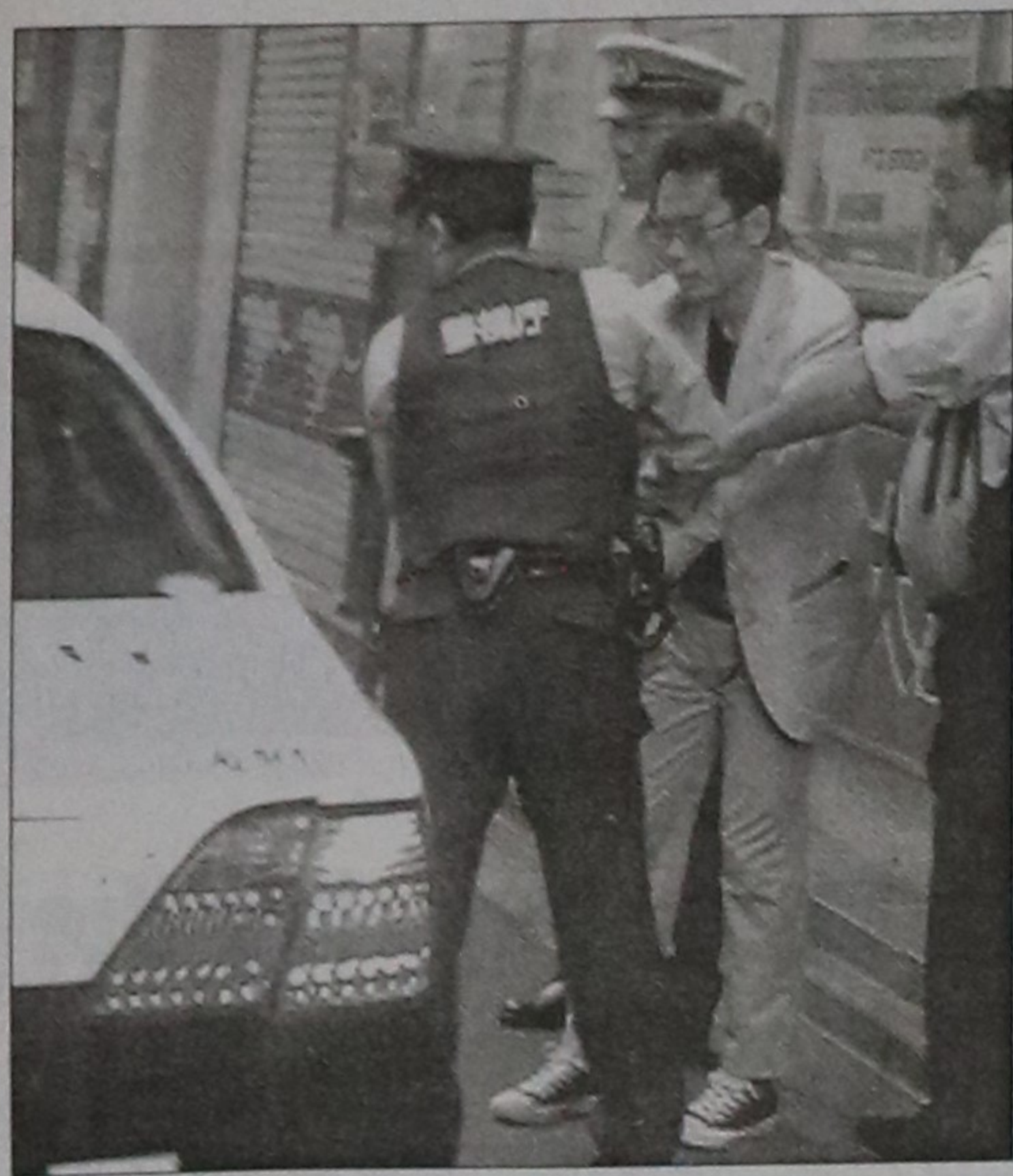




This picture, taken by a pedestrian, shows Tomohiro Kato being arrested by policemen on a street at Tokyo's Akihabara electronic district yesterday. At least seven people were killed in a stabbing frenzy on a crowded part of Tokyo, Japanese public broadcaster NHK said, quoting police sources.

Seven killed in Tokyo stabbing frenzy

AFP, Tokyo

A man went on a stabbing spree yesterday in a Tokyo neighbourhood famed for comic-book subculture, killing at least seven people and leaving around a dozen injured in Japan's deadliest crime in years.

The assailant, who later told police he was "tired of living," swerved a truck into a crowd of pedestrians shortly after noon in Tokyo's bustling Akihabara area before jumping out, and screaming and stabbing strangers.

The assailant was identified as Tomohiro Kato, 25, from central Shizuoka prefecture. He first said he was a gangster before retracting his story.

"I came to Akihabara to kill people. It didn't matter whom I'd kill," he was quoted by Jiji Press as telling police.

Kato, bespectacled in a beige suit and black-and-white sneakers, was armed with a survival knife and duelled with a police officer who fought back with a baton.

By the time Kato finally dropped his knife in face of an officer's gunpoint, 17 people lay bloodied on the street of the crowded district, according to fire department and police officials.

Kato had blood running down the side of his face as he was taken into custody.

Jiji Press and other Japanese media said seven people were dead -- six men aged 19, 20, 29, 33, 47 and 74, and a 21-year-old woman.

The attack fell on the anniversary of the last incident of such magnitude -- a stabbing frenzy that left eight children dead at an elementary school in 2001.

Ambulances with sirens blaring raced to the scene, where Kato's rented white Isuzu truck was abandoned with a shattered windshield on streets that were closed to traffic on a balmy Sunday afternoon.

Hundreds of stunned pedestrians stared from a distance as medical workers set up green plastic sheets in the middle of an intersection to ensure privacy as they gave emergency treatment.

"I was shocked to hear the news as I've visited this place quite often," said Wataru Amano, a 26-year-old truck driver who often visits Akihabara. "I could have been a target if I had been here a few hours ago."

US security deal with Iraq won't harm Iran: Maliki

Shias share Tehran's concerns

AP, AFP, Tehran

Iraq's prime minister sought to ease Iranian fears over a proposed security deal with the US Sunday, saying his government will not allow Iraq to become a launching pad for an attack on its neighbour.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki met with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during a two-day visit to Tehran that was expected to focus on the security pact, which Washington and Baghdad hope to finish by mid-summer.

The agreement aims to establish a long-term security arrangement between Iraq and the US Iran fiercely opposes the proposal, saying it will lead to permanent American bases on its doorstep, reflecting Tehran's fears US forces could attack it.

After talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki on Saturday evening, al-Maliki said the Baghdad government will not allow Iraq to become a launching pad for "harming" Iran, according to Iran's state broadcaster.

Al-Maliki said his government places great value on Iran's security, according to a report on the broadcaster's Web site.

Iran's concerns that it is the likely target of the US drive for an abiding military presence in its western neighbour are shared by many in Iraq who do not want to see their country used as a launchpad for a new war in the region.

Many of Iraq's leading Shia politicians found asylum in Iran when Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated regime held power in Baghdad, and Iraq's Shia majority has close religious and cultural links with its Shia co-religionists across the border.

Iraq's Shia spiritual leader Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, whose opinions are closely adhered to, has indicated his opposition to any agreement with Washington that limits Iraqi sovereignty.

On Friday, his spokesman Abdel Mahdi Karbalai welcomed "the determination of (Iraq's) political parties to defend nationalist principles."

According to state TV, al-Maliki also met Iran's intelligence minister, Gholam Hossein Mohseini Ejei, on Saturday night. The report did not elaborate.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said Saturday that al-Maliki would also discuss "security issues" during his visit a

reference to US allegations that Iran is arming, funding and training Shia militiamen. Iran has denied the charges, saying it supports Iraq's security and stability.

The visit is the second this year by al-Maliki, a Shia, and three months ago, Ahmadinejad made a landmark visit to Iraq. Al-Maliki's Dawa party, along with other Shia parties in his ruling coalition, have longstanding close ties with Iran.

During the Saddam Hussein era, Iran and Iraq fought an eight-year war that killed about 1 million people.

But after the 2003 US-led invasion toppled Saddam's Sunni-dominated regime, Iraq's Shia majority came to dominate the government, bringing improved ties with Tehran.

Qaeda cell busted in western Iraq

Seven killed in Baghdad attacks

AFP, Ramadi Baghdad

Iraqi police yesterday dismantled an al-Qaeda cell of would-be suicide bombers in western Iraq and seized 50 explosive belts primed for use, a local mayor said.

Sheikh Hikmat Jubair al-Kaud, mayor of the town of Hit, said the arrests were carried out during a raid by special units of the police.

"These people belonged to an al-Qaeda cell which was preparing to carry out suicide attacks," he told AFP. Police seized 50 vests stuffed with explosives and uncovered a workshop used to equip car bombs.

Hit lies in Al-Anbar province, which was a bastion of the Sunni Arab insurgency which erupted shortly after the 2003 US-led invasion and a battleground in which the US military said it expelled the rebels in late 2004.

The American military has over the

past 18 months been recruiting local tribal chiefs in both western and northern Iraq to join the fight against al-Qaeda.

According to the mayor, the dismantled cell carried out a June 1 attack on a police checkpoint in Hit that killed nine people, including an officer.

"Those arrested are Iraqis but the group has also recruited foreign elements. The first confessions on the June 1 attack were made by a Palestinian," said Kaud.

The US army said it made 49 arrests after that attack.

CIA chief Michael Hayden said in late May that al-Qaeda was essentially defeated in Iraq.

Meanwhile, seven people were killed in two attacks in the Iraqi capital on Sunday, including a mortar strike on the highly-fortified Green Zone, Iraqi officials said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Lankans live on the edge as rebels turn war on civilians

AFP, Colombo

Each time Indika Jayawickrema uses public transport, his wife Chamindri anxiously waits for a telephone call to let her know he has safely reached his destination.

His journey is one that has become more risky recently as a wave of bomb attacks targeting civilians sweeps through Sri Lanka, which is in the midst of 36-year-old civil war.

"With a 10,000 rupee (93 dollar) monthly pay, an infant and a wife to maintain, I can only afford the bus," he shrugs outside a bus stop in Colombo, a day after twin bus bombs on Friday killed 23 people.

Sri Lanka's defence ministry blames Tamil Tiger rebels for a string of attacks against civilian targets that have killed more than 170 and injured over 500 since January.

Attacks against civilians are of little strategic military or political importance, but they heighten public insecurity, said Ajai Sahni, head of the New Delhi-based Institute for Conflict Management.

"If you look at the pattern, they (the attackers) are hitting the softest of soft targets, the poorest of the poor, the most unguarded population. The sheer volumes doesn't allow meticulous checking to prevent future attacks," he told AFP.

However, the Colombo-based government is not easing up and instead has poured a record 1.5 billion dollars into this year's war effort, hoping for a quick end to a conflict that has left tens of thousands dead.

Endless bloodshed is also taking a toll on the island nation's finances, where inflation in May hit a high of 26.6 percent, fuel prices were recently raised by 30 percent and bus fares by 27.7 percent.

"We have to first look after our safety, in spite of economic hardships," said Sudeepa Jayakody, who drives a private minibus carrying office workers to Colombo.

Jayakody, who narrowly escaped Friday morning's bus bomb, wants to buy a motorbike to escape the dangers of public transport.

"I tell everybody, Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese, if you can afford it, hire private transport, buy a bike, rather than risk your life on a train or bus," Jayakody said.

But many, like financial analyst Anchana Kathirgathambay and stockbroker Mohandas Thangarajah, say they have no choice but to use the bus.

"I can't afford to take cabs," Kathirgathambay told AFP, calling the security situation "scary."

"Each time I step into a bus or stand at a bus stop, I try to be aware of people around me, the surroundings, people carrying bags and try to keep my distance from them," she said.



Sri Lankan passengers aboard a bus wait for its departure in Maharagama suburb of Colombo on Saturday. Sri Lankans are living on the edge as a wave of bomb attacks, blamed on separatists Tamil Tiger rebels, have targeted public transport.

Questions linger over Obama's Asia policy

AFP, Washington

Will he sit down with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Il? Order trade sanctions against China? Send US troops into Pakistan to flush out Islamic militants?

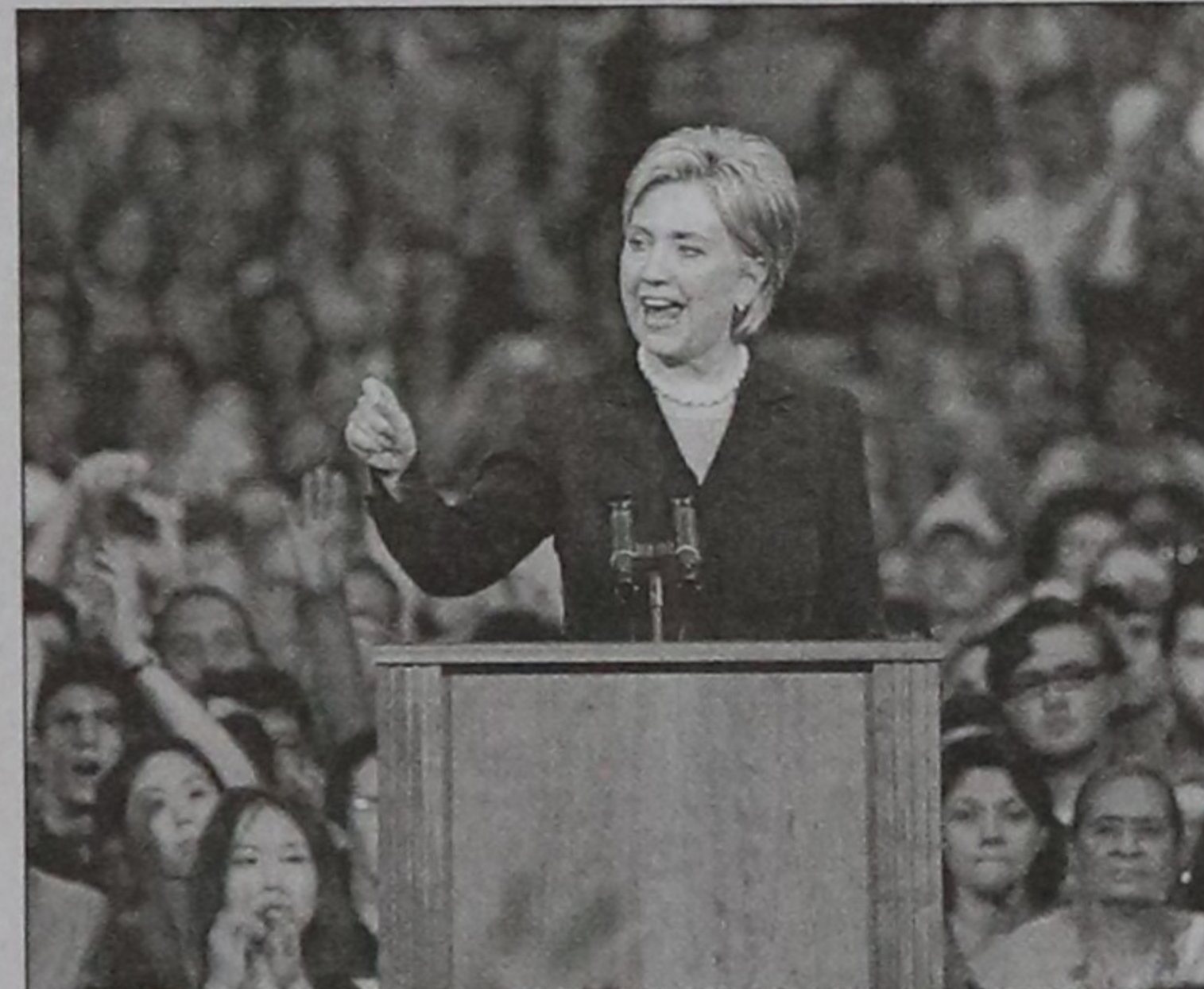
Unending questions have surfaced about Barack Obama's Asia policy since he pledged to negotiate with the leadership of US adversaries and revamp US free trade and "war on terror" strategies if he wins the White House in November.

Despite such lingering doubts, a victory by the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee over Republican rival and Vietnam War veteran John McCain will be enough to herald a new era in ties with developing Asia, some experts say.

"I think simply the act of electing a black American in a country which is still predominantly white would really send a message to Asia and the rest of the world that this is going to be a very different US from what you have seen over the last eight years," said Robert Hathaway, head of the Asian programme at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars.

"Barack Obama's election I think will do wonders from day one -- you can expect a new sensitivity to other peoples, other perspectives and other cultures," he said.

But "real change" which the 46-year-old Obama has promised could raise tensions in the region, too.



US Senator Hillary Clinton speaks to supporters on June 7 at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. Clinton on Saturday threw her full support and energy behind Barack Obama as she endorsed the Democratic White House nominee and vowed to do all she could to send him to the White House.

Kosovo prime minister's home attacked

AP, Pristina

Armed assailants trying to break into the home of Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci exchanged fire with guards, but the leader was away and his family was not hurt, police said Saturday.

Police later said they had arrested a 19-year-old ethnic Albanian man suspected in the shooting. They said they found the suspect, who was already known to authorities, after a tip from his father.

The teenager has a wound to his arm, leading police to believe he was shot in a shootout with Thaci's security guards.

Thaci condemned the assault as an attack upon his family and urged Kosovo's citizens to remain calm.

"Last night my family was attacked," Thaci told reporters in the capital, Pristina. "Like any parent and husband I am happy that my family is safe."

"No one will have the power to threaten independence, democratic order, rule of law, the freedom and security of the citizen of the Republic of Kosovo," Thaci said.

Police said the teenager told investigators he did not know he was breaking into the prime minister's house and that he had only wanted to steal something.

Looking for Senior Investment Manager for New Business Generation

Our client **DEG - German Investment and Development Company** is a major European development finance institution for private sector in emerging countries with total assets of 5 billion USD. DEG has been active in Bangladesh since 1981 and has financed 20 projects with 150 million USD. The current portfolio is expected to increase substantially allowing plenty of room for growth over the next years. Our client is looking for a Senior Investment Manager who will be responsible for generation of long term financing business in Bangladesh in the area of foreign and local currency loans, equity investment and mezzanine financing.

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- Identification and approaching of suitable companies
- Analysis of companies, business plans and finance proposals
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- Preparation of internal clearance documents
- Support to Company's due diligence and portfolio management team

Educational Qualification and Other Requirements:

- University degree in Business Studies and MBA in Finance
- Sound knowledge of long term finance instruments (loan, equity, mezzanine, lease, etc.)
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- Proven skills and demonstrated ability to analyze company's financial statements and business proposals
- Demonstrated financial modeling skills and capacity to apply them appropriately in projects
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- Strong analytical and communication skills both oral and writing
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- Age should be in between 32 to 40 years

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Re-advertisement with correction

Institute of Microfinance (InM) is a research institute on poverty and microcredit. The Institute invites application from deserving candidates for recruitment to the following positions:

Research Fellow

Educational Qualification : PhD. in Economics/ Finance/ Agricultural Economics/ Applied Statistics/ or any other subjects under Social Science from any recognized university with no third division/ class in any examination.

Age : Maximum 40 years. This can be relaxed for suitable candidate.

Salary : (28,000-1200x6-35,200-1250x6-42,700). Higher initial salary may be offered for experienced candidate.

Other Benefits : 60% of basic salary for house rent allowance, medical allowance, conveyance, festival bonus etc.

Senior Research Associate

Educational Qualification : At least master degree in Economics/ Applied Statistics/ Agricultural Economics from any recognized foreign university with no third division/ class in any examination.

Experience : The candidates must have experience in research.

Publication : Preference will be given to the candidates who have at least one research publication.

Age : Maximum 35 years. This can be relaxed for suitable candidate.

Salary : (23,000-1000x7-30,000-1100x7-37,600).

Other Benefits : 60% of basic salary for house rent allowance, medical allowance, conveyance, festival bonus etc.

Terms & Conditions:

A) Candidates working in Government and Semi-Government Organization should apply through proper channel.

B) Application with CV and recent two photographs should be addressed to the Executive Director, Institute of Microfinance (InM), PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. Please write the name of the post applied for on the top of an A4 size envelope.

Last date of submission : June 25, 2008.

Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview.