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Friday's hero Shafiqul proves to be a pivotal player for the Tigers

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QUAKE-HIT JAPAN

Blast at nuke plant raises meltdown fear

AGENCIES, Japan

A massive explosion rocked a Japanese nuclear power plant yesterday menacing a nation just beginning to grasp the scale of a catastrophic earthquake and tsunami.

A huge pall of smoke was seen coming from the plant at Fukushima and several workers were injured.

The plant was damaged by Friday's 8.9-magnitude earthquake, which sent a 10-metre tsunami ripping through towns and cities across the northeast coast.

The blast raised fears of a meltdown at the facility north of Tokyo as officials scrambled to contain what could be the worst nuclear disaster since the Chernobyl explosion in 1986 that shocked the world.

At least three persons have been exposed to radiation, AFP added, citing NHK report.

The three were randomly chosen for examination out of some 90 bed-ridden patients moved from a hospital in the town of Futaba-machi near the quake-hit nuke plant.

The patients had waited for rescuers on a school ground, spending a long time outside and then being moved by helicopter at the time when an explosion hit the ageing Fukushima No 1 plant, NHK said, citing the Fukushima local government.

Japan's Prime Minister Naoto Kan declared a state of emergency at the Fukushima 1 and 2 plants as engineers try to confirm whether a reactor at one of the stations has gone into meltdown.

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PHOTO: REUTERS

A ship washed ashore by tsunami at Kamaishi City in Japan. More photos on page 12.

10,000 missing in port town

Tsunami death toll rises to 1,300

AGENCIES, Japan

Around 10,000 people are unaccounted for in the Japanese port town of Minamisanriku in quake-hit Miyagi prefecture, public broadcaster NHK reported yesterday.

The figure is more than half of the population of roughly 17,000 in the town on the Pacific coast, it said, reports AFP.

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No more death on border

BSF to use non-lethal weapons, pledges to bring down firing incidents

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India yesterday announced to equip its Border Security Force (BSF) with non-lethal weapons in order to stop killing of unarmed Bangladeshis along its border.

The BSF jawans will carry the non-lethal arms in addition to the regular ones, BSF Director General Raman Srivastava said. However, he denied elaborating about non-lethal arms.

He was addressing a joint press conference with the Director General of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Maj Gen Rafiqul Islam after conclusion of 5-day annual talks between the border guard forces here.

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West Pakistan leaders backed Bangabandhu

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The movement for freedom was inexorable, indeed was unstoppable.



So were the reports from foreign newsmen then in Dhaka in numbers that were stupefying. On March 13, The Economist reported that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in charge of the province. Earlier, on March 9, The Daily Telegraph reported

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A day of horror for expatriates

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Many Bangladeshis living in Japan spent a night and a day of nightmare in the aftermath of the most devastating tsunami in the Pacific nation's history.

Members of many families staying in different locations could not contact each other, plunging into a worrying situation.

Agony of many parents escalated as they could not know the whereabouts of their children, who went to schools in the morning. Many attending their jobs in Tokyo walked or cycled all night long to reach their home, according to Bangladeshi expatriates living in Japan.

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GRAMEEN BANK ISSUE

Dipu Moni responds to Blake's views

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Laws of the land and the rule of law do not depend on anyone's happiness and unhappiness, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday responding to a senior US official's remarks on Grameen Bank and its founder Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"Our friends outside may or may not be happy but we will take action in accordance with our law. The rule of law in our

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