The Daily Star

NEWS

UN powers close to ME truce

FROM PAGE 1

buffer zone there until the arrival of a multinational force, the military and observers said vesterday.

Up to 10,000 ground troops were battling Hezbollah around more than a dozen villages in south Lebanon on Thursday with the aim of clearing the area of Hezbollah fighters. Tzvika Golan, a spokesman for Israel's northern command. told AFP.

The troops were to establish a "security zone" six to eight kilometers (four to five miles) deep along Lebanon's border with Israel in order to "push Hezbollah further north." he said Israeli media reported that the

army had been told to establish the zone by the end of the day on Thursday.

General Gai Tzurn, one of Israel's top military commanders in the Lebanon offensive, denied that the security buffer would mirror the one that Israel held in southern Lebanon between 1985 and 2000. That zone reached eight to 15 kilometres inside Lebanon along

100 kilometres of the border. "Our aim is to put in place a mobile presence and we don't have

any intention of installing ourselves in fixed positions on the ground," he told army radio. Two Israeli soldiers died after

being wounded in fighting in southern Lebanon, al-Jazeera news channel reported Thursday. In Tel Aviv, Israeli military

declined to comment on the report. Six Israeli civilians were killed in a hail of nearly a 100 rockets launched at northern Israel from south Lebanon within the space of an hour, according to police, army and medical officials

Three people were killed by rocket that slammed into the northern village of Maalot, close to the Lebanese border, that was hit by more than 40 rockets.

Another two people were killed by a strike in the coastal city of Acre some 25 kilometers (16 miles) south of the Lebanese border, an attack that also wounded at least five people.

It was not immediately clear where the sixth victim was killed. Malavsia, chair of the 57-nation

Organisation of the Islamic Conference, said "the international community is in paralysis" and called on Muslim countries meeting in Kuala Lumpur to contribute troops to a UN force for Lebanon.

In a sign of diplomatic progress toward a ceasefire, the permanent UN Security Council members embarked on intense talks on the conflict and ambassadors said a

resolution setting out a possible settlement was close. French ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said a UN accord

was now within reach. "We are working very well. We are getting closer, much closer," he said, although ambassadors said there was still no agreement on how many resolutions were needed or

on the makeup of any international

Britain's UN ambassador Emyr ones-Parry told reporters that text which actually takes us forward" could be discussed in the Security Council as early as Friday.

US ambassador John Bolton said Wednesday's talks had been "encouraging" but more work needed to be done on a final agreement, while the White House predicted a resolution within "days" But differences between France and the United States forced the United Nations to again postpone a

planned meeting Thursday of potential contributors to an international force. Olmert said he expected a UN resolution sometime next week but Israel's pullout would then depend on how quickly international forces

could be assembled and deployed into Lebanon Some 835 Lebanese have been killed and 3,210 wounded in the Israeli response to that attack, according to official figures.

Hundreds of thousands more have been forced to flee their homes. Lebanese officials estimate that Israeli bombardments have caused

losses of 2.5 billion dollars. Explosions lit up the night sky over the Lebanese capital as aircraft circled overhead, the first such strikes on the battered city since Israel declared a partial bombing lull

on Sunday. No details of casualties were immediately available but southern suburbs of Beirut, considered a stronghold of the Hezbollah Shia militia, have been largely reduced to rubble after earlier heavy Israeli air attacks

Israeli jets also struck the northern Lebanese region of Akkar, near the Syrian border, the second attack there in 24 hours after two bridges were hit early Wednesday, Lebanese police said.

The fresh air strikes came after Hezbollah fired its biggest salvo of rockets at Israel on Wednesday, in apparent retaliation for an Israeli commando operation in which five suspected querrillas were snatched

rom a hospital One Israeli was killed in the barrage of 230 rockets, the heaviest in 23 days of fighting sparked by Hezbollah's July 12 attack inside Israel in which eight Israeli soldiers were killed and two abducted.

A Hezbollah missile also hit near Beit Shean, some 60km south of the Lebanese border in the militia's deepest strike yet into Israel. The barrage came as a blow to

Israeli claims to have significantly reduced Hezbollah's ability to aunch such rocket strikes, the main objective of the Jewish state's war in southern Lebanon.

It came hours after Israeli special forces descended by helicopter early Wednesday onto the ancient city of Baalbek, 100 kilometres north Israel, and attacked a hospital said by Israel to be a Hezbollah

4th ODI

FROM PAGE 1

stronghold.

"We have carried out this operation to prove that we can hit everywhere in Lebanon," army chief of staff Dan Halutz told reporters after the raid, which involved some 200 elite troops.

A military source told AFP that for the first time. Hezbollah fired a Syrian-made Fajer-5 missile, with a longer range and larger warhead, hitting the northern town of Rosh Pina and causing no injuries.

The militia has fired more than 2,000 rockets at northern Israel since the start of the offensive on July 12, killing 19 civilians, while more than 800 people, mostly civilians have been killed by Israeli strikes on Lebanon.

At least seven people were killed, including an 80-year-old couple, as Israel renewed its air, sea and land bombardment of the southern Tyre region, police said. All died when their homes collapsed.

Israel had called a 48-hour partial halt to air attacks after a raid on the Lebanese village of Qana Sunday that killed 52 civilians, mostly women and children, fuelling international calls for an immediate ceasefire.

On the ground, Israel pressed its advance deeper inside Lebanese territory in the teeth of stiff resistance from Hezbollah gunmen.

One Israeli soldier was killed and four others were wounded during clashes with Hezbollah querrillas in the flashpoint village of Aita-ash Shaab in southern Lebanon, the army said Thursday.

A total of 37 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the start of the offensive. Israel claims to have killed hundreds of Hezbollah fighters but the militia says its losses are much lower.

Thousands of crack Israeli infantrymen, paratroopers and reserve units have poured into southern Lebanon since the Israeli cabinet on Tuesday approved the expansion of the ground war, ignoring worldwide pleas for a ceasefire.

Olmert told British newspapers Thursday that the ground offensive would not stop until an international force of some 15,000 combat ready troops was deployed in southern Lebanon with a view to disarming Hezbollah

"There should be overlap in terms of time so that we will pull out and they will come in without a time gap that will allow Hezbollah to rebuild their position in the south of Lebanon," he told The Times.

"It's as simple as that. We want a ceasefire and we don't want to occupy the south of Lebanon."

Charge-framing

On February 20, 2005 Dhamrai police

arrested Sentu, Wahab, Yaqub,

Anwar, Faruq and Salam with nine

bomb-making manuals and contra-

Khaleda told the meeting the OIC should play a more proactive role in the ME peace process and Bangladesh will lend its full support to whatever course of action the OIC

may decide. She said the OIC leaders have assembled in the session to issue a firm call to the Israeli leadership for bringing an immediate halt to the violence that it has let loose.

"I appeal to you to take the lead in getting our message across Israel by the best means available at your disposal to end violence forthwith and get the peace process back on track," she told the meeting

"We are here not to fan hate but to express our anguish and indignation at the Israeli atrocities. We are here not to incite passion of retaliation and more bloodletting," she said, making clear Bangladesh's stand on the conflict.

Khaleda said the senselessness in choosing the path of violence cannot bring about whatever ends the Israeli government wishes to

GDP growth slows

ing production in the quarter under

In the monetary sector, the

"While the central bank pursued

a restrictive monetary policy,

reserve money growth in Q4 of F06

was unusually high, at 19.8 per cent,

compared to 9.7 per cent in the last

fiscal year. This resulted in a larger

volume of currency issue than

The foreign exchange market

remained relatively stable. The

exchange rate underwent a mild

appreciation by 0.4 per cent in the

guarter under review. In the earlier

quarters -- Q1, Q2 and Q3 -- of

FY06, the exchange rate depreci-

ated by 9.7 per cent compared to 4.2

The MCCI said the average

inflation rate was 7.08 per cent in

April of the review quarter, com-

pared to 7.07 per cent in Q3, 6.91

per cent in Q2, and 6.78 per cent in

Q1 of FY06. In April, point-to-point

inflation was 7.46 per cent, com-

pared to 6.62 per cent in April FY05.

modity prices and the upward

pled in our approach," she said.

"The rise in international com-

per cent depreciation in FY2005.

anticipated.'

FROM PAGE 1

still retained for the tax officials and review, the MCCI said. above all, political confrontations and recent tendency amongst a section of workers to take law into chamber said, the central bank their own hands at the instigation of continued its restrictive monetary outsiders." the chamber said in its policy stance by increasing interest Review of Economic Situation Aprilrates in the review quarter. June 2006.

"Complaints have also been made against unrealistic approach in the decision-making process of some important government agencies. One entrepreneur pointed out the recent requirement of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that any company having paid-up capital exceeding Tk 40 crore must go public. The entrepreneur feels that this is against the spirit of free enterprise.

During the period, the MCCI said, the major growth area was industry, particularly manufacturing and construction, which recorded notable expansion in the quarter under review. "The performance of the agriculture sector was relatively weaker compared to that of the previous year," the chamber said.

It said a favourable aspect of the country's macroeconomy during the period, was the return of stability in the foreign exchange market, and an improvement in the country's

foreign exchange reserve. "Increased inflows of remittances and better performance of the export sector together helped raise Bangladesh Bank's foreign exchange reserve by US\$430 million in the review quarter (compared to a decline of \$10 million in the corresponding quarter of the last vear) to \$'3340 million at end June 2006.

adjustment in some domestic The generally stable domestic and external macroeconomic administered prices provided the major inflationary impetus during environment benefited all the real the quarter. The relative stability of sectors of the economy. In particular, the industry sector benefited the exchange rate during the period from increased investment and the did not have any perceptible modercreation of additional production ating influence on the inflationary capacity in textile and leather subsectors, which boosted manufacturpressure," the chamber said.

PM calls for ceasefire

FROM PAGE 1 executive committee meeting of the

Khaleda observed that the Israeli 57-nation forum of Muslim counaggression has not only caused deaths of hundreds of innocent Lebanese, including women and children, but also members of UN interim force in Lebanon. The Israeli senseless act of

killing the innocent children has shocked the world conscience. The civilised society, she lamented, does not have any word strong enough to express its indignation. The prime minister said this crisis

has been thrust upon Lebanon when it was just struggling to move towards a viable national reconstruction mode, after decades of civil war and Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

At the same time, the Israelis have also been systematically destroying Gaza's infrastructure, inflicting damages on the Palestinian economy and undermining its democratic government, she added.

> Khaleda mentioned that the UN Secretary General, in his remarks to the international conference in panon on July 26. recommended some immediate actions. They are undoubtedly pertinent. "But we feel that he has missed out on the main issue. If Israel wants to live in peace with its neighbours, it has to deal with their democratically elected representatives." Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin, Secretary to the Prime Minister Khandaker Shahidul Islam and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia Shafi U Ahmed were present at the session as members of the Bangladesh delegation.

School teachers

FROM PAGE 1 wire fences. Later, a team of five

teachers were allowed to go to the Prime Minister's Office to submit the memorandum.

Following the procession, the teachers started hunger strike until death at Muktangon where different political leaders and professionals including Awami League leaders Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Nurul Islam Nahid and Dhaka University Teachers' Association's (Duta) former president AAMS Arefin Siddique expressed their solidarity with the teachers' demands.

Another faction of Bangladesh Non-government Primary Teachers Association led by Abdur Rahman Bachchu started non-stop sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital from Wednesday to compel the government to meet their demands.

Teachers of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas, under the banner of National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE) brought out protest processions at all district towns and the capital's Muktangon vesterday condemning the education minister's 'misbehaviour' during dialogues with the NFTE on Tuesday.

MA Awal Siddique-led Bangladesh Shikkhak-Karmachari Oikva Parishad, a platform of eight teachers' and employees' organisations, held a grand rally at Muktangon around 11:00am vesterday protesting the government's delay in meeting their demands using dialogues as an excuse. After the rally, a procession was brought out that marched different streets of the capital

Teachers and employees of nongovernment high schools, colleges and madrasas under four platforms have been observing indefinite strike demanding cent percent basic salary from government exchequer and other facilities like house rent, medical allowance, dearness allowance and annual increment.

Voter list

FROM PAGE 1 for updating the voter list by visiting door to door from July 21.

The task is yet to get momentum, as the field level staff recruited for updating the voter list have not got assurance about their remuneration due to fund crisis. The task began even without allocation of any fund for purchasing necessary materials for updating the existing voter list. The 1.35 lakh temporarily

recruited staff were asked to meet the expenditure on their own. The remuneration for the field

level staff will be fixed soon, the EC Secretary said yesterday.

The EC secretary said some 70.53 lakh people so far applied for registering as voters while 5.96 lakh applications were received for deletion of names from the existing voter list.

tices, he said Bangladesh is an Considering the present progimportant democratic and moderate ress, many field level election country, an example for many other officials said the task is unlikely to complete by the scheduled time limit of August 10 as many field level staff are vet to start working 'sincerely' due to uncertainty of their remuneration

EC reforms a must

the women will not need any affir-

Badiul Alam Mojumdar of Hunger

Samson H Chowdhury, chair-

man of Transparency International

Bangladesh, observed that a whole

lot of discriminations are there

between the ordinary citizens and

consultation sessions for each goal

throughout this month. The goals

are: i) to become a participatory

democracy, ii) to have an efficient,

publicly accountable and transpar-

ent government, iii) to become a

poverty-mitigated middle-income

country, iv) to have a skilled and a

creative workforce, v) to become a

health-endowed nation, vi) to be

globally integrated and to be a

regional hub, vii) to be environmen-

tally sustainable and viii) to be a

more equitable society.

Indian probe

finds Natwar

guilty in Iraq

oil-for-food

AFP, New Delhi

those who are in power

FROM PAGE 20 include it in the Vision 2021

mative actions if discriminatory Hasanul Huq Inu, president of practices are removed from the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal. welcomed society. the initiative of the Nagorik Committee and said some of the Project said political parties are supposed to be the driving force in a reforms proposed by the 14-party opposition alliance are already democratic society but in there in the Vision 2021 for Bangladesh they are out to 'form Bangladesh. syndicates just to be in power'.

For now, holding an acceptable election is absolutely imperative for democracy to sustain, he said calling for the proposed reforms in the electoral systems to be implemented urgently.

He urged the Nagorik Committee Nagorik Committee, formed to draw up a list of black money early this year at a national diaholders so that they cannot particilogue, has identified eight goals for pate in the polls. vision 2021 for Bangladesh, will "Elected dictators are now ruling organise separate expert group

the country and they are desperate to cling on to power." Inu added.

Earlier, making a presentation on Vision 2021 for Bangladesh goal one to become a participatory democracy, Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of CPD, said currently, the country has a short-term goal in poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) but there is no long-term planning. Vision 2021 is different from the

PRSPs on three counts in that it is a long-term one, its ownership is much widened because of recom mendations [included in it] from the grassroots level, he said adding that most importantly, the accountability of the political parties has been emphasised

Justice Abdur Rouf said he tried to introduce ID cards for the citizens when he was the CEC but a section of people in the administration worked against the plan.

It would be very difficult to hold a scandal free and fair election without empowering the people, he observed.

Mahbubur Rahman, president of An inquiry set up by the Indian International Chamber of government on Thursday found Commerce, Bangladesh, said former foreign minister Natwar registration of the political parties is Singh and his son guilty of miscona must to end the culture of one-man duct over the UN oil-for-food party in the country. He also under-scored the need for introduction of scheme in Iraq, reports said. the ID cards for the citizens.

Supreme Court judge R.S. Pathak, Shamsul Bari, chairman of Research Initiative Bangladesh. stressed the need for building a knowledge society, adding that the wrongdoing, the Press Trust of India planning should be based on news agency reported. research so that the initiatives can be more sustainable.

Shaheen Anam, executive them even though two of Jagat director of Manusher Jonno, said Singh's friends were found to have the issues relating to inequality and made money from the deal, another inequity should be addressed, and report said.

US wants all to talk

FROM PAGE 1 and imams to discuss certain press-

"I heard them on different issues prospects and enjoyed the hospital-ity they offered," said Richard said Richard Boucher hours before his departure. here when the members were Boucher is also optimistic about withdrawn, he said. a free and fair election. "There were three successful elections in the economic growth but bracketed past, and I hope that the fourth corruption as one of the major ection will also be successful one. hurdles to the economic develop-Lauding the democratic pracment and poverty alleviation.

Core operations in Bangladesh, he said, "We would love to send them back. But unfortunately the Peace Core did not have enough security

Boucher praised the recent

"It is hard for the business people

to do business here if corruption is

rampant." he said, stressing that the

government should have a strong

political will and commitment to curb

should be transparent and legisla-

tion stringent. There are examples

of providing international coopera-

tion and expertise and, if need be,

maintaining double standard in the

US policy regarding the Israeli

aggression on Lebanon, he said, "L

don't think it is a double standard.

There should be political resolution

to stop violent attacks. We are trying

to achieve solution on emergency

asking the Tigers to lift the water

blockade. "If that happens, we will

however opened another front against

the security forces, firing mortar

bombs at military camps in the Mannar

The Tigers Thursday morning

Responding to the allegation of

could be extended, he added.

The public procurement process

corruption.

On the resumption of Peace

The inquiry, headed by retired

decided that both Natwar Singh and

his son Jagat Singh were guilty of

Iraqi oil has been traced to either of

But no money from the sale of the

Hossain and Mahmudul Hasssan, and activists Huraira and Shafiq.

seven JMB militants -- Abdur Rouf,

suicide squad members Saiful Islam

and Kamruzzaman Kamal, Ehsar

(full-time) members Tofazzal

No specific

FROM PAGE 1

The court granted 10-day remand for the fist five, seven-day for the last two, and sent the rest 20 to jail. The same court sent Nuruddin to five-day remand.

Asked why no specific allegations were brought against the militants, the Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mizanur Rahman of Bhaluka Police Station said police will collect more information from them before bringing any specific charge.

Asked what if the High Court (HC) gave any directive not to bring the arrestees under Section 54 in remand, the OC said, "It [HC] only cautioned the law enforcers to be careful, nothing more."

On why only seven out of the 20 were brought for quizzing, he said, "We have acted following the order of the high-ups only."

A number of militants earlier got release as they were produced before court under Section 54.

Cigarettes

FROM PAGE 1

who apparently used false letterhead of the company.

One Mofizul Islam of Messrs Surovi Enterprise, 30 Mokim Batara, Dhaka imported the contraband with official clearance for importing 6,000 pieces of electrictouch-lamps. The customs officials who opened the container yesterday found several boxes containing lamps used as camouflage. Inside they discovered hundreds of cartons containing Benson and Hedges cigarettes.

"As soon as the Clearing and Forwarding agent SSAF Global told us that they were unwilling to process paperwork for clearing the merchandise because they suspected foul play, we immediately involved several law enforcement agencies to trap the importer, but he could not be found," said Almas Uzzaman

The Kamlapur ICD accommodates over 2,000 containers coming from Chittagong port by train for customs clearance. The haul was first of its kind in three months, said the customs commissioner.

Customs officials said a departmental case would be started to investigate the matter.

Anti Corruption Commission's Deputy Assistant Director Akhter Hamid said they would investigate the matter and decided whether to file a case.

agement last night, it is expected that young all-rounder Sakib Al Hasan will make his international

Although the playing eleven was

over off Mashrafee Bin Mortuza

behind in the five-match series.

leaving the Tigers in tatters and 2-1

not announced by the team man-

the first three matches, veteran opener Javed Omar is likely to make way for Sakib. If Javed misses the crucial game, Rajin Saleh would be chosen to open the innings with lefthanded Shahriar Nafees. The match will be telecast live by

Bangladesh Television and Star Sports and from 1.30pm BST.

Criminal killed FROM PAGE 20 Babu tried to flee during the encoun-

ter and was hit by bullets, the press release added.

The Rab men later found bullethit Babu at a crop-field. He was rushed to Joypurhat Sadar Hospital where attending doctors declared him dead

The Rab press release said they recovered a pistol and six bullets from the scene.

Shibir men

FROM PAGE 20 Examination Controller Dr Anwar Hossain said certificate-issuing regulations are equally applicable to all including the vice chancellor. Shibir's attempt to exercise political influence in the university administration is uncalled for and we will never tolerate it." he added.

Nur Muhammad Mandal, ICS general secretary, said there was a misunderstanding with the controller of examinations, but it has been settled

Move to catch FROM PAGE 20

Bangladeshi exporters. But organised gangs are counterfeiting the certificates to serve the interest of exporters of third country facilitat-

Bangladeshi products. Bangladesh Garment

facility illegally. He urged the government to find

Showing them Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the police produced them before a first class magistrate's court in Dhaka on February 22, 2005. The With only 24 runs behind him in

court granted two days' remand for them All the arrestees were released on

FROM PAGE 20

band materials.

bail 13 days after their arrest.

During investigation Dhamrai police found that the activities of the accused were seditious. With approval from the home ministry, Dhamrai police filed the sedition case against them on September 11 last

Investigation Officer (IO) Iqbal Hossain submitted the charge sheet

on December 27 against the accused. Sentu was re-arrested in November.

Release of WB

FROM PAGE 20 In the first five days of the current

fiscal, the government borrowed Tk 1,608 crore from the banking sector to meet the expenditure.

The IMF's \$80 million loan has become uncertain as the government failed to notify the IMF of the measures to tackle the huge loss due to subsidy in fuel prices and the ways to achieve revenue growth in the current fiscal.

The donors are unhappy about the slow pace of government's reforms in the National Board of Revenue and nationalised commercial banks, sources said.

Rupali Bank was scheduled to be handed over to private sector one and a half years ago, but the government has failed to achieve progress in this regard.

The donors are in doubt whether it will be completed by the first week of September as per the new deadline set by the government.

During the 10-day visit, Saifur

from August 6 to 8 and attend pre-

negotiation meeting with World

Director Christine I Wallich vester-

day met Saifur Rahman at the

latter's office on the eve of his visit to

Saifur told reporters after the

meeting that during his meetings in

Washington he would raise the

issues of macroeconomic chal-

lenges for Bangladesh in the wake

of the soaring price of oil in the

Meanwhile. World Bank Country

Bank and IMF.

Washington.

international market.

The World Bank halted discussion with the Bangladesh government on releasing \$200 million

its Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme. To avail the opportunity development support credit (DSC) exporters need to show the GSP since the IMF deferred its PRGF certificate to the European buyers. loan. release of which was a condi-JEPB issues the GSP certificate tion for the disbursement of DSC. Rahman will stay in Washington

ing duty-free export of their products to Europe in the name of

Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President SM Fazlul Haque said Bangladesh is facing losses due to the forgery of GSP certificates as exporters of other countries are utilising the

out and punish the forgers immedi-

Congratulating the OIC chairman for convening this open-ended session of the OIC, Khaleda noted that this is a time when the sovereignty of the brotherly membercountry of Lebanon is being flagrantly violated. Its innocent citizens are being killed and their homes destroyed by wanton aerial and

artillery bombardment by Israeli forces However, she said a question that may come up is why this meet-

ng could not be convened earlier. "Our task here is guite onerous and demanding. We need to act together and we need to be princi-

Boucher tells Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

Saieeb Wazed Jov.

and corruption.

Ahsanullah Master.

government rule

fair manner.'

kingpins.

people will be reflected in the election results, he observed. The US Ambassador in Dhaka

sador Ziauddin and Hasina's son

for South and Central Asia said they

have discussed a range of issues

with the AL chief and listened to her

party's views on issues including the

current political situation, militancy,

At the meeting, the AL called for

international investigations into all

blast incidents, militancy and the

killings of former finance minister

Shah AMS Kibria and AL lawmaker

demanded that an international team

interrogate the detained militant

have told Boucher that the BNP-

Jamaat alliance has long been

sheltering the militants of Jama'atul

Speaking with the journalists, AL

General Secretary Abdul Jalil said,

chief election commissioner (CEC)

are essential for it to function inde-

The main opposition party also

The opposition leaders said they

The assistant secretary of state

pendently UNB adds: US Assistant Secretary of State yesterday met the bereaved members of Kibria family at Patricia A Butenis accompanied their Dhanmondi residence and Boucher in the meeting attended also assured them that his country is with by AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, them to ensure justice for the assasparty leaders Kazi Zafarullah MP, sination of the former finance minis-Syed Abul Hossain, former ambas-

ter Boucher stayed there for about 45 minutes and enquired about the state of the Kibria murder case. He stressed that all political killings should have fair trial in the interest of democratic process in Bangladesh.

discussed the necessity of keeping political violence out of the electoral process to stop recurrence of tragic

After the meeting, Asma Kibria, wife of SAMS Kibria, told reporters that Boucher has conveyed to her that the US government will try its best to make sure that the killers of Kibria are brought to book.

Mujahideen Bangladesh and will Barisal judges again use them during the caretaker

FROM PAGE 1 militants in this sensational murder case

'We told them (US assistant secre-The death reference bench tary and ambassador in Dhaka) that which heard 250 out of 325 page we have placed the proposals for paper book (history of the case), will electoral reforms because we want sit on Sunday for further hearing. the elections to be held in a free and Helal Uddin Mollah read out deposition of 44 witnesses.

He said they also told them that The others to walk the gallows the government had a hand in the are JMB Mailish-e-Shura members August 21 grenade attacks on an AL Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal rally, which they said, was an attempt on the life of Sheikh Hasina. and Khaled Saifullah, suicide bomber Iftekhar and Asadur Hasina told Boucher that reforms Rahman Arif. Of them, Arif is still at and reconstitution of the Election Commission after resignation of the

None of the seven militants has appealed to the High Court against the death sentence.

The EC secretary, however, said the time limit might be extended if necessary.

SC Bar FROM PAGE 20

rule on 11 anti-government lawyers. Meanwhile, pro-government lawyers held a rally in a showdown against the boycotting lawyers in front of Justice Joynul's courtroom and also in front of both SCBA president and secretary's office.

However, the court proceedings at Justice Joynul Abedin's bench continued without any untoward incident.

On August 1, the HC bench comprising Justice Joynul Abedin and Justice Mashuk Hosain Ahmed issued contempt rule on 11 Supreme Court lawyers to explain why proceedings of contempt of court should not be brought against them for violation of the HC's suo moto ruling on May 23, 2005 and also for committing other contemptuous acts.

SCBA on Wednesday decided to refrain from joining any activities in this court protesting the rule.

A number of SCBA leaders and anti-government lawyers led by the SCBA Secretary AM Amin Uddin took position in between the entryway of the court building and the Bar office from 10:15am to 11:00am in support of their boycott programme.

Pro-government lawyers, on the other hand, took position in front of Justice Joynul bench at around 10:30am to foil their opponents' boycott programme. Some of them took position inside the courtroom as well.

At around 11:00am, progovernment lawyers led by advocate Khandker Mahbubuddin Ahmed MP under the banner of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (JIF) gathered in front of the SCBA president and secretary's office and stayed there for half an hour to protest the boycott.

JIF held a meeting later in the south hall of the Bar building in protest against the SCBA programmes.

Meanwhile, anti-government lawyers under the banner of Shammilito Ainjibi Parishad held a human chain programme protesting politicisation of the judiciary.

He went on to hail the government for its success in arresting the leaders of the Jama'atul Muiahideen Bangladesh, assuring whatever US assistance required for breaking down the militant networks in Bangladesh and combating terrorism globally. "We must continue assisting the country in this regard, he asserted

toemul

count

Asked if the Jamaat-e-Islami, a partner of the ruling alliance, has any link with the militant activities in Bangladesh, he said, "We have not seen any such evidence. If anyone finds evidence, let them come with

All have the rights to get involved in politics, he said; adding that they however should adapt democratic practices

Lanka offers talks supported the government's stance by

move out," he said.

basis."

Al Hameema College "The Tigers are trying to bring down artillery on our positions and when they miss, this is what happens, Rajapakse said.

FROM PAGE 20

other two attacks.

by the rebels.

with both sides.

district

5.000 families of water

nformation about the shelling.

Two constables and two paramilitary troopers attached to the local police were also killed in the clashes in . Muttur. officials said.

eight days ago to lift a canal blockade

posed by the Tigers, depriving some

The fighting began when the

military sent warplanes to bomb the

Tigers on Wednesday last week. It

escalated on Monday when the army

launched a massive ground operation

Rambukwella said Norway had

district 150km from Trincomalee. The defence ministry said the shell "Mortars are being directed at that killed the 10 civilians came from Mannar but security forces have the Tigers while the pro-rebel retaliated to neutralise these attacks, Tamilnet.com website said the attack had been initiated by the military. a military official said. "We believe these are diversionary tactics." The Tamilnet did not report the

The fighting has killed at least 156 The latest deaths raised to at least people, 139 of them since Monday, 156 the number of people killed since the military launched an offensive according to an official count.

Norway's top peace broker Erik Solheim in a statement said the escalation of the conflict coincided with the worsening of the situation of the Nordic Rambukwella said he had no Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM).

The LTTE has refused to cooperate with Danish, Finish and Swedish monitors since the European Union included the LTTE on its list of terror groups in May, Solheim said.

to try to take control of the Maavilaru The three Nordic nations, which reservoir and reopen sluice gates shut are also EU members, have said they The government described its would withdraw their monitors by the military action as a "humanitarian September 1 deadline set by the gesture" to restore water to some Tigers but Colombo opposes the 15,000 families in the Trincomalee pullout.

The International Committee of the Diplomats close to the peace Red Cross appealed to both sides to process said Norway had already offered a face-saving exit to both spare civilians while the EU asked for parties by asking them to return to the restraint and an end to the bloodshed. positions they held at the ceasefire The Tigers argued Wednesday and negotiate a settlement.

that their action was to stop military Norwegian embassy spokesman Tom Knappskog said Oslo's special attacks against civilians under the pretext of securing water. peace envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer was due in Colombo Friday to hold talks

Local officials said troops had not managed to reopen the sluice gates as the area is heavily mined.

He told reporters that he also

ncidents like that of Kibria's death.

Reza Kibria, son of the slain AL lawmaker, said Boucher told them that the US government is following

the developments in the Kibria murder case.