

UN seeks US help to bury dead

Cholera claims 2000 Rwandans daily

GOMA, Zaire, July 27: The United Nations asked for urgent help from the United States Wednesday to bury the nearly 2,000 Rwandan refugees dying daily of cholera in and around this border town, reports AP.

At least 1,800 people are dying each day, the United Nations said, and their decomposing bodies are spreading the disease through the town and the squalid, teeming camps around it.

Ray Wilkinson, spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said at least 16,000 refugees have died since cholera was first detected in the camps a week ago. The epidemic has overwhelmed relief workers, and Wilkinson said only the United States has the money and equipment to help resolve the crisis.

"Anyone who just drives along the road or goes to the camps can see that the situation is very, very critical," Wilkinson said. "If the bodies are left out, this cholera will spread."

Wilkinson said the United Nations has asked the United States to send troops to supervise burials, bulldozers to dig mass graves and 25 to 30 trucks to haul bodies.

French troops said they collected 500 bodies Tuesday and helped bury a total of 2,000 in a new mass grave. Zairian boy scouts also were helping to collect and bury the dead.

Also Wednesday, more purification equipment was set to begin pumping clean water from Lake Kivu to some of the 1.2 million refugees.

But rotting bodies continued to pile up around the foul, swollen camps, and soldiers blasted through volcanic rock to dig more mass graves.

Despite the first, relatively small purification systems, thousands more will die from drinking the slimy water of the nearby lake fouled by floating bodies and excrement.

"Our top priority is clean water, because without it more people are going to die in droves," said Brig. Gen. Jack Nix, the American commander in Goma, after landing Tuesday at the town's single-strip airport.

About 75 US soldiers set up the first water purification systems Tuesday, capable of producing some 96,000 quarts (91,200 litres) of water a day. But that was far short of the 5 million quarts (4.75 million litres) a day the United Nations says is the bare minimum required for refugees.

across the country tomorrow and to make Saturday's half-day hartal a success.

Addressing the rally, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad said Sheikh Hasina is committed to holding elections under a caretaker government even if her party were voted to power.

Azad said a conspiracy was being hatched to hand over power to certain quarters and warned the government against such moves.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman said the present government had surpassed all records of the previous autocratic government at vote rigging.

City Mayor Mohammad Hanif urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to accept the national demand for elections under a caretaker government.

Hanif also blamed the government for obstructing him in discharging his duties as mayor. "I will try to uphold the faith and dignity of 70 lakh people of Dhaka who elected me as Mayor and will disclose informations soon revealing how I am being obstructed by the present government in carrying out my duties."

Tofael Ahmed, MP accused the government of secretly supporting the Jamaat during the incident in Chittagong Tuesday.

As part of a blueprint, Ziaur Rahman had brought Golam Azam into Bangladesh and Begum Khaleda Zia has merely implemented that blueprint, he said.

Abdur Razzak, MP said thousands of policemen and BDR personnel were deployed by the government in Chittagong to protect Golam Azam and the Jamaat. Tuesday's killings in Chittagong were designed to ensure that 'killer Golam Azam could hold his meeting'.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim, clarifying his party position vis-a-vis the Jamaat, said "the Awami League will never compromise with the anti-Liberation elements."

Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP hinted at a conspiracy to 'change the national flag and anthem' and called upon the people to remain vigilant against such conspiracies.

"We will avenge the Chittagong killings," she said and called upon all pro-Liberation forces to unite to protect the independence and sovereignty of the country which, she said, was at stake.

The meeting was also addressed by Abdul Mannan, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

Without quite naming the Jamaat, however, she told the rally that a particular party was using the mosques for its political activities.

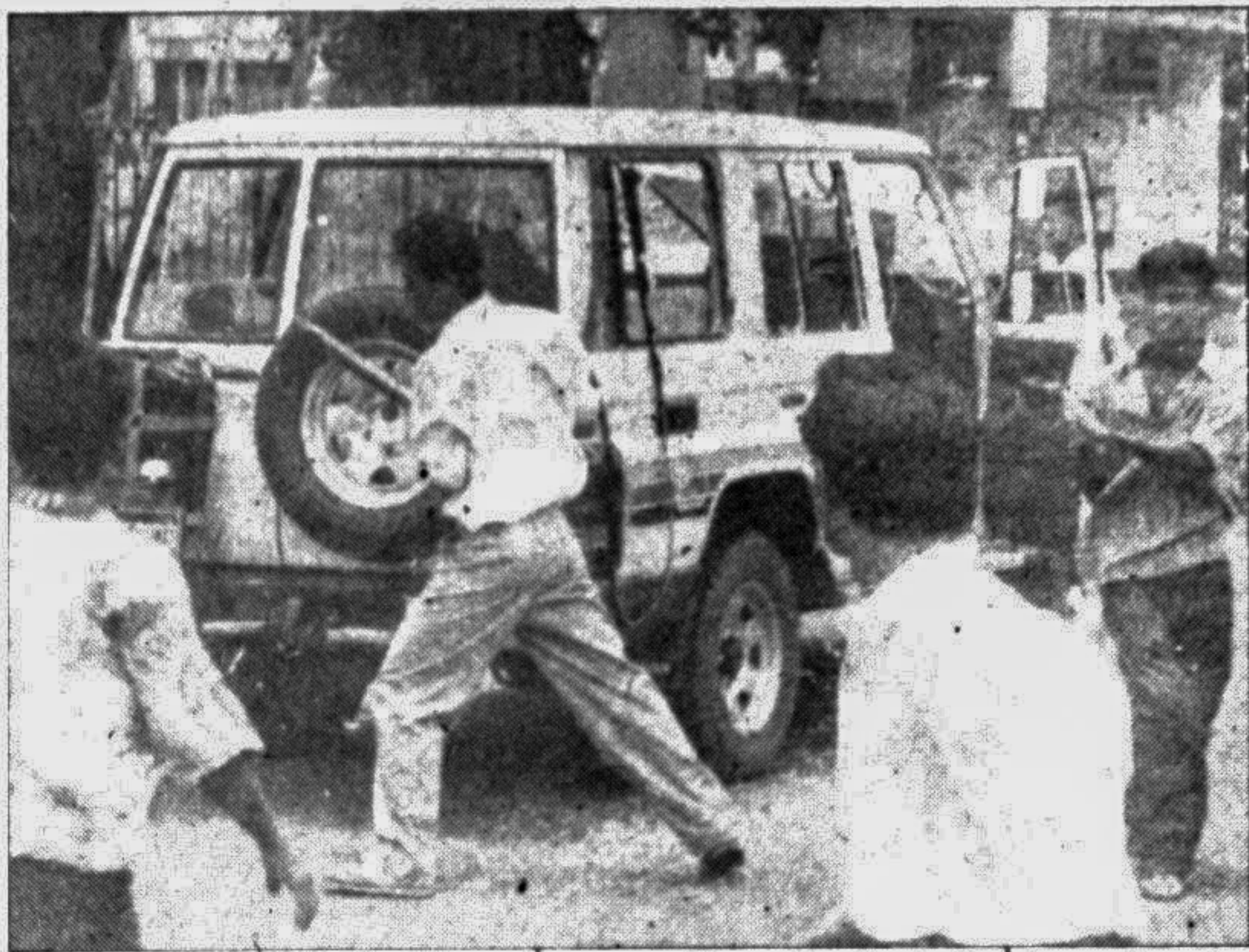
She asked her party activists to perform namaz (prayers) at the mosques on a regular basis and thus ensure that the mosques are not used for political purposes.

In an oblique reference to the Taslima Nasreen issue, Sheikh Hasina condemned any attempt at dishonouring Islam, its holy book and the Prophet.

"We shall not tolerate any derogatory comments against Islam, although we believe in the freedom of religion" the AL chief warned.

During her 30-minute speech Sheikh Hasina told the rally several times that she had no personal political ambition, rather she was committed to the cause of the people.

She called on the people to attend the *gaebana janaza* (funeral service) for those killed in Chittagong — to be held at the Baitul Mukarram after Zohr prayers today — to organise protest processions



The Sampradayikata Birodhi Chhatra Samaj, an alliance of student-bodies, damaged cars in the city yesterday protesting the killings in Chittagong on Tuesday. —Star photo

Students protest

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sponsible for the killings.

Speakers at the Chhatra Samaj rally condemned authorities for 'not taking' any effective steps to resist the Jamaat-Shibir forces in Chittagong from doing what they did on Tuesday.

"Police and the local administration sheltered the 'killers' and 'armed terrorists' of Jamaat-Shibir," the student leaders alleged at the rally held in front of Jatuya Press Club.

They urged the students to prevent the killers, collaborators and war criminals from raising their heads again to save the country.

The rally was addressed by Mainuddin Hasan Chowdhury, Ruhul Quddus Babu, Belal Chowdhury, Ragib Ahsan Munna and Sajjad Zahir Chandan.

Earlier, Samaj activists brought out a procession from the Dhaka University campus. Witnesses said that police intercepted the procession near the Teachers Students Centre (TSC). At least seven motor vehicles were damaged at the time.

Samaj leaders claimed that four of their activists were injured during the police intervention.

The Samajantirik Chhatra Front (SCF) also protested the killings in Chittagong.

50 killed as Afghan warlords clash

HERAT, Afghanistan, July 27: Rival warlords fought a pitched battle in eastern Afghanistan Wednesday, killing at least 50 people even as Afghanistan's beleaguered government pleaded for peace, reports AP.

A powerful commander, known only as Qarar, ambushed Commander Nisar Khan outside a provincial prison in eastern Laghman province on Wednesday, killing Khan and 36 of his men.

Reprisal attacks have left another 13 people dead, according to several Afghan sources, who said the fighting has spread throughout the province.

Meanwhile in the arid capital of the western Herat province, President Burhanuddin Rabbani appealed to Afghanistan's warring factions to lay down their weapons.

DPRK has five N-warheads?

SEOUL, July 27: North Korea has developed five nuclear warheads and is now concentrating on developing missiles to carry them, a North Korean defector who is a son-in-law of Pyongyang's Prime Minister Kang Song-San said today, reports Reuters.

The defector, Kang Myong-Do, 36, told a news conference in Seoul that North Korea was not simply using suspicions about its nuclear programme as a negotiating tactic to obtain concessions from the west.

"North Korea is not simply trying to use its nuclear development programme as a negotiating card. It sees nuclear development as the only means to maintain Kim Jong-il's regime," he said.

Burundi violence claims 200

LONDON, July 27: Ethnic violence in north-western Burundi, which has the same racial mix of Hutus and Tutsis as neighbouring Rwanda, has claimed nearly 200 lives and triggered an exodus, a local official said, reports AFP.

The administrator for Mbuve district in Muramvya province said he had fled his offices in Mbuve commune to his home, six kilometres away, according to a Burundian radio report monitored here by the BBC.



As US President Bill Clinton (C) turns and starts to leave the East Room of the White House, Jordan's King Hussein (L) and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (R) shake hands at the end of their joint press conference Tuesday. —AFP photo

Clinton

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against a Jewish charity in Argentina last week that left at least 95 people dead and Tuesday's bombing in London that rocked the Israeli embassy and left 15 people injured.

"I believe they have got an infrastructure of terror throughout the world," and were engaged in an "all-out war" to block peace, Rabin said.

King Hussein condemned the terrorist bombings and said, "We are going to have to increase our vigilance in this respect because more may come."

Khmers attack train : 9 killed

PHNOM PENH, July 27: Nine people were killed and scores injured when Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked a train in southern Cambodia, taking more than 200 passengers, including three foreigners, captive, a top railway official said today, reports AFP.

Rebels detonated two mines, one under the train's engine and the other under the last carriage, around 2:00 pm (0700 GMT) Tuesday as it passed through the Kompong Trach district of Kampot province, about 130 kilometres (81 miles) south of Phnom Penh, the director of the state railway, Pich Kimsreang, said.

"After the mine explosion, the Khmer Rouge started firing heavily at the train,"

Left Front convention

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coordination council, Faye Ahmed of Sammilita Sangkritik Jote, Ahad Choudhury of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Bela Nabl of Mahila Parishad, NGO representative Lutfar Rahman Choudhury, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid and A N Rasheda of teachers' liaison committee.

Awami League did not join the convention. However, Abdur Razzak of the AL, who is also a leader of the Nirmul Committee, was present on the occasion for some time. But he did not speak.

Addressing the convention, Dr Kamal Hossain said that the independence would be meaningless if the 'anti-liberation Jamaat-Shibir group' continued their 'atrocities'. He called upon the freedom-loving people to be prepared for the 'final struggle' against the 'defeated forces' in the liberation war. Dr Kamal stressed the need for national unity to protect and preserve the spirit and values of 1971 war.

Rashed Khan Menon criticised the Awami League for its 'attitude towards the Jamaat' and for not participating in the convention. "We can no more have confidence in the AL after its absence from the convention in contrast with its earlier assurance" that it would, Menon said.

Poet Sufia Kamal, in a message on the occasion, hoped that the convention would help reinvigorate the Bangalee nation with the spirit of the liberation war.

Hasanul Haq Inu urged the AL to 'prove its sincerity' to uphold the spirit of the liberation war by 'severing its ties with the Jamaat'.

Mujahidul Islam Selim urged the politicians to 'correct themselves by taking lessons from the past'.

Manzurul Ahsan Khan called upon all democratic and progressive political parties to sink their differences and unite against the reactionary, communal and anti-liberation forces.

Strike paralyses Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, July 27: A general strike called by Muslim clerics paralysed life in Kashmir today, as a spurt of violence related to Muslim militancy left 14 people dead in the troubled valley, reports AFP.

Hundreds of demonstrators shouting "we want freedom" and "killers, tyrants leave Kashmir" took to the streets in the Batmaloo neighbourhood of this Kashmir summer capital, witnesses said.

At least 12 people were hospitalised after police used clubs to break up the demonstration, hospital sources said. Smaller protests were held in half-a-dozen other Srinagar neighbourhoods.

'No restrictions on foreign journalists'

Foreign Ministry last night said there was no restriction to the visit of foreign journalists to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"Absolutely bogus," said an official of the Foreign Office when his attention was drawn to a report published in a section of the press that visit of foreign journalists was restricted.

A number of foreign journalists are currently visiting Bangladesh and more are expected to cover the SAARC Council of Ministers' meeting July 30-31 in the capital. Journalists from abroad are rather welcomed to visit Bangladesh, the official added.

Gias Kamal sent to Singapore

Eminent journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury, who suffered a cerebral haemorrhage last week, was flown to Singapore last night for further treatment, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia ordered his staff to make immediate arrangements for the treatment of the renowned journalist in Singapore.

Chowdhury, Chief Reporter of BSS and correspondent of Voice of America, underwent emergency brain operation at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka after the haemorrhage.

Ministers and leaders of journalist community were at the airport to see the ailing journalist off. Among those present at the airport were Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Whip Mahbulul Alam Tara, BSS Chief Editor D P Barua, UNB Chief Editor Enayullah Khan and the Financial Express Editor Reazuddin Ahmed.

Besides his close relations, a specialist from CMH accompanied Chowdhury.

Farida Rahman MP new BCD president

By Staff Correspondent

The seventh founding anniversary and annual general meeting of the Bangladesh Council for Democracy (BCD) was held at the WVA auditorium in the city yesterday.

The president of the BCD, Farida Rahman, MP, chaired the meeting which was addressed by Faridul Huq, Abdul Qaium Mia and Habibur Rahman.

Farida Rahman said the BCD would always work for world peace and development through democracy. In Bangladesh, the organisation would extend its support to those groups which are fighting against the 'fatwaba'.

The meeting also elected an executive committee with Farida Rahman MP as president, Habibur Rahman — vice president, Abdul Qaium Mia — General Secretary, and Anjuman-ara Rahman — Treasurer.

The BCD is the Bangladesh chapter of the World League for Freedom and Democracy which has branches in 99 countries around the globe.

UNDP's programme review ends

The government and the UNDP here yesterday ended a two-day mid-term review of the UNDP's ongoing country programme in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The meeting discussed the changes that took place after the approval of the Fifth Country Programme in 1990, says a press release of the United Nations Information Centre.

Overall status of the programme was also discussed apart from matters relating to the impact and focus of the programme with particular reference to women in development.

The UNDP team at the meeting included Eimi Watanabe, UNDP Resident Representative in Dhaka and Henning Karcher, a senior official from the UN body's headquarters.

Economic Relations Division Secretary Lutfullah Majid and other senior officials of different executing ministries headed the government side.

Publication of Dainik Janata suspended

The Dainik Janata will not come out today, signaling its closure, reports UNB.

"Printing of the paper is suspended until further order," said a notice yesterday by the editor of the Bengali daily Dr Muhammad Asadur Rahman to the Asiatic Printers & Publishers, from where it was printed.

On Tuesday, the management had fired five journalists. A mouthpiece of the Jatya Party, the Dainik Janata was published from Dhaka. It was established by deposed President Ershad 11 years ago.

The Midnight File

Turkish air raid kills 70 Kurds in northern Iraq

ANKARA, July 27: A Turkish air force raid killed more than 70 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, the Turkish news agency Anatolia reported today. The separatist rebels of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) were killed and a munitions factory destroyed Tuesday when Turkish fighter bombers attacked a group of 100 rebels in the Maysri region, 20 kilometres (13 miles) from the Iraqi-Turkish border, a military spokesman in Ankara told Anatolia, reports AFP.

Jiang Zemin to visit Russia

MOSCOW, July 27: Chinese President Jiang Zemin will pay an official visit to Russia on September 2 and 3, President Boris Yeltsin told reporters today. The visit, repaying one by Yeltsin to China, will be the first by a Chinese head of state to Moscow since the 1950s. Yeltsin, asked about his holiday plans, said he would make a working trip by boat down the Volga river in August, reports Reuter.

Yemeni leaders meet in Geneva today

GENEVA, July 27: The United Nations confirmed on Tuesday that representatives of the government of Yemen and its defeated Southern rivals will meet in Geneva this week for reconciliation talks, reports Reuter.

A UN statement said the two sides would meet on Thursday under UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who is trying to restore peace to Yemen after its recent civil war.

The object of the meeting is to explore the possibility of engaging upon a worthy and reasonable political dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect," the statement said.

The Yemeni government, which defeated the secessionist South on July 7, will be represented by Abdul Karim Al Iryani, Minister for Planning and Development, and Abdullah Saleh Al-Ashtal, Ambassador to the United Nations.

The South will be represented by Haidar Abu Bakr Al-Atas, Prime Minister of the defeated Southern states, and Abdullah Al-Asnag.

Atlas told Reuters in Abu Dhabi on Monday that he hoped the Geneva talks could "lay down the pace" for future negotiations between the two sides.

"We have a lot of proposals. If the North is really keen to come to peace and stability it can work," he added.

A senior Yemeni government official, Abdel-Aziz Abdel-Ghani, said the talks were the continuation of those between Iryani and Atlas held in New York while the war was still on.

UN spokeswoman Therese Gastaut said the talks, which were being held at the request of the parties themselves, were "exploratory" and would probably last two or three days.

Nizami

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He alleged that a large fund was mobilised to hire trouble mongers, spread rumours and cause panic, involve the Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League and churn out false and fabricated news in the national dailies to provoke a situation.

Nizami noted with anguish that certain national dailies had published 'false and fictitious' reports of the incident to exaggerate the situation beyond all proportion. These newspapers have not only failed to be objective in their reports but also grossly violated journalistic ethics.

He, however, declined to single out any particular newspaper.

Giving his own interpretation of what happened in Chittagong, Nizami claimed that life in the port city was normal and the Jamaat meeting was held peacefully.

Denying reports of the clashes on conflicts, he said this was actually a one-sided affair confined to an isolated pocket near the meeting venue.

About four thousand people have gathered in the areas.

Sit-in in Sylhet

From our Correspondent

SYLHET, July 27: The activists of the Nastik Muratad Pratirodh Andolon began an indefinite sit-in here today to press their demand for immediate release of 24 teachers and students of Kaziabazar and Subhanighat Madrasah of Sylhet.

SAARC body

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committees on sectoral issues. It also reviewed the progress of implementation of SAARC Regional Convention on suppression of terrorism and the SAARC regional convention on narcotics, drugs and psychotropic substances.

The Standing Committee at its 19th session also discussed issues on various SAARC funds including the SAARC fund for regional projects and the proposed South Asian Development Fund (SADF).

The issue relating to SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) also came up for detailed discussion. The session chaired by Bangladesh Foreign Secretary M R Osmani, also focused on cooperation of the SAARC with other international and regional organisations.

Deputy Foreign Minister of the Maldives Salah Shihab, Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Thilakratna, Bhutanese Acting Foreign Secretary Lhatu Wangchuk, Nepalese Foreign Secretary Kedar Bhakta Shrestha, Pakistani Foreign Secretary Najmuddin A Shaikh and Indian Additional Foreign Secretary Deb Mukherjee attended the session.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister A C S Hameed, Indian State Minister for External Affairs R L Bhatia, Nepalese Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Ram Hari Joshi, Foreign Minister Fatullah Jameel and Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Asef Ahmad Ali are scheduled to arrive in the city on Friday.

Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering will fly in on Saturday morning.

A few hundred armed bandits and terrorists in the name of the Chhatra Oikya attacked the Jamaat-Shibir workers, exploded bombs and crackers and opened fire at a particular point near the venue of the meeting at the Laldighi Maidan resulting in the deaths of five persons including three Jamaat-Shibir activists and injuries to over 100 others, Nizami claimed.

When asked to comment on Sheikh Hasina's reactions on the Chittagong incident, the Jamaat General Secretary said that he supported her demand for a judicial probe into the incident and punishment to the culprits.

He, however, disagreed with other things Hasina had said in her statement and added that such a statement ran counter to her image as a responsible leader.

Asked if the Chittagong incident would adversely affect the current Opposition unity, Nizami said, "We have submitted a bill for a caretaker government in the interest of democracy. Cooperation of all concerned is necessary for the passage of that bill."

40 hurt in Ctg

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newsmen here today, claimed that about 20 other activists of his party have been missing since Tuesday.

Moulana Taher, who blamed the police for playing a "mysterious role" on Tuesday, demanded immediate investigation into the incident and punishment to the persons responsible for the violence and killings.