The future of the subcontinent is in togetherness: Gujral

LONDON, Aug 13: On the day of India's celebrations for 50 years of independence, the country's Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, can be seen giving a rare in-depth interview to BBC World's Hardtalk programme. He describes the greatest achievements of the last five decades and his hopes for the new millennium.

Gujral speaks frankly to Delhi-based correspondent Daniel Lak of his personal feelings about the struggle for independence, recalling the arrest of both his parents. He explains what it means to him to be Prime Minister of a billion people on the world's largest democracy. He is optimistic about tacking corruption in India and about a new age of friendship between India and its neighbours.

"My major contribution in the last few months that I have been in office, as Foreign Minister and Prime Minister is that we have turned the corner

Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta

Sheikh Ahmed Jalal called on Jyoti Basu, the Chief

Minister of West Bengal, recently at Writers' Building in

BRIFIE

Blair to meet Jospin in France:

British Prime Minister Tony Blair will meet his French counterpart Lionel Jospin next week during his holiday in southwest France, a Jospin aide said on Tuesday, Reuter reports

"They will meet informally, they are going to see one another," the aide said. He added that no date or place had yet

been set for the meeting. Blair is to arrive in southwest France

on Sunday and stay a few days. The British premier, his wife

Cherie and their children Nicholas, Kathryn and Euan will be

staying in the house of London lawyer David Keene in the

Landslide claims 5 in China: Five

people were killed and four were missing in a landslide and

floods in southern China's Guangxi province, it was reported

county on August 7 also seriously injured two people, the China-

backed Ta Kung Pao reported. The four reported missing were

swept away by flash floods which destroyed 300 houses in

Curfew relaxed in Liberia: The newly

elected government relaxed a seven-year curfew on Tuesday in

the latest sign of reduced tensions since the end of the civil war,

be reduced from midnight to 6 am to 2 am to 5 am. He also said a

West African peacekeeping army currently responsible for

security in the country had approved of the change. The

peacekeepers, who entered Liberia in 1990 to quell the civil war,

has been enforcing the stricter curfew. During extremely tense

times, such as when factional fighting engulfed the capital in April 1996, curfew hours were pushed back to begin as early as 7

4 die as ferry overturns in Vietnam: A

crowded ferry collided with barges and overturned outside Hanoi throwing dozens of people into the water and killing at

least four, a city official said yesterday. Reuter reports from

declined to be identified, said the ferry struck the barges on

Monday hight as it was attempting to pass them in a narrow

Earthquake shakes Japan: A moderate

earthquake registering 6.1 on the Richter Scale rocked Miyako

island in Japan's Okinawan chain today, the Meteorological

property damage, police said. The agency said there were no

fears of tidal waves following the quake at 1.45 pm (0445 GMT).

The focus of the quake was located some 90 kilometres (56

Moro rebels kill 2 in Philippines:

Two suspected murderers were shot to death by a firing squad of

Muslim rebels in a town near this southern Philippine city.

Monday by 11 black-hooded members of the Moro Islamic

Liberation Front (MILF) in front of some 600 Muslim residents,

said a Jianati Minbantas, who witnessed the execution.

Balindong Sarip and Muyin Dipatuan were killed on

There were no immediate reports of casualties or major

channel on the Red River just north of the city.

witnesses said yesterday. AFP says from Iligan.

agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

miles) below a point near the island.

More than 20 passengers were missing. The officials, who

Justice Minister Peter Bonder Jallah said the curfew would

Guangxi's Xileng village on August 8, the report said.

The landslide at a quarry in the hilly region of Gongcheng

Calcutta.

from Paris.

village of Saint Martin D'oydes.

AP reports from Monrovia.

pm (1900 GMT).

Hanoi.

yesterday, AFP says from Hong Kong.

as far as neighbour relations have gone — India's relations with Bangladesh, India's relations with Nepal; our relations with the Maldives," says Gujral.

"Our relations have moved on and are qualitatively very different than they were, say one year ago. We have been able to do something and we have now moved towards the last hurdle - India and Pakistan relations. Since my talks with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, I am optimistic that we will find a way out."

Gujral cited the examples of India supplying 50,000 tonnes of sugar to Pakistan last year and Pakistan offering 300,000 mega-watts of surplus power to India as examples of how the two countries are already cooperating. He is similarly optimistic on he subject of Kashmir: "I am optimistic that, given the goodwill, and commonality if interest, we will find a way out.

The Prime Minister also

pointed to the fact that South Asia is due to become a free trade zone by 2001. "If you are to be a free trade zone you have to have friendly relations." the Prime Minister tells Hardtalk. "I am sure that the future of this subcontinent is in togetherness. We can take off together. It's not possible for any one nation to take off singly — if at all, in limited flight. But if we want to

gether.' India's biggest achievement since independence, says Gujral, has been to build a democracy, in spite of the predictions of some "prophets of doom."

touch the skies we must fly to-

"We have shown, to the dis-may of the prophets of doom, that democracy is deeply entrenched in the minds and hearts of India," he says, denying suggestions that the country's economy might have grown faster with another system of government. He proudly says that some 30 to 40 per cent of the population have entered

WASHINGTON, Aug 13:

NATO forces have begun in-

specting weaponry held by

paramilitary units in Bosnia in

an effort to crack down on

them, a Pentagon spokesman

forces that we believe should

have been treated as military

forces and treating them as mil-

itary forces." Pentagon

spokesman Kenneth Bacon told

reporters at a briefing on Tues-

peacekeeping force in Bosnia

announced that special police

forces will be banned except for

protecting senior elected offi-

In the past, special police

forces in the Serb-controlled

half of Bosnia have protected

wartime Serb leader Radovan

Karadzic and others indicted on

charges of committing war

fled by the UN police by Aug. 31

will be considered to be illegal

military forces and subject to

Any police units not certi-

rain storm. Twenty-eight survived.

SYDNEY, Australia, Aug 13:

Indonesia's President Suharto

has indicated he wants a peace-

ful end to the armed conflict in

East Timor as part of his legacy.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Jose

Ramos-Horta said Wednesday.

tween South African President

Nelson Mandela and jailed

Timorese resistance leader

Xanana Gusmao last month

Suharto had given himself a

"face-saving device" to end

fighting in the disputed terri-

tory without appearing to give

in to diplomatic pressure from

the United States and other

"By allowing the meeting be-

tween Mandela and Xanana to

take place, he (Suharto) really

wants to resolve this conflict,

as he is ending his lifespan, as

countries, he said.

By allowing a meeting be-

reports AP.

cials or dignitaries.

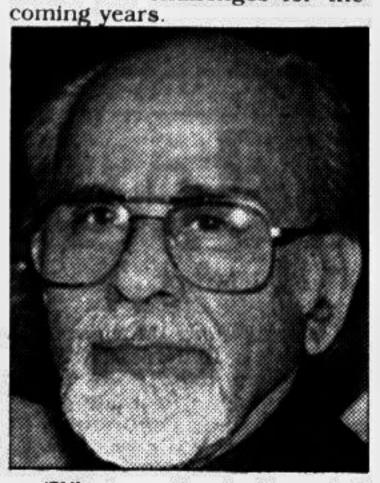
crimes.

On Monday, the NATO-led

"This is an effort to take

said, reports AP.

the middle classes over the last 50 years, but admits that improving the standard of living for the rest of India's people is one of the challenges for the



What was the starting point in 1947?" he asks. "There are always two ways of looking at things. Is there a glass half full

NATO forces start inspecting

Bosnian Paramilitary units

inspections by the NATO-led

ported that teams of British, US

and French commandoes are

being trained in Europe to cap-

ture Karadzic and his former

military chief, Gen. Ratko

Mladic, who also is wanted on

been made to actually utilise

the teams, which are separate

from any NATO operations, but

a late fall operation is envi-

port, saying in a statement that

"US forces are not now training

for or participating in any uni-

lateral or multinational com-

mando operation to apprehend

indicted war criminals in the

move against the special police

was made by NATO's top com-

mander, Gen. Weseley Clark. He

"reached a conclusion, after

consultations with the North

Atlantic Council and others,

that... he would give instruc-

Masked South Korean workers unload a coffin containing the remains of one of the victims

of the Korean Air Flight 801 that crashed in Guam on August 5 from a Korean Air plane at

Kimpo International Airport in Seoul Wednesday. Ten remains were the first to be

brought back home from Guam, where a Boeing 747 with 245 people on board crashed in a

Suharto wants peaceful end to

armed conflict in E Timor

he is nearly at the end of his

regime," Ramos-Horta told an

audience of Rotarians in Syd-

to's legacy, for his a place in

history, if he were to have the

courage, the statesmanship, the

wisdom to resolve this conflict

of the 76-year-old Suharto, held

an unprecedented meeting with

Gusmao on July 15 during a

Suharto to release Gusmao, say-

ing life in the former Por-

tuguese territory would return

normal only when the con-

flict could be ended "in the next

Ramos-Horta said the con-

victed guerrilla leader is free.

state visit to Indonesia.

Mandela, with the approval

Mandela earlier urged

of East Timor.

few years."

"It would be great for Suhar-

Bacon said the decision to

The Pentagon denied the re-

sioned, the network said.

No political decision has

Meanwhile, ABC News re-

peacekeeping forces.

war crime charges.

former Yugoslavia."

of water or half empty? We take pride in the half full but I would also be concerned about half empty."

Still now to being the coun-

try's leader, how does Gujral

find being a prime minister to a billion people? "It's not me who runs the country," he insists. "It's the system that runs the country. The system is strong, the nation is strong — that's what gives me courage and hope. When I sit here as Prime Minister, I never look at myself as ruler of the nation.... I look at myself as the instrument to keep the process of democracy running smoothly.

But isn't the system corrupt, to the dismay of ordinary people? "This dismay is shared by me," says Gujral. "I am far more angry because I think that over the years this situation has been allowed to come up where people question the integrity of people they are putting in responsible offices and for good

tions to SFOR (the Stabilisation

Force) to crack down on the

have armaments that include

tanks, artillery, armored per-

sonnel carriers, rifles and au-

tomatic weapons. Bacon said,

rather than just side arms

normally used by police forces.

notified the units it would in-

spect their storage sites to see

whether their declared weapons

dures, they will report their

weapons, and store them in

cantonment areas where they're

subject to inspection, to make

sure that the weapons aren't be-

ing used improperly or moved.

And then that, of course, will

make the weapons subject to the

arms-control limits that also

have been imposed as part of

the Dayton process," Bacon

agreement, international offi-

cials had a mandate to disman-

tle all paramilitary forces.

Under the 1995 Dayton peace

- AP/UNB photo

"If Suharto wants to find a

Ramos-Horta praised

face-saving device, he can do it

Suharto and Indonesia, saying

the country was a "vibrant and

extraordinary" and had played

a positive role in international

forums such as the Asia-Pacific

Economic Cooperation group.

Suharto had made "enormous

progress" in tackling poverty

political battle" over East

Timor, and the province would

remain a thorn in the side of

Indonesia's international repu-

years what are Indonesia's

strategic interests for continu-

ing this conflict in East

Timor?" Ramos-Horta said.

"The question is after 22

But Indonesia had "lost the

and illiteracy, he said.

tation.

through Mandela."

"If they follow the proce-

matched those in storage.

Starting last weekend, NATO

The paramilitary groups

special police forces.

There are two types of corruption, he says. The Prime Minister believes that corruption among people in high office is probably easier to tackle than that which means that ordinary people have to pay more to get electricity or a telephone.

So what will India be celebrating as it marks its anniversary this week? "We have very good reason to be proud," says Gujral. "We were able to defeat a massive colonial power by nonviolent means. We also want to celebrate the fact that we have survived five decades of democ-

"We want to celebrate the fact that we have become economically what is called a developing nation.... but also, in many ways, a developed nation.... where our scientists can launch a satellite and make a satellite. where our technological achievements are something to be proud of."

460758 die of AIDS in Uganda in 9 years

KAMPALA, Aug 13: Some 460,758 people have died of AIDS in Uganda over the past nine years, the official New Vision newspaper reported on Tuesday, says AFP.

The toll amounts to almost 85 per cent of the total number of sufferers of Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which currently stands at 546.173, Elizabeth Madras, manager of the Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) control programme, told the newspaper.

Madras said that about 1.5 million people were carriers of the HIV virus which causes AIDS, although projections put the figure at well over two mil lion people.

The country's total population is 19 million.

New Vision reported that 693,600 women between the age group of 20 and 49 years will be infected by the virus by 1998, while during the same period. 83,993 women in the same age group will have developed fullblow AIDS — up from 55,584 in

For men in the same age bracket, 642,600 will carry the virus, compared to 529,200 in

King Hussein ready to talk to Islamic opposition

AMMAN. Aug 13: King Hus sein said Tuesday he was prepared to talk to the Islamic opposition about its planned election boycott, reversing his hard-line stance of last month. reports AP.

Speaking to tribesmen on a tour of Maan, 250 kilometres (150 miles) south of Amman. the king said that "the door to dialogue is open and never closed, especially with the Islamic movement.

Two weeks earlier, when the Islamic Action said it would boycott the November 4 parliamentary elections, the king said he would not consider dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood, of which the Front is the parliamentary wing.
Deputy Prime Minister Ab-

dullah Nsour will meet Wednesday with the Brotherhood's spiritual guide, Abdul-Majid Thneibat, government officials said Tuesday.

Chechen made official language in Chechnya

MOSCOW, Aug 13: Chechnya's parliament voted to make Chechen the official language of the southern republic and declared Russian a foreign tongue, the latest move to assert the territory's self-proclaimed independence, reports AP.

The Muslim republic considers itself a sovereign state following a two-year independence war against Moscow, which ended with a peace treaty this year. Moscow says Chechnya is and will remain part of Russia.

Although most Chechens speak Russian, the war has changed their attitude toward the Russian language, parliament Speaker Ruslan

Alikhadzhiyev said Wednesday. "People are demanding that Chechen be made Chechnya's

only national language," he told the interfax news agency.

Sino-US ties good, says Chinese president

BEIDAIHE, Hebei, Aug 13: President Jiang Zemin, meeting yesterday with Samuel R. Berger, Assistant to the US President for National Security Affairs, described the general atmosphere of Sino-US rela-

tions as good, reports Xinhua. "Since my meeting with President Clinton in Manila last November, relations between the two countries have had positive progress, with common ground in many fields," Jiang said.

"This situation is the result of joint efforts made by the two sides. It has been painstakingly achieved and should be treasured," he said.

About his visit to the US, Jiang said: "I expect to discuss significant issues about developing Sino-US relations with President Clinton and join hands with him to bring alongterm, stable and healthy relationship of co-operation to the 21st century."

He said that because China and the US have different social systems, ideologies, cultural traditions, historical backgrounds, and levels of development and because they are both large countries with different principles in handling things, it is natural that there are disagreements between the two.

In properly dealing with these disagreements, he said, the first thing is to deepen mutual understanding, in doing so, direct, face-to-face dialogues and exchanges between the two countries' leaders are especially important. These contacts cannot be replaced by any other modern means of communica-

Discussing Sino-US relations, Jiang emphasised the important of the two sides sticking to the principles of mutual respect, non interference.

Indian FFs gather to mark golden jubilee of liberty

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: Veterans of India's freedom struggle gathered Wednesday to cele- lives with Joshi in a governbrate the golden jubilee of the liberty for which they spent their youth fighting, reports

The programme included music and dancing by local school children. It also included a great deal of intropection among the freedom fighters, most in their late 70s, who spoke of a mission left unfulfilled.

"No dream is ever complete. so be it with the independence we dreamed of," said Jagat Ram Joshi, who spent six years in a British jail for possession of a revolver. Joshi, who said he was among those who believed independence had to be taken with violence, said he was arrested before formalising plans

to use his weapon. Joshi said he wanted a socialist revolution he believes would have lifted millions of Indians out of poverty. Today, as it celebrates 50 years of independence from Britain, India remains one of the poorest

countries in the world. But Vanshropan Singh, who ment home for old freedom fighters in New Delhi, was up-

"India has never lagged behind. It's always been a great nation and will continue to be so," said Singh, who also served time in prison for his activities against the British.

Indians have approached the 50th anniversary with mixed feelings. Their country's poverty, ethnic and religious tensions, and concern that today's political leaders - tainted by corruption and slow to make crucial decisions - have fallen far short of Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru have led some to question whether there's anything to celebrate this year.

Independence day also marks the division of the British empire into officially Muslim Pakistan and largely Hindu India. Partition was accompanied by bloody religious riots in 1947.

Afghanistan needs 1700 tons of emergency food aid

GENEVA. Aug 13: be 3.66 million tons compris-ghanistan will need 170,000 ing 2.71 million tons of wheat, Afghanistan will need 170,000 tons of emergency food aid for about 1.75 million people in coming months, despite the expected largest harvest in 18 years of war, reports Xinhua.

The need was announced today by the World Food Programme (WFP). The aid, including 150,000 tons of cereals, will be distributed to the most vulnerable Afghan people including displaced persons, returned refugees, female-headed households, and sick and old people.

The WFP is expected to supply 140,000 tons food aid while non-governmental organizations provide the rest. The provision of aid is

aimed at increasing the selfsufficiency of the Afghan people, a press release issued by the WFP said. The WFP and the Food and

Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimated the cereal production in Afghanistan this year would mannations variate pos million tons of maize and 0:25 million tons of barley. This would be 18 per cent

higher than the 1996 harvest of 3.10 million tons and the largest harvest since the outbreak of hostilities in 1978. The press release said improved security in southern

Afghanistan, sufficient rains and relatively little pest damage favoured agricultural pro-

But fighting in the north

could disrupt harvesting, it

provinces are forecast to pro-

"The eight northern duce 1.3 million tons of cereals. but if the intensity of military activities increases or the conflict widens over the next few months, harvesting could be interrupted, and a reduction from this forecast is possible," the

Bollywood halts filming to protest killing of Gulshan Kumar

report said.

BOMBAY, Aug 13: Filming ground to a halt in India's movie capital here today in protest at the Mafia-style killing of a multi-millionaire

film producer, reports AFP. Gulshan Kumar, 41, died in a hail of bullets Tuesday as he left a Hindu temple in Bombay.

Pahlaj Nihalani, President of the Association of Motion Pictures and TV programme producers, said there would be no filming today in Bombay, which is nicknamed Bolly-

Nihalani said the industry was "enraged at the inability of the police to crack down on the

underworld which is now targeting us.

"Whatever has happened is seller in New Delhi.

not a good sign. We are creative people. And if we cannot make films in peace, it would be better to stop making films. If such a thing can happen to a God-fearing man like Kumar, what about others?

. India produces about 900 movies a year, the highest by any country, surpassing even Hollywood.

Kumar was a well-known figure in the Indian film industry and a successful business tycoon. It was the fourth attack on film producers here this

He had about eight films to his credit, and had also built up business empire based on audio cassettes after starting as a fruit

Sihanouk urges Cambodian leaders to help restore peace "passed without confrontation."

PHNOM PENH, Aug 13: King Norodom Sihanouk urged Cambodia's leaders Wednesday to help restore peace and prosperity to their country, and said his offer to abdicate the throne had been rejected by strongman

Hun Sen, reports AP. "Please try to the maximum of your powers to allow the nation and the people to enjoy again peace and prosperity, to eradicate war, insecurity and violence," the king said in his first public statement since meeting the leader of last month's coup.

The 74-year-old monarch released the statement to news agencies after meeting Cambodia's top government leaders including Hun Sen and acting Head of State Chea Sim — at his residence in Beijing on Tues-

In a separate statement given to The Associated Press in Beijing, Sihanouk said their meeting, followed by dinner,

In response to questions, he also said that Hun Sen had turned down his offer to give up the throne.

"This delegation (in particu-lar His Excellency Hun Sen), assuring N Sihanouk of its loyalty and backing for the king. did not accept the offer of abdication," wrote Sihanouk.

Earlier this week, Sihanouk released a statement saying he was prepared to abdicate "when it is possible for me to do so" without risking criticism from Hun Sen, who he described as a "strongman."

Sihanouk had talked previously about abdicating and said he does not expect Cambodia's monarchy to last much longer.

Hun Sen's delegation also offered "infinite thanks for the royal decision to return to Cambodia in the near future." Sihanouk wrote. The king had said he would soon return for

Buddhist observances.

Sihanouk is in Beijing for medical treatment, but in the past has used his absence from Cambodia as a signal suggesting disapproval of events in his homeland. He told The Associated Press that he went to the hospital Wednesday morning for treatment.

A threat to abdicate would clearly have political repercussions, since it would suggest to many of his subjects that he was being forced to do so because of Hun Sen's actions. which would have an unfavorable effect on Hun Sen's actions. which would have an unfavorable effect on Hun Sen's popu-

larity In Washington Tuesday, US State Department spokesman James Rubin noted that Sihanouk "is a very popular figure among Cambodians, and does have significant political influ-. No doubt a decision to abdicate would obviously have

major political implications." Hun Sen led a 45-member delegation that went to Beijing to explain the political changes since the July 5-6 upheaval that resulted in the ouster of the king's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, from his position of first prime minister.

Including in the delegation was Foreign Minister Ung Huot, whom the National Assembly approved last week as Ranariddh's success

The assembly acted at the behest of Hun Sen, who is the country's top leader even though he retains the title of second prime minister. Hun Sen and Ranariddh had become joint premiers after a 1993 UNsupervised election.

Sihanouk, who has described Ranariddh's removal from power as illegal and called Ung Huot a "puppet," made no comment in his Wednesday statement about the change in government.

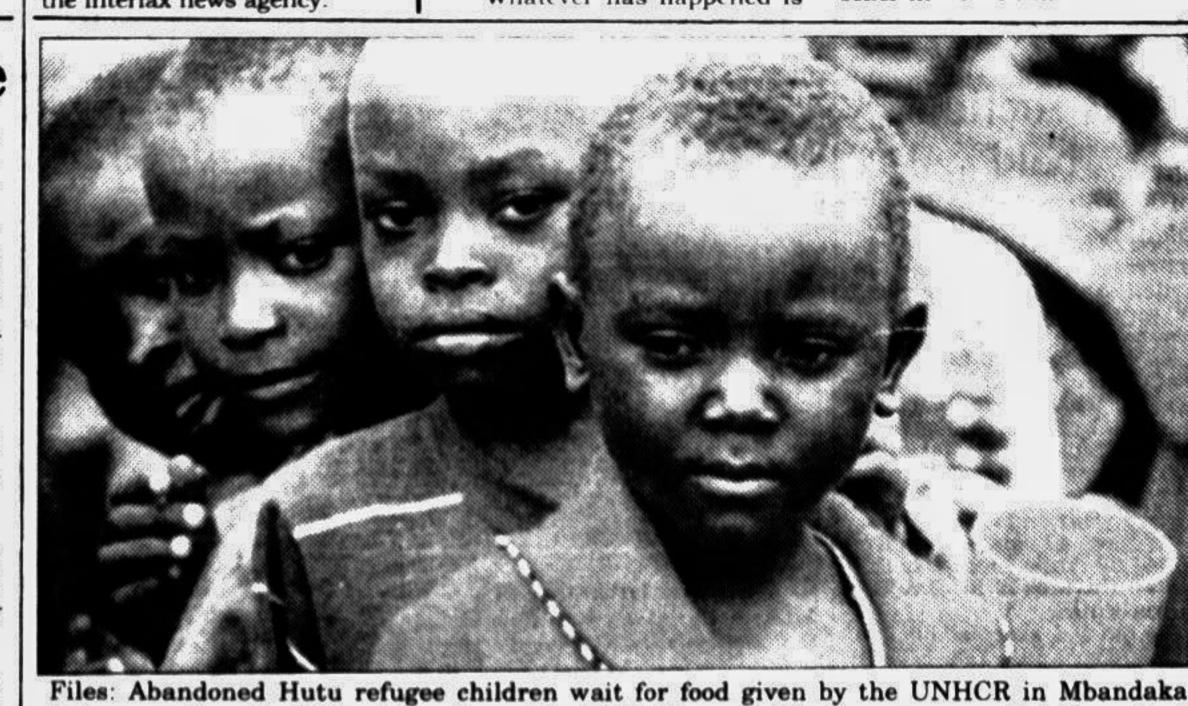
He instead voiced serious concern about continued violence and killings in the aftermath of the takeover.

"Everyone has to do whatever possible so there will be only non-violence, national reconciliation, and unity by living together in peace, solidarity and with full respect of human rights and our constitution," the king wrote.

United Nations human rights investigators have documented at least 40 killings of Hun Sen's opponents since the takeover.

Hun Sen's Cambodian people's Party has said it would work with human rights workers to investigate the reports of killings. Military forces loyal to Ra-

nariddh and Hun Sen also are involved in fighting in northern Cambodia, where loyalists to Ranariddh are holding out at a base on the Thai border.



Files: Abandoned Hutu refugee children wait for food given by the UNHCR in Mbandaka, Congo, northeast of Kinshasa, June 24, 1997. Many children were separated from their families or abandoned as Rwandan refugees fled the recent civil war in Zaire, now renamed Congo. - AP/UNB photo