



Dr Mashiur Rahman, Secretary, Economic Relations Division, and Uwe Sichamm, Ambassador of Germany, signing on behalf of their respective governments an agreement under which Bangladesh will receive Tk 136 cr in grant from Germany yesterday. — PID photo

Relief activities continue

Ministers visit flood-hit areas

A number of ministers yesterday visited different flood-affected areas of Dhaka and Chandpur districts and various areas in the city including Islampur and Ganakotli, and distributed cash money and relief materials among the flood-hit people, reports BSS.

State Minister for Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader visited Islampur and Ganakotli areas of Lalbagh thana in the city and distributed relief materials. Haji Mohammad Selim MP was also present.

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleq yesterday visited flood-hit Mohamudpur, Bharraghat, Khoshum-hali, Raipara, Maksudpur and Joypara under Dohar thana and Bandura, Sadapur and Shikarpara under Nababganj thana in Dhaka district and distributed relief materials and cooked food.

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam visited various areas of Hajiganj thana under Chandpur district and distributed cash money and relief materials.

Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif visited various areas in the city and distributed relief goods. At his directive, 87 shelter centres have already been opened in 54 flood-affected wards. About 40,000 flood-hit city dwellers have taken shelters there so far.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh armed forces personnel continued their relief activities in different flood-hit areas of the city yesterday.

Five army relief teams distributed 7,500 packets of prepared food among the flood victims at Brammanchiron Government Primary School, Nababganj Park Government Charitable Dispensary, Basabo

Girls High School, Khilgaon Government High School and Madhubag Field Shikkhalaya Shangkha Centre, an ISPR release said.

They also distributed pure drinking water and water purifying tablets, while two army medical teams provided medical assistance to the affected people.

UNB adds: BNP unit of Bikalpa Market, Gulistan, donated various items to the party's relief fund yesterday.

Unit leaders deposited 25 sacks of rice, 8,000 water purifying tablets, 2,000 packets of oral saline, 1,571 shirts, 1,467 pairs of trousers, 968 vests, 131 jackets and 50 sarees at the Minto Road residence of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Later, the unit leaders and workers, led by BNP convenor of ward number 56 Rafiqul Islam Rafiq and city commissioner Chowdhury Alam, met with Khaleda.

Meanwhile, some traders of Gowsia Market, led by Mohammed Mohsin, Selim Newaz and Siddique Rahman also handed over 905 pieces of garments to the BNP relief fund.

DU Social Welfare Alumni Assoc

Social Welfare Alumni Association of Dhaka University has taken initiative to distribute relief materials among the flood-hit people in different areas of the country, a society press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The association has formed a 10-member task force to conduct relief operations. All students of the Institute

'Banglar Nari Sangrami' launched

By Staff Correspondent

Minister for Food and Agriculture Begum Matia Chowdhury yesterday said the empowerment and liberation of women are possible only through their active participation in political, economic and social activities.

Calling upon the women to join politics more in number, she said the women's movement and their emancipation cannot be separated from politics.

The minister was addressing a book launching ceremony as chief guest at the Academy for Planning and Development in the city. She said the government has ensured the rights of women through their direct participation in the Union Parishad elections by enacting new laws.

Arranged by the Steps Towards Development, the launching ceremony of 'Banglar Nari Sangrami: Oitijher Anusandhan' was attended by Hena Das, Dr Sufiya Ahmed, Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir and Shaheen Rahman.

Vice President of Mahila Parishad Bela Nabi presided over the function.

The book which is a historical documentation of women's participation in political move-

Analysts rule out Indo-Pak war over Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: India and Pakistan have escalated their dispute over Kashmir, but seem unlikely to go to war again over the region, Indian analysts said today, reports Reuters.

More than 100 people have been killed in Kashmir in the past week in cross-border firing across the military control line. The border duels kindled memories of two wars the neighbours fought over the Himalayan territory since independence from Britain in 1947.

"I would almost certainly rule out a war," political analyst George Verghese of New Delhi's Centre for Policy research told Reuters. The centre is an independent think-tank.

"Pakistan is trying to create a psychology in the minds of the West that a war is looming large and in no time would escalate to a nuclear war (and) therefore they must intervene," he said.

The attacks were the latest episode of intrigue surrounding the Kashmir valley, two thirds of which is ruled by India and the rest by Pakistan.

Relations between the two neighbours worsened after India and Pakistan staged rival nuclear tests in May.

Border firing, intermittent in Kashmir, escalated to rare levels and dozens of Hindu civilians died in attacks blamed on Kashmiri separatists.

Tensions increased when the prime ministers of the two nations failed to make headway at a meeting on the margins of a South Asian summit in Colombo in late July.

Hopes of peace talks, stalled last year on how to discuss Kashmir, were further dashed as a fresh round of firing erupted.

Hari Kishore Singh, former junior foreign minister, said Pakistan wanted to attract the attention of the United Nations Security Council.

"I don't think there is any possibility of war," he said.

"The foremost aim of Pakistan at the moment is to internationalise the situation... they are escalating the whole thing so that the Security Council may be compelled to intervene."

India rejects Pakistan's demands for international mediation over the Kashmir problem.

Verghese said Pakistan, in pushing its claims on Kashmir, was eyeing a string of forthcoming international events where it hoped to gain attention for Kashmir.

US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott is expected to meet Indian special envoy Jaswant Singh later this month in Washington in the latest round of talks after India's nuclear tests.

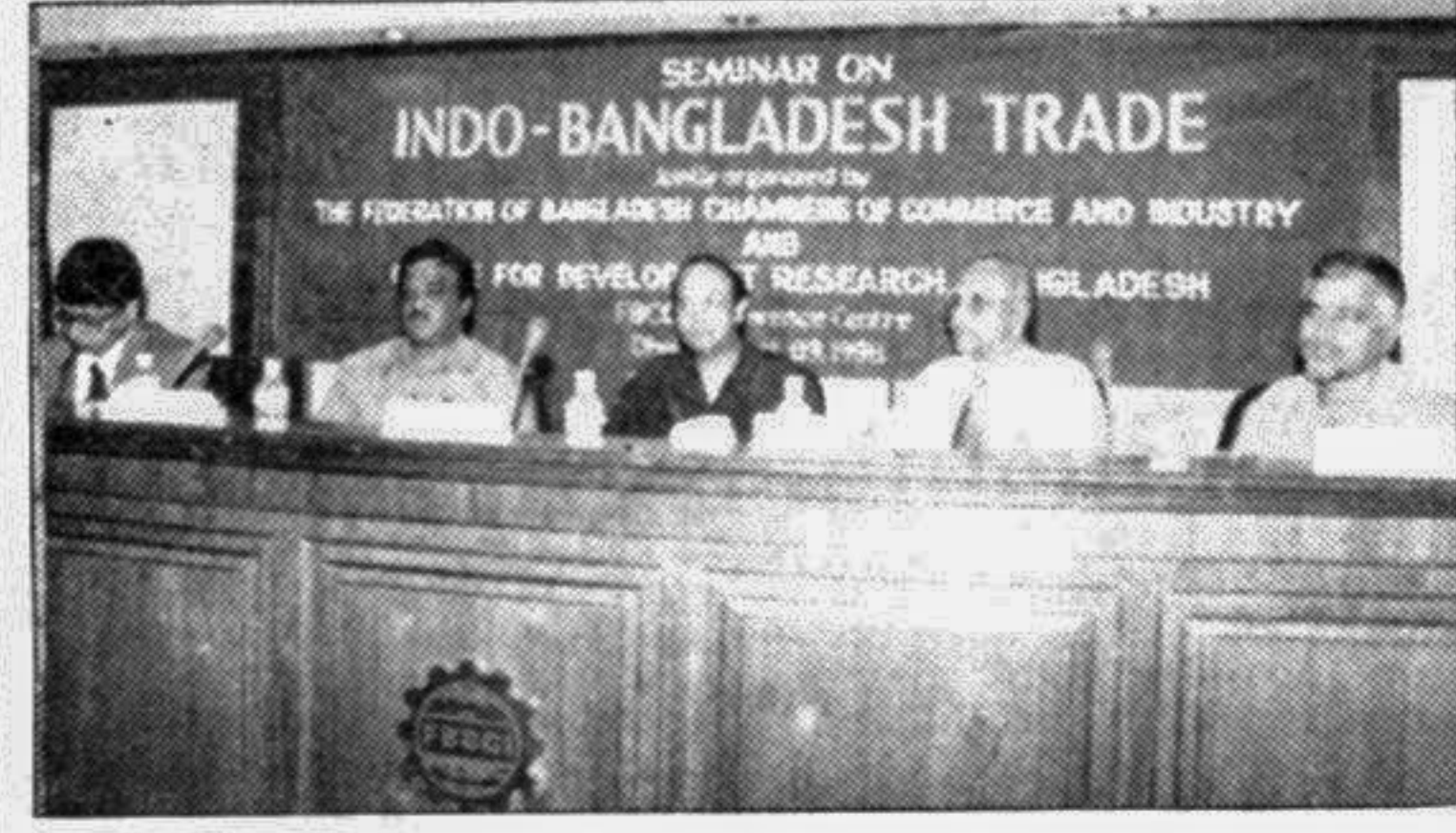
A summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is scheduled to take place in September at Durban, the UN General Assembly will open in October.

Varghese said Pakistan's policies had shifted gear from an emphasis on human rights violations in the valley to impressing on the United States and other Western nations of the danger of a nuclear war over Kashmir.

India accuses Pakistan of arming guerrillas in Jammu and Kashmir, where rebels have been fighting Indian rule since 1990.

Pakistan denies the charge and in turn accuses India's army of human rights violations in the region.

Pakistan, citing a UN resolution, wants a referendum to determine Kashmir's future. India, citing a bilateral treaty of 1972, insists the neighbours must talk the problem out amongst themselves rather than involving the international community.



Commerce Secretary Sayed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury addressing a seminar on 'Indo-Bangladesh Trade' jointly organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDR) in the city yesterday. FBCCI President Yussuf Abdullah Harun, CDRB Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, Professor of New Orleans University, USA Dr M Kabir Hassan and FBCCI Vice-President Kazi Md Shafiqul Islam were also present.

Arafat's cabinet okayed

RAMALLAH, Aug 9: Legislators approved Yasser Arafat's new Cabinet by a wide margin on Sunday, despite criticism that the Palestinian leader has done nothing to address charges of widespread government corruption, reports AP.

The legislative council, which is dominated by Arafat's Fatah faction, approved the Cabinet by a vote of 55-28 with three abstentions. The new ministers were to be sworn in at a ceremony Sunday night in the Gaza Strip.

Arafat announced the new Cabinet last week, a year after legislators demanded the old one be dissolved because of corruption. But the roster left in place most of the former ministers — including those accused of corruption — and added 10 others.

Two ministers — Hanan Ashrawi and Abdel Jawad Saleh — quit last week in protest.

Ashrawi, a prominent Palestinian political leader, said Sunday that the substantial vote against the new Cabinet was a warning signal... that this government has to face the serious expectations of the people.

Husam Khader, a Fatah legislator who voted against the Cabinet, said the council, "by giving a vote of confidence to this government, has legalized corruption."

The council demanded last year that Arafat dissolve the Cabinet after a legislative committee report found extensive abuses in all government ministries and recommended that Arafat dismiss Planning Minister Nabil Shaath, Civil Affairs Minister Jamil Tariqi, and Transportation Minister Ali Qawasmeh - be put on trial. The three ministers, who denied any wrongdoing, all retained their jobs in the new Cabinet.

The committee report followed a government audit that found nearly half the Palestinian Authority's dirrs 800 million annual budget had been squandered through corruption and mismanagement.

Despite repeated promises, Arafat put off any action until the legislative council threatened in recent months to hold vote of no-confidence in his government.

Some of Arafat's usual critics, like Bethlehem legislator Salah Tamari, were apparently coopted by being given seats in the new Cabinet.

Palestinian political analyst Ghassan Khatib said the legislators' approval of the same ministers they had declared corrupt a year ago would further undermine the credibility of the council, which has struggled to be taken seriously and play a real part in governing the Palestinian territories.

Couple killed in road accident in Jessore

JESSORE, Aug 9: A middle-aged couple was going to see the doctor for treatment in the town, but the wife was killed in a road-accident on the way, reports UNB.

On way to the town, Abdul Wahab (60) of Rahelapur village in Kotwali thana was riding a bicycle with wife Anwara Khatun (45).

As the couple reached near Hashimpur Bazar on the Jessore-Magura highway, a Dhaka-bound bus dashed the bicycle leaving Anwara injured.

She was rushed to Jessore General Hospital, but succumbed to her injuries few hours after admission there at noon.

In another incident, Jelama Khatun (50) of village Joygnagar in Keshabpur thana was killed in a road accident at Chanchradal Mill area in the town while going to visit her daughter.

A fast moving motor-cycle hit Jelama as she reached near the house where her daughter, Rokeya, was working as a maid. Jelama was taken in an unconscious state to Jessore General Hospital, where she later died.

Two separate cases were lodged with Kotwali police in connection with the accidents.

Shahabuddin condoles death of Dr Ashraf

President Shahabuddin Ahmed expressed his deep shock and profound sorrow at the death of eminent scholar and Islamic thinker Dr Syed Ali Ashraf, founder Vice-Chancellor of Darul Ihsan University, reports BSS.

In a message of condolence, President Shahabuddin recalled his distinguished academic career.

The President said late Syed Ali Ashraf was a man of high moral character and attended a number of international seminars on Islamic culture and civilization. He wrote many books and articles on Islam and contemporary world affairs. As a poet, writer and literary critic, his contribution is well-acclaimed at home and abroad.

Rebellion in eastern Congo Foreign aid workers flee rebel-controlled city

KINSHASA, Aug 9: Fearing an escalation in fighting in eastern Congo, foreign aid workers in the rebel-controlled city of Bukavu have fled across the border into neighbouring Rwanda, state-controlled radio in Rwanda reported, says AP.

More than 60 foreigners including Americans, Canadians and Belgians, left the city, the Rwandan report said.

In Kinshasa, the government on Sunday increased security around the capital, closing all river ports and halting traffic across its river border with the Republic of Congo.

Tutsi gunmen with close ties to Rwanda launched a rebellion a week ago in Congo's eastern Kivu region and vowed to topple President Laurent Kabila's 14-month-old regime.

Within the first few days of their uprising, the rebels captured several key cities near the Rwandan border, including Goma and Bukavu.

They also control several small towns in Congo's far west near the Atlantic coastline about 250 kilometres southwest of Kinshasa.

Kabila accuses the Tutsi-led Rwandan government of masterminding the revolt, although Rwanda repeatedly has denied the charge.

On Saturday, Kabila sat down in the Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, with his Rwandan adversary, President Pasteur Bizimungu, to try to find a peaceful end to growing hostilities. They were joined by five other regional leaders.

Neither side emerged optimistic and the prospects for a solution emerging from the talks appeared dim.

Throughout the weekend, Congo broadcast accusations against Rwanda and urged young people to join newly created militia units to defend the country.

State-controlled television in Kinshasa broadcast scenes from a demonstration rally by a Congolese student group calling for an invasion of Rwanda.

"The Circle of Kasai Students simply recommends the annexation of the infamous Republic of Rwanda, which will, as a result, become the 12th province of the Democratic Republic of Congo," an unidentified student leader said in the broadcast.

In the Rwandan capital Kigali, Bizimungu accused Kabila of trying to establish a pretext to attack Rwanda and threatened Congo with a preemptive strike.

"We will not wait for Congo to attack first," Bizimungu told The Associated Press.

Bizimungu said Rwanda had credible evidence of Kabila's training of at least 10,000 former Hutu soldiers and militia in the southern city of Kamina, and that he planned to use them against Rwanda.

The rebels were responsible for the 1994 genocide of more than 500,000 minority Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus.

Amanpour, Rubin tie the knot

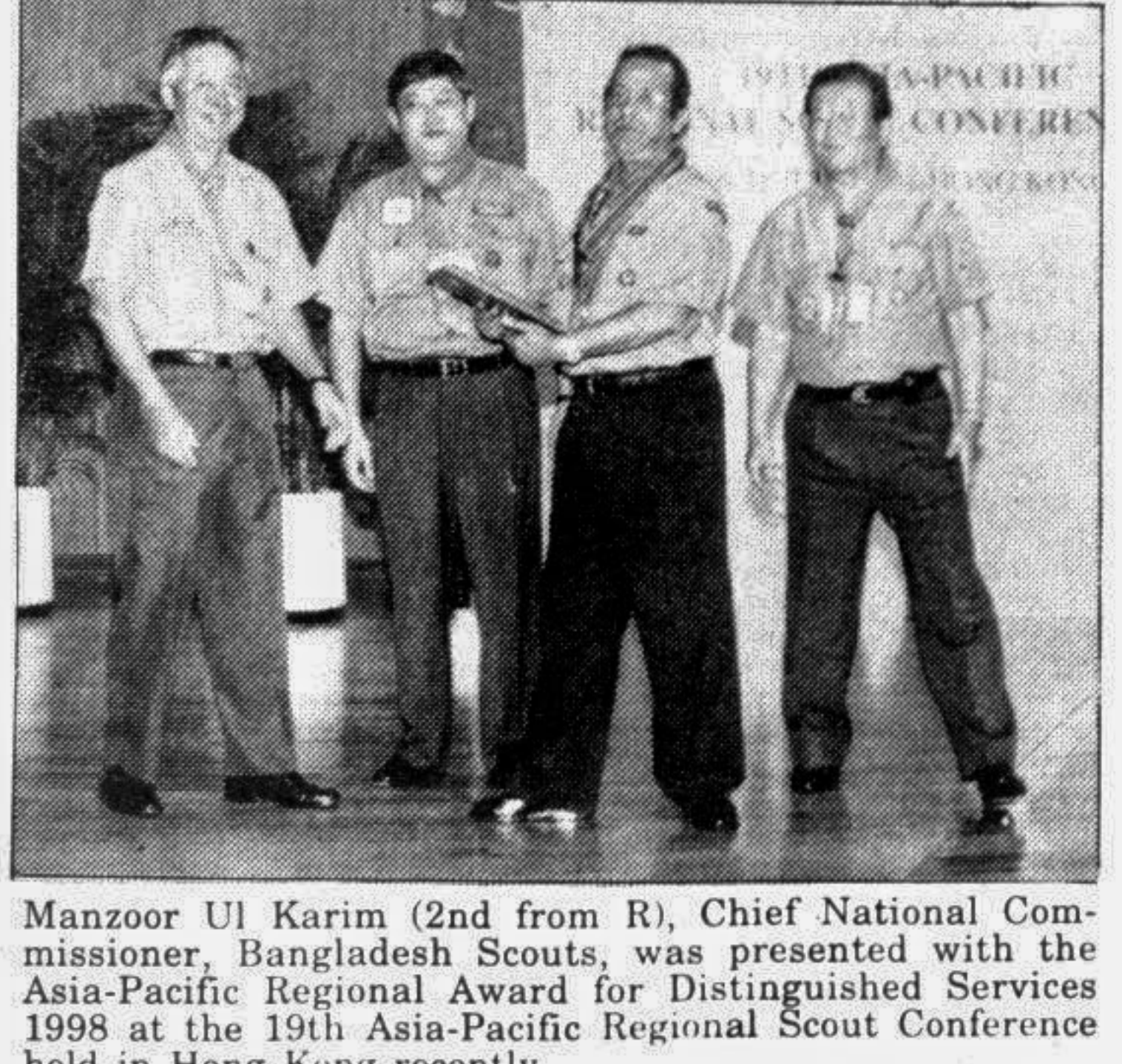
ROME, Aug 9: CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour and US State Department Spokesman James Rubin tied the knot on Saturday at a lakeside Renaissance Church near Rome, reports Reuters.

Iranian-born Amanpour, 40, who has reported from Bosnia and many other world troublespots for the television network, wore white for her marriage to 38-year-old Rubin on the banks of lake Bracciano.

After a catholic service at the church, a Jewish ceremony was held at the nearby Odescalchi Palace.

John Kennedy jr and his wife Carolyn Bessette were at the wedding, but hopes of a star-studded guest line-up were disappointed: celebrities such as Jane Fonda and her husband Ted Turner, founder of CNN, did not turn up as expected.

Rubin's boss, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, had flown to Italy for the occasion but returned suddenly to Washington on Friday after the deadly bombing attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.



Manzoor Ul Karim conferred Scouts Distinguished Services Award '98

The Asia-Pacific Scout Committee has conferred the Asia-Pacific Regional Award for Distinguished Services for 1998 on Manzoor Ul Karim, Chief National Commissioner, Bangladesh Scouts, in recognition of his exceptional services to scouting, says a press release.

Manzoor Ul Karim was presented with the award, along with George I Fairbairn of New Zealand, during the 19th Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Conference held in Hong Kong recently.

The Committee also presented Faizur Razaque, former international commissioner, Bangladesh Scouts, with the Asia-Pacific Regional Chairman Award for 1997, the release added.

HERE and THERE

Rotary Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Club

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury has said the government has taken a number of pragmatic steps to provide "better quality of life" to the rural people, a parliament secretariat press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The overall development of the greater population is possible through welfare of the rural people," he said while addressing as the chief guest the 10th installation ceremony of the board of directors of Rotary Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Club at a local hotel in the city on Saturday.

Appreciating the role of Rotarians in mitigating the sufferings of the people, the Speaker urged them to fight against poverty and illiteracy.

You have the scope to unite people against drug abuse and child trafficking and you can play a vital role to rehabilitate young drug addicts of the country," the Speaker said.

He urged the members of the club to expand their activities in the rural areas to make the rural poor economically self-reliant.

UN Schools Organisations

The United Nations Schools Organisation of Bangladesh distributed certificates to the successful examinees of the 8th

SSC Exams (Ctg Board) Sharmin secures 3rd position in Humanities group

Sharmin Sultana (Rony) has secured 3rd position in the combined merit list of Humanities and Social Sciences group in the SSC Examinations '98 under Chittagong Board from Dr. Khastagor Govt. Girls' High School, Chittagong, says a press release.

Sharmin wants to pursue higher studies in English.

She is the youngest daughter of Md. Ataur Rahman, Senior assistant, Vice President, IFIC Bank Ltd, Agrabad Branch, Chittagong. Her mother is a housewife.

Mizan 15th on Business Studies merit list

Md. Mizanur Rahman stood 15th in the combined merit list of the Business Studies group in this year's SSC Examinations under Chittagong Board.

Mizan, who appeared in the exam from Nasirabad Govt. High School, secured 818 marks with distinction in four subjects.

Mizan is the eldest son of M Rahman and Begum Shamsunahar.

Mannan Bhuiyan demands release of Anny

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday demanded immediate release of JCD President Shaheed Uddin Chowdhury Anny who, he said, was detained in a false case, reports UNB.

In a statement, Bhuiyan said although Anny was granted bail in different "false" cases he was implicated in new cases ahead of his release on bail and kept detained by the government driven by its political vengeance.

The BNP leader said the autocratic government continued to oppress and harass its political opponents through false cases falling in all spheres, including in maintaining law and order. The normal course of law is being disrupted with the undue interference of the government, he added.

One gets life term for killing minor boy in Rangpur

RANGPUR, Aug 9: A court here on Thursday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing a minor boy, reports UNB.

The court also fined the convict Mrityunjoy Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer one year more.

The prosecution, in brief, was that Mrityunjoy abducted the minor boy, Kamol Chandra (12), of Rotirampur village in Kotwali thana and killed him on January 28, 1995 as Kamol's parents failed to pay Tk 60,000 as ransom money.

A case was filed and after investigation police submitted chargesheet against five people. Examining the witnesses and recording the Additional District and Sessions Judge M Salahuddin awarded the punishment acquitting four others.

Obituary

Begum Tyeba Khatun, widow of poet Farrukh Ahmed, died of a heart attack in the city yesterday. She was 70, reports BSS.

Her namaz-e-janaja will be held today at Azimpur Sapra Mosque after Zohr prayers, family sources said.

Nagasaki remembers 53rd anniversary of atomic bombing

TOKYO, Aug 9: In ceremonies marked by undiminished anger at the world's nuclear powers, Nagasaki today remembered the atomic bomb that devastated this port city 53 years ago, reports AP.

"We cannot help but feel anger at the legitimisation of nuclear weapons by those countries that possess them," Mayor Ichiro Ito told thousands who gathered at the city's Peace Park to commemorate the anniversary.

Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi criticised India and Pakistan for making the world a more dangerous place with their tit-for-tat nuclear tests in May.

"Our government strongly urges both the Indian and Pakistani governments to immediately stop nuclear tests and unconditionally conclude the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," he said.

Under international pressure, Pakistan and India have said they are ready to engage in negotiations on a treaty on nuclear materials like plutonium and highly enriched uranium.

About 700 people attended an early morning service at Nagasaki's Urakami Cathedral, which was rebuilt along with much of the city after the atomic explosion in 1945.

Some 25,000 people joined in the Peace Park ceremony, where survivors read gruesome accounts of destruction and the suffering that followed the blast.

City residents recognised a moment of silence as Buddhist temples rang bells at 11:02 am (02:02 GMT), the exact time that the bomb exploded after a US B-29 dropped it.

More than 60,000 people perished in the blast, which had an explosive force of 22 kilotons, or 22,000 tons of TNT.

The Nagasaki attack came three days after the United States dropped a smaller bomb on the city of Hiroshima in an effort to force the Japanese into surrender at the end of World War II.

Ultrasound waves may cause cancer

CALCUTTA, Aug 9: Repeated exposures to ultrasound waves, being increasingly used in biology and diagnostic medicine today, might induce cancer, says a study, reports PTI.

Ringling alarm bells for laboratory workers dealing in such process, a joint study, conducted by Dr SN Chatterjee of Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP) and Dr Pratima Sur of Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB), warns them to keep malignancy at bay by taking adequate measures.

The duo subjected 40 female mice to continuous wave Ultrasound at 25 kilohertz frequency, a minute each every day for about six months, and found that the rodents produced large amounts of fluids in their guts with many abnormal carcinoma-like cells.

Seventy per cent of the experimental animals developed malignant tumors and highly wrinkled skin, lost hair and mobility significantly and died much earlier than their non-exposed counterparts.

Though at the tested frequency levels, ultrasound waves are used mostly for laboratory purposes like breaking of cells and DNA, at the megahertz (mhz) level, it is generally used in short pulses for medical diagnosis and therapy, Chatterjee said, adding that experiments at the higher level have been initiated.

The experiments and results have been published in the latest issue of the journal 'Current Science'.