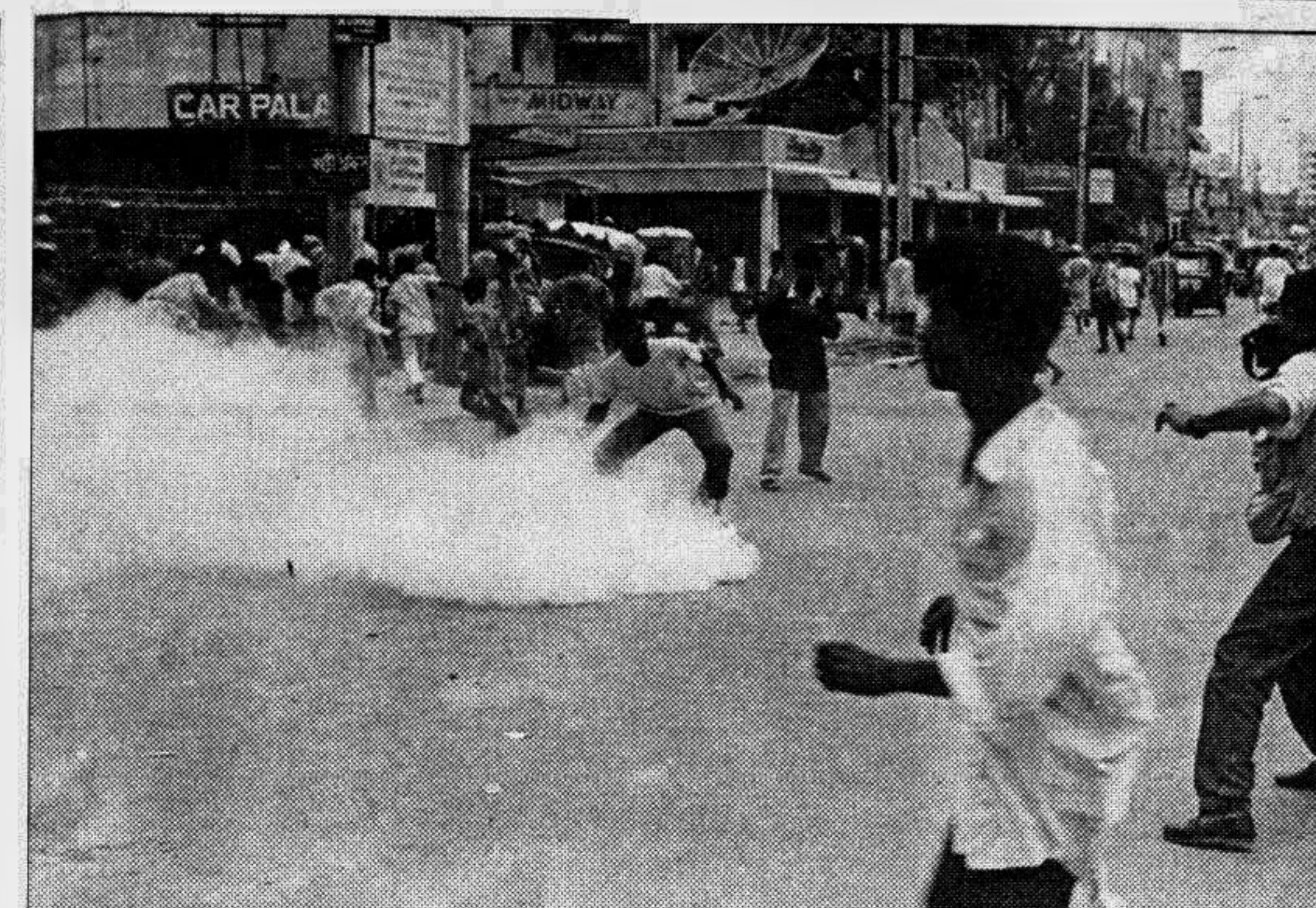




BNP activists held a gathering in front of the BNP office yesterday in support of the hartal. — Star photo



Police lobbed teargas canisters on a gathering in front of the BNP office yesterday during hartal. — Star photo

Nirad Chaudhuri dead

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home. His niece, Krishna Bose, wrote that when she lived with her uncle in 1947 in New Delhi, he once told her: "When somebody comes to visit me, I open my conversation with Plato, as if he were my next door neighbour. If the visitor survives that, he becomes a good friend."

Chaudhuri published "Unknown Indian" in 1951. At the age of 90 he added a second 1,000-page tome of autobiography, "Thy Hand, Great Anarch."

His last book of essays, "Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse," was written when he was 95. It was an indictment of what he called India's failed leadership and a lament for the decline of the country he adopted in his old age. After living in Oxford for 30 years, he concluded that England did not deserve itself.

He was controversial from the very first words he published. The dedication of his first book, it read:

"To the memory of the British Empire in India, which conferred subjecthood upon us, but withheld citizenship; to which yet every one of us threw out the challenge: 'Civis Britannicus sum' because all that was good and living within us was made, shaped, and quickened by the same British rule."

The Latin phrase means, "I am a British citizen."

Indians were offended by Chaudhuri's praise of the oppressive British Raj. But Chaudhuri said his backhanded criticism of the British was never understood by his countrymen. Interviewed by the Associated Press nearly 50 years later, Chaudhuri still grew angry when he spoke of "these wretched, idiotic, uneducated Indians" who misread his famous lines.

His British publishers re-released the book in 1999, calling it one of the great books of the 20th century — but without the original dedication.

The son of a country lawyer and illiterate mother, Chaudhuri was born on November 23, 1897 in Kishoreganj, Bangladesh, a riverside town where the turning of the seasons was measured by the depth of mud on the road in the monsoons and the height of the dust kicked up by children's feet in summer.

"I have not forgotten anything about Kishoreganj, where I bathed in the same pool with elephants," he said, speaking in his cluttered Oxford apartment shortly after his 101st birthday.

He went to Calcutta University and then worked as a government bureaucrat, then shifted to New Delhi for a job as a broadcaster and political commentator at All India Radio in 1942. He began writing his autobiography five years later, fearing that he would die without leaving anything permanent behind.

With the book's critical success, he was invited to England, a trip that produced "A Passage to England" comparing the country of his readings and imaginings with the actual country. In 1970, he settled in England, moving to the university town of Oxford, 50 miles northwest of London.

His wife Amiya, whom he married in 1932, died in 1994. He is survived by three sons, Dhruva, Kirti and Prithvi.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

Narayanan mourns death of Nirad C Chaudhuri

NEW DELHI, Aug 2: President K R Narayanan today mourned the death of author and scholar Nirad C Chaudhuri, who died in Oxford yesterday at the age of 101, reports PTI.

In the passing away of Nirad Chaudhuri the world has lost an intellect of the rarest sparkle. His knowledge of the life and mores of undivided Bengal, of Bengali and Sanskrit literature, of our ancient epics and classics was matched by fluency in the languages and literatures of the West, he said in his message.

Narayanan said Chaudhuri was a virtual master of English prose wielding it with the punctiliousness of a grammarian as well as the elan of a maestro.

Just as Nirad babu's interests could range, in seeming contrariness, from music to literature, he was an adept at dialectical fencing. Few could rival Nirad babu's intellectual sallies in swiftness and verve. One did not have to agree with him in order to admire his erudition, his humor and freedom of the spirit that lay behind his mental prowess, the president said.

I mourn, with millions of his readers, the demise of a powerful intellect which will outlast his corporeal life in the shape of his brilliant literary works, he said.

Striking civil servants return to work in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 2: Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said today she was confident a public sector wage dispute could be settled, as South African civil servants returned to work after a two-day strike, reports Reuters.

Unions who mounted a strike by up to 300,000 workers last week scheduled a news conference on Monday to announce plans to continue their campaign for a 10 per cent wage increase.

"Workers are back at work today," said David Makhura, the deputy secretary general of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAU).

Makhura said on Friday unions probably would resume the strike from Tuesday if President Thabo Mbeki's government did not revise its offer of increases between 6.2 and 6.8 per cent worth 3.2 billion rand (\$518 million).

NEHAU and other unions representing half of South Africa's 1.1 million public sector staff staged strikes on Thursday and Friday to press home their demands.

3 more held

From Page 1

coalition of employees' organisations led by Nurul Alam and Shah Alam who recently buried differences on their five-point demand.

The action triggered violence in which rooms of a minister and several officers were ransacked on Sunday.

Police kept three gates of the Secretariat closed for the second day yesterday, leaving two gates open for entrance and the other for exit. Restriction on entry of visitors continued.

Police have set up a 'camp' at the Secretariat, keeping riot police at strategic corners and floors of buildings. A fire tender was kept ready inside and a water cannon outside the Gate No 1.

Police permitted people with ID cards, sniffing suspected persons with metal detector. But the dog squad was not seen.

Photo-journalists were kept out. Those who dared to peep inside through the entrances were hounded out.

Newsmen were carefully sniffed, their ID cards checked, and those carrying bags were frisked.

Sources said the arrested persons were met at the Ramna Thana by some of their colleagues who carried a message from the government to "resolve the crisis."

An aide to Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak however, denied reports that the minister had been entrusted with the task of resolving the crisis.

Besides the nine already arrested, police are looking for employees' leaders Mujibul Huq, Nurul Alam, Abdul Khaleque and others, the sources said.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Sarkari Karmachari Samamony Parishad (BSAMU) in a statement after its emergency meeting yesterday condemned the police action on Secretariat employees and demanded release of the detained persons.

The employees are scheduled to hold a 'tiffin carrier' rally today to highlight their problems due to change in office hours.

Arab states urged to fight terrorism

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Aug 2: Arab states on Monday urged greater cooperation between countries to fight terrorism, although they said armed struggle was the right of all occupied people, reports AFP.

The statement came at the end of an anti-terror convention in the Red Sea port of Jeddah, which brought together 10 Arab ministers to discuss the implementation of an Arab convention against terrorism.

In a final statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency, the participants said they had "anxiously followed the developments in terrorism from which the whole world is suffering."

"The fight against this phenomenon is the duty of the whole international community and needs tight and permanent cooperation between different countries."

The delegates urged Arab states to make "bilateral records in the fight against terrorism with foreign countries, which will help pursue the terrorists and deliver them to their countries where they will be tried."

But the statement stressed the difference "between terrorism and the right of people to fight against a foreign occupation and aggression by all means, including an armed struggle."

The meeting, chaired by Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdel Aziz, was attended by the interior ministers of Jordan, Syria, Algeria, Yemen and Egypt.

The justice ministers of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Morocco were also present, together with Egypt's deputy justice minister.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Prince Nayef signed an agreement with his Syrian counterpart Mohammad Harba on a joint fight against drugs, SPA said.

"Terrorism has no country and no religion, its danger spills over frontiers, and it is not possible for any country to wipe out the phenomenon by acting alone, however rich it is," said Prince Nayef.

"The Arab Convention on the Fight against Terrorism is inspired by Islamic law, and its ratification reflects our desire and our determination to struggle against this phenomenon in the Arab world, and to cooperate with other countries" to achieve this end, he said in his opening remarks.

It also calls for an exchange of information on terrorist activities and for the extradition of terrorism suspects.

PFLP turns down Arafat's offer to join PA Barak accused of trying to evade peace commitments

JERUSALEM, Aug 2: Responding to Israel's renewed offer to implement only parts of the Wye land-for-peace agreement, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Monday accused Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak of trying to get out of some of Israel's peace commitments, reports AP.

Arafat's sharp words were yet another sign of growing tension over the Wye accord, which requires Israel to hand the West Bank. Barak complains that the Palestinians are not flexible enough, while the Palestinians say they are beginning to suspect Barak is acting in bad faith.

The sense of a first real crisis between the new players — Barak took office last month — emerged after Sunday's meeting between the Palestinians' chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, and Barak's envoy, attorney Gilead Sher.

The Palestinians complained that Sher reiterated what Arafat had already rejected a week earlier — a request by Israel to skip over one of two West Bank troop pullbacks mandated by Wye so as to avoid friction with Jewish settlers.

Asked Monday whether the Sher-Erekat meeting had produced a crisis, Arafat said: "This confirms what I said at the beginning. There is an attempt to evade the accurate and complete implementation of the agreements."

The Wye agreement contains a very specific timetable spelling out the steps each side had to take at a particular time, such as three Israeli troop withdrawals and the release of 750 Palestinian prisoners in three stages.

Barak's hard-line predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, carried out phase one, including a troop pullback from 2 per cent of the West Bank, but then suspended the accord, accusing the Palestinians of reneging on their security commitments.

Israeli Cabinet Minister Haim Ramon told The Associated Press that Israel was proposing to start the Wye clock again in September.

From the date of resumption, four weeks would pass until Israel hands over territory, as stipulated by the agreement.

The agreement says in these four weeks, things are taking place," said Ramon, mentioning the release of Palestinian prisoners by Israel and confiscation of illegal weapons by the Palestinians.

In Sunday's meeting, Sher asked the Palestinians again to consider skipping over the final Wye pullback and blending it into talks on a permanent peace agreement. Israel fears that the withdrawal will isolate several Jewish settlements and make them easy targets for attack by Palestinian militants. Barak has hinted he would call off negotiations in response to terror attacks.

Meanwhile, leaders of a PLO faction that has moved toward reconciliation with Yasser Arafat have turned down his offer to join the Palestinian authority, officials said Monday.

Arafat and leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine concluded meetings in Cairo Sunday aimed at ending a six-year rift over peacemaking with Israel.

Though the meetings ended on an upbeat note, Palestinian officials said the PFLP leaders rejected attempts by Arafat to lure them into leadership posts in his Gaza-based administration.

"Some ideas about our participation were made but we will not take part" in the authority, the Damascus-based group's spokesman Maher el-Tajer said before returning from Cairo to Syria.

He said the PFLP's position is "not to deal with the Oslo agreement and its consequences," a reference to the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

During the weekend talks the PFLP leaders reaffirmed their staunch opposition to Oslo, but said the accord had to be dealt with as "a political reality."

According to a statement issued Monday, the PFLP and Arafat's main stream Fatah movement agreed to reactivate the PLO and give it a greater role in the last stage of negotiations with Israel.

Syrian minister insults Arafat

BAALBEK, Lebanon, Aug 2: Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass hit out today at Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, calling him the "son of a whore" over his failure to maintain Palestinian rights over Jerusalem, reports AFP.

"Son of 60,000 whores, you should have told the White House that Jerusalem is the capital of the future Palestinian state, but instead you stayed as quiet as a mouse and did not dare say a single word in favour of Palestine or Jerusalem," Tlass said in a speech marking Syrian and Lebanese army day in this eastern Lebanese town.

Tlass, who is known for his colourful language, went on to compare Arafat to a stripper.

"Look at him when he is on the stage, he moves from concession to concession, like a striptease artiste, except that the artiste becomes more beautiful with every layer she removes, while Arafat becomes uglier and uglier."

Tlass's attack ran counter to recent signs of an improvement in relations between Syria and the Palestinian leader.

Last week the nephew of President Hafez al-Assad, Sumer al-Assad, met Arafat in Gaza. On Sunday Arafat held a reconciliation meeting in Cairo with top officials of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

There have also been increasing expectations that peace negotiations could resume shortly between Syria and Israel after the coming to power last month of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Purification of arsenic-contaminated water Japanese team to test new device Aug 11-12

A research group from Tokyo University plans to tour Bangladesh next week to test and demonstrate a newly developed device which they claim can purify arsenic-contaminated water, reports UNB.

The manually operated device has proven capability of purifying sea and underground waters, said Dr Shin-ichi Nakao, head of the research group that made the innovation.

"We are confident that it would be equally effective in purifying arsenic-contaminated water," he told UNB ahead of the planned visit to Bangladesh.

The team of 12 would arrive in Bangladesh on August 8. They plan to conduct tests in arsenic-prone areas from August 11-12 and demonstrate the appliance's effectiveness in separating arsenic from water to the people and authorities concerned.

Dr Shin-ichi Nakao, Professor of Department of Chemical Systems Engineering, School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo, and his team had been engaged in developing the purifier for the last three years mainly targeting the saline and contaminated underground water in developing countries.

Last year, one of his professor-friends working on arsenic problem in Bangladesh asked for his cooperation in this regard, and Dr Nakao and his team evolved the new device.

They tested it with arsenic-contaminated water on a smaller scale and the result was "satisfactory."

Talking to UNB, Dr Nakao said it produces 3 litres of pure drinking water the device takes 10 minutes for seawater, 1 to 1:30 minutes for groundwater and 1 hour for arsenic-contaminated water.

"With more research we can improve the device and produce more purified water in less time," he said.

The simple bicycle-like purifier contains handles, pedals, a pump and a filter made of reverse osmosis membrane. While pedaling the pump sucks the contaminated water into the filter. The filter purifies the water and releases it through a pipe connected to it.

The purifier could be suitable for domestic use in the remote areas of Bangladesh, facing the worst problem of arsenic poisoning, as it does not require electricity to operate, said Dr Nakao.

"It could help ease the hardship the people facing in the arsenic-prone areas of the country. It could also be useful during natural calamity like floods when people face scarcity of drinking water."

Life of the device is 4 to 5 years and cleaning of the filter is required after around 6 months. If the concerned people and the authorities in Bangladesh find it useful and approve its application, Dr Nakao said, he would try to improve the device to make it more cost-effective.

Research on breeding of Bhetki fish

CHITTAGONG, Aug 2: A contract-research on the artificial breeding and extensive culture of the seabass, known as 'Bhetki' fish, with the objective to ensure adequate supply of its fry, is progressing fast at the Kalatati Hatchery, reports BSS.

Being conducted under the auspices of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), the research is financed by the International Development Agency (IDA).

The breeding technology has been undertaken considering the popularity of Bhetki fish.

Prof Nani Gopal Das of the Institute of Marine Science, University of Chittagong, spoke with BSS yesterday about his research project.

Prof Das, who had earlier made a remarkable achievement in artificial breeding of mullet, locally known as 'Baata' fish, said aquaculturists of many countries had developed various techniques of spawning hormone treatment which is indispensable for increasing production of fish on a large scale through culture system.

Seabass, the scientific name of which is 'Lates Calcarifer', is an important food item in South and Southeast Asian countries. It exists in tropical and sub-tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific region.

Bangladesh has a vast territorial water with a coastline of shallow brackish water of some 480 kms, and as such seabass has a prolonged spawning season in the Bay of Bengal from March to September, Prof Das said.

Dr Alamgir to attend seminar in Tokyo

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir left city yesterday for Tokyo to attend the 'Asia Pacific Regional Launch' to be held on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Dr Alamgir will also attend a workshop on 'Asian Perspectives on Globalisation and Human Security' on August 5.

Both the functions were organised by the United Nations Development Programme.

High profile government policy-makers, intellectuals and government representatives across the Asia and the Pacific will speak on globalisation and fix developed guidelines on the issue.

Ethridge, Rafiq discuss bilateral issues

Outgoing Commission High Commissioner to Bangladesh Nicholas H R Ethridge called on State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam at his parliament office on Sunday, reports BSS.

During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest with particular focus on cooperation in the power and gas sectors. Ethridge said there is a wide scope of cooperation between the two countries and his government is very interested in it.

Ethridge thanked Prof Rafiqul Islam for his cooperation and accessibility, which have helped in strengthening friendly relations between the two countries further.

Two commit suicide in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Aug 2: Two people committed suicide in two separate places under Tanore thana of the district today.

Housewife Nasima Begum, 19, of Chowbaria village under Tanore thana committed suicide by taking poison. Police sources informed that a family feud might be the reason behind the suicide.

In another incident, one Harunur Rashid, 24, son of Aziz Sarker of Muthurapur village under the same thana committed suicide by taking poison.

Two separate UD cases have been recorded with the thana in this connection.

Monsoon

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been evacuated from the town.

In Vietnam, the death toll in flash floods in the central province of Binh Thuan has risen to at least 36, an official from the Provincial Committee for Flood and Storm Control said Monday.

The floods, the worst there in 15 years, have left more than 11,000 houses under water, entirely destroying more than 1,000.

An estimated 22,000 people are in a situation of "extreme need", without sufficient food or clean water and flood waters have damaged crops and fisheries, destroyed dozens of roads and bridges and sunk 94 ships.

Military helicopters, the navy and soldiers have been mustered to help search for the missing and assist recovery efforts.

In the Philippine capital Manila and its suburbs, at least 16 people have been killed and more than 20,000 displaced in landslides and floods caused by heavy monsoon rains, disaster officials said Monday.

Bangladeshi officials have said despite some heavy rains this summer they were hopeful they would be spared a repeat of last year's disastrous flooding, the century's worst that affected two-thirds of the country.

In the first round of floods in June and July, several parts of the country were inundated and run off from the hills in India reportedly killed 31 people through snake bites, drowning and house collapses.

SANGAT to observe Hiroshima Day

South Asian Network of Gender Trainers and Activists (SANGAT) will hold a rally at the foot of the Central Shaheed Minar on August 6 at 4 pm in observance of the Hiroshima Day, reports BSS.

SANGAT, a combine of 12 prominent non-government organisations for promoting peace, women empowerment and removal of poverty in South Asian region, have also taken a number of programmes including a press conference at the National Press Club on August 4 in observance of the historic occasion.

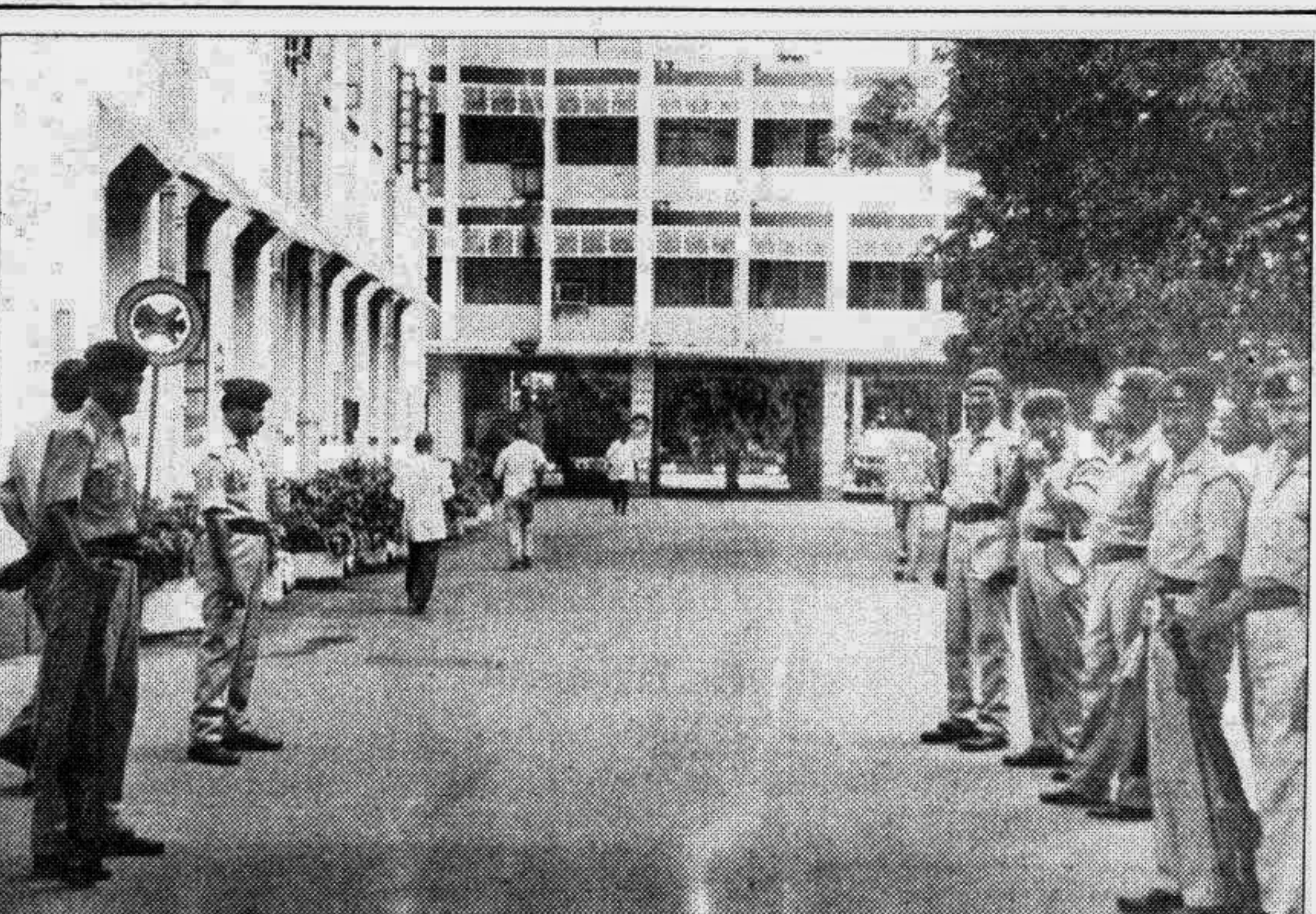
Meanwhile, on the eve of the Hiroshima Day, in a statement here yesterday SANGAT called for integrated and concerted efforts of all for building a society based on peace, equity and justice. The organisation expressed its deep concern over various conflicts like, Kargil, which have not only caused a threat to peace and stability but also loss of lives and properties of the concerned nations.

SANGAT formed a year ago with the prime objective of working for the welfare of the women and children and to stop women and children repression, consists of Proshika, BRAC, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Steps Towards Development, Nijera Kori ADAB, CARE, Prip Trust, Saiki Foundation, Ubining, ASD and IVS. Besides, a number of leading personalities and gender activists are also associated with this new organisation.

Death anniversary

The first death anniversary of Amena Khatun, mother of BSS News Editor M A Mohaimin, will be observed today, reports BSS.

Milad mahfil and Quran Khawani will be held at her Rajshahi residence in Rajshahi after Asr prayers today.



Security measures were stepped up on the Secretariat premises following the agitation of employees there for the last few days. The picture was taken yesterday during hartal. — Star photo

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PIB condoles death of Ahmed Humayun

The Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) at a meeting at its office yesterday condoled the death of its former Director General and eminent journalist Ahmed Humayun, reports BSS.

Silence was observed in the meeting for a minute to pay respect to his memory.

PIB researcher Kamrul Huq discussed the life and works of Ahmed Humayun, PIB DG Dr Sheikh Abdus Salam chaired the meeting.

Officials and employees of different sections of PIB were present in the meeting.