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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina hosts
iftar party

Leader of the Opposition in
Parliament and Awami League
chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday
hosted an iftar in honour of
ambassadors, high commissioners,
diplomats, heads of
different UN missions, editors
of the different national
dailies, intellectuals, leaders of
business community and
entrepreneurs and retired high
civil and military officials. Held
at the Minto Road residence
of the Leader of the
Opposition, the party was attended
by central leaders of the Awami
League and mayors elect of
Dhaka and Chittagong, reports
BSS.

Pak army chief
to visit China

KARACHI, Feb 24: Pakistani
Army Chief General Abdul
Waheed is to visit China next
week, a military spokesman
said here today. Waheed would
hold talks with Chinese officials
on enhancing defence
cooperation between the two
countries, the spokesman said.
Sources said he is expected
to explore the possibility
of purchasing military
hardware, reports AFP.

Jute goods gutted
in Khulna city

KHULNA, Feb 24: A godown
of jute goods in the city was
heavily damaged by fire
tonight. According to the first
hand information, fire broke
out at Kadamtala godown at
9:30 pm. Firemen from the
city and Daulatpur rushed to
the spot and put the fire out
within 30 minutes. UNB.

Discussion on
Language Movement

The "Bhasha Satik o Raj-
bandhi Parishad" will hold a
discussion today at 10 am at
the Shilpakala Academy to pay
homage to 21 persons for their
contributions in the Language
Movement, reports UNB.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Rmdn	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
13	25	—	6:03 pm
14	26	5:03 am	6:03 pm
15	27	5:02 am	6:04 pm

Opposition plans common bill for care-taker govt

By Staff Correspondent
garding the alleged corruption
by the ministers instead of
forwarding them to the
Speaker.

The unprecedented con-
sensus came at a meeting of all
the opposition parties in the
fifth Parliament chaired by
Leader of the Opposition
Sheikh Hasina at her
Parliament office yesterday.

This is for the first time in
the last three years of the fifth
Parliament, that Jamaat-e-
Islam representatives attended
such a meeting convened by
the Leader of the Opposition.

"We reached a consensus
that we will submit one bill
unitedly in the House to introduce
the provision of a care-
taker government," Mohammad Nasim, the Awami
League leader and Opposition
Chief Whip told The Daily Star.

Three separate bills on the
formation of a care-taker
government were earlier tabled in
the House by the Awami
League, Jatiya Party and the
Jamaat.

He said the opposition parties
also decided to place in the
House the documents re-
quested by the Speaker.

Monirul Huq Chowdhury,
Ganatantri Party's Suranjit
Sengupta, Workers Party's
Rashed Khan Menon, NDP's
Salauddin Kader Chowdhury
and IOJ leader Maulana
Obaidul Huq.

The Opposition party lead-
ers will meet again on Sunday
as a follow up of their new
common approach, opposition
sources said.

At the one and a half-hour
meeting yesterday, the leaders
said the ruling party had been
evading the discussions on al-
leged corruption and is failing
to initiate effective investiga-
tions into the allegations.

"We should remain united
to divulge the corruption of
the government as well as fight
for the independence of the
judiciary," one AL leader was
quoted as saying at the meet-
ing.

According to sources, the
See page 12 Col 2

JS ruling on discussion on corruptions Sunday

By Staff Correspondent

Allegations and counter al-
legations of corruption by
members of both the treasury
and the opposition benches
dominated the proceedings of the
Jatiya Sangsad (JS) yester-
day.

Accusing each other of cor-
rupt practices, the members of
both sides in the House, how-
ever, requested the Speaker to
fix a date for discussion on the
alleged corruptions of the
ruling party and the opposition.

The Speaker, hearing both
the sides, told the House that
he would give his ruling on the
issue next Sunday.

Earlier, he said he was
ready to allow deliberations on
alleged corruptions provided
the demands for the debate
were made as per rules. The
chair, however, apprehended
that such a general discussion
would not benefit the nation.

"There is also no precedent

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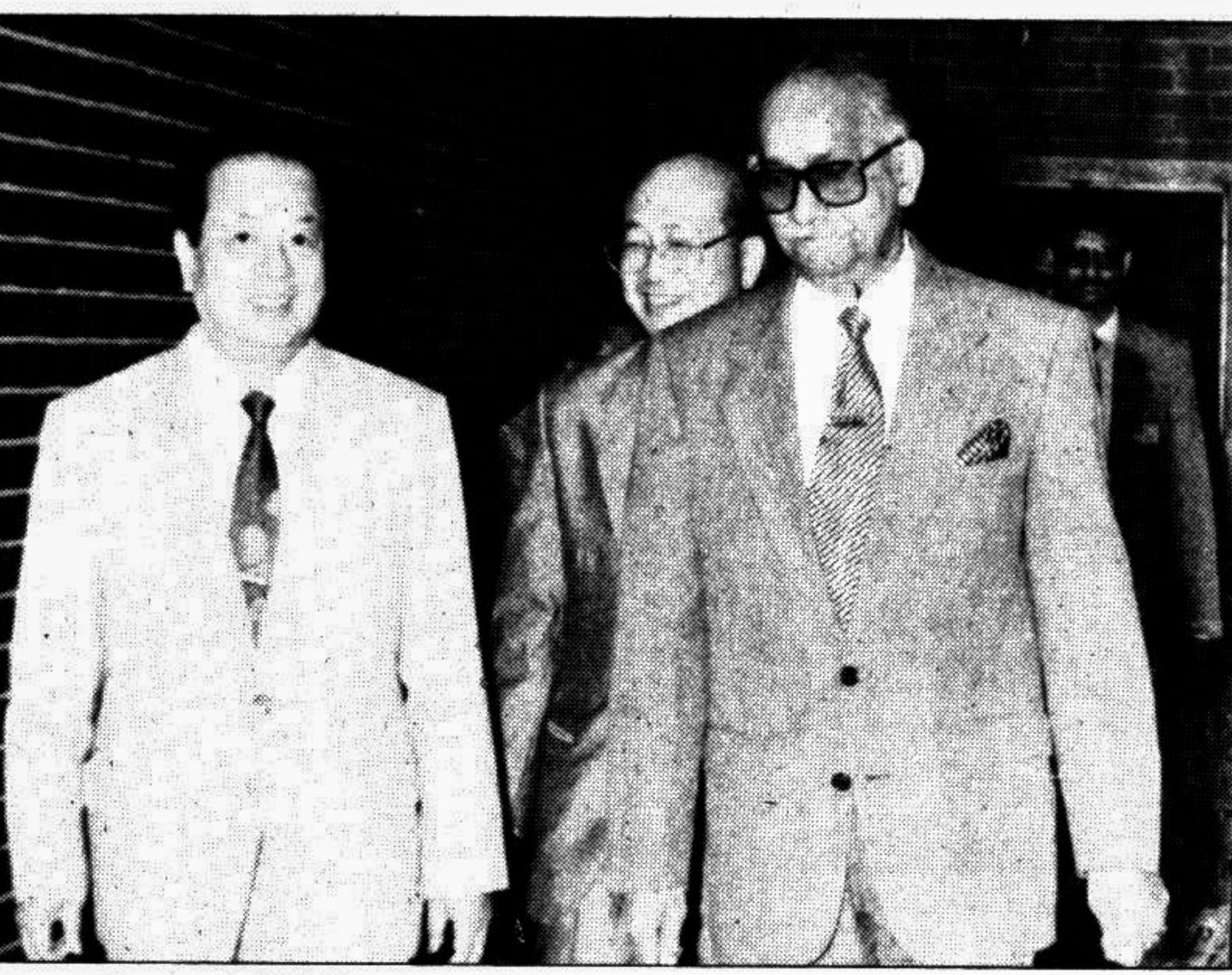
Report on judiciary bill placed

The select committee re-
port on the Constitutional
(Amendment) Bill seeking in-
dependence of the judiciary
and rule of law was placed be-
fore the Jatiya Sangsad yester-
day. reports BSS.

The report along with the
bill as amended by the select
committee was laid before the
House by Housing and Works
Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah on
behalf of the Chairman of the
select committee and Minister
for Law, Justice and Parliamentary
Affairs Mirza Golam Hafiz.

The bill in original was
submitted by Salauddin Yusuf
(AL) in accordance with the
agreed outline of the three
alliances — fifteen party alliance,
seven-party alliance and five-
party alliance — for protection
of the fundamental rights of
the people, independence of
the judiciary and ensuring rule
of law.

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Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman (R) receiving the visiting Chinese Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen (L) at the Zia International Airport yesterday. — PID photo

Bilateral talks today

China will never seek hegemony : Qian

Chinese Vice Premier and
Foreign Minister Qian Qichen
said last night that his country
will never seek hegemony but
remain a force for preserving
world peace and stability, re-
ports BSS.

This was stated by Foreign
Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman
at a dinner given in
honour of visiting Chinese Vice
Premier and Foreign Minister
Qian Qichen last night, reports
UNB.

"Dialogue and cooperation
is increasingly replacing conflict
and confrontation in international
relations. China's contributions to this process
are acknowledged and admired by us. We are looking
forward to continued Chinese
initiatives towards promoting
global peace and security."

The Foreign Minister said
the people of Bangladesh
See Page 12 Col 4

dependent foreign policy of
peace and will never seek
hegemony," he said.

Reciprocating the sentiments
expressed by Foreign
Minister Mostafizur Rahman in
his address of welcome, the
Chinese leader said he is con-
vinced that cooperation be-
tween China and Bangladesh in
all fields will further develop
in depth and breadth with
concerted efforts of the two
countries.

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ports BSS.

This was announced in
Tokyo by the Director-General
of Public Information and
Cultural Affairs of the Foreign
Ministry of Japan, a message
received here yesterday said.

Prime Minister Begum
Khaleda Zia, who is likely to
pay an official visit to Japan
from March 28 to April 1, will
be received in audience on
March 31 at the imperial
palace by their majesties of the
emperor and empress.

The two countries are car-
rying out fruitful cooperation in
the economic, trade, scientific
and other fields and have sup-
ported each other and coop-
See Page 12 Col 4

Taka devalued further

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank has
further devalued the Taka by
six paisa to a dollar with im-
mediate effect from Thursday,
according to Finance Ministry
sources.

The Bangladesh Bank's
buying rate for one US dollar
will now be Tk 40.03 and the
selling rate Tk 40.23.

The devaluation became
inevitable because of a de-
crease in deflation rate and
depreciation of partner coun-
tries' currencies.

The deflation rate is now
approaching to a zero inflation
from the deflationary trend.
The inflation rate was minus
.38 per cent in December last
year. It now stands at minus
.03 per cent.

This is the third time that
the government had devalued
its currency this year.

The last devaluation was a
result of the Chinese devalua-
tion of its currencies.

The country's exports will
now be more competitive, fin-
ancial experts said adding that
the country can accom-
modate another two to three
per cent devaluation at this
moment.

Japanese emperor
to host luncheon
for Khaleda

The emperor and empress
of Japan will host a court lun-
cheon at the imperial palace in
honour of Prime Minister
Khaleda Zia during her
forthcoming visit to Japan, re-
ports BSS.

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Begum Khaleda Zia will hold
a press conference on the
concluding day of her five-day
visit at the National Press Club
in Tokyo, it added.

The announcement further
said some business organisa-
tions will host a luncheon on
March 30 in honour of Bangladesh Prime Minister.

**IMF warns against
using its name**

The International Monetary
Fund (IMF) has warned against
using its name in connection with
issuance of various de-
nominated instruments or of-
fers of participation in certain
financial schemes, reports
UNB.

The warning, issued from
Washington by the treasurer of
the IMF, was available from
Bangladesh Bank yesterday.

The Fund does not issue
any obligations called 'Prime
Bank Notes', 'Prime Bank
Guarantees', 'Bill of Exchange' or
'Bill of Equity' or extended any
credit lines through commercial
banks or other agencies," said IMF clarifying its position.

"Moreover, the IMF does
not guarantee debentures or
other financial instruments is-
sued by a member country or
any other entity. It does not is-
sue to countries or to outside
parties an IMF Number, IMF
Country Registration Number,
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**NDP men attack
a Raozan village:
Woman shot**

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 24: A
group of armed activists of the
National Democratic Party
(NDP) reportedly attacked
Andermanik village of Raozan
town last evening firing indiscriminately, police said.

During the attack one
Jesmin Aktar, 22, received se-
rious bullet wounds while she
was standing in front of her
house, police said adding that
a cow was also hit.

The injured Jesmin was
admitted into the Chittagong
Medical College Hospital where
her condition was stated to be
critical.

Police informed that some
Chittagong League activists im-
mediately launched a counter
attack forcing the NDP ac-
tivists to flee the village. Police
rushed to the spot after the
incident.



Shopping is gradually getting a momentum at the city markets as was seen yesterday, two weeks ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

No scope for JS debate on corruption: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

The policy makers of the
ruling Bangladesh Nationalist
Party (BNP) said that there was
no scope for a general debate
in JS on alleged corruption as
agreed upon in Parliament
yesterday by both the opposition
and treasury benches.

In an informal meeting of
the policy makers immediately
after the session, they concluded
that "the discussion must be held
within the perimeter of existing parliamentary
rules," according to a top BNP
leader who attended the
meeting.

According to the rules, the
House can debate any charges
of corruption against any min-
ister or member after it is
substantiated by necessary
documents.

Later in the afternoon, the
standing committee of the
BNP resumed its meeting with
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda
Zia in the chair. The meeting
was adjourned until today.

No substantive discussion
was made during the half an
hour meeting at the Tejgaon
office of the Prime Minister.

The committee