The Midnight File

US diplomats meet Myanmar

junta chief

junta chief Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt today in the first

high-level discussion between the two countries in six years,

embassy sources said. Details of the talks, which were de-

scribed only as "lengthy," were not immediately available. The

four-member US delegation, led by Deputy Assistant

Secretary of State Thomas Hubbard, also met with Yangon's

5 held for kidnapping

three Britons

Foreign Minister. Ohn Gyaw. reports AFP.

YANGON Nov 1: Senior US diplomats met with Myanmar



Sandhani blood donation programme was launched at **DMCH** in 1978.

# A red-letter day for Sandhani

Star Report The year before it was 22,100

bags. The queues of volunteers

keep growing longer every day.

that is chiefly composed of

medical students and their

donors has also collected 582

corneas and restored eye-sight

members have received pled-

ges from 23,750 people wi-

shing to donate their eyes after

tion was a necessity," says Dr

Muhammad Kamruzzaman, a

former president of the volun-

"The birth of our organisa-

Sandhani leaders pointed

out that the total need of blood

in the country is 2,00,000 bags

ever year. Out of the total, 65

per cent are usually supplied

teers and, interestingly, many

convicts make up another 29

per cent, leaving a deficit of

another 12,000 bags, they said.

works," comments a leader

Many of the professional do-

nors spread infectious diseases

like hepatitis, jaundice, sy-

volunteers so that disease-free

blood could be provided to the

work, the organisation faces

many problems like constant

fund shortage, lack of proper

blood screening facilities and

other vital logistical support,

among which a shortage of

bags and a fully-equipped per-

manent blood donation centre

only source for the bags, but

many a time we have to return

without taking any blood from

Islam Babu, General Secretary

of the Sandhani Central Com-

volunteer," says Samirul

"Our donors do not like that

"The government is our

are the most acute.

needy patients," he added.

"That is why we encourage

However, despite its good

phillis and gonorrhoea.

"This is where the Sandhani

Relatives of patients, volun-

by professional donors.

Besides, the Sandhani

of 554 people so far.

tary organisation.

The non-profit organisation

A few drops of blood and lots of good wishes made all the difference.

A group of donors who volunteered 26 bags of their precious blood at a simple function at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital 17 years ago, perhaps never realised that one day their noble gesture would stir the conscience of the nation and people in their thousands would line up to donate their own blood for a greater cause.

Sandhani, an organisation thorn out of the love of a group of friends for a poor, fellow medical student and their desire to help him with some pocket money, has now become a faithful national movement and symbol of hope for the suffering humanity. And Sandhani has rightly

carned the epithet as trail blazer of the country's campaign for voluntary blood and ere donations Today. Sandhani celebrates

the 17th anniversary of that hum the beginning. Today, their annual average collection of 7500 bags. Indeed, the first 26 bags collected on November 1978 were worth far more

than their volume in gold. This year, the date has also become a red-letter day in the annals of Sandhani. For the first time the day is being observed as 'National Voluntary

Blood Donation Day Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to make an announcement to this effect at a function that will also mark the beginning of Sandhani's country-wide Voluntary Blood Donation and Pos-

thumous Eye Donation Week. With units at the country's nine medical colleges. Sandhani has created a unique slogan: "It is not just a bag of blood that you donate - it is

Last year. Sandhani's blood ollection was 25,300 bags. Youths asked to take part in nation-building activities. Prime Minister Begum

Khaleda Zia yesterday summoned the youth to play a greater role in nation-building activities to build a prosperous Bangladesh through united efforts, reports UNB.

"We have to work for development of the country uphold ing our national tradition, culture, values and morality," she said inaugurating the National Youth Day at the Dhaka outer stadium in the afternoon.

The youth had not been properly utilised in nationbuilding activities in the past. Begum Zia said adding that the present government had taken up extended programmes for their development and resolving their problems.

They can be the main driving force in national development, production, innovation, invention and exploration, she said pointing out that they could be at the vanguard of the country's socio-economic and cultural progress.

The Prime Minister recalled the glorious role of the youth in the Language Movement of 1952, liberation struggle in 1971 and the antiautocratic agitation that culminated in the ousting of the autocratic regime in the 1990

Body recovered . in N'ganj From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 1: The mutilated body of a 25-year old woman was recovered from a slum house beside the Pousha Pond at Sastapur under Fatulla thana at 11 am today.

Police said, when the local people smelled the stench from the house which looked deserted, they called the police and found the woman hanging from the ceiling of the bamboo hut.

Local people said the woman rented this house from one Milon Munshi 25 days ago. The woman was staying here with a man whom she introduced to the local people as her husband. Her husband and, the owner of the house Milon were absconding.

# Eyes of alleged Sarbaharaman gouged out

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Nov 1: Villagers gouged out eyes of a person, reportedly a Sarbahara Party activist at Madhyajotha of Dasmina thana under Patuakhali district last night.

Witnesses said, when three alleged members of the outlawed Sarbahara Party were challenged by the villagers they tried to escape.

The villagers caught two of than while one managed to escape. They plucked out the eyes of Belal, 24, and beat up Wahab, 20, seriously.

Later the villagers handed

them over to the Dasmina thana police. Police recovered one locally made pistol and eight rounds of bullet from their possession.

Jamaat

From Page 1 Col 5

measures of the BNP during its three-and-a-half years rule,' said some 200 rallies and meetings of the opposition parties across the country were foiled by imposing Section 144.

Also blaming the government for unleasing terrorism in the educational campuses, he claimed that there was proof of the BNP's involvement in the killing of Abul Kashem Pathan, a Chhatra Shibir leader gunned down recently in Khulna. "Democracy, independence

and Islam are not safe under the present government," Khan said. Jamaat Secretary General

Matiur Rahman Nizami MP brushed aside the government's proposal for strengthening the Election Commission and strict application of the code of conduct for ensuring free and fair elec-

"These are not realistic in Bangladesh perspective. The ruling party (here) always use the government machinery and the state media, and also make the administration ineffective for bringing the election result in their favour," he

"It is impossible to ensure the right of voters keeping a party government in power," he said, adding that democracy and voters' right were very much interrelated.

Nizami, the leader of the into cognizance in the Jamaat parliamentary party, said the present political crisis lasting over seven months was the result of the BNP's 'inefficiency and obstinacy' in conducting parliamentary af-

> Chaired by city Ameer A T M Azharul Islam, the rally was also addressed by party leaders Mohammad Quamruzzaman, Abdul Kader Mollah, Mojibur Rahman, M M Taher and Jasimuddin Sarkar.



in Munshiganj yesterday. President of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians Association Hiroshi Mitsuzuka (L) is also seen among dignitaries attending the function. - Star photo

# Meghna-Gumti Bridge opens

From Page 1 Col 8 economic impact

"This marks the fulfilment of a long cherished dream of the people of this region," she said, while thanking the Japanese government for the assistance. "This friendship bridge is yet another symbol of their friendly gesture towards us ... which will remain as a milestone in the friendship between Bangladesh and Japan.

Thousands of men, women and children gathered at the Baushia ghat end of the bridge to witness the colourful open ing ceremony while a large number of people also gath ered on the other side at Daudkandi, Begum Zia later addressed the gathering

Flags of Bangladesh and Japan bedecked the entire length of the bridge while festoons and banners were also hung at both ends. Construction of the bridge

was completed by the Japanese firm Obayashi Corporation in 38 months, 16 months ahead of schedule. The foundation stone was laid on September 3, 1991 by Begum Speaking of her govern

ment's thrust on the communications sector, the Prime Minister said that with this bridge 223 bridges have been built during the past three and-a-half years. Begum Zia noted that work

has already started on the second bridge over the river Buriganga in Dhaka while the foundation for the Rupsha bridge in Khulna would be laid this year and the feasibility of a bridge on the river Padma at Paksey is under study. Plans are also underway to build bridges over the river Meghna at Ashuganj, a third Buriganga bridge and at Doarika and Shikarpur on the Faridpur-Barisal highway Work has also been under-

taken to build bridges over the Kushiara at Fenchuganj and at

Beanibazar while a plan has been taken up to construct a tunnel under the river Karnaphuli. The construction work of the bridge over the river Dhaleshwari on the Dhaka-Mawa highway is also progressing, the Prime Minister pointed out.

"The day is not far away when there will be no ferries on the national highways from Tetulia to Teknaf and from Tamabeel to Bhetkhali. Begum Zia declared, "But political and social stability is necessary for the realisation of these goals of public welfare. seek cooperation of all circles in this matter." If this trend of development

continues unhindered, she said, then Bangladesh would emerge within the next decade as one of the developed countries of Asia in economic and social sectors including road communication.

Speaking on the occasion, Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, a former foreign minister in the LDP government, said: "The sight of this bridge rising over the mighty river is truly magnificent and will remain in my memory for many years to come, as will the warm welcome of the Bangladesh people that has been accorded to us during our short stay here."

He noted that the Meghna bridge, also funded under

# Mitsuzuka leaves tor home

Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, member of parliament and president of the Bangladesh-Japan Friendship Association, left Dhaka yesterday for home, ending a four-day visit to Bangladesh.

"This has gone off very well this has enabled me to know Bangladesh closely" he told BSS at the airport about the visit, first by him to this coun-

Japanese grant assistance, was inaugurated in 1990 in the presence of the then Japanese Prime Minister Toshio Kaifu "I am sure that this bridge, together with the Meghna bridge, will become a symbol of friendship between the two countries," he said. Ambassador Takenaka

pointed out that this is the longest bridge ever constructed under Japanese grant assistance programme any where in the world and it is also the largest grant aid project implemented in Bangladesh. Hoping that the bridge

would be remembered as landmark in the history of friendly ties between Bangladesh and Japan. Takenaka concluded by thanking Obayashi Corporation, Pacific Consultants International Nippon Koei Co Ltd and the local sub-contractors for their efficient work. Communications Minister

Oli Ahmed said that the opening of the Meghna-Gumti bridge would usher a new era in the country's trade and commerce. Terming Japan as a partner

in the national development of Bangladesh. Oli Ahmed ex pressed his gratitude to the Japanese government for the friendly cooperation. He also sought Japanese

assistance for building the Paksey road bridge, the second Meghna bridge at Ashugani the tunnel under the river Karnaphuli and the second Dhaleshwari bridge on the Dhaka-Mawa highway. The other members of the

Japanese delegation attending the opening ceremony in cluded Shin Sakurai, vice president of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Association and Takeo Kawamura, secretary general of the association

Chief engineers of the Roads and Highways Division read out a vote of thanks.

NEW DELHI. Nov 1: Indian police who freed three Britons and an American held hostage by alleged Kashmiri militants have arrested five men in connection with the kidnapping, a senior official said today. K Tadmanabhaiah, the top official in the Home (Interior) Ministry, told reporters two of those arrested were suspected to be Afghans, reports Reuter.

# 20 hurt as JCD, BCL activists clash at Feni

FENI. Nov 1: The student activists of the ruling BNP and opposition Awami League fought a fierce gunbattle in the town today leaving at least 20 injured, most with bullet, reports UNB. Witnesses said the clash

erupted when a group of Chhatra League activists allegedly attacked the BNP office at the Panchagacehia road at about 1 pm blasting crackers.

They stormed the office and ransacked its furniture, windows and the party signboard The adjacent Lucky restaurant was also ransacked during the

The two groups then locked in a street battle, using sawedoff rifles, guns, countrymade revolvers, rods and kirish. Some 100 shots were reported fired and 300 crackers exploded during the fighting. Sequel to an earlier clash

today's trouble lasted about three hours

#### Ninian From Page 1 Col 8

an's aide Chris Childs yesterday went to the house of SAMS Kibria, Political Adviser to Sheikh Hasina. Childs was learnt to have handed to Kibria a written outline of the ruling party's proposal for an interim government.

After the breakdown of the formal dialogue on October 25. talks at the deputy leader-level were held on October 27 and 29 at the State Guest House 'Meghna' in the presence of Sir Ninian.

But the meeting suffered yet another jolt when the Opposition rejected the ruling party proposal for a multi-party interim government headed by the incumbent Prime Minister to conduct the next parliamentary elections.

Sir Ninian Monday night met with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and exchanged views with her on possible solution to the linger ing crisis through dialogue.

# 25 hurt

From Page 1 Col 6 ganj to the AL rally in Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka. When the trucks reached the Jurain railgate, some 15 to 20 teenagers hurled 20 to 25 cocktails at the trucks. The cocktails, which ex-

ploded on five trucks, caused burn injuries to some 25 AL supporters who were given first aid later. The teenagers fled the spot

as the AL activists got down from the trucks and chased In the evening, an AL press

release issued by Town AL general secretary Shamim Osman accused governmentbacked terrorists' of the at-It claimed that, in order to

foil the truck procession, police raided the houses of AL, Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders in Narayanganj last night.

#### N-programme From Page 1 Col 3

duce enough plutonium for several nuclear bombs a year. The Foreign Ministry also

said it has shut down a 5megawatt reactor and decided not to reload it with new fuel rods. In May, the North removed 8,000 spent fuel rods from the reactor and threatened to produce plutonium from them. That prompted the United States to threaten to end the negotiations in Geneva.

Meanwhile, US and South Korean troops began a major field exercise Tuesday.

#### Yeltsin fires Dy defence minister MOSCOW. Nov 1: President

Boris Yeltsin today dismissed a controversial general as first deputy defence minister. reports AP

Col Gen Matvei Burlakov, the former chief of the Russian armed forces in Germany, has been accused of corruption by Russian newspapers. Most recently, media reports linked his name to the bomb killing of Moscow investigative reporter.

### JS team visits Rohingya camps From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Nov 1: The

four-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on Disaster Management and Relief Ministry Affairs today visited different Rohingya refugee

Azizur Rahman MP, Syed Mohammad Mohsin MP and Relief Ministry Joint Secretary Golam Murtoza of the parliamentary committee also visited the projects for development of areas which had been affected or damaged by the inmates of the refugee camps around Cox's

Rohingya refugees of 250 families were repatriated to Myanmar today

# of Zakir held A special squad of the

Dhaka Metropolitan Detective

Police has arrested Md Monzurul Alam alias Litu Monday for his alleged involvement in the killing of S M Zakir Hossain, a student of the Dhaka University, on October 27, reports BSS. Biman

From Page 1 Col 5 dislocation at any time," the

official said. "You will find no other airlines in the world flying to 29 international destina-

engaged for the twice-a-week New York flight, he said. "It is quite difficult on our

part to maintain our service on other routes with only four aircraft," the official added

The official also said, most of the world's reputed airlines keep one aircraft standby for

# JP rally in city

Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem

Hossain, Anwar Hossain Manju. Abul Hasnat, and other JP ssain Khan, Begum Razia Fayez, Secretary General Khaledur Rahman Tito, Mahbubul Hun Abu Zafar. Former Mayor of Maleg was in chair.

"We are expressing our

There is no reason for con-

tinuing 'such a 'fruitless' dia-

programme of action would be declared on November 9 after the 'gherao' programme at the Prime Minister's office.

Moudud Ahmed said the demand for elections under a caretaker administration is not aimed at ousting the present government from power but for ensuring fair elections to help institutionalise democ-

"We expected the government to accept the people's demand, and for this we kept our agitation within the confines of Parliament," Moudud said. "But unfortunately, the ruling party has not yet accepted the people's demand which has led the opposition

said, it is a great shame for the. nation that it needed a foreign mediator for resolving its political crisis.

be fruitful if former president Ershad remains in jail.

## Taslima Nasreen case two years imprisonment and

From Page 1 Col 8

vesterday. The defence lawvers referred to their previous arguments saying the plaintiff not have proper authorisation from the government before filling the case against Taslima. Two solicitors, Zahirul

Islam and Sara Hossain. appeared for Taslim.

A case was filed against Taslima Nasreen on June 4 by the Officer-in-Charge of the Motifheel Police Station for hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslims through an interview with a Calcutta English language daily. Taslima left the country August 9.

Taslima Nasreen was sued under Section 295 (A) of the Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC). If proved guilty, she might face

## 40 pilgrims feared drowned in India

VIJAYAWADA, Nov 1: About forty pilgrims were feared drowned when a tourist bus went out of control and fell into the Pumbaleru river near Gudur in the early hours today.

Nellore District Collectorate sources told PTI over telephone that the bus was carrying 61 passengers, most of them belonging to one family who were going to Tirupathi to perform the 'Tirukalyanam' of lord Venkateswara, the presiding deity at Tirupathi.

The sources said 21 persons swam to safety. Five bodies had been re-

Tirupathi.

covered. The bus was proceeding from Palkol on its way to

fine or both.

The public prosecutor argued that under existing laws a person can be tried in Bangladesh if the people of the country are affected by the 'consequences' of his or her offence, irrespective of the place where the offence was committed.

Although Taslima later denied some portions of the interview published in the Indian daily, yet even so the contents of the interview which she did not disown. gave rise to strong reactions in the country, thus affecting the sentiments of the people. which is also an offence under

295 (A) of the Penal Code. In support of his argument, the PP submitted that he would produce Major General (Rtd) Dr Anis Waiz, Mufti Moulana Fazlul Hug Amini, Korban Ali Bar-at -low and Prof Abu Ahmed Chowdhury as wit-

The PP further submitted that Taslima's interview was very "calculative and deliber-"

Defence counsel Zahirul Islam further argued that the charge against the writer was not tenable as it was brought on the basis of secondary, not primary evidence. Further, Taslima had

denied having said what the

newspaper interview quoted

her saying and that she never intended to hurt the religious sentiment of anyone, he said. Neither the reporter, nor the publisher nor the editor of The Statesman was brought

petition, he submitted. Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzak Khan, assisted by APP Masud Ahmed Talukder, defended the state.

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#### Hasina's public meeting in city From Page 1 Col 4 of capturing by power violating the Constitution. "Under which Hasina also accused the gov-

The three Britons and an American rescued by Indian police from Kashmiri Muslim separatists

address a press conference in New Delhi yesterday. From-L to R: Paul Ridout, Miles Croston.

workers and supporters from different townships and thanas. The rally and the yehicles parked around the meeting venue dislocated the city's traffic system. Sheikh Hasina in her 40-

Bela Josef Nuss (USA) and Rhys Partridge.

minute speech said the opposition parties demanded an amendment to the Constitution to insert the provision for a earetaker government to supervise election which the ruling party repeatedly termed as unconstitutional. "Even a layman would

understand that if there were

any provision in the Constitution we would not have demanded its amendment." she added. The Constitution can always be amended for the greater interest of the people, she said, referring to the 11th and 12th Amendments which restored parliamentary system

people," she said. In a sharp rebuttal to the ruling BNP, the Awami League chief accused late President Zia

of government. "We are de-

manding another amendment

to ensure voting rights of the

constitutional provision, had Zia grabbed power by promulgating martial law?" she asked. She said constitutional amendments from the 5th to the 7th were made "only to

General Zia and General Ershad." Urging the people to intensify the current agitation for a caretaker government, the Opposition leader called for cal agitations in many other making a success of the Opposition's November 9 sit-in

programme in front of the Prime

Minister's Secretariat.

serve the personal interests of

Bringing serious charges of corruption against the ruling party, the Opposition leader quoted an IMF report that there was no trace of some Tk 570 crore from the two previous budget accounts (1992-93 and 1993-94).

a sheer wastage of tax payers'

Hasina charged the Prime Minister with extravagance, saying that she (Begum Zia) alone requires Tk 700 crore to maintain her residences and offices. "A poor country like Bangladesh cannot afford such

ernment of 'indecision' and 'inefficiency' which, she said had been the main reasons for continued shyness of investors. "They (the government) tend to blame the Opposition agitation and hartals for the poor re-

sponse from foreign investors,

but the real cause lies in the

time-consuming process of decision-making," she said. There are strikes and politicountries but those affect in vestments the least, she observed.

Hasina also blamed the government for failing to ensure safety and security of the business community and said some 50 businessmen had been murdered during the last threeand-a-half year. The meeting was also ad-

dressed by Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Zillur Rahman, Tofael Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu, Mohammad Nasim, Abdul Jalil, Mohammad Hanif, Abdur Razzak, Sajeda Chowdhury, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury

# Akhter Hamid Siddiqui MP.

Meanwhile, some 1322

Alleged killer

tions with only five DC-10 air-One of the five DC-10-30s is

every four to five routes.

From Page 1 Col 5

leaders including Sirajul Ho-Sheikh Shahidul Islam, JP Dolon and Shah Mohammad Dhaka City Corporation Abdul

Rejecting the ruling party's proposal for holding the next national elections under an allparty government headed by the present Prime Minister, Mizan Chowdhury said there is no scope for accepting the proposal as it did not reflect the wishes of the people.

strong condemnation of time killing through a dialogue and also for tarnishing the image of the country by hiring a mediator from abroad," the JP acting chairman said.

logue, he said, adding that what is needed to be done is to compel the government to accept the demand for a caretaker government by organising a massive agitation. The JP leader said a fresh

parties to come to the streets." Shah Moazzem Hossain

The ruling party alone is responsible for such a 'shameful' event that is taking place in the country in the name of dialogue, he observed.

He also said no dialogue will