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Barrister Emily Thornberry, along with members of Siraj Miah's family addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. On her right is Samsia Begum, widow of Siraj. — Star photo

10 commissioners walk out of RCC meeting

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 3: Ten ward commissioners of Rajshahi City Corporation walked out of a general meeting of commissioners for not putting up the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the conference room of the corporation.

Later in a joint press statement they also announced that they would boycott all meetings till Bangabandhu's portrait is hung.

Fazle Elahi Dulal, Commissioner of Ward No 8 at the beginning of the meeting demanded that a portrait of Bangabandhu be hung as per government order and that the meeting be suspended till it is done.

But the Mayor, Mijanur Rahman Minu, Chief Executive Officer Abul Qasem and some of the commissioners did not agree to discuss the issue since it was not on the agenda. At this stage, 10 commissioners walked out of the meeting.

Maltese vessel removed from KAFCO jetty

Maltese vessel MV Blue North which slammed into KAFCO Ammonia Jetty, has been removed from the jetty on July 27 and safely taken to nearby Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Jetty, reports UNB.

The vessel with 23,000 metric tons of imported cement sank into the river Karnaphuli after badly damaging the KAFCO jetty on June 25 due to break failure of its anchor.

After the sunken ship removed, at present there is no obstacle of ship movement through port channel and the activities of two KAFCO jetties resumed in full-swing, said an official release yesterday.

Carl Lewis

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Lewis. But he refused to pin himself down further until Saturday. The deadline for nominations was one hour before the 7:20 pm (2320 GMT) start.

Assistant coach Charlie Greene said Lewis was likely to train with the squad today — but pointedly declined to say he had been invited.

With Russia now competing for the first time as a single entity, the United States has no serious rival atop the medals table — although the Russians are holding a strong second place.

But the fight for the minor places has heated up. On a day when 30 medals were on offer, Germany leapt above China and France into third with 18 golds after wins in canoe, kayak and equestrian events.

Germany won the men's and women's kayak fours and the canoe doubles, and then Isabell Werth followed up by winning the individual equestrian dressage freestyle.

There were also canoe and kayak golds for Italy, Norway and the Czech Republic.

Germany suffered a blow, however, when defending Olympic showjumping champion Ludger Beerbaum had to pull out of the individual final because his horse had sustained an injury in Germany's resounding team event victory on Thursday.

Beerbaum would have started favourite to become the first rider in Olympic history to win consecutive individual jumping titles.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Chechen leaders to sit with Russian officials for peace

MOSCOW, Aug 3: Chechen rebel leaders are ready in principle to meet Russian negotiators who have arrived in Grozny to try to restart the moribund peace accords, mediator Tim Guldinmann said today.

He, however, told Itar-Tass news agency that it was not "completely sure" if the talks could take place because of the "very complicated" situation in the war-torn republic.

If a meeting did take place, he added, it would not be talks as such merely "contact" between representatives of the warring sides.

Guldinmann is the Grozny mission chief for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is trying to broker a lasting peace accord in Chechnya.

Separatist leaders meanwhile expressed their suspicion about the visit by Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov and Sergei Stepanov, secretary of the State Commission for resolving the Chechen crisis.

"Russia is not keeping its promises (in the accord of May 27 in Moscow and June 10 in Nazran, which is putting the effectiveness of negotiations at risk," they said in a communiqué cited by Interfax

news agency. Earlier today, as he left Moscow for Chechnya, Mikhailov said the Major aim of the visit was to restart talks on military questions and the release of prisoners of war.

He also said he wanted talks with Chechnya's pro-Moscow administration over its relations with Moscow and its delegated powers.

In spite of the peace accords, under which a ceasefire is supposed to be in force ahead of a withdrawal of federal soldiers and disarmament of the rebels, Russian forces have stepped up military actions in the republic.

US House okays anti-terrorism bill

WASHINGTON, Aug 3: The US House of Representatives passed a watered-down anti-terrorism Bill yesterday, voting to tighten airport security but ignoring a White House request for two more controversial measures, reports AFP.

In a Bill that passed 389-22, the House legislation was more notable for what it did not contain than what it did.

Increased wiretap authority and a provision calling for chemical tracers, or "taggants" requested by President Bill Clinton, were dropped.

Conservative Republicans objected to the wiretap powers on grounds it violated privacy, and the taggants measure remained controversial amid opposition from the powerful US gun lobby.

Congressional and White House negotiators had been wrangling for the past week to quickly draft legislation in order to claim a nation fearful of a wave of terrorist attacks.

But with Congress set to recess this weekend, the controversy surrounding the anti-terrorism package proved too great to allow swift action.

Nat'l film policy soon

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday said the government would formulate a national film policy soon, reports BSS.

He said this while inaugurating a retrospective of the internationally reputed filmmaker Goutam Ghosh at the Indian Information Centre in the city yesterday evening.

The state minister said the government would examine the "Chalachitra Sangsad Control Act 1980" and would consider to repeal the anti-people portion of the law.

Termining the film as a strong medium of communication, he said we could achieve our goal of creating consciousness among the people on various issues through this means.

Presided over by Prof Anisuzzaman the inaugural function was addressed by Indian acting high commissioner to Bangladesh A K Basu and noted filmmaker Badal Rahman.

On the inaugural day 'Dakhal', a film made by Goutam Ghosh was screened.

BNP city legal aid body formed

A 201-member Dhaka Metropolitan Legal Aid Committee of BNP was formed yesterday with Mohammad Fazlur Rahman Khan as its convener, a press release said, reports BSS.

The legal aid committee would provide support to workers and leaders of the BNP and its front organisations on legal matters.

The meeting held at the city office of the BNP was presided over by Advocate Abdul Ahad Mian, vice president of Nationalist Lawyers' Forum, Dhaka unit.

BNP urges admin to remain neutral during by-polls

Secretary General of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday urged the administration to remain neutral during by-polls in the face of all sorts of party pressure, according to a press release, reports BSS.

While talking with the BNP workers and leaders from Bogra, Rangpur and Pirojpur districts who met him at the party central office in the city Bhuiyan alleged that BNP leaders, workers and supporters were being arrested and harassed before the by-elections. He said unless this was stopped election environment would be affected.

Mannan urged the party workers and leaders to remain alert in the by-elections from the experiences of the June 12 elections.

He also urged the workers and leaders of the BNP to work unitedly for the party nominees in the by-elections.

Norwegian team meets Hasina

A six-member delegation of Norway yesterday called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office, reports BSS. Led by its head Terje Magsnesson Watterdal, the delegation apprised the Prime Minister of their activities in Bangladesh which included training for the blind to study Braille.

She expressed her concern for the retarded, handicapped and poor children of the country and said such social welfare programmes would contribute much towards improving their condition.

"Such programmes have been continuing in Bangladesh from the days of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government," she said.

The delegation members expressed their happiness to see democracy in Bangladesh and also the Prime Minister's personal initiative for education and welfare of the poor.

The Prime Minister assured of her government's cooperation towards such welfare programmes.

Arlo Oksnevad, acting head of mission of Royal Norwegian embassy in Dhaka was present.

Depressions likely

One or two depressions are likely to be formed over the Bay of Bengal during the current month causing more rain, a long range Met Office forecast said in the city last night, reports UNB.

It said Chittagong division may experience the highest 450-500 mm rain, followed by Sylhet 420-460 mm, Barisal 400-450 mm, Rajshahi 330-380, Dhaka 250-300 mm and Khulna 230-280 mm.

Enver Pasha

From page 1

But, swayed by Turkish nationalism in Central Asia, Enver abandoned Lenin to lead the Muslim "Basmachi" guerrillas and their fight against the Bolsheviks.

Over 100,000 Soviet troops were sent to Central Asia to put down the Basmachis.

Flood

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Dharia, the Buriganga and the Kaliganga in the same basin recorded further fall.

The Ganges, in the Ganges basin, registered rise by 2 cm at Pankha while it recorded fall by 13 at Rajshahi, 4 cm at Harding Bridge and 3 cm at Goalundo. But the river was still flowing 23 cm above its danger level at Bhagyakul as it remained steady at this point.

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Govt, Opposition blame each other for supplementary expenses

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday wrapped up the discussion on supplementary budget 1995-96 while members of Treasury and Opposition benches blamed each other for incurring the supplementary expenses, reports BSS.

Participating in the discussion on supplementary budget on the third day yesterday Opposition BNP lawmaker M Ruhul Qudus Talukder paid glowing tributes to the memory of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman who, he said, had announced the national independence.

Qudus deplored the Treasury bench members for criticising previous BNP government.

Awami League member Kamal Ahmed Majumder said the supplementary budget is the glaring example of corruption of the past BNP government. He paid high tributes to the memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who Majumder said was the best Bengali of thousand years.

BNP legislator Abdul Mannan criticised some of the supplementary expenses including the June 12 elections, police and jails and said there were irregularities in the election in 111 constituencies.

Jatiya Party member Dr Rushtam Ali Faraji said if the government can gag the bank defaulters and realise the long outstanding bank loans, then the Jatiya Sangsad in future would not see any supplementary budget.

He also emphasised the need for ensuring social justice, eliminating red tapism, curbing terrorism and tackling

price-hike. Awami League member Mostafizur Rahman was very critical about the inefficiency, nepotism and politicization of the previous BNP government and said the present government do not want to hide the truth and facts.

He said the supplementary budget had become a culture and we had to pass it as a constitutional obligation. BNP member Alamgir Kabir said even after facing 114 days of hartals and non-cooperation, the BNP government of Begum Khaleda Zia had raised the production and income, expanded infrastructure and achieved macroeconomic stability during 1995-96 which would be evaluated by the nation.

He said the Awami League had made the nation a guinea pig as this particular party had switched from parliamentary democracy to one party Baksal system, welcomed martial law of Ershad, then propagated caretaker government and now giving lip-service to government of consensus.

Speaking for the first time in Parliament Awami League MP and former chief of Army Staff Major General (ret'd) M Shafullah referred to the controversy on the announcement of the independence and said one formal announcement did not initiate the Liberation War in 1971.

He said late President Ziaur Rahman announced the independence on March 27 which was described in different documents including the 'A Tale of Millions' written by Major (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam while the late president was alive.

"But some Bengali troops including my battalion revolted ever before my friend Zia announced the independence," General Shafullah said.

He said even if the question of formal announcement comes, it was made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which was referred to in the Pakistani documents including the radio speech of the then Pakistani military dictator General Yahya Khan and Pakistani ISPR officer Siddiq Salik's book "Witness to Surrender."

General Shafullah posed a question, had the war of independence been initiated, following the announcement of Ziaur Rahman why the Bangladesh's Independence Day was declared on March 26 in the Constitution?

He said the independence war was not the result of an announcement alone, rather it was the result of a long history of political struggle. The people and the Bengali troops of the then Pakistani army was inspired to take part in the war of independence by the leadership of Bangabandhu particularly by his historic speech on March 7 of 1971.

Jatiya Party member Sabita Begum said her party was in Parliament to support the good tasks of the government and criticise its wrong doings.

She claimed that during the JP rule the nation had witnessed

Advance grant

From page 1

advance grant made to meet partial expenditure of the current fiscal year.

The House passed the Bill by voice vote.

Earlier, President had authorised the grant through an ordinance, in view of the parliament's inability to approve the budget in June amid political transition.

Anawara

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A large number of homeless people took refuge at the local cyclone shelter at Anawara while others took shelter on the nearby embankment.

Saline water from the sea entered three unions of Anawara thana and six unions of Sandwip island as there were breaches in portions of the flood protection coastal embankment, the officials said.

The affected unions in Anawara include Raipur, Burumchhara and Halidhar while at Sandwip the affected unions are Harishpur, Musapur, Mait-banga, Unirchar Magdhara and Kalaparia.

According to official reports, 200 dwelling houses were completely destroyed by the tidal flood which also damaged 720 acres of standing crops and 75 acres of seed beds at Anawara thana.

At Sandwip island 3,200 people belonging to 550 families were affected, officials said. But reports on the extent of damage caused to dwelling houses, crops and seed beds were not immediately available.

Meanwhile, the District Relief Office said that two metric tons of rice, 25 tons of biscuit and cash money amounting to Taka 12,500 were sent this morning for distribution among the affected people of Anawara.

nessed maximum development in all sectors.

Awami League member ASM Firoz demanded probe into the corruption charges against the ministers of the former government and MPs, and leaders of all parties for the sake of transparency.

He termed the BNP rule as the 'regime of corruption, nepotism, partisanship, dacoity and vote rigging' and alleged that during the last five years the opposition MPs and the people of their constituencies were subjected to immense discrimination regarding to the allocation of wealth and resources.

Awami League member MA Hakim said Bangabandhu and Bangladesh are synonymous and Bangabandhu means Bangladesh.

Lauding the role of his leader, the Awami League member said Major Zia had just played the role of a school daptari by ringing the bell at the instruction of his headmaster.

BNP member Amanullah Aman said this supplementary budget would not have been required if there were not so many hartals and non-cooperations during the last fiscal year. He said Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman was the architect of multi-party democracy and proclaimer of national independence.

Aman said Tareq Rahman Zia is doing business lawfully, not robbing banks like the son of post-independence prime minister.

He described the appointment of Awami League Law Affairs Secretary KS Nabi as the Attorney General and another party activist as vice chancellor of Jahangir Nagar University as the highest form of politicisation in the history of the country.

Aman was also very critical of the deterioration of law and order and called upon the home minister to curb terrorism immediately.

Awami League member Biren Sikder recalled the glorious role of Bangabandhu and Sheikh Hasina for democracy and development of the country.

Sikder said the rigging of Magura by-election had sparked widespread criticism against the previous BNP government and culminated in caretaker government, formation and assumption of power by Awami League government after 21 years.

Al-haj Makbul Hossain (AL), paid glowing tributes to the Father of the Nation and also gratefully remembered the people of Dhanmondi-Mohammadpur area for electing him as the member of the House.

He criticised former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for vacating this seat after 1991 elections and said 'Man from Panchagarh' Jamiruddin Sircar got elected from there in the by-elections but he did nothing for that constituency.

Hossain said terrorism was encouraged during the last five years in the area and demanded arrest and punishment of the killers of popular commissioner Shahabuddin and also of another commissioner Alim. He called for recovery of illegal arms and said the Awami League never believes in terrorism.

Earlier, Hossain said he would have been happier if Jamiruddin Sircar, who represented his constituency in the fifth parliament, was present in the House since he would like to speak about that constituency.

Taking the floor on a note of personal explanation, Jamiruddin Sircar (BNP) said in a lighter vein that when Hossain did not see him (Sircar) in the House even when he was very much present and observed that how Hossain will evaluate his works in that constituency when he failed to find Sircar's presence in the House.

Then Sircar rejected the allegations of Hossain that nothing was done in the constituency when Sircar was the member of Parliament and also a minister for five years and gave a list of what was done including building of a school near the house of Hossain. Sircar said he contested the by-elections from the Dhanmondi-Mohammadpur seat after resigning as a minister since his critics would have said that ministerial position had helped him in the event of his winning the election.

Shafiqul Islam (JP) taking part in the supplementary budget, said that such budget carried little relevance for the people of Rangpur since that area was totally ignored during the last five years by the BNP government. The member devoted his entire seven minutes time in saying that the people of Rangpur had a bitter taste of governance by the BNP government and repeatedly said that discussions on supplementary budget carried no importance to them at all.