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Visiting British business delegation led by British Overseas Trade Board Chairman Sir Martin Laing called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her parliament office yesterday. — PID photo

'We want CHT solution thru' ballot, not bullet'

Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan hoped for an early solution to the problems in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) through current dialogue with Shantibahini leaders, reports UNB.

PCJSS leaders return to Tripura

CHITTAGONG, Jan 28: The Parbatia Chhatragram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) delegation, which held talks with the government earlier this week in Dhaka, has returned to its sanctuary across the border from the Dudukchhari frontier hamlet this morning, according to sources concerned.

The delegation, escorted by some aides and armed-cadre members, crossed the border at 10 am today to reach their base in the Tripura state of India, the sources added.

The PCJSS team arrived at Dudukchhari on Thursday last to attend the peace talks held in the capital for the first time.

The team members stayed at Dudukchhari and were flown by a military helicopter from there to Dhaka on Saturday morning.

JS: Power import

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company to float shares in the stock market.

Besides, under the Rural Electrification Board (REB), 10 projects have been authorised to generate 10 MW power each at haor, shail and offshore areas in the country.

When a lawmaker asked why the country has to depend on funds from donors to generate power and why local resources cannot be mobilized, the Energy Minister said, DESA and PDB were overburdened with loans. PDB is not in a position now to generate more power with its own resources, said Khan adding that REB would float shares in the stock market soon to generate funds for development.

The Energy Minister told another questioner that a request has recently been made to the National Board of Review (NBR) to allow duty free import of generators.

He said that load shedding increased to 763 hours in 1995-96 from 113 hours in 1990-91. During the period from June 1, 1996 to January 20, the average

Microcredit summit

from the participation of the First Lady, she told this correspondent.

The organisers of the meeting are hopeful that the summit will generate wide global interest and re-energise the microcredit movement. Currently, over 2.5 billion people are considered extremely poor, living on one dollar or less a day. The organisers hope that by the year 2005, over 100 million poor people would have access to small loans, giving them a real opportunity to crawl out of abject poverty. If this is to happen, the microcredit groups will need a total of 21.6 billion dollar over the next eight years.

The organisers believe that the bulk of the money, about 8 billion dollar would be raised commercially. About 7 billion dollar would come from aid-giving countries and various multinational corporations would chip in some 2.5 billion dollar. Another 1.6 billion dollar would come from the developing countries themselves. The remaining 2 billion dollar would come in the form of new deposits from creditors.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

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The Daily Star

BAC decisions not followed, alleges BNP, denies AL

By Staff Correspondent

Some senior members of the Treasury and Opposition benches had an unscheduled debate in the House yesterday on whether or not the Jatiya Sangsad session was being run as per decisions of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC).

The BAC, comprising leading members of all the parties in parliament, meets time to time to decide issues relating to the running of every session.

The brief debate was triggered by Chief Whip of the Opposition Khandakar Delwar Hossain who blamed the ruling party for not going by the BAC decisions. The Opposition leader rose after several members of his party demanded allowing more questions on the government plan to import power from India.

He also criticised the 'lengthy and irrelevant' deliberations by the ministers while replying to questions and notices and termed such practices as inconsistent with what was decided at the BAC meeting. Earlier, some Treasury Bench members also protested issuance of statements by their Opposition colleagues in the name of formulating questions and raising points of order.

It may be mentioned that the BAC members belonging to the main opposition BNP boycotted the committee meetings during the last session and they started participating in its activities following the recent Government-Opposition agreement on issues relating to the affairs of the parliament.

Referring to the BAC meeting, the Opposition Chief Whip said that the meeting decided that more questions on issues of special importance be entertained and the ministers concerned confine their replies within two to three minutes with a view to stop wastage of time.

Deputy Leader of the House and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman rose to contradict the Opposition leader. "The BAC meet did not limit time for the ministers... because time cannot always be limited for the ministers,"

Khandakar Delwar took the floor again to challenge the

Deputy Leader of the House and demanded that the proceedings of the last BAC meeting be placed in the House. "It was decided that time will be allocated to the questioners and the respondent in accordance with the importance of the issues," he added.

The BNP leader also protested issuance of statements by the Energy Minister yesterday and by the State Minister for Religious Affairs the day before.

Decision on BNP petitions seeking revision of JS ruling soon

By Staff Correspondent

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that he would give his decision soon on two petitions, filed by BNP lawmakers, seeking revision of his ruling on Sunday.

The Deputy Speaker gave a ruling on Sunday last rejecting opposition BNP's allegation that empowering a technocrat minister to reply questions not related to his ministry was contrary to the Constitution.

State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir answered questions relating to Prime Minister's office and Cabinet Division in the House on Thursday and Sunday.

Two BNP lawmakers, M K Anwar and Ziaur Rahman Khan, filed petitions on Monday seeking revision of the Chair's ruling.

When the petitioners raised the issue yesterday, for the third consecutive day, Abdul Hamid assured that after reviewing their petitions he would soon let the House know about his decision on the matter.

As MK Anwar argued that if the decision was delayed, the technocrat minister may again reply to questions not related to his ministry, the Deputy Speaker said, "I will give my decision in this regard before the same is repeated again."

Raphel: Cooperation

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Raphel said that she is happy that Bangladesh was now having a more stable and matured democracy after having overcome the political stalemate of the past through the efforts of the political parties.

She was happy to note that all the major parties are now working again in parliament and hoped that they will make efforts to strengthen the democratic institutions.

She mentioned that she had fruitful meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia.

She observed that the Opposition had expressed some doubts to her about implementation of the four-point accord recently signed for their return to Parliament. But she hoped that everything will progress smoothly.

Raphel observed that Bangladesh is attracting foreign investment and there was now greater interest and investment by US companies.

She said South Asia was strategically important for the United States as it borders China and South East Asia besides being the home of nearly one-fifth of the world's population.

Besides, South Asia, "is important to us in terms of trade and investment," Raphel added.

The new US Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, considers South Asia as an important area that deserves US attention, she said.

Albright was serving earlier as the US Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Replying to a question, she said President Bill Clinton will bring several changes in the State Department during his second term in office as part of a routine exercise. "I do not

know if it will be possible to be there after four years."

Raphel said she had exceedingly enjoyed her trips to the South Asian region, particularly Bangladesh which has a very resilient and friendly people.

Responding to another question, the US Assistant Secretary said India and Pakistan should talk directly in an effort to improve the overall atmosphere in the region. She hoped that both countries will put sincere political will to resolve the Kashmir issue keeping the hopes and aspirations of the people of the valley.

Raphel hoped that efforts would be made to ensure free and fair polls in Pakistan and mentioned that different monitoring groups including that from SAARC countries would be there.

About Afghanistan, she said the US does not recognise governments, but only recognises states.

However, she categorically stated that the US does not recognise the Taliban or any other warring factions.

"Our main concern is the instability in Afghanistan and I hope that peace and stability will return there, which had eluded it for 18 years."

Responding to a question if the United States would keep scaling down USIS programmes, educational and cultural operations worldwide, Raphel said, this was happening due to budget cuts but she hoped that the new administration would sensitise the US public about making increasing global efforts in the education and cultural sphere.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh David N. Merrill was present at the press conference which was conducted by Public Affairs Director Donald Bishop.

Indemnity (Repeal) Act

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In September last year, a six-member committee was formed by the government to examine the Indemnity Ordinance of 1975 and prepare a bill for its repeal.

The committee headed by Aminullah, secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, also included Mustafizur Rahman, Abul Bashir Bhuiyan, joint secretaries, Ministry of Law and Justice, and Iqbal Ahmed, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice.

The committee submitted the bill to the ministry of law which was later placed before parliament, the Jatiya Sangsad passed the Indemnity (Repeal) bill, 1996 on November 12 last year by a simple majority.

UNB adds: Earlier the High Court had issued rule upon the writ petition on December 2 directing the government as to why the Indemnity (Repeal) Act '96 should not be declared illegal and ultra vires of the Constitution.

The court had appointed six constitutional experts as amicus curiae - Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Dr Kamal Hos-

sain, Barrister Rafiqul Huq, Khandaker Mahabubuddin Ahmed, Barrister Amirul Islam and M Nurullah.

Of the six jurists who assisted the court in reaching a decision on this crucial constitutional dispute, five said that the Indemnity (Repeal) Act '96 was a valid piece of legislation and the Indemnity Ordinance '75 was void being ultra vires of the Constitution.

They contended that the repealed ordinance was never a part of the Constitution.

Khandaker Mahabubuddin Ahmed was the lone jurist who supported the contention of the writ petitioner and argued that the impugned Indemnity Ordinance '75 was part of the Constitution and can't be repealed or altered by a simple majority.

The Indemnity Ordinance '75 was a bad law and against humanity, Ahmed observed but viewed that the vote of two-thirds majority is required to repeal the ordinance in parliament.

The court in its judgment said, "We have accepted the view of the majority. In the result, both the rules issued in these two writ petitions are discharged."

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PHILIPS

Young man murdered

By DMC Correspondent

A young man was hacked to death by some of his friends in the city on Monday, police said yesterday.

The victim, Nurul Islam alias Rifat, 24, son of Alhaj Abdul Aziz went out of their house in the New DOHS allegedly at the call of one of his friends Monday afternoon. He was found lying dead beside the railway track near the BTC in the same locality yesterday morning.

Rifat passed the HSC examination from the Teigaon College. He later became involved in his brother's garment's business as a director, police said quoting his family members.

The cause of the killing could not be known immediately. However, police say, the murder might be the result of a conflict among the friends.

Rifat's elder brother, Ismail Hossain, a businessman, in the FIR filed with police has accused eight persons of the murder. He said, one Bidyut called his brother from their house saying they would go to a friend's residence for iftar.

Cantonment police arrested one Manik, reportedly a friend of Rifat, from the New DOHS area yesterday, in connection with the murder. They also interrogated the driver, Mokbul.

Husband kills wife, minor daughter

From Our Correspondent

NARYANGANJ, Jan 28: One person allegedly strangled his wife and their six-month-old daughter in Mridhakandi village under Sonargaon thana last night.

Police said, Abdul Hakim killed Sheful Begum, 25, and Pinky at around midnight and fled soon after the killings.

Sheful and Pinky were sleeping beside him at his house.

The police recovered the bodies and sent them to the Narayanganj hospital morgue for autopsy.

Sheful's father, Ansur Ali, filed a case against Abdul Hakim and his parents.

According to the FIR, since their marriage one and a half year ago, Hakim had been torturing Sheful for dowry.

Farooq Sobhan in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, Jan 28: Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan arrived here today on a three-day official visit to Pakistan as a special envoy of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reports BSS.

He was received by his Pakistani counterpart at the Islamabad Airport.

Sobhan will call on Pakistani President Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari, Prime Minister Mirza Khalid, Foreign Minister Shahabzada Yakub Khan and other dignitaries.

He will have talks with his Pakistani counterpart Nazmuddin Shaikh and discuss matters related to the interests of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Zobaida Rashid's bail prayer rejected

Additional District and Sessions Judge M Azizul Haq yesterday rejected the bail prayer of Zobaida Rashid in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case, reports UNB.

Moving the bail prayer, Advocate Mahabubur Rahman said she has been implicated in the case only because she is the wife of Col (ret) Abdur Rashid. She is seriously ill and there is no chance of her absconding if her bail prayer is allowed, he said.

Opposing the bail prayer, special PP advocate Sirajul Haq submitted that the accused was above 16 years of age and she is not ill. So she cannot get the privilege of bail.

After hearing both sides, the court rejected the bail prayer.

Raqibul Huda produced in court

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 28: Former police commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Mirza Raqibul Huda now in jail custody in connection with the mass killing here on January 24, 1988 was produced in the court of the District Sessions Judge today.

A prayer for his bail was moved but the court set February 4 for a hearing on it, court sources said.

Businessman robbed in city

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers snatched Tk 1.2 lakh from a businessman in Islampur area under Kotwali thana in the old part of the city Monday.

A gang of three snatchers attacked Rafiq Ahmed who came from Chittagong to purchase sarees from a wholesale shop at Islampur.

Sangsad snippets

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proceedings. It's alright." Abdul Hamid also told the House in a lighter vein. "Mosharraf is not lost. He is very much in the House."

The former energy minister was absent from the House at that time.

Discussing on the Artho Rin Adalat (amendment) Bill, Maj (ret) Akhtaruzzaman of BNP quoted the Prime Minister as telling a newspaper that files in the government offices did not move without fuel.

Retorting to his comment, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria said, "We inherited as many as 90 files, left by the former Prime Minister (Begum Khaleda Zia) at the PM's Secretariat. May be, those files could not move due to lack of fuel."

"The minister was backed by cheering Treasury Bench members who shouted 'shame, shame'."

As soon as Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury mentioned Maj Akhtaruzzaman's name to give him the floor, another Akhtaruzzaman (of AL) requested the Chair to add 'Oba' (retired) with the BNP lawmaker's name.

The Speaker laughed while complying with the AL member's request.

Getting the floor, Maj (ret) Akhtaruzzaman specially thanked the Chair for mentioning 'Oba' after his name because, he said, mentioning only Akhtaruzzaman reminded him of that Akhtaruzzaman, against whom warrant of arrest was issued.

Jatiya Party MP MK Alam Choudhury sought the floor for raising, what he said, a 'Point of Order'.

A reeling Deputy Speaker allowed the JP lawmaker to speak asking what he meant by 'Point of Order'.

Getting the floor, Alam Choudhury told the House amid giggle that he rose to speak about the chilly cold sweeping over the northern districts. "The bite of cold in our northern

Misti murder case

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 28: All four accused in the Misti Mandal murder case were acquitted by the court of the District and Sessions Judge today.

They are: Tophi, Suresh, Paresh and Babul. According to the prosecution, the case in brief is: Misti, an HSC examinee of the Barisal Govt Women's College was kidnapped allegedly by some young men on Aug 8, 1995.

Tophi Biswas, one of the alleged kidnappers, prepared marriage documents and took Misti to his village home at Agailjhara as his wife.

But after two days, Tophi and two of his associates allegedly raped Misti and later handed her with a tree.

After investigation, CID police submitted chargesheets against the accused.

After examining 20 witnesses and documents, the District Judge M A Samad pronounced the judgement today.

Ghost bills

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caught the owner of the business house by surprise because it never owned telex no. 632199. Moreover, it has not been using its telex for a long time since having a fax installed in the office.

The business house strongly reacted to such false bills and sent a protest letter to the T&T Board.

When contacted yesterday, an official spokesman of T&T Board could not give any information regarding the ghost bills.

PM leaves

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important councils of the total 15 sessions of the summit.

Other co-chairpersons are Queen Sophia of Spain, US First Lady Hillary Clinton and former Japanese Prime Minister Dr Tsutomu Hata.

More than 3,500 delegates from 185 countries are scheduled to participate in the conference, first of its kind in the world, organised by a Washington-based organisation, in collaboration with World Bank and a number of leading NGOs of different countries.

In Washington, the Prime Minister, apart from the summit, is expected to have bilateral meetings with President Clinton and other heads of state and government of the friendly countries.

Hasina will visit Boston University which will confer on her a PhD degree in recognition of her contribution to consolidating democracy.

During the visit, Hasina will lead a 15-member delegation that includes State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, MP, Kalpanjan Chakma, MP, and Segufa Yasmeen, MP.

She is expected to return home on February 9.

districts is much more than that of your area," he told the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker told the member, who is a lawyer, "You're supposed to feel more cold since you wear coat even in the summer."

During a heated debate on the government plan to import power from India, ruling party MP Tajul Islam said, "We find problems with power everywhere... even discussion on power is generating much heat in the House."

The House plunged into laughter when Islam wanted to know from the Chair if the heat in the House could produce power.

Speaking on the Artho Rin Adalat (amendment) Bill, BNP lawmaker Mashiur Rahman blamed the present government for not punishing the bank loan defaulters, rather giving them privileges such as including some of them in the Prime Minister's entourage during her foreign trips.

At one stage, Mashiur claimed that loan was even granted for 'pet dogs' of some influential persons which was not recovered later. He, however, did not name anybody.

Polls observers go to Pakistan today

A 10-member Bangladesh team led by former Chief Adviser of the caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman leaves Dhaka today for Pakistan to join "SAARC Non-government Election Monitoring Delegation," reports BSS.

The delegation will monitor elections in Pakistan scheduled to be held on February 3 next, a press release said in Dhaka yesterday.

Other members of the team are former chief justice Kamal Uddin Hossain, former foreign secretary Fakhruddin Ahmed, former adviser Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, editor of the Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, editor of the Bhorer Kagoj Matur Rahman and human rights activists.

Khaleda

From Page 1
ing bilateral matters as well as regional issues of common concern.

The former Prime Minister gave the US official a brief account of present political and economic scenario of the country.

Raphel was also briefed on the deteriorating law and order situation of the country.

Begum Zia, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, discussed with the US official the functioning of the legislature.

She mentioned the difficulties being faced by the BNP in voicing their demands in parliament, the sources said.

The four-point agreement on the basis of which the Opposition had returned to the House after a prolonged abstention also figured in the discussion.

Raphel hoped that parliamentary democracy would flourish in Bangladesh through mutual cooperation of all political parties.

Raphel apprised the BNP chief of the conference of the US ambassadors in South Asia, chaired by her.

US Ambassador in Bangladesh David N. Merrill, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, party adviser and former ambassador M M Rezaul Karim and press secretary to the BNP Chairperson Ahmad Nazir were present.

AL council

From Page 1

January 31 as 'Lalbagh Killing Day' and February 15 as 'Democracy Killing Day'.

On January 31 in 1994, a day after the mayoral election, six persons were killed in a post-political massacre in the city's Lalbagh area. On February 15 last year a general elections was held under the then BNP government amid anti-government movement launched by major opposition parties. The then Awami League, had rejected the polls calling it 'one-party farcical election'.

According to the sources, yesterday's meeting discussed the forthcoming parliamentary by-poll in a Thakurgaon constituency. Party chief Sheikh Hasina also exchanged views on various socio-political issues with her party colleagues, the sources added.

The ALCWC members congratulated the government of Sheikh Hasina for signing the historic Ganges water sharing treaty and repealing the Indemnity Ordinance, said a party press release.

The meeting also expressed satisfaction at the progress of recently held talks between the National Committee and representatives of Shantibahini in resolving the problems in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The meeting endorsed an obituary reference on some eminent persons and party leaders and workers who died since the last ALCWC meeting.