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Speaker's ruling: State Minister for Planning did not violate constitutional provision

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury yesterday ruled that the participation of the State Minister for planning in the discussion on supplementary budget on June 17 in new way violated any provision of the Constitution, reports BSS. Giving his ruling on the issue, the Speaker said the point of order raised on the matter by Deputy Leader of the Opposition AGM Badruddoza Chowdhury, thus, could not be accepted. Chowdhury said when he entered the House to preside over on June 17, he found that the main opposition walked out of the House but they returned to the House after a short time. He said the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had alleged that the provisions of the Constitution were violated when the State Minister for Planning took part in the budget discussion since the minister is not a member of Parliament. He said the treasury bench member Suranjit Sengupta had rebutted the objections raised by the Opposition on the issue, saying that the Planning Minister confined his speech within his jurisdiction since much of the development budget is related to the Annual Development Plan. Gupta had justified the participation of the State Minister of Planning in the discussion since he dealt with the matters relevant to his sector, the Speaker said. Chowdhury said he had gone through the verbatim report of the proceedings and he is convinced that the State Minister for Planning and the Deputy Speaker, who was presiding over the session, were very much aware of their role governed by the Constitution on the matter. The Speaker said the State Minister for Planning's participation in the discussion on the supplementary budget did not violate any provision of the Constitution.

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A Rath procession in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Sangsad snippets

From page 1 Earlier, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad issued a statement on the matter but the minister was not heard clearly as he spoke at a distance from the microphone on his table. The papers he was holding in his hand also acted as a barrier. At this stage several BNP deputies rose to advise the minister to go closer to his microphone. But the minister misunderstood the opposition members as interrupting him. In a bid to communicate with the angry minister, Shamsul Islam showed the way of speaking in a mock performance with his own microphone. As Samad Azad was lingering his deliberation Shahidul Islam of BNP jokingly said, 'Let the statement be deemed to have been read [a practice in case of lengthy reply by the ministers during the question-hour]'. Later, another BNP legislator, KM Zakir Rahman also demanded distribution of copies of the foreign minister's statement as most of the members could not hear him. Awami League MP, Sharif Khasruzzaman, who is quite active in the House, brought to the notice of Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim that the telephone exchange in Lohagorha thana in his constituency was ineffective for a longtime. In response, a smiling telecommunications minister commented, 'The telephone exchange cannot remain ineffective in the area of Sharif Khasruzzaman who is very active in the House. It will be turned active very soon.'

Shibir activist arrested with wireless set

CHITTAGONG, July 6: Police in their overnight drives in various parts of the city recovered some arms and ammunition and a wireless set yesterday, reports UNB. Acting on a tip-off, police raided Harina village in Fatikchhari thana and arrested Chhatra Shibir activist Jamaluddin, 25, along with the wireless set. Police said Jamal, son of Mohammad Ibrahim and accused in several cases, used the wireless set in conducting various terrorist acts in the area. In the city's Pahartoli thana, police arrested four terrorists along with two LGs, two cartridges, some equipment used in making arms and explosives from a house in Mousumi residential area. On information, police raided Tareq Bhaban and arrested Akter, Rabiul, Riyaz and Hafez, and recovered the arms and explosives acting on their confessional statements. In another drive, Sitakunda police recovered a US made abandoned .38 bore revolver loaded with 29 bullets from Shitalpur ship-breaking yard at 11.30 pm yesterday.

Cricket team leaves

From page 1 SQUAD Akram Khan (captain), Aminul Islam Bulbul (vice captain), Minhazul Abedin Nannu, Athar Ali Khan, Shahriar Hossain Biduy, Khaled Masud Pilot, Sheikh Salahuddin, Mofizur Rahman Munna, Enamul Huq Moni, Saiful Islam, Naimur Rahman Durjoy, Hasibul Hossain Shanta, Zakir Hossain and Habibul Bashar Sumon. Standby: Atiar Rahman, Zakir Hossain, Sanwar Hossain, Khaled Mahmud Sujon. Coach: Gordon Greenidge, Team Manager: Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, Tour Manager: Tanveer Haider. Fixture: July 14 — Sri Lanka vs Pakistan, R Premadasa Stadium, July 16 — Bangladesh vs Pakistan, R Premadasa Stadium, July 18 — Sri Lanka vs India, R Premadasa Stadium, July 20 — Pakistan vs India, SSC ground, July 22 — Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka, SSC ground, and July 24 — Bangladesh vs India, SSC ground. Final: July 26 — R Premadasa Stadium and July 27 — Reserve day. We did not get enough time to prepare ourselves for the big occasion. Our preparation was time and again hampered by the persistent inclement weather. But still we've got some very lively wickets (aid by a South African expert at the Dhaka Stadium recently) to limber up," the West Indian coach told a crowded press last night. "What I can assure you that we will fight with our limited resource till the last ball is bowled. Our approach will be always positive," said a confident former Caribbean opener. "Over the last four or five weeks we have tried our best to lift the morale of our boys... Now it's time to wait and see how they are going to perform in the field" Greenidge quipped.

Rathajatra

From page 1 In the city, a nine-day Rathajatra and a fair began at Tanti Bazar, State Minister for Land Alhaj Rashed Mosharraf inaugurated the festival organised by Jagannath Deb Jew Takkur Mandir managing committee. Speaking on the occasion, the State Minister said the Rath is a symbol of peace and justice. He said the communal harmony which was established through peaceful co-existence of the followers of different religions will enhance the socio-economic progress of the country. In Gazipur, a week-long Rathajatra Utsab began at Gazipur Public Library premises. State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Mohammad Nurul Islam opened the function.

Exam system

From page 1 When the examinations are held next year. In case they fail to pass in the subject, their admission to the next class will be automatically cancelled, it was suggested. The committee has also reached a consensus on replacing the existing system of merit list by grade system, the sources added. A three-tier education system is also under active consideration of the committee. The first tier will comprise class one to class eight, the second classes nine to twelve and the third graduation level and above. Under the present system, primary level comprises class one to class five, classes six to eight are considered junior secondary level classes nine and ten secondary and classes eleven and twelve higher secondary level. Graduation level begins after that.

Security

From page 1 launcher as a serious threat to security of the President and the Prime Minister, sources said. It prepared a package of recommendations for tightening the security for the VIPs for sending it to the top authorities through police headquarters and the Home Ministry. The sources said that the recommendations mainly included increased watch, dubbed 'eternal vigilance', and using modern security instruments. Keeping the assassination of some leaders in India and Sri Lanka in mind, they said, the meeting also recommended setting up close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in places concerned to keep an all-time watch. When contacted, DMP Commissioner AK Al Mamun declined to make any comment on the proposed security measures for the VIPs. He only said, 'We are planning some new things, not done before.'

The two-hour DMP meeting was attended by all its DCs — Habibur Rahman (Headquarters), Syed Bazil Karim (DB), Rahmatjan Sikder (South), Awlad Hossain (West), Naim Ahmed (East), Sabbir Ali (North), Mushatqa Ahmed (Traffic), Matur Rahman (Protection) and Sultan Ahmed (Riot). The meeting observed that there might be more such rocket launchers brought in the city and asked all concerned to make special drive to recover those, the sources said. Detective Branch of police recently recovered a rocket launcher from city's Arambagh and in this connection arrested four youngsters — Lulu, Russel and Khairuddin. The recovered rocket launcher is of a type usually used by international terrorist groups, and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Unusual move by Law Ministry: BNP MP's point of order rejected

By Staff Correspondent BNP lawmaker Golam Mohammad Siraj rose on a point of order in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday to mention a press report carried by The Daily Star and the daily Bhorer Kagoj on an unusual move by the Law Ministry about a bank loan defaulter. But Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury did not allow the Opposition MP to continue, declining to accept the matter as point of order.

Bangladeshi

From page 1 have led a campaign to press for political and social reforms since 1994. About 40 people have been reported killed in the unrest. The attack occurred in the impoverished Shilte village of Sitra village, a hotbed of anti-government activity, southeast of the capital, Manama. The official Gulf News Agency quoted witnesses as saying that the attackers stormed the store at 8 pm (1700 GMT) and set it on fire with the two men inside. One of them died in hospital. The other was severely burned, the news agency reported. It was not immediately clear if the victims were workers or customers. Shilte activists have in the past targeted the large number of Asian workers in Bahrain, a nation of 1.5 million people which serves as the Middle East's main banking hub. Some of Bahrain's Shiltes, who form a slight majority of the country's estimated 400,000 citizens, resent the presence of Asians, saying they take away jobs and some of them work as police informants. Some 20,000 Bangladeshis — mostly labourers — work in Bahrain. Many arson attacks have taken place in Sitra village, including one in March 1996 when seven Bangladeshis were burned to death after masked men set a restaurant ablaze. Last month four Indians were killed in an arson attack on an upholstery shop in Manama.

Housing

From page 1 Prime Minister, is very keen to provide housing facilities to the fixed and low-income people and professionals. He asked the journalist leaders to come with specific proposals and assured that the government would look into the matter sympathetically. The criteria and modalities of such housing society for the working journalists were also discussed in the meeting. BPU president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, vice-president Kartik Chatterjee, Secretary General Abul Kalam Azad, and DUJ general secretary Azizul Islam Bhuiyan were, among others, present in the meeting.

Blasphemous posters

From page 1 The Jatiya Sangsad resolved that foundation of an independent and sovereign Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital is the only solution to the Middle East problem. The Jatiya Sangsad also made a fervent call to the people of the world, all countries and governments, parties, groups, associations, national, regional and international forums and the OIC to exert pressure on Israel to stop its heinous activities against Islam and Palestine. Earlier, in his statement, the Foreign Minister condemned the publication of posters in Al-Khaili city demeaning the Holy Quran and Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) and urged a world community to press Israel to refrain itself from such heinous activities. Abdus Samad Azad observed that founding of an independent Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital would be the only solution to the Middle East problem. Describing the incident, he said that on the morning of June 28 dwellers of Al-Khaili saw posters on walls in the city showing a caricature of the Prophet as a pig stamping on the Quran. Some four to five hundred Jews have settled in Al-Khaili, an abode of 20,000 Palestinians, said the foreign minister adding that the Jews have grabbed 20 per cent of the city's land by force. Taking floor after the minister's statement, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury also condemned the publication

Authorities look for new SEC chairman

Star Report The authorities are looking for a suitable person to head the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Chairman of the SEC Dr Harunur Rashid tendered his resignation last week. He submitted his resignation from the contractual appointment on June 29. The resignation in all likelihood is going to be accepted when Finance Minister SAMS Kibria takes it up today. He returned from a visit to Japan with the Prime Minister last night, according to informed sources. Several names of retired civil servants have been suggested. They include Chairman of Rupali Bank Abu Saeed Chowdhury, a former Secretary, and Sekandar Ali, a former BSB and ICB official. The Chairman of SEC had been under pressure from different quarters to quit since a probe into the country's biggest scam in the share market, manipulation led to the filing of cases against 32 people.

Khaleda: Intellectuals

From page 1 destroyed opposition parties to reestablish autocratic BAKSAL system. Begum Zia said people of the country are now living in a suffocating situation amidst repression, looting, terrorism, torture, toll extortion, abduction, corruption everywhere in the country. She said once people had tolerated those for a few years, but revolted against the misrule of the then Awami League and toppled it from power. Begum Zia said people are now showing restraint, but they will soon stand against repression and misrule of the present AL government. She said agriculture, industry, education and other sectors are now experiencing stagnation because of the government's wrongdoing and subservient policy. The opposition leader said the farmers are now the most deprived section of the country as they have not been getting fair prices of their produce since this government assumed power.

Report on Admin Tribunals (Amend) Bill finalised

The parliamentary committee on private members' bills yesterday finalised its report on the Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Bill, 1996, reports UNB. In a meeting at Sangsad Bhaban with its chairman Col (ret) Shawkat Ali in the chair, the committee held detailed discussion on the Bill before finalising the report. The bill was placed by opposition BNP member MK Anwar and sent to the committee for vetting. Committee members Abdul Latif Mirza, AKM Jahangir Hossain, Khandaker Asaduzzaman, Rajiuddin Raju and M Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury attended the meeting.

BNPPP meet postponed

The meeting of BNP Parliamentary Party (BNPPP) scheduled to be held this evening was postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, report UNB. According to a party press release signed by opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain, the next schedule for the meeting will be announced later.

5 hurt as rival groups clash in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, July 6: Five people were injured, two of them seriously, in a clash between two rival groups at Mokampur village under Rupsha thana today. Police said, the clash ensued over the alleged misappropriation of wheat by UP chairman Sona Molla, 40, who is also among the injured. Both sides used firearms and handbombs in the clash. The injured have been admitted to Sadar hospital, police said.

Terrorist held in city

By Staff Correspondent The CID police arrested a terrorist from the city's Scout Market at Inner Circular Road under Motijheel thana yesterday. The arrested was identified as Md Ayub Ali, 30. Police said, Ayub is wanted in connection with eight cases including murder. In another raid yesterday morning, police recovered 95 bottles of phensidyl from the Khilgaon Bagicha slum area. Police said, three persons — Jaimal Mia, Shaqif and Selim Bhuiya — were arrested in this connection.

PCP against dist council system

By Staff Correspondent The leaders of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP-pro-Sanchoy) in a statement yesterday criticised the government's reported move to rehabilitate the persons who had served as members in the hill district councils during the Ershad and Khaleda Zia regimes. Dipty Shankar Chakma and Dipayan Khisa, president and general secretary of the PCP respectively said "the government's decision to retain the district council system on an ad hoc basis" is against the wishes of the hill people. They said such a step would force the hill people to launch a movement for annulling the system.

Kidnapped schoolboy rescued in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 6: Police rescued the schoolboy, kidnapped by miscreants from a city school on Friday, from a slum in Fanchaij thana early today, reports UNB. A special squad of DB and CMP raided the slum at Shershah Colony and rescued the 11-year-old boy Mohammad Fayez, a class VI student of JM Sen High School. Police also picked up five youths — Abdul Mannan, Jhilon, Nasimuddin, Shaabbuddin and Abdul Gafur — from the slum in connection with the kidnapping. The arrested were brought on a three-day police remand. A group of miscreants abducted Fayez from St Placid School at Bathogorha in the city on Friday while playing with some of his friends. The miscreants demanded a ransom of Tk 10 lakh to release Fayez, son of a non-Bengali businessman, Abdul Jabbar.

JS: Nasim

From page 1 Of the three companies given licence recently, one has already started its operation from March 26 this year. The quality of service could be evaluated if the two others begin their operation, the minister said. He said two private companies — Seba Telecom and Bangladesh Rural Telecommunication Authority (BRTA) — were given contracts for installing digital phones in all thanas. But the progress in the project implementation and quality of works are not up to the mark, Nasim said. "In a number of cases, the two companies failed to install telephone lines on schedule." The minister said the agreements with the two companies blocked the way for Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB), the state-run telecoms company, to operate at the thana level. The government is unable to cancel the agreements which will remain in force for 25 years, he said and informed that the government is pressing the firms to finish their projects on schedule. He also informed that a project for setting up 140,000 digital telephone lines in all the district headquarters was under active consideration of the government. The project, for which the government is trying to arrange fund, is due to be completed in 1999, he told the House. He said the private sector would be involved with the card phone system, which is delivering very good results. It has been decided that the system would be spread to village level with the help of the private sector, he said. Referring to monopoly in the paging service, Nasim said the present government dismantled the monopoly on all services under the telecoms sector. He informed that tender would be called to allow more companies in the paging service as well as pay-phone service.

Deadlock

From page 1 port might be shut down due to the ongoing deadlock," he said. Port sources said even the shipment of export cargo could not be done due to the strike. However, the Port Users Forum in an emergency meeting held at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry office and chaired by its convener Kamal Uddin Ahmed expressed grave concern over the deadlock at Chittagong port. Seeking the immediate resolution of the problem, the Forum felt that the port authorities did not handle the situation sternly and quickly. The Forum observed that punitive measures should be taken against those who illegally stop the work at the port. BSS adds: Chittagong city Mayor Alhaj ABM Mahiuddin Chowdhury said today that the activities at Chittagong port will resume tomorrow. The Mayor said this while addressing the leaders of Port Users Forum in Chittagong chamber house auditorium today. Presided over by convener of the Forum and vice-president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kamaluddin Ahmed, the meeting was addressed by a number of representatives from various organisations of the port users. The Mayor said Chittagong port, the economic lifeline of the country, should not be held hostage by a vested circle. He urged the Chittagong Port Authority and law enforcing agency to take necessary measures to resume the activities of the port by tomorrow. The port users also urged the authority to resume the port activities by tomorrow.

Bangabandhu

From page 1 leged that the absconder's lawyers had earlier marched in processions demanding the hanging of the accused. At the beginning, Azra Ali, on behalf of accused Farook placed before the court a prayer for staying the proceeding of the case on the ground that a transfer petition under Article 110 of the Constitution is in the list of the High Court and a civil petition against the sitting place of the court is pending before the Supreme Court. The court observed that it did not receive any order from the High Court in this regard. The accused present in the court were allowed to have lunch brought by their relatives during a one-hour recess.