

Steps against ETV

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steps once the court disposes of the matter," Moyeen said.

Seven lawmakers from the treasury bench—five from BNP and the two from its coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami—blasted the ETV during the question-answer hour.

The parliament sitting resumed at 4.25 pm, nearly half an hour behind schedule, with Speaker Jamrudin Sircar in the chair.

BNP lawmaker Helaluzzaman Lalu asked whether the government is going to change ETV's broadcasting policy. The minister said the people mandated the government to change its policy as necessary and "we will do it when required."

The historic Seventh November would also be added in the proposed change, he said.

Asked by Sarder Sakawat Hossain Bakul whether the government has any plan to allow more private television channels, the minister replied in the positive and said the government believes freedom of expression. Now is the age of information technology and democracy will flourish if more TV channels are allowed, he said.

Masirur Rahman alleged that ETV has long been broadcasting biased reports and programmes to destroy communal harmony. ETV is owned mostly by Awami League leaders, he claimed.

Replying to another query from Mowlana Abdus Sobhan of Jamaat-e-Islami, Moyeen said the government has by this time improved BTV's programme modules to upgrade its standard keeping in mind the Islamic sentiment of the

people. Mawlana Delwar Hossain Sayeedi of the same party asked the minister whether the government has any plan to control ETV's programmes as "it mostly broadcasts programmes contradictory to Iman and Akkida". The minister said that the government has no such plan but will have discussion with ETV authorities to change its "style".

Replying to BNP lawmaker Abu Yusuf Khalilur Rahman, Moyeen said the government will encourage if any one applies for a TV channel to broadcast Islamic ideals.

To the main question from Prof. Shahidul Islam, the minister informed the House that three television channels—ETV, ATN and Channel I—are now operating in the private sector in the country. The ETV was given permission for terrestrial operation on March 9, 1999.

The minister disclosed names of 24 shareholders of ETV while replying to another question from Nurul Amin Talukder. They are: Abu Syed Mahmood, Farhad Mahmood, Unidev Productions limited, Unidev limited, ECS Securities Limited, Sea Fisheries Limited, Abdus Salam, SAS Holding Limited, Astras Limited, Rangs Industries Limited, Nasiruddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Saimon John Dring, Citicorp International Finance Corporation (CIFIC), CPF Limited, Brian D Young, Joshua Mailmn, Bank Julius Baer, IPDC, Waterford Partners LLC, Adward Bozaan, Francois Gour and Yusuf Abdullah Harun.

PM's directive to keep major river routes navigable

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday directed officials concerned to take necessary steps for keeping all major river routes navigable.

The directive came when Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain made a presentation on his ministry at the Prime Minister's office in the afternoon.

Stressing the need for dredging as river-beds of many rivers have silted up, the prime minister asked the officials to take long-term measures for keeping Chittagong-Chittagong and Sylhet-Chittagong river routes navigable round the year.

The prime minister also asked the officials to take all-out measures for smooth functioning of the ports by maintaining discipline among the port workers.

Referring to some officers' leaving Bangladesh merchant ships, the Prime Minister asked for changing the service rules so that none can quit job without prior notice as they are trained up at the cost of public money. If necessary new law can be enacted to check such practice, she added.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and secretary of the shipping ministry were present.

College lecturer assaulted by BNP activists

UNB, Meherpur

A lecturer of Mahanopur College was assaulted by unruly JCD activists yesterday.

The victim, Abdur Razzak, was rushed to Meherpur Sadar Hospital with severe head injury.

Witnesses said he came under attack in front of Cooperatives Bank here at about 12 noon while returning home from a local court.

The reason behind the attack could not be known.

Canadian help

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pledges laid down in her party's election manifesto.

Focusing on his country's special relationship with Bangladesh the Canadian High Commissioner assured continued cooperation in various development sectors of Bangladesh.

He pointed out different cooperation sectors of Canada in Bangladesh, including those in health, education, environment, IT, telecommunications, transportation and natural resources.

Appreciating the 100-day programme of the new government and manifesto of the ruling party Preston said the image of Bangladesh would change radically in the international arena if the points are properly implemented.

The Canadian High Commissioner said that Canada has "special relationship with Bangladesh in development cooperation," the envoy said.

Ctg Test

FROM PAGE 1
to almost dry up the outfield of the new look stadium, which makes its debut as a Test venue with the hosting of the historic match.

Local met office also confirmed that the weather would get to improve gradually from tomorrow.

Both the visitors and the home side reached here last night after the rain-hit drawn Test in Dhaka and had a feel of the 62nd Test venue of the world yesterday.

Match referee Hanuman Singh and two umpires Ashoka de Silva (Sri Lanka) and Shawkat Rahman (Bangladesh) have also reached here in the morning and immediately went to have a look at the venue.

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Garments

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Afghanistan, Bangladesh's exports dropped by 35 per cent in September this year from that of the same period last year and its foreign exchange reserves dwindled to little over one billion US dollars.

The US buys about 40 per cent of Bangladesh's garment exports, which is worth about 5 billion dollars. Garments account for more than 75 per cent of the country's total annual exports.

Bangladeshi garments now faces stiff competition after the US allowed duty -and quota-free access to 27 African countries last year.

More than 1,200 out of 3,200 garment factories in the country have been closed.

While handing over the cheques at the US embassy, Peters mentioned that a US State Department report released in July said trafficking of women and children has reached "staggering dimensions" around the world.

Of the amount, Tk. 1,091,000 was given to Bangladesh National Workers Association (BNWLA) for holding international workshops. Tk. 1,101,500 to Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA) to stage dramas on trafficking and Tk. 540,000 to Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programs (BCCP) for dubbing a Nepalese film on trafficking, titled "Chameil".

For instance, said Sen, "a Bangladeshi Muslim is not only a Muslim but also a Bengali and a Bangladeshi, not to mention the other identities he or she may have connected with class, gender, occupation, politics, taste and so



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League president Sheikh Hasina consoles a woman, a victim of the post-polls violence, when on a mass-contact campaign in Gafargaon yesterday.

Shahabuddin's last day in office

FROM PAGE 1
Chowdhury will administer the oath to the 72-year-old new president at 7:00pm at the Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban.

Shahabuddin, 71, was elected for a second stint as the president on July 23, 1996 on the Awami League's nomination.

Earlier on December 6, 1999, following the downfall of Ershad's autocratic regime, Shahabuddin, the chief justice then, was made the acting president to head a caretaker government.

On October 9, 1991, after successfully conducting the parliamentary elections, he handed over his responsibilities to President Abdur Rahman Biswas and resumed his previous position as the chief justice the next day.

Shahabuddin leaves the Bangabhaban nearly three hours before the arrival of the new president for the oath-taking ceremony on the presidential motorcade with full protocol for the last time. He will move into a rented house at the city's Lalmatia area.

Shahabuddin, who will continue to be the president till Badruddoza is sworn in, is expected to have a hectic last day in office.

He will address the Bangabhaban staff and chiefs of three services will make a farewell call on him. After a quiet lunch he will depart with the President's Guard Regiment (PGR) giving him the guard of honour for the last time.

Observers of the presidency feel that the government should have created a ceremonial handing and taking over ceremony of the president who is the head of the country and a symbol of national unity.

There is no precedence or convention of a handing or taking over ceremony for departing and incom-

ing presidents.

But this government, which has been elected twice, incidentally both times during Shahabuddin's presidency, had a unique chance to initiate a ceremonial convention that would have enhanced the dignity of the president's office and strengthened democratic institutions. Instead, it seems to have decided to consign Shahabuddin into history without a parting ceremony.

Shahabuddin came under criticism in the last days of his presidency, some of which was muted and some open. Both the Awami League, who pushed through his election, and the BNP, which benefited from his neutral role, on several occasions criticised him.

The Awami League denounced him in harsh terms, with a ranking leader going to the extent of terming him a "betrayor".

He was also criticised for reading out a speech, drafted by the new government, at the inaugural session of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad. His speech was viewed by many as a party propaganda rather than presidential address.

Shahabuddin later lamented that the presidency had been diminished to a subservient status. He confided in some newsmen that the Rules of Business had been changed by then Awami League government to make even the presidential speech a party propaganda.

Shahabuddin is also learnt to have regretted that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina neither received nor returned the call he had made to her on November 8, a gesture interpreted as extremely "discourteous".

Although it was speculated that the new BNP government would ask Shahabuddin to stay on for another term, it now seems no such request

was ever made.

In fact, the BNP government wanted to retain Shahabuddin for a longer time so that they could have their own president during the next caretaker government, when its tenure ends in five years' time, sources close to the party said.

Shahabuddin, however, put his foot down and made it clear that unless a new president was elected following the sitting of the parliament he would resign. The BNP relented and went ahead to elect the president.

President Shahabuddin will leave behind an example of simplicity.

He was known for his Spartan lifestyle. A special budget of Taka 60 lakh meant for his discretionary expenditure, which was a totally unaudited fund, was reduced to Taka 6 lakh only. He used to have his meals both at his office and in residence from his private fund. All his private guests were treated to from his personal expenses.

Shahabuddin will be long remembered for speaking out loud whatever he felt was correct, when ever he felt truth had to be spoken out. He called for an end to student violence and terrorism and advocated for tolerance in politics.

At a tea reception for journalists, when asked if there should be amendment in the constitution, he replied, "We have to amend our character first."

A man with utmost simplicity and a diminutive figure, President Shahabuddin would definitely pass into history as one of the great presidents the country has ever had.

Hasina supports hartal

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election as the ruling party candidate was defeated by the Awami League nominee.

She also talked to families whose houses were either looted or set on fire after the election and consoled them. Many female members of the families returned only yesterday following her tour while males still stayed away.

Referring to government's 100-day programme she said there is news that the 'Hawa Bhaban' is planning to make Tk 3,000 crore within the period. "We left a good economy and only within one month they emptied the treasury," she told her audience, mentioning her government's successes.

She asked the government to stop its terrorist acts and warned otherwise people of the country

ment continued current spell of torture on Awami League supporters and innocent people.

She said the alliance leader on one hand announced a war against terrorism and corruption and on the other let loose her 'terrorist bahinis' who are unleashing inhuman torture and repression on people and capturing everything.

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know how to do it. "If one house is ransacked further, they will ransack yours one, if one house is set ablaze, they will set fire to yours."

The rally was also addressed by Altaf Hossain Golondaz MP, Principal Minister Rahman, Syed Ashraful Islam MP, Dr M Amanullah MP, Nazimuddin, advocate Promod Mankin MP, Shamsul Haq, Abdul Matin Sarkar MP and Capt (ret) Majibar Rahman MP with Amir Hossain in the chair.

Earlier in Bhaluka, the former Prime Minister blasted against illegal removal of vice chancellors and pro-VCs. "They are politicising everything. Again the session jams emerged in the universities that we had eliminated," she said.

Respect for human rights

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Afghanistan raised political and ethical problems of far-reaching consequences for champions of human rights, as it did not differentiate between civilians and terrorists.

Sen debunked the tendency to view the battle against terrorism as a clash of civilisations. The danger, he said, is that the September 11 attacks on the US would be seen as being caused by people sheltered or harboured by Afghans, thus "placing all people in Afghanistan in the same descriptive category".

This, in turn, could make it acceptable for normal human beings that some innocent people in Afghanistan may have to die in an operation to counter terrorism, he said.

The Nobel laureate said the basic problem with proponents of "clash of civilisations" is that they categorise the world into "Islamic World," "Christian World," "Hindu World," "Buddhist World," etc, tending to obfuscate other identities of human beings in terms of economic status, occupation, political leanings, nationalities and linguistic groups.

For instance, said Sen, "a Bangladeshi Muslim is not only a Muslim but also a Bengali and a Bangladeshi, not to mention the other identities he or she may have connected with class, gender, occupation, politics, taste and so

on".

"Landless labourers struggling against exploitative landlords have things in common that cut across religious boundaries and even national ones. Again it cannot be their only identity but it is one and

VCs replaced

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claimed that the Chancellor can not remove him under the General Clauses Act of 1897.

He said, "The action contradicts the University Ordinance of 1973." The new VC of BAU Prof. Mustafizur Rahman took over charge yesterday.

Addressing teachers, officials and employees at a simple function, he sought cooperation of all for creating a congenial atmosphere on the campus.

ADP trimmed

FROM PAGE 1
A maximum of Tk 245.13 crore was cut from communications ministry, Tk 159.34 crore from physical planning and water supply wing, Tk 138.74 crore from education and religious affairs ministry and Tk 102 crore from rural development and co-operatives ministry.

sometimes even the dominant one," he said.

"Poverty too can be a great source of solidarity across other boundaries... cutting right across religious or national or civilisational lines of division," he argued.

The SAHR Congress heard discussions on various topics relating to human rights: extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions, arbitrary detention and human rights in Afghanistan.

Leading participants of the SAHR Congress included Rehman Sobhan, Barrister Amirul Islam, Hameeda Hossain, Sigma Huda and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam of Bangladesh; former Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral, former Chief Justice of India P N Bhagwati, journalist-cum-member of parliament Kuldip Nayar and actress-cum-member of parliament Shabana Azmi; Damaris Wickramasekera of Sri Lanka; Khalid Ahmed and Mubashir Hasan from Pakistan; Kapil Shreshtha and D N Dhungana of Nepal.

It is a happy tidings that the SAHR which began its journey with just 100 participants a year ago was attended by more than five times that number this time around. The human rights flock is swelling and one hopes that so will be awareness.

Kabul falls

FROM PAGE 1
Kabul should remain a demilitarised city under the control of UN peace-keeper until all factions in Afghanistan are able to form a broad-based government representing all ethnic groups, Khan said.

Pakistan would prefer to see Kabul's security handled by the United Nations or a multi-national force sanctioned by the (UN) Security Council, Aziz Ahmad Khan said.

India yesterday reiterated the need for a broad-based government in Afghanistan which would exclude all Taliban members.

"We are looking forward to the post-Taliban scenario and we discussed the kind of government we would like to see established there," said Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes.

Reacting to the news that Northern Alliance forces had entered Kabul, Fernandes said the Taliban should be kept out of any future government in Afghanistan.

It should be "a government where all ethnic groups are represented but from which the Taliban should be kept out under any circumstances," the minister said.

As the sun rose over the Hindu Kush mountains, Kabul residents of shouted out congratulations, honked car horns and rang bells on their bicycles. Men shaved off beards mandated by the Taliban and the sounds of music returned after having been banned by the Islamic militia.

There were also signs that the Taliban were abandoning other urban centres, possibly to withdraw into the remote southern mountains to wage guerrilla war.

In Kandahar, the southern Taliban stronghold and birthplace of the movement, a resident contacted by telephone said many Taliban figures appeared to have left the city, too, except for uniformed militia police.

People feared anarchy, he said on condition of anonymity, speculating that the Taliban have fled into the southern mountains to mount a guerrilla war.

Along the Pakistani border at Chaman, a Taliban official, Mullah Najibullah, said about 200 former guerrillas had mutinied against the Taliban in Kandahar and that anti-Taliban forces had seized part of the airport outside the city in fierce fighting.

The report could not be independently confirmed. Kandahar is 500 kilometers southwest of Kabul.

Also, Taliban guards yesterday abandoned the Torkham border station along the Pakistani frontier. A group of local Afghan elders was trying to sort out who would man the station, near the western Pakistani city of Peshawar.

Officials with the northern alliance's foreign ministry said they had seized control of the eastern city of Jalalabad. There was no independent confirmation.

In Kabul, bands of heavily armed northern alliance soldiers moved around the city in taxis, trucks and cars, seeking out Arabs, Pakistanis, Chechens and others who had come to Afghanistan to fight with the Taliban.

Five Pakistanis were killed in a shootout early Tuesday, witnesses said. Their bodies lay in a public park hours later. Alliance troops were setting up roadblocks on streets were Arabs and others associated with al-Qaida movement had been living.

The bodies of two dead Arabs were on the street near a UN guest house. Close to the bodies were rocket launchers and a rifle.

On the Shomali plain on the road to Kabul, a large crowd stood around three dead Taliban fighters.

In the city, alliance soldiers stood guard outside the offices of some international aid organisations. Some, however, appeared to have been looted. "Some illegal people went through and took everything from the offices," said Ghulam Ali, an elderly resident.

Mindful of international concern over their behaviour, the alliance was running in 3,000 specially-trained security troops to maintain order. The alliance's interior minister, Yunis Anonni, said the main body of opposition forces would stay out of the city.

AFP from Islamabad says, The United Nations said yesterday more than 100 young Taliban recruits were killed as they hid in a school in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif over the weekend.

UN coordinator's office spokeswoman Stephanie Bunker said the UN had received several reports from "corroborative sources" that the soldiers died after the opposition Northern Alliance captured the city on Friday night.

"Over 100 Taliban troops, who were mainly young recruits hiding in a school, were killed Saturday at 6 pm local time, Bunker told a news conference.

She said the opposition alliance had "apparently" carried out the killings.

Some 200 Taliban troops reportedly made a stand in the school, armed with light and heavy weapons, after the opposition captured Mazar-i-Sharif.

Another report says, millions of dollars were stolen from Afghanistan's main money market as the Taliban pulled out of Kabul, dealing a heavy financial blow to one of the poorest capitals in the world, money changers in Kabul said yesterday.

The thefts wiped out the life savings of many local residents, in a city already in economic ruin following more than 20 years of war and three years of drought.

"This was all our capital. Even the computers, carpets and tea pots have gone. This is a crime against Afghanistan, the Afghans and against Islam," said Haji Amin Jan Khosti, chief of the Shara-e-Shazada money exchange.

Residents said they also saw armed men robbing the central bank and driving away in cars stuffed with money.

An AFP reporter also saw civilians looting the Pakistani embassy here, taking electric fans, air conditioners and blankets.

Khosti said unknown thieves looted 80 shops in the money market, leaving none untouched and driving away with trucks full of the local Afghan currency, which is worth around 50,000 dollars.

A massive fortune, at least in Afghan terms, of around 1.5 million US dollars and 100 million Pakistani rupees (1.6 million dollars), plus unknown amounts of various other currencies had also disappeared.

"In every shop at least five to 10 million Pakistan rupees has been taken," said Khosti.

A Dushanbe report says, ousted Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani intends to return soon to Kabul after his forces chased the ruling Taliban militia from the capital, an Afghan envoy said yesterday.

Rabbani, the political leader of the Northern alliance, plans to return to Kabul in the next two or three days, said the ambassador for the Afghan government-in-exile in Dushanbe, said Ibragim Khikmat.

Rabbani, who was deposed by the Taliban in 1996, is still recognised as Afghanistan's president by the United Nations and most countries and his forces have been battling the Taliban militia.

Khikmat also said that a military and political committee has been created, headed by Rabbani's military commander General Fahim, to ensure security in Kabul.

Meanwhile, Xinhua from Cairo adds: The Taliban regime yesterday retook the northern strategic town of Mazar-e-Sharif, Qatar's Al Jazeera TV reported.

Residents of Kandahar, the southern stronghold of the Taliban regime, were celebrating the news of recapturing Mazar-e-Sharif, said Yousef Shuli, correspondent of the Qatari television in Kandahar.

"Our retreat has been made by a tactical way rather than under pressure of forces. The recapture of Mazar-e-Sharif shows that the Taliban will never be forced to retreat," Shuli quoted a source of the Taliban regime as saying.

The news has yet to be confirmed independently, the Qatari television said.

Gun shots at DU

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students of Dhaka University, swooped on general students of the hall and beat them up mercilessly. They also ransacked more than ten rooms and took away cash and valuables.

Later, at a rally in front of October Memorial Hall Pintu congratulated the JCD men for successfully resisting and ousting the BCL activists from the hall. He asked the JCD leaders and workers to see to it that the BCL did not capture any halls of the university.

The JCD activists then moved towards the Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall, which until yesterday was the lone stronghold of the BCL on the campus. They locked in an altercation with the police at the entrance of the hall after the latter refused to let them in.

However, the police asked the BCL men to leave the hall or face arrest. The JCD cadres, meantime, entered the hall. The BCL men fired several shots to ward off the JCD men but finally left the hall at about 4:30 p.m., sources said.

Police raided both halls but failed to recover any arms or ammunition. Additional police personnel have been deployed on the campus to avert further untoward incident.

Meanwhile, the JCD and its arch-rival BCL have blamed each other for yesterday's incident on the campus.

At a press conference at Madhu's canteen on the campus in

the afternoon, the JCD president said that outsiders belonging to the BCL swooped on the Jagannath Hall in the small hours of yesterday. They fired about 150 rounds of gunshots, ransacked about 50 rooms, set fire to some rooms, occupied the provost office and looted goods worth about Tk 5 lakh.

The BCL in a statement strongly protested the 'atrocities' unleashed by the JCD men on general students and BCL supporters at Jagannath and Zahurul Haq Halls.

It alleged that while capturing the halls, the JCD men snatched away mobile phone sets and cash from the BCL activists. It demanded ouster of the JCD 'culprits' from the campus and security for the BCL leaders and workers at the halls.

UNB adds: The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) at a meeting yesterday protested the removal of two-time elected Vice-Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury.

The removal by invoking a clause contradictory to the University Ordinance, 1973 is condemnable and breach of democratic norms, said a press release issued after the meeting of its executive committee.

The DUTA demanded immediate withdrawal of the order, which it termed illegal.

Three members of DUTA executive committee, however, disagreed with the decision of the meeting.