

Int'l telecom carriers

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witnessed drastic fall in calls since illegal call-termination started last year. However, the situation improved a bit after TAR was reduced to 0.50 SDR from 1.24 SDR in August last year. But things changed for the worse since April this year as call-termination operators again became active.

According to BT, its incoming calls to Bangladesh at Sylhet gateway started slipping dangerously from 1.23 million minutes in March this year to only 759,740 minutes in August. Sources said a number of shady ISPs in Sylhet is making millions in illegal call-termination. One of the firms got a stay order from court against BTB's disconnection of its outgoing phone lines.

From the US to Dhaka gateway, the incoming calls dwindled to 1.76 million minutes in June from 2.39 million minutes in January this year.

With such developments, a number of international operators have threatened to withhold payments to BTB for UK and US nodes till TAR is reduced. They would also make payments for the first quarter of last year on the basis of international rate which is about SDR 0.18.

The international operators are also pointing out that it has become very difficult for them to find bidders for routing calls to Bangladesh market at high TAR. According to the system, a local operator in a hub makes a projection of calls it can generate to Bangladesh and then invites bids from international call operators. The bidders make offers based on the market size. For example, the highest rate quoted in

the US hub for calls to Bangladesh was \$0.071 with the lowest being \$0.0575 while Bangladesh has unrealistically set the rate at SDR 0.50.

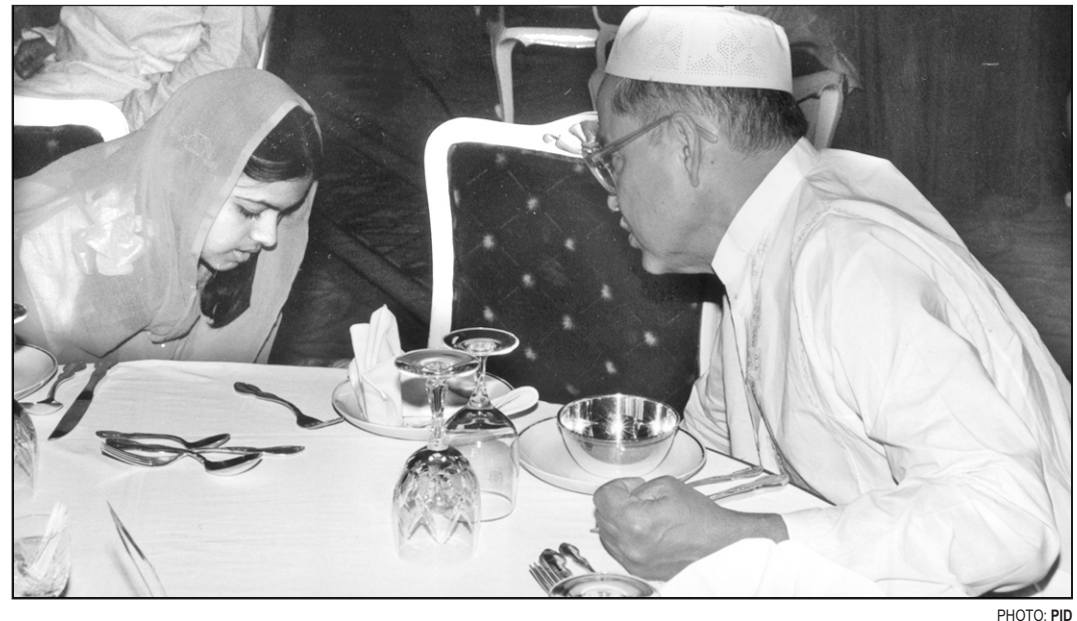
Such low quotes by call operators make it a plain fact that the call-termination is thriving in the US as such low rates are not applicable for Bangladesh as it has a set 0.50 TAR.

International operators now say that Bangladesh should open up its TAR for free quotes by carriers as this would drastically reduce call charges. And the drop in tariff rates would be compensated by increase in call lengths and numbers, as was witnessed after the reduction of TAR to 0.50 SDR.

14 police officials

FROM PAGE 1
The SP ranking officials are AIG (ENT) Syed Bazul Karim, AIG Malik Khasru, PR Chandra, Commandant of Rangpur Police Training Centre, Mia Abul Hossain, Commandant of Tangail PTC, Sirajul Islam, DC Traffic of south division, Abdur Rahim (SS-CID), AH M Froze Kabir (SS-Passport), Ashrafuddin Malik, commandant of PS Betunia, Khan Akramuzzaman, Commandant of APBN, Shafiqul Hossain Chowdhury, Commandant of Barabunia PTC and Erfan Ali Khan, APBN of Dhaka.

Earlier, more than twenty senior police officials were made OSD and hundreds of juniors transferred in a bid to 'improve the law and order situation'.



President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury hosted an iftar party for orphans and disabled children at the Bangabhaban yesterday. Picture shows him exchanging greetings with a girl on the occasion.

Showcouse on BIWTA secy, its chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
A Division Bench of the High Court (HC) yesterday issued a show cause notice on BIWTA Secretary

Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury and its former chairman Mohammad Abdul Huq why contempt proceedings shall not be drawn against them for violating an earlier HC order.

World toilet summit!

AP Singapore
The World Toilet Organisation which is being formed in Singapore this week at the inaugural World Toilet Summit wants to take lavatories to the world, its founder said yesterday.

The HC had issued the order on July 20, 1997, following a writ petition filed by one Haji Shamsul Huq of Zinzira.

Personal hygiene became serious business in Singapore several years ago after the government said clean public toilets are a hallmark of a 'gracious' society.

According to a press release issued by the petitioner's lawyer Najmul Hasan, the writ petition was filed against the BIWTA secretary and its former chairman in connection with the petitioner's private property on the southern bank of the Buriganga, known as Katpatti and Bansh patti, under Kernaniganj upazila.

Experts' body

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be built. Explaining the proposal for importing hydropower from India, the participant from Bangladesh told The Daily Star that it would mainly depend on cost.

"If the cost of imported hydropower is more than that of the power to be purchased in AES Haripur plant, then hydropower import will not be reasonable", he said.

Sources also said that there was no exclusive discussion on gas export from Bangladesh. Representatives from Nepal and Bhutan said they have resources for producing hydropower, but they need investment from neighbouring countries in this regard.

Batamul blast

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Darul Ulum Madaninagar Madrassa, Dhaka was arrested on June 7 this year for his alleged involvement in the blast.

A powerful bomb went off at Ramna Batamul during the Bengali New Year's function on April 14 this year, killing nine people and injuring many others.

Police filed a case in this connection. Advocate Khondaker Mahbub Hossain moved the petition on behalf of the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Abu Kaiser stood for the state.

Minority issue

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some Indian political parties. "There are provocations from across the border to destroy communal harmony in Bangladesh", he said.

The speaker brushed aside the newspaper reports regarding atrocity on minority community and gave the ruling.

On another point, Shah Mohammad Ruhul Qudus of Jamaat-e-Islami drew attention of the Chair on recent incidents of killing in some bordering areas by Indian BSF. But the chair regretted that his point could not be considered.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia held an iftar party for officials and employees of her office at the International Conference Centre (ICC) yesterday evening.

Naimur axed, Khaled captain

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Aminul, country's first Test centurion, will however be a member of the New Zealand tour party.

Mainul announced the 15-man Test squad for the New Zealand and the 14-man team for the first ODI at a crowded press briefing at the MA Aziz Stadium lounge at the end of the second Test on Monday.

Naimur, who was captain in all of Bangladesh's seven previous Tests, has of late come under criticism for his lack of form and apparent failure to inspire the team.

"His performance is not up to the mark. He is struggling both with the ball and bat. I think, he has little chance as a bowler in the near future. If he wants to stay in the team he must prove himself only as a batsman", remarked Mainul.

"We are also thinking of giving Fahim Muntasir a break and trying Sanwar's spin", added Mainul.

Off-spinner Fahim, who has been sitting on the reserve bench in both the Dhaka and Chittagong Tests, is likely to be one of the three new faces in the one-day squad.

For Sanwar, the call-up was a deserving one after his outstanding showing on the Bangladesh A team tour in India.

player has raised some strong arguments, but stripping of his captaincy was quite predictable.

"He is giving only his fifty per cent with the ball after he was reported by the match referee in Colombo Test. There is no bite in his bowling now," said Mainul with a note of finality.

But the fact remains, if he performs to his potential, Naimur can be a useful member of the Bangladesh set up with his aggressive style of play. It could also be argued that his omission from the one-day squad is rather premature.

Besides, the decision to choose Khaled Masood as captain remains a mystery. Masood is also struggling with the bat since picking up an injury in Zimbabwe last April. His leadership ability has never been tested even in the domestic cricket.

About Akram, Mainul said that the days of the big Chittagonian in the abridged version of the game are over. But he might be considered in Tests 'only if he can improve his batting'.

"We have also not considered Aminul for the one-dayers. But his Test record is much better than Akram and that is why he is going to New Zealand", said Mainul.

Reserves: Anwar Hossain (wicketkeeper), Mehrab Hossain and Anwar Hossain Munir.

SQUAD FOR THE FIRST ODI:
Khaled Masood (captain), Mohammad Ashraf, Al-Shahriar, Tushar Imran, Habibul Bashar, Sanwar Hossain, Khaled Mahmud, Mohammad Rafique, Fahim Muntasir, Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, Monjurul Islam, Mohammad Sharif, Javed Omar and Enamul Hoque.

EU support

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products at the meeting. It has identified a number of products like bicycle, melamine, electronics and cutlery where relaxation in rules of origin will make them competitive.

Other than these, Bangladesh would also seek some capacity building supports under trade-related technical assistance, especially for agro-based industries. In addition, it will also seek assistance for setting up of a foreign trade institution.

A EU team headed by Sokian Sotiadis, Director, Asia of the EU, is now in city for the meeting.

Meantime, European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy will arrive here today to attend a seminar on the Everything-but-Arms (EBA) facility, which allows duty-free access to the EU.

Indian HC

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that additional replacements of two platoons had been sent to the tension-ridden area.

Tension has prevailed at the border since the BSF opened fire on stone collectors at Panchagarih two days back, killing two and injuring many others, several critically.

Thirty-eight Bangladeshis have been killed by the BSF since the Roumari skirmish in April this year.

Boy dies

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Nahid's father rushed him to the Dhaka Shishu Hospital when his condition deteriorated. Police said, quoting the UD case filed with the police, that doctors referred him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital after his condition worsened in the early hours yesterday.

The doctors at Shishu hospital also told Nahid's father that he had been administered 'wrong medicine', according to the UD case.

Nahid died at DMCH at about 4am yesterday.

Following filing of the case police sent the body to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Badda police said that they would go for action after getting the autopsy report today.

Verdict in Mouze Ali Murder Case today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna
Verdict in Mouze Ali Murder Case will be pronounced today by the additional district and sessions judge of the third court.

Fourteen people including notorious terrorist Ershad Shikdar are accused in the murder case. Eight of FIR named accused are in jail custody, while six are still absconding.

The arrested are Ershad Shikdar, Jamai Faruque, Liaquat Lashkor, Nasruddin, Mostafa, Bhutto and two others.

Mouze Ali, a handling worker of Boyra CSD godown was shot dead on the night of October 10 in 1994. A case was filed with Khalishpur thana in this connection.

11 cops killed

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The fifteen other sick policemen are Rafiqul Islam, Md Jahangir, Md Ataul, Md Bashir, Ajit Barua, Delwar Hossain, Priotosh Dutta, Aminul Hoq, Md. Harun, Shakil Ahmad, Md Akhter, Prabhask, Jamal Hossain, Anwarul Hoq, and Shafiqul Hossain Hashem.

As all the policemen started feeling bad after taking iftar, they were immediately rushed to the local health complex. As their condition deteriorated, they were brought to CMCH.

But after admission, despite frantic efforts by doctors, eleven of them met with their tragic end of life one after another, hospital sources said.

difficult to treat the victims. "We did our best to treat the victims," said.

Nursing supervisor Ayesha Khatun said, "I never came across such a case of food poisoning in this hospital earlier."

"As the policemen were brought to the hospital, doctors and nurses rushed there. We all made frantic efforts throughout the whole night to save their lives", she added.

Constable Shafiqul Islam Hashem and some of his sick colleagues were seen lying on the floor at the ward. Doctors and nurses were attending them.

Hashem who married one year back and joined the Paglipara camp on November 4 said, "Just half an hour after taking iftar, I and my colleagues started suffering from stomach trouble and loose motion."

"I think the Begunee was the cause of our food poisoning. All the iftar items were prepared at our camp," Hashem said.

A five-member committee headed by Lt. Col. Shahid, Commanding Officer of BDR at Rangamati, was formed yesterday to probe the cause of the food poisoning.

The bodies were sent to CMCH morgue in the afternoon for autopsy, hospital sources said.

Police sources said the remaining cooked iftar has been sent to Dhaka for forensic test.

Doctors at CMCH suspected that the food poisoning was caused by use of date-expired bason in the begunee, that could contain Botulinum Toxin.

Professor Dr. MA Fayez, head of medicine department at the hospital told newsmen that policemen died from a 'severe' food poisoning.

"In such severe cases of food poisoning, 70 to 80 per cent of the affected people may die as it is very

35 hurt as AL, BNP activists clash in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 35 people were injured, 10 of them critically, in a clash between activists of Awami League and BNP at Bhabonhati area, about 7 km away from Magura town yesterday.

Local people said that the two groups, one led by AI leader Abdul Hai Sardar and the other by BNP leader Asgar Biswas clashed over establishment of their supremacy in the area.

They used iron rods, sticks and other weapons during the clash. The injured were admitted to Magura Sadar hospital.

No case was filed in this regard.

Couple murder

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witnessed the couple being shot to save the child on their lap. The second rickshaw carrying Afsana and Shumi fled the road to escape the firing. They returned when the situation calmed down to look for the other rickshaw but were unable to trace it.

Afsana, who received minor injuries on her forehead, and her daughter then went back to Suhrawardy Hospital for first aid. There they found the bodies of her parents.

Sub-inspector Monirul of Mohamadpur police station, posted near the area at the time, had brought the bodies to the hospital. The minor boy Fardin was also with him.

The trouble between the Nabi and Razzak gangs started yesterday evening. At one stage of the altercation members of Nabi group attacked Razzak's house at Khilji Road. Razzak's group then chased them out resulting in the exchange of gunfire between the two rival groups.

The tension among the groups heightened following the killing of Raj, a member of Nabi's gang a month back. Another source said that local gangster Mahboob had been provoking the Nabi group to go against the Razzak group for some time.

Jamal Uddin, a relative of the dead couple, filed a case with Mohamadpur police station in this regard.

Cabinet

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In the past, the EC enjoyed the power to announce the schedule of the upazila election. Prior to handing over the power to the caretaker government, the immediate-past Awami League government amended the Upazila Act and vested the power of announcing the schedule with the LGRD Ministry to avoid some legal technicalities.

The EC sent a letter to the LGRD Ministry in late October, seeking fresh amendment to the law.

The first upazila election was held on May 16 and May 20, 1985 to elect chairmen of 460 upazilas for a period of five years.

The next election was held over a period of 10 days beginning from March 14, 1990. Next year, after coming to power, the BNP nullified the Upazila Act.

The cabinet meeting also approved free education system for female students up to the intermediate level as committed by the BNP in its election manifesto. Besides, it decided to reintroduce the food for education programme immediately.

The cabinet made another committee with the finance, commerce and law ministers to scrutinise a Consumers Rights Act.

The cabinet also reviewed recommendations of the Secretaries' Committee on Poverty Alleviation and took decision to implement those, which could be executed within 100 days.

Test series

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But once the last recognised Bangladesh batsman Ashraf was out caught off a full toss by off-spinner Maillier at mid-on, the match was all but over.

Sharif entertained the crowd with 24 off 11 balls that included two towering sixes off Grant Flower. Bangladesh innings folded when Masood, who contributed 12 off 38 balls, was caught by Dion Ebrahim at forward short leg.

When Imbatwe came to bat a second time young tearaway Kowshik came close to clearing a hat-trick.

Regardless of the imminent outcome of the match, Kowshik ran in with full pace to uproot opener Ebrahim's wickets with his fifth ball and had captain Stuart Carlisle by Akram Khan in the slips with his final delivery.

But when Kowshik returned after Enamul had gone away just one run in the second over, Gripper negotiated the hat-trick ball.

Occasional left-arm spinner Grant Flower, who captured eight wickets in the match, was adjudged as the man-of-the-match and received 2,000 dollars.

During the presentation ceremony, Friend, man-of-the-match in Dhaka, also received his award. The young all-rounder took six wickets in the first Test and scored a superb 81 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"I never expected to be given the ball here. But once I got it I exploited the rough areas," said the younger of the Flower brothers who had earlier got only ten wickets in 55 Tests.

Both teams will meet again in the first of three-match one-day series at the same venue on November 23. The visitors, in the meantime, will play a limited-overs exhibition match against Chittagong Division on Wednesday.

(Scoreboard and other stories on page 13)

PM: Good governance

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minister. She reminded them that her government had announced a 100-day programme and a committee headed by the principal secretary is working for its implementation.

She hoped that the officials of the PM office would play an important role alongside the other government officers in executing her government's priority agenda.

She also expressed the hope that her official staff would apply their innovative power for formulating the process and effective recommendations for removal of the existing problems in various sectors.

The prime minister asked the officials to make the environment and efficiency of her office an example to be emulated by rest of the offices in the country.

She stressed the importance of establishing the rule of law in all spheres of national life. "Besides, being an official, you all also have a role as citizens in removing the existing problems," she said.

She told the officials that personal and family environment could provide a framework for establishing discipline in greater perspectives.

The PM sought innovative ideas, recommendations and suggestions from the officials of her office to fulfil the aspirations of the people.

She hoped that they would utilise the opportunity of serving the nation

VP Joynal

FROM PAGE 12
such a situation would not arise. "He should have at least checked whether his name was included as terrorist."

Delwar Hossain Sayeedi of Jamaat-e-Islami demanded punishment of the officials who prepared the list. "The home ministry list branded not only MPs but also ministers as terrorists," he said mentioning the names of Social Welfare Minister Ali Hossain Mohammad Mujahid and Fazlul Haque Amin MP.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who chaired the sitting, immediately gave a ruling on the matter and said the word terrorists would be expunged from the proceedings.

Questions plea

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one of its member-countries and "we defined our stand".

The bank has given its reaction about the SOE losses and suggested readjustment of power, gas and petroleum prices.

"We have only started the talks. I hope if we can reach a consensus we can get significant assistance from the bank under its PRSP programme," he added.

However, Nishimizu stressed that any WB assistance would depend on implementation of critical reforms as early as possible.

According to meeting sources, the WB vice-president told the ministers that the donors wanted initiation of a comprehensive structural reforms programme and also mentioned the policy brief prepared by the bank for the new government.

"We want to see it urgently implemented," the meeting sources quoted Nishimizu as saying.

She also wondered what type of governance Bangladesh was practising where no action was taken against the utility bill defaulters, although the service providers were continually making losses.

Nishimizu also put accent on privatisation of the SOEs as soon as possible.

Saifur said they had discussion on good governance and reforms. "We agree with the WB view on

these issues as we thought these are important for the country. But we have our own outlook."

On the question of privatisation and other reforms, Saifur said the government needed to ensure social safety net before going for all-out reforms.

"If we get good prices for the SOEs we will definitely dispose these off. But privatisation does not ensure profitability," he said. "We would have to think of the best possible way out to get rid of these loss-incurring SOEs with social and economic benefits."

In a separate meeting on Monday, the WB vice president met Bangladesh Bank Governor Md. Farashuddin and chairmen and board members of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and discussed reforms measures in the banking sector.

Nishimizu arrived in Dhaka on Sunday for a five-day visit.

Her purpose is to learn the priorities of the new government's development programme.

She will also meet members of the civil society and the business community to get their views.

During her stay, Nishimizu will also travel outside the city centre to visit some local government offices and grassroots entrepreneurs.

NAM Summit

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permanent heads of missions of NAM members to the UN met in New York at the end of last week on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman addressed the meeting and informed it about Bangladesh's inability to host the Summit.

The Bangladesh State Minister told the meeting that the post September 11 scenario in South Asia had created an economic downturn and unfavourable climate in the region, raising questions of security for so many heads of state or government likely to attend the Summit.

Bangladesh's inability learnt to have been accepted by the NAM members.

Jordan, which had vied along with Bangladesh at the last NAM Summit in Durban in 1997 to host the 13th Summit but lost the contest, has now accepted the responsibility of hosting it.

Jordan will convey the date of the summit shortly, it is learnt.

Policy planners in Dhaka said the country does not have required infrastructure for holding such a mega summit which could attract about 5000 delegates and some 60 to 70 heads of state or government.

Construction work of three luxury hotels for accommodating the guests was yet to begin and expansion of Sheraton Hotel was well behind schedule.

Expansion of runways and apron space for parking private jets and several aircraft to bring heads of state or government was also not initiated, sources said.

Taliban withdraw

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many Pakistanis, Arabs and Chechens linked to Laden's al Qaida network were holed up in the city.

AFP says, besieged Taliban fighters are willing to surrender Kunduz, but only under UN supervision, a militia commander said in an interview yesterday.

The commander, Mulla Fazil, told the Pakistani newspaper Dawn the offer was prompted by the constant US bombings which he said had killed some 1000 people over the weekend in the Kunduz area and 250 in nearby Khanabad district.

"We have authorised the governor of the province to take necessary steps in this respect," Fazil, described as the chief Taliban commander in the north, told the newspaper.

But Fazil said the Taliban would under no circumstances surrender to the rival Northern Alliance after hearing reports of a bloody settling of accounts in the capital Kabul and northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Pakistan said yesterday it was no longer doing business with Afghanistan's beleaguered Taliban movement although it had not withdrawn diplomatic recognition.

Pakistan also said the radical militia's sole remaining embassy, in Islamabad, remained open.

"We don't have relations, we don't conduct business between the government of Pakistan and whatever is left of the Taliban government," Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar told a news conference.

"But relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan continue and they will be maintained according to our best intentions," he added.

AP says, with no government in

Afghanistan for the past week, the United Nations was pressing yesterday for the disparate Afghan factions to quickly convene at a neutral site possibly in Europe to create an interim government.

The Northern Alliance, led by former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, sent troops and police into the capital Kabul immediately after the Taliban movement fled Nov 13, and is therefore in the strongest bargaining position.

The alliance has called for the Afghan factions to gather in Kabul, but under strong pressure from the United States, the alliance now appears ready to travel to European for the crucial talks.

"We would like to convene this meeting as fast as humanly possible," said UN spokesman Eric Failt. "If we get an agreement from the northern alliance it would certainly be a matter of days."

Meanwhile, dismissing suggestions Afghan forces would be unable to unite, an opposition envoy said that if left alone Afghans could create their own form of government, pointing out they had done so once in the past, in 1747.

The UN envoy of the Northern Alliance, Haron Amin, made the comments in a CNN interview, in reaction to claims by former US ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke.

Amin was responding to a recent Washington Post editorial, in which Holbrooke wrote that the Afghans "have been fighting among themselves too long to form an integrated security force right now."