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BNP MPs for go-slow on constitution amendment

Suggest talks on raising seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmakers yesterday asked Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to go slow and hold large-scale discussions on amendments to the constitution for raising Jatiya Sangsad (JS) seats and widening the gap between two sessions.

Chairing a Bangladesh Nationalist Party Parliamentary Party (BNPPP) meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban, Khaleda, also the BNPPP leader, told the legislators that her coalition would go ahead with the plans.

The four-party coalition is SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presides over the meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Muggers kill businessman in Tejgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman was stabbed to death in an apparent mugging incident in Tejgaon on Tuesday night, police said.

Police recovered the body of Shariful Haque Siraji, one of the owners of Siraji Home and Overseas Machinery at Nawabpur, from the road in the commercial area at around 11:45pm and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

As the 39-year-old man did not return home, his family after an overnight search went to the DMCH and identified the dead yesterday. Siraji and his brother Rafiqul closed their shop at 6:30pm and went to Madan Lal Lane in Sutrapur for business purpose. Rafiqul went back home, but Siraji went missing, the family said.

Police believe muggers killed him, as the victim's mobile phone, bracelet and about Tk 8,000 were missing.

A case was filed with Tejgaon Police Station.

Kids in fetters

108 children are held in jail in violation of law

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

At least 108 juvenile delinquents are being held in Dhaka Central Jail instead of correction centres, as the law dictates, according to a list prepared by the jail authorities in December 2003.

Section 2(F) of the Children Act, 1974 says any person aged below 16 is a juvenile and must be sent to a "certified home or approved home or to the custody of a relative or other fit person". A juvenile has to remain in such a place till the age of 16.

The children languish in the prison though at least 99 seats are lying vacant in the National Juvenile Correction Centre at Tongi. Of the 108 children, at least eight have been in the jail for more than one year. Al Amin, a boy of 14, has been there since October 7, 2000. Six have

murder cases against them while the majority were arrested for allegations of robbery or theft. A few are accused in arms cases too.

The Children Act says living in jail may pose moral dangers to juveniles. Social workers as well as guardians of the children are also worried from the thought that the children will be more exposed to crime inside the jail and from contact with adult criminals.

"I did not know there is an exclusive place for juveniles at Tongi and thought my son was bound to suffer in prison for his misdeeds," said Nasrin Begum, mother of 14-year-old Badal who came out of the prison on bail January 12 evening. "Now, everyone says he will get entangled in bigger crimes," Nasrin weeps in apprehension.

In most cases, children's age SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Bail to accused of Lalbagh 7-murder cancelled

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday overruled its previous order that had granted ad interim bail to the prime accused in the sensational Lalbagh seven-murder case.

The carnage took place at Lalbagh in old Dhaka on December 31, 1994 in a violence following the Dhaka City Corporation election, in which the accused, Abdul Aziz, lost the race for a commissioner.

A division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hassan Ameen and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir also asked the accused to surrender before the trial court in a week.

The court orders came upon petitions filed by the state and the informant of the case who sought cancellation of the bail granted by another HC bench on November 15 last year.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

UK minister worried at law, order slide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting British Minister for International Development Gareth Thomas expressed concerns yesterday at the law and order situation in the country.

He raised the issue including the recent killing of journalist Manik Saha during his meetings with the government high-ups. "I have discussed the state of law and order,

press freedom and human rights situations in Bangladesh during my separate meetings with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan. Both of them shared our concerns on the issues," Thomas told a press conference in the city prior to his departure after a two-day visit.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

TEESTA WATER-SHARING Dhaka, Delhi set up experts' body

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

India and Bangladesh yesterday set up an eight-member committee of senior technical experts to undertake a joint scientific study on the availability of Teesta water and help finalise a draft agreement.

Both countries are seeking to move ahead in a time-bound manner towards an interim accord on sharing of Teesta river water.

The decision to set up the technical experts committee, which would also examine in detail 'pending

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Internal feud mars Jubo Dal council at Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The council meeting of Chittagong city unit Jubo Dal ended amid pandemonium and freestyle scuffle between activists of the president and general secretary groups at a community centre yesterday.

Angry activists of the groups led by Jubo Dal President Abul Hashem

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Outlaws kill Khulna VDP member

Snatch rifle from police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Alleged outlaws yesterday shot dead a VDP (Village Defence Party) member at Paikgachha in Khulna.

A three-member gang shot and killed Abdul Jalil, a VDP chowkidar, at Katipara Bazar under Rarhuli

union at about 6:30pm, sources said.

They were underground operatives of an unspecified outlawed group, police suspect.

The gang later traded bullets with police while leaving the area. They SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Watchdog mulled to curb cop corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government is considering setting up an intelligence force to check crimes in the police force, Home Minister Atif Hossain Chowdhury informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

He was responding to a query by independent lawmaker MM Shahin. But, despite repeated insistence, the

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First Death Anniversary of late Aiman Haque

A Milad and Doa Mahfil will be held on Saturday, 24.01.2004 soon after Asr prayers on the occasion of First Death Anniversary of late Aiman Haque at House # 15, Road # 59, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212. All relatives, friends and well-

wishers are requested to attend the Milad Mahfil and pray to the Almighty Allah for eternal peace of his departed soul.

On behalf of Family Members
Father : Bazlul Haque (Dipu)

Ctg schoolboy killed after abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Halishahar police yesterday recovered the body of a schoolboy from near Firoz Shah Rail Gate in the port city, 14 hours after the abduction allegedly by his relatives.

Police recovered the body of 11-year-old Hasan Murad Bablu, son of Abu Jafar, at about 8:00am, sources said.

Police held victim's uncle Abul Kashem, his wife Shelly Akhter and their daughter Munni for their alleged involvement in the crime, sources added.

On Tuesday evening, Bablu's cousin Munni, 14, daughter of Abul Kashem, called him out to visit their aunt's residence, family sources said.

Later, the victim's parents went to Halishahar Police Station to file a

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