INTERNATIONAL

Pak NA elects first

female speaker

'Life or death struggle' over Tibet, says China

AFP, Beijing

China said yesterday it was wants talks between his governengagedina "life or death struggle" ment-in-exile and China to within China. over Tibet as it announced 105 resume and is committed to a people had surrendered over an non-violent settlement of the uprising and exiled groups warned Tibet issue, one of his aides told reporting on unrest in Tibet at least hundreds had been detained.

"We are currently in an intensely bloody and fiery struggle with the we have to live side-by-side. We Dalai Lama clique, a life or death have to talk to each other," Tenzin AFP reporter was ordered off a bus struggle with the enemy," Tibet's Taklha said. Communist Party leader Zhang Qingli said in an editorial in the said Tuesday that Beijing was Tibet Daily yesterday.

the country that have seen independence. Tibetans protests in recent days remained sealed off to the foreign pendence," Taklha reiterated, press to prevent independent stressing that the Dalai Lama was edly quelling unrest.

run-up to April's election. The

election will pick members of a

special Constituent Assembly,

which is to rewrite Nepal's consti-

tution and decide the nation's

by five masked gunmen at his

house just after midnight

election from his village of Betini,

about 310 miles southeast of

Adhikari was shot several times

future political system.

Katmandu.

NCC

BANK

AFP vesterday.

"Both sides have to realise that there last week.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao willing to hold talks, but only after used no deadly force to quell the viewed in China as a campaign for Xining, as well as in Lhasa. unrest, Tibet and other parts of the remote region to be granted

"still committed to the Middle Way Meanwhile the Dalai Lama approach" -- a policy of nonviolence and autonomy for Tibet

> Chinese police have threatened or blocked foreign journalists from 30 times since deadly riots erupted

In one of the latest incidents, an in southwest China.

The Foreign Correspondents Club of China said journalists had experienced interference in the While China has insisted it has the Dalai Lama gave up what is cities of Beijing, Chengdu and

> In several other locations, police barred reporters from carrying out "We are not asking for inde- their work and escorted them out of areas where forces were report-

ment, or national assembly. have been elected as the speaker of the national assembly," outgoing speaker Amir Hussain announced after a day-long vote before handing over the speaker's

AFP, Islamabad

Benazir Bhutto.

Pakistan's parliament yesterday

elected the first female speaker in

the country's 60-year history, a

loyalist from the party of assassi-

nated former prime minister

Fahmida Mirza, 52, could play a

crucial role in a looming show-

down between a coalition govern-

ment led by Benazir's party and

President Pervez Musharraf,

whose political allies lost heavily

Mps in the National Assembly

pounded their desks in approval

as the the purple-veiled former

medical doctor was announced

the winner with 249 votes from the

in elections a month ago.

Mirza, a veteran politician from Benazir's home province of Sindh, then took the oath as the first woman to hold the position in this deeply conservative Islamic nation of 160 million people.

"This is my third tenure in the national assembly and I believe it is time that we all work together to address the challenges facing the country," Mirza told reporters before the session.

"I am sure that we will be able to face these challenges with the support of parliamentarians, our tions.

Western envoys

slam UN's failed

Myanmar mission

people and Pakistani media."

Benazir, the first female premier of an Islamic nation, was slain at an election rally on December 27. Her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the most seats in elections last month and is set to lead a coalition government.

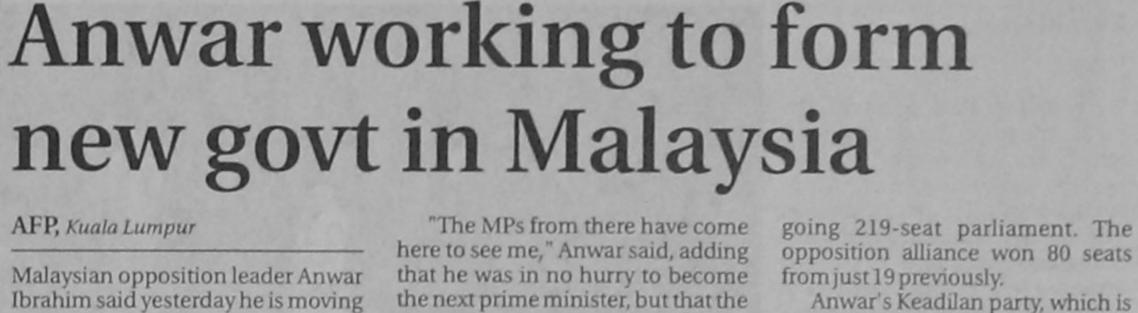
"The election of Fahmida Mirza as speaker will be a big step towards the empowerment of women in Pakistan," Shah Mahmood Qureshi, a central PPP leader, told reporters.

A rival party supporting key US ally President Pervez Musharraf, which suffered a crushing defeat in the elections last month, put forth a candidate who won 70 342-seat lower house of parlia-

The speaker conducts the "Fahmida Mirza is declared to business of the house, deciding which debates or motions are allowed, and will play a key role in a parliament that looks set for a bruising confrontation with Musharraf.

"This is a big test and I hope that with the honour that Allah has bestowed upon you, you will be able to live up to expectations," said Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, parliamentary leader of the pro-Musharraf Pakistan Muslim League-Q party.

Musharraf, whose popularity has slumped amid rising Islamic militancy and economic problems, is desperate to find a political ally after his backers were trounced in the February 18 elec-



Ibrahim said yesterday he is moving towards forming a new government after landmark elections, with the help of defectors from the ruling coalition.

with China hold the key to success, analysts say.

"I don't know how soon we can form the new government but we are moving in that direction," the former deputy premier.

Anwar said that coalition members from Malaysia's eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo island had contacted him to discuss switching sides. The power bloc there could unseat the government ifitchanged hands.

the next prime minister, but that the opposition would already be in power if the polls had been clean

Taiwan's presidential candidate Frank Hsieh of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party with his wife Yu Fang-chih

(R) greet supporters under heavy security presence during a motorcade rally in Taipei yesterday. Taiwan's next

president will have to work hard to carve out a meaningful role for the island on the international stage, and relations

was no fraud in the election, we would have won. If we had two percent more votes we would have formed the new government," he

The three-party opposition alliance made unprecedented gains in March 8 polls.

lawmakers in the new 222-seat parliament, against 199 in the out-

going 219-seat parliament. The opposition alliance won 80 seats from just 19 previously.

formally headed by his wife, will be the biggest opposition party in parliament, but Anwar is barred "I am maintaining that if there from standing for public office until April because of a corruption con-

Anwar said that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's future was in jeopardy.

Anwar has said he will return to parliament through a by-election in a seat held by Keadilan, but that the Barisan Nasional will have 140 plan is on hold until he consolidates Keadilan's unexpected electoral

MRANGS.

Election candidate shot dead in Nepal AP, Kathmandu Masked gunmen in southern Nepal shot and killed a candidate from a small communist party contesting upcoming elections, police said yesterday. Kamal Prasad Adhikari, a National People's Front candidate, is the first candidate killed in the

Wednesday, police official Govinda Ram Pariyar said. Adhikari was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, but died a few hours later, Pariyar said. Fahmida Mirza at the the Parliament House in Islamabad yesterday. Adhikari was contesting the

top post with 249 votes from the 342-seat of parliament. National Credit and Commerce Bank Ltd.

Pakistan's parliament later elected Fahmida, a veteran politician from

Benazir's home province of Sindh, as its first female speaker. She won the

Head Office: 7-8, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000

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assigning any reasons whatsoever. Md. Bulbul Alam, Project Director

AFP, United Nations

Western ambassadors on Tuesday voiced disappointment with the outcome of UN troubleshooter Ibrahim Gambari's latest mediation in Myanmar but vowed to keep the crisis in the Security Council's spotlight.

"We are disappointed by the lack of any concrete achievement" during Gambari's last visit to Myanmar from March 6 to 9, US Ambassador to the UN Zalmay Khalilzad told reporters after council consultations on the issue.

"The (military) regime has not responded appropriately to Gambari's initiative," he added, describing as "flawed" plans by Myanmar authorities to to hold a referendum on a new constitution in May and multi-party elections in

Sawers, said Gambari gave a "not very encouraging briefing" on his Kyi and to act as go-between latest mission to promote between two," he earlier told the national reconciliation between Myanmar's government and the opposition led by democracy ron and Nobel peace prize laure-

SONY

ate Aung San Suu Kyi.

He said the world community's best tool to sway the ruling junta was "the power of persuasion" and keeping the issue "in the spotlight."

France's UN Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert expressed alarm that the draft constitution unveiled by Myanmar authorities contained provisions aimed at preventing Aung San Suu Kyi from running in the elections.

"That is not acceptable," he

But Chinese Ambassador Wang Guangya, whose country is a major trade partner and arms supplier of Myanmar, insisted that Gambari's mission had achieved some prog-

"One can argue whether the glass is full or the glass is half full," he told reporters.

"The United Nations is the only His British counterpart, John outsider to maintain access to both the government and Aung San Suu On his third visit to Myanmar

earlier this month, Gambari was rebuffed twice by the junta.

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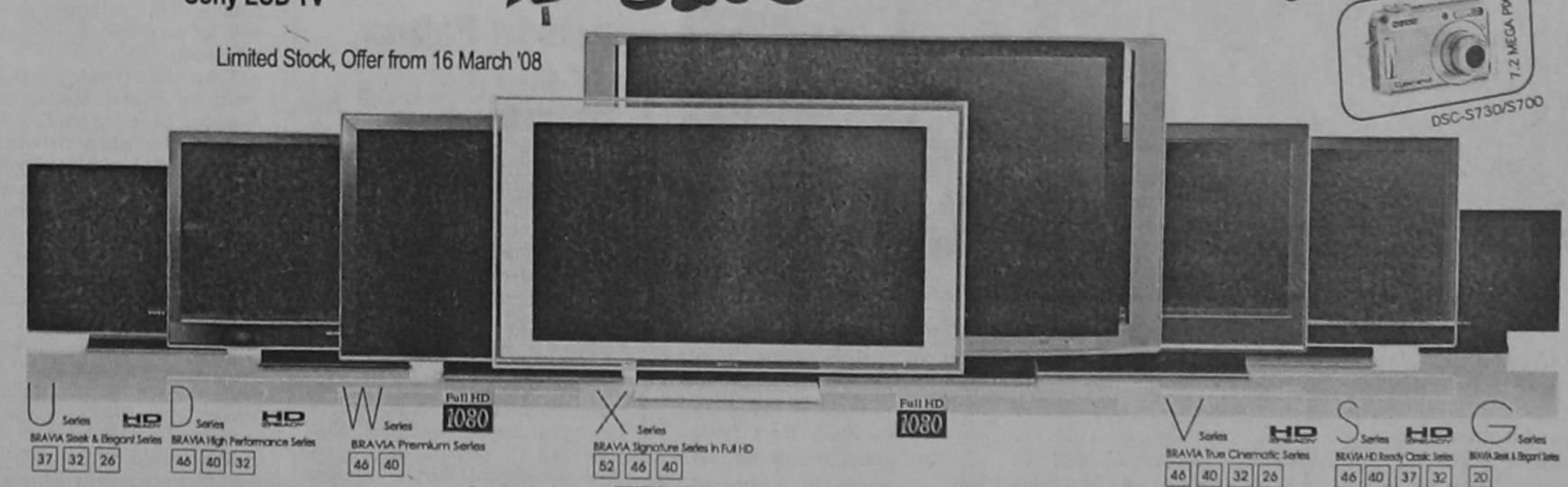
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