Staff query Speaker acts

Questions raised on use of powers over Taiwan issue

By PEARSON KOLO

NATIONAL Parliament Speaker Jeffery Nape's actions in gagging the Opposition from asking questions on the Taiwan dollar scandal in Parliament last week have been queried by his own staff.

Opposition leader Sir Mekere Morauta was prevented from raising questions on the controversial Taiwan dollar scandal.

However Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, Nawae MP Timothy Bonga and Paul Tiensten were allowed to make statements on the issue.

State Enterprises Minister Arthur Somare was also allowed to make a statement on the Taiwan issue, including remarks critical of the Post-Courier and the Opposition.

But some participants of a parliamentary staff workshop in Port Moresby had the impression during the course that Speaker Nape may have wrongly used parliamentary privileges and powers vested in him.

National Parliament's First Assistant Clerk Podi Kohu, however, said the Speaker might have been advised that the matter was before the court and that was why he gagged the Opposition Leader.

"Matters before the courts are not to be deliberated on the floor of Parliament," Mr Kohu said.

But the answer of acting deputy Parliament Clerk Simon Ila was different:

"The past process of Opposition questioning the Government to check their numbers has changed and there is a new way of testing numbers now," the parliamentary staffer said.

He said this was not done under proper procedures. Some parliamentary staff said the powers of having the numbers might be exercised in such ways. The question was raised by the Post-Courier during the workshop and the parliamentary officers and other staff elaborated on it extensively.
Tribesmen use their gardening tools to cut down a small hill at Polokobugo village last Saturday. They constructed a 7km road from Gagi Primary School to Sim which connects to the old feeder road. – Nationalpic by JAMES APA GUMUNO

Members and staff taught parliamentary procedures

BY WALLACE KIALA
PARLIAMENT staff and the provincial assemblies would now be able to effectively carry out their duties and better understand the processes and procedures of the Westminster system of parliament.

Acting Deputy Clerk of Parliament Simon Ila said this yesterday at the start of a three-day professional development workshop for parliament and provincial assembly staff.

The workshop is designed to enable officers to learn about the various aspects of parliamentary work, give opportunities to develop professional skills and ultimately lift the standards of services for parliamentarians.

The training focuses on developing staff capacity in research and analysis, writing, planning and budgeting, parliamentary privileges and contempt, and understanding the Westminster parliamentary model.

The programme is practically oriented with participants being involved in a range of exercises including report writing, conducting public hearings, planning and preparing budgets for their respective areas.

The workshop is part of an ongoing series of activities for MPs and parliamentary staff of the 8th National Parliament that began with the induction programme last August.

It is sponsored by the AusAID-supported Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) that was established by the Australian government in 1998 to support the efforts of new democracies in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen their political systems.

AIDS awareness

By DULCIE OREKE AIHI
AWARENESS campaigns on HIV/AIDS, to date, have apparently not been effective.

The National AIDS Council has now recognised the need for additional measures to improve the effectiveness of the national response to HIV by fully addressing the needs of all demographics.

Gender adviser Elsie Oreke said during the first roll-out of the gender HIV/AIDS policy one of the critical gender issues was gender-sensitive care.

However, the roll-out of the gender HIV/AIDS policy aimed to work closely towards addressing gender and minimise the spread.

The council is optimistic of bringing about gender term development by 2005. It provided the...
Parliament staff learn to do a better job

BY PEARSON KOLO

PARLIAMENT staff are attending a workshop to improve their performance.

The workshop is being conducted by the Centre for Democratic Institutions. Acting deputy clerk of Parliament Simon Ila said the workshop would enable staff from the different divisions of the parliamentary service to improve their knowledge and skills.

He said the main subjects were research and analysis, writing, planning and budgeting and understanding the Westminster parliamentary model.

“This workshop has been designed to enable parliament staff to learn about all the aspects of parliamentary work and have the opportunity to develop professional skills to lift the standards of service for parliamentarians,” Mr Ila said.

He said the workshop was part of an ongoing series workshops by the Centre of Democratic Institutions for members and staff of the National Parliament.

“We will organise the next workshop for Members to learn the functions of the Westminster system of Government,” Mr Ila said.

Villagers get project off the ground

FIRST phase of development cooperation can involve people getting their hands dirty.

As pictured, Beikut village boys on the west coast of Buka island are using their hands to clean up the area.

Uni’s policy on HIV/AIDS

STUDENTS and staff living with HIV/AIDS will be free to study and work at the University of Goroka as long as they are physically fit.

The administration will not use the HIV/AIDS status of an individual to terminate or refuse entry of students and employment opportunities for staff at the university.

The Goroka university becomes one of the first universities to teach HIV/AIDS as one of the compulsory subjects.

These are outlined in the university’s new policy on HIV/AIDS, which states that the university will not discriminate against people living with the virus who are studying and working at the Goroka campus.

at the university share the same responsibility that all members of staff to undergo a HIV test as part of the university’s policy on HIV/AIDS.

However, the university does not allow students and staff to undergo voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

The University of Goroka has determined or renewed contracts on the basis of HIV/AIDS status nor to influence retrenchment decisions on the basis of HIV/AIDS status.

Employees have a supportive and safe working environment.
The National May 21

Assembly staff highlight snags

By PEARSON KOLO

MANY provincial assemblies do not have assembly committees for checks and balances, it has been claimed.

This is because there is no clear understanding of procedures and processes on the establishment of a provincial assembly. And this is one of the main reasons why corruption at the provincial level is likely to flourish undeterred.

These fears were highlighted by provincial assembly clerks who are attending a three-day workshop for parliamentary staff in Port Moresby.

East Sepik provincial assembly clerk Jack Link said many of the responsibilities of the provincial assemblies were not functioning.

“Most provincial assemblies do not have the assembly committees like the parliamentary committee that monitors and keeps checks and balances watch on government ministries and departments,” he said.

Mr Link said this was because of inadequate understanding of the roles and functions of the provincial assemblies.

Asked if this meant that there was no monitoring of the members of the provincial assembly and the function of the provincial government, Mr Link said: “If you don’t have the committees, who will monitor.”

Other provincial assembly clerks said it was the responsibility of politicians to see that such committees were established and functional.

They all agreed that one of the major factors that contributed to the absence of committees was the lack of funding.

AOG leader dies

SUPERINTENDENT of the Assemblies of God (AOG) churches Reverend Joseph Maru died on Sunday after suffering a stroke.