# JS debate over question cut

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The JS yesterday witnessed an unscheduled debate and uproar over shifting of 28 out of 71 questions from the day's order.

Deputy leader of the opposition Advocate Abdul Hamid pointed out in the House that it was an unprecedented incident that so many guestions were shifted in a single day.

He alleged it was designed to avoid the 'unpleasant' questions of opposition lawmakers. He sought the Chair's intervention to ensure the government's accountability.

Speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, who was presiding over the session, at one stage of the debate termed Suranjit Sengupta's speech "extraneous and exaggerated" and talked in terms of expunging them from the proceedings.

He, however, cooled down as the treasury bench members certified there was nothing un-parliamentary in Suranjit's deliberation, and also informed the House that the question would be transacted on February 27

The House that resumed its session 40 minutes behind schedule transacted a total of 71 questions during the question-hour. It also witnessed tabling of four ques-

Secretary general of the

Manpower Council Abdulwahed al-

Humaid described the move as

"strategic" and warned that if expats

continued to grow at the current

pace, "an economic and social

conducting a study to determine the

work force needs of the Saudi

males is estimated at more than 20

per cent according to unofficial

figures, while less than 10 per cent

The government puts the unem-

experts doubt the figure because it

does not include women who form

20 per cent of the government work

force and a meagre half a percent-

Saudi economist Ihsan Bu-

Hulaiga believes the decision is

essential and will not create a vac-

uum in the domestic labour market

since the overwhelming majority of

the foreign work force is unskilled

"Skilled manpower constitutes

The decision "is in line with the

only 15 per cent of the total. The rest

is unskilled and more than 15 per

cent of them are illiterates." Bu-

kinadom's long-term strategy for

2020 that calls for cutting the num-

ber of expats by 2.25 per cent annu-

ally", or by more than 150,000

with Saudi job-seekers," he said.

Since the mid-1990s, the Saudi

government has taken a series of

measures to facilitate the entry of

Saudi job-seekers into the private

sector because the public sector

Hulaiga told AFP.

workers.

age point in the private sector.

of women of working age are actu-

Unemployment among Saudi

economy over the next 10 years.

Humaid said the Council is

catastrophe" will take place.

the required 10 per cent.

Saudi expat law

LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the questions transferred from yesterday's proceedings would be transacted on some other day, and that triggered a debate.

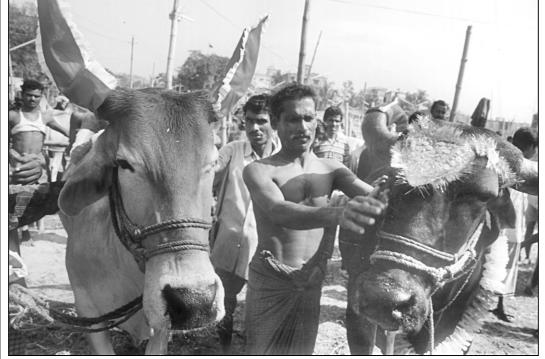
Suranjit Sengupta sought explanation from the treasury bench why so many questions were shifted in a single day. "It is a serious lapse. The parliament secretariat must be judicious in dealing with the questions," an exited Suranjit said, adding that he would not make the Chair a party.

At this stage, an angry speaker said Suranjit's speech was "extraneous and exaggerated "and it should be expunged from the proceedings

The Chair's 'ruling' prompted the opposition lawmakers to shout in the House.

However, the Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Law Minister Moudud Ahmed supported the opposition lawmaker on this point, saying Suranjit was within his rights as a parliamentarian.

After a long debate, the speaker informed the House that he had reason to shift the question and it would again be transacted or



It's Eid time and sacrificial animals are pouring into the capital

# Govt, NGOs should join hands to stop spread of AIDS

KAUSHIK SANKAR DAS, from

A high-level conference on

HIV/AIDS in South Asia ended here

yesterday with pledges to 'speak out

and break the silence and stop the

stigma and discrimination' to pre-

vent the disease from accelerating

in a statement at the concluding

ceremony of the two- day long

conference in the Nepalese capital

co-sponsored by UNICEF and

They also called upon the

eadership to use every opportu-

nity to openly discuss the issues

surrounding the spread of the

And to make it possible, the

Kathmandu declaration committed

to include government and NGO

partners, especially from sectors

like education, religious affairs,

defence, social welfare, women

development, information and also

the young people of the region who

have become extremely vulnera-

of gender inequalities and human

Angered by the government's refusal

to deploy army in the local polls. Sved

said the elections did not reflect peo-

The parliament yesterday heard a

brief debate on the CEC's comments

with the opposition supporting his

contention and the government

(CEC) has made such comments

despite the fact that he himself

declared the polls, is conducting those

as well as announcing their results,"

Mannan Bhuiyan told the House. He

claimed that the UP polls were being

Regarding CEC's demand for

army deployment, he commented that

so far there had not been any situation

that called for army deployment.

"Never in the history of Bangladesh

has the army been in the Union

Parishad elections. It's not possible

that the army would be deployed in a

held in a "very fair and festive manner".

"We don't understand why he

denying any wrongdoing.

ple's choice.

**Bhuiyan tells Sangsad** 

ble to the menace in recent times.

The commitments were declared

The employment of foreigners in sions was banned. Two years ago, the government

special fund set up to help "national-Official statistics indicate that

'This time, the move looks very

ployment rate at nine per cent, but The sixth five year plan from 1995-1999 envisaged a cut of 320,000 foreign workers but the end result was an addition of 80,000

> The current 2000-2005 plan aims to create more than 800,000 new jobs for Saudis, mainly through replacement of foreigners, but the results have not been encouraging.

### Threewheelers

Monir Hossain, a mishuk driver said that he is charging according to BRTA-fixed rate. But he said that the

"The domestic market is saturated with foreigners, some of whom are unemployed. They compete

than the government rate.

Tk 30 for about 5.70 kilometres. The rate for GPO to Airport (about 15 kilometres) is Tk 77, while for Mirpur

250 to Tk 300 for mishuks and Tk 500 for CNG-run autorickshaws.

Department of the DMP at Sonargaon Crossing yesterday said that he has not received any complaints yet from the commuters regarding extra fare.

### Mary Ann Peters

proposed that an AL team should Bangladeshi society, Saber said. with members of the Bangladesh caucus in US Congress and other

congressmen and senators." The US envoy welcomed the

At the meeting, Hasina also expressed concern at lack of progress in investigations of recen bomb blasts in Mymensingh,

The ambassador was told that the AL favoured "expert assistance" from security and intelligence agencies of other countries such as the FBI in such investigations

Saber said. Hasina also told Peters that opposition lawmakers were not lowed to speak on such crucia issues such as the indemnity ordinance, price-hike of fuels and essential commodities, and push-in

number of Saudi nationals by five per cent of the workforce every year.

employees is 30 per cent. 22 mostly administrative profes-

The current required rate of Saudi

hiked fees on the recruitment of expatriates. The money goes into a

guest workers remit about 18.6 billion dollars a vear.

serious. More government measures will follow to streamline recruitment because the situation is not bright ... Government pressure is needed," Bu-Hulaiga said.

more, Bu-Hulaiga noted.

about the fare chart yesterday.

chart has reduced his income.

'To make up for my loss, sometimes I charge extra fare," he tried to

charges Tk 50, which is Tk 20 more

According to BRTA rate, it costs

owners after the total ban on twostroke three wheelers from January1, they need to charge amounts beyond the fixed-rates.

### Tk 10 lakh looted from Rajshahi police office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Unidentified miscreants looted Tk

9.78 lakh from the reserve office of Raishahi district police in the early hours of vesterday. Police said a gang of about eight

people beat and tied up security guard of the office, Habibur Rahman at about 4:30am. They entered into the office

breaking open the main entrance, and looted the money from an iron District Police Inspector Bazlur

Rahman filed a case with Rajpara police station accusing reserve office inspector Nasu Mia and three constables Mizan, Kabir and Fayez for the incident. He alleged that the four looted

to a clinic in the city. the money as per a plan. Police claimed that they recovwere passing their days in a state of ered Tk four lakh from an abandoned safe found in a garden

rights violations, especially the abuse and exploitation of women and young girls and boys which spread the epidemic The donor partners present at

the conference committed to allocate and mobilise adequate resources from government, private sector and international agencies to ensure that the epidemic is prevented. One of the delegates however

need it more may turn out to be a difficult task for the UN agencies. It was acknowledged that the governments of South Asian countries and other organisations have been taking a number of actions

agreed that successes exist on a small and localised scale. It requires a collective responsibility of the governments and leaders of all levels including religious sector and media to halt the epidemic from spreading. Creating an environment which would provide services to the most

local polls staggered for three (actually

two) months. The army has its own

Opposition Abdul Hamid sought a

statement from the LGRD minister

about the CEC's comments. "How can

it be a credible election if the Election

Commission dismisses it as a futile

League opened the debate rising on a

point of order. He criticised the govern-

ment for not complying with the EC's

repeated requests for army deploy-

government to meet the EC require-

ments for a fair election. Razzak noted

and asked for cancellation of the polls.

Rahman argued that deployment of

army in the local polls might prompt a

demand for deployment of UN troops

Faruk told a press conference earlier

yesterday that he was frustrated by

Claiming that the polls were being

what the CEC had said the day before.

held properly, the secretary said the

voters' turnout was 81 per cent and

troubles were much less than the

Polls violence

Julhas in a planned way.

quences' after the polls

in the attack.

Haq, also president of Kanchpur

union BNP, killed Zahirul and injured

Fazlul Haq --Shamim Haq, Selim

Haq and Hanif Haq-- also took part

asked his rival candidate not to

contest the polls. As he denied, he

threatened him of 'dire conse-

and injured one of my nephews,

Zihad Khan, on election day," Nazrul

Khan alleged. Zihad was admitted

Nazrul said his family members

He alleged that three sons of

Sources said Fazlul Haq had

"Hanif Hag and his men attacked

Meanwhile, Home Secretary Omar

It is a constitutional obligation of the

BNP lawmaker KM Obaidur

ment in the ongoing UP polls.

in the general elections

previous UP polls.

Abdur Razzak of the Awami

Earlier, Deputy Leader of the

jobs including training."

exercise?" he said.

The head of Bangladeshi delegates Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said while chairing a group discussion that to eradicate poverty, one of the root causes of the disease, education and health issues should be given top priority.

He added, "To prevent

HIV/AIDS, we have to keep our moral, social and family values intact. They should not be eroded." He also observed that the media can a play a vital role. Carol Bellamy, executive direc-

tor of UNICEF, admitted that the numbers of infected people in South Asia are much lower than the numbers in sub-Saharan Africa the world's largest HIV/AIDS infected region. But the number of new infections is also growing in South Asia at an alarming rate. Bellamy said it would not be

wise to wait for the numbers to get bigger, because by that time it could be too late.

And probably that's the reason the delegates called upon the SAARC countries to include reports on progress in fighting HIV/AIDS at relevant ministerial level meetings.

## **BGMEA** leaders

UNB, Dhaka

said important productive sectors kept above politics for economic development of the country.

Development of garment industry can ensure jobs and speedy progress of the country, she told the newly elected office bearers of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) at a meeting at the International Conference Center.

earner for the country, the Prime Minister said: "We all have to face the challenge unitedly for its further development.

Congratulating the newly elected leaders, the Prime Minister assured her government's continued support to this important export sector that employs nearly 18 lakh people.

She also called upon the garment industry owners to ensure quality of apparel in keeping with requirements of the international market.

commitment to set up a garment village at Roopganj for a planned growth of the industry. Quazi Moniruzzaman, President-

elect to the BGMEA Board of Directors, incumbent president M Kutubuddin Ahmed, former president Commerce Minister Amir Khosru

Political Secretaries Harris Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali were The BGMEA leaders appreciated the government's measures in obtain-

They hoped that similar initiative would be taken in case of Japan, a vast apparel market.

In the meeting the garment industry owners recalled with gratitude BNP's step while in the opposition, exempting garment industry from the purview of

### Clash with police **CU JCD** leader arrested

**CU CORRESPONDENT** 

A JCD leader was arrested yesterday in connection with Monday's clash on the Chittagong University campus.

Nasir Khan, president of Shahjalal Hall unit of JCD, was arrested from Fotehpur area near the campus at 2pm.

Earlier, Hathazari thana police had filed a case against some leaders and activists of Chittagong University (CU) unit of JCD, including its president Md. Salim for their alleged involvement in the clash with police.

Meanwhile, CU unit of JCD in a press conference in the city yesterday placed five-point demand.

The demands include immediate resignation of CU Vice-chancellor professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury and pro VC prof Dr. M Shamsuddin, punitive measures against police men involved in the attack on JCD men and expulsion of the shibir cadres who beat JCD men

### Transport strike in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Transport strike in Khulna-Satkhira and Khulna-Paikgachha roads began yesterday.

Khulna Division Bus and Minibus Owners Association and Transport Workers Association jointly called the strike following a clash between transport workers and local people at Dumuria bus stand at around 10 in the morning. At least five people, including

three transport workers were injured in the clash.

### Sonali Bank

FROM PAGE 12 daughter of Aziz Mishir, a senior journalist, tried to encash a cheque for Tk 10,000. Later, it was found that the cash was not delivered.

Similar incidents have recurred at this very branch after the bank stopped giving tokens for cheques,

### Evacuation

grants from Bangladesh and Pakistan" would be deported. Within weeks, India started pushing Bangla-speaking Muslims into Bangladesh. Dhaka responded by pushing them back.

The BDR is already on high alert to face any "unpleasant incident", security sources said. The evacuation followed a flag meeting between the border forces of the two countries, which ended in failure on

India's West Bengal home department has asked the Union home ministry to deal with the impasse on the border.

Meantime, the 213 Banglaback by the BDR five days ago are stranded in no-man's land in the Nazir Gomani area. They do not know what to expect next The Nazir Gomani area is also

tense as the local population expects the stranded people to be pushed in again. BDR sources at Panchagarh

said the BSF has assembled truckloads of people along the border overnight for possible push-ins. Our Kushtia correspondent

reports that the BSF also assembled people along the Meherpur border. Kamal Guha, West Bengal

agriculture minister, has blamed Indian Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani for the border crisis. Describing the situation as "serious", he said he would raise the issue at the cabinet and corecommittee meeting.

### IMF loans FROM PAGE 1

Pacific region.

He refused to comment on the possible outcome of the loan negotia-According to banking sources, the

recent reserve position is not at a level

that permits the government to take a

decision on free-float of exchange

The finance minister yesterday said remittance, which has so far provided the cushion to the dwindling reserve, showed a downward trend in

the last few days. "And if war breaks out in Iraq there would be a negative impact on remittance, as many Bangladeshi expatriates may come back," Saifur said.

According to the latest figures

available with the central bank, the reserve stands at \$1.61 billion. It was at \$1.55 billion when the

government made an Asian Clearing Union (ACU) payment early last month. Another ACU bill is due next If US-led forces strike Iraq and

remittance continues on a downward trend, the foreign exchange reserve would be difficult to manage, said the At yesterday's meeting, the gov-

ernment agreed downsize the Tk 19,200 crore ADP for the current fiscal. "We have to cut down the ADP

(Annual Development Programme) as it could spell a setback in the face of a slowdown in the flow of external assistance," Saifur said.

social development goals, he said.

# **BAC** sues Agarwal, seven others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) yesterday filed seven cases against businessman Omprakash Agarwal and seven others, including two bankers, on charge of misappropriating Tk 18.34 crore.

BAC officer Abdul Huq filed the cases with the Motijheel Police Station, according to sources.

The other accused are Saiedul Huq, managing director of the United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL); Anwar Ahmed, former managing director of the National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited (NCCBL); Pankaj Saha, chairman of H B Apparels Ltd., Narayan Chandra Bhoumik, managing director of HB Apparels, Kazi Mohammad Shafiqur Rahman, executive vice-president of the NCCBL, and G M Fakhruddin and Syeda Khaleda Begum, branch manager and former vice-president respectively of the NCCBL. According to the cases, the

accused misappropriated the money through over invoicing and transferring foreign currency against back-to-back letters of credit. They were also accused of misappropriating the government's cash incentives against garment export through fake documents.

Omprakash Agarwal was the fictitious owner of H B Apparels at 56. S M Maleh Road. River View complex, Tanbazar, Narayanganj. His official name was Omprakash

# **HC** summoned

the two countries on accepting people back when they are detained while crossing the border, a spokesman of Indian External Affairs Ministry said here Monday night.

He said the 213 people, now stranded in no-man's land across Cooch Behar (West Bengal) border. were Bangladeshi citizens and carried proof of their residence like electricity bills.

These people are from Lalmonirhat district of Bangladesh and were intercepted on January 31 while trying to cross into Cooch Behar district of West Bengal, the spokesman added Meera Shankar told Haider that

the fact that 213 people were stranded at the border was "a humanitarian issue" and that they were not getting any humanitarian assistance. "They are stranded on the zero line and they have to be accepted

back by Bangladesh," said the Indian spokesman. He also said India is ready to extend humanitarian assistance to the stranded people. Haider was told that Bandladesh has to take back its nationals based on the agreed terms between the two countries. Under the terms, it was to

hended people or within three days where verification was necessary. He said, "The problem is of illegal immigration. It must stop. Everything else one has been reading about is

be done immediately on the basis of

statements given by the appre-

arising out of that.' Dismissing Dhaka's charge that Indian Muslims were being pushedin, the spokesman said the question of any Indian national being forced into Bangladesh is "baseless and absurd.'

The BSF is mandated to protect the sanctity of Indian border and if there is any illegal immigration, it is

duty bound to stop it, he added. On the other hand, the Bangladesh high commissioner told reporters that "there is a big problem.

The bigger issue is that there has

between the two countries and a dialogue is needed to resolve the issues" He said the issue was not only

about immigrants and a new element

was injected into relations between Bangladesh and India. After talks about insurgents from India taking shelter in Bangladesh, the "al-Qaeda factor was the new element" in the situation, Haider added. Asked to confirm reports that Bangladesh foreign minister M

for a political-level contact, Haider said such a contact was quite possi-He said India should not use the word "infiltration" as it has quite different connotations but speak of

"illegal immigration or economic

Morshed Khan was likely to visit India

Last Friday, the acting Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh Shahdat Hussain was summoned and given the aide memoire by Director, Indian External Affairs Ministry, Kheya Bhattacharya.

### Accused in Monk murder case held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

An accused in the Buddha monk Ganojyoti Mohasthabir murder case was arrested at Rauzan in the

district yesterday evening. Sources said local people caught accused Nurul Islam from a market at Sultanpur under Rauzan thana, beat him mercilessly and then handed over to Rauzan police.

Rauzan thana police confirmed the arrest of the accused

Buddhist monk Ganoivoti was slain at Warapunya Buddha Bihar (temple cum orphanage) at Hingala in Rauzan on April 21 last year.

## **Accident: Chittagong**

on the drivers of both the transports. One report says that there was not much of mist on the road at that night, and there was not much traffic either: so weather and road conditions could not have been contributory factors to the accident. Another report says that the tempo was speeding fast, and that the moment it approached the rather unwieldy culvert in front of Ibrahim Cotton Mills, the Ranger just dashed into it from the other end, and then resulted the carnage.

My hunch is that it is the tempo driver (unfortunately, he also got killed) who might have caused the accident. As the culvert rises to a curve from the road, the drivers of vehicles from both sides have obstructed vision forward. It is very likely that the drivers of both the vehicles did not sight each other's car until they were dangerously close. The tempo driver may be responsible here in this regard that his one was a hired transport, probably not one that ran regularly on Chittagong-Rangamati route. Of the two drivers he may have been the less familiar one with the condition of the road, and, therefore, to be held the more responsible one.

This very sorrowful and regrettable accident apart, the Chittagong-Rangamati Road has turned into an absolute nightmare for the automobile passengers on the road. From the port city this road goes straight to Hathazari via Sholashahar and Oxygen, where another road converges with it from Chawk Bazaar via Muradpur. On its way to Hatahazari, the road covers such important landmarks as BRTC Bus Depot Chittagong Cantonment and Chittagong University, all places of great traffic movement. At Hathazari, the road bifurcates, one going north to Nazir Hat Bibir Hat Khagrachari and finally to Karer Hat; and the other taking a northeastern bend touches the hills at the end of Raozan and winds upward to Rangamati. The road between Chittagong and Nazirhat has become the only thoroughfare of three districts of the region, but the ironv is, it is also one of the narrowest inter-district roads in Bangladesh. The road has never been widened, and has remained the

same old serpentine kind of path, thus becoming a mockery of a highway. Because of immense pressure of people and transports on the road. the movement of traffic has become very slow. A journey now to the CU campus by a CU teachers' bus takes seventy to eighty minutes, which was merely a 35-to-40 minutes' journey

five years back. It is quite essential that a paralle highway about 8 miles be built from Oxygen to Hathazari. The existing road, because of the network of military connections between Chittagong Cantonment and the cantonments in the Hill Tracts, has got immense strategic importance, and a comprehensive development of it is very much in order. The zigzag road must be straightened first, by acquiring public land, if necessary.

In the end, I want to refer to a popular American TV series, The Paper Chase, a law-flick, where the central character Professor Kingsley takes a case to the court holding the authority responsible for negligence of duty. The court accepts and passes a verdict against the state authority. Thus, Professor Kingsley proves that every road accident is caused by a neglect on the part of the traffic and road authorities. This 'higher responsibility' toward the nation is never present in our higher authority, and such accidents as the one under this column occur.

### SM Sultan

FROM PAGE 12

tense. But the local administration has failed to act effectively to solve this problem," said one of the admirers of Sultan. The caretaker of the residence,

Md. Zakir Hossain along with leaders of the Lal Baul Dal (founded by the artist) has informed the district administration in writing about the illegal occupation. Meanwhile, the acting Deputy

Commissioner of Narail Mohammad Korshed Alam has assigned Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Md. Mujibur Rahman to nvestigate the matter.

#### can not absorb any more. In 1995, a law was issued requiring private businesses employing more than 20 people to increase the

assembly (MLA)

W Bengal FROM PAGE 1 Sources said the state government had decided to mediate at the insistence of some Forward Bloc and RSP members of the legislative

A very senior MLA from the Cooch Behar yesterday said, "The problem is that the central government has a totally different view about the problem with Bangladesh. "However, since we speak the same language and understand the

people over there, we should inter-

fere to solve the current deadlock",

# Edible oil

Project funded by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Experts from the PHI, the DCC and Dhaka University took part in the project. The final report of the project will be released soon

Some experts in the project said they thought that the expiry dates on some items are also regularly tampered with. They suggested that imported food items should be tested before being allowed inside the country. They also said that "gastro-

enterological" diseases have spread like an epidemic throughout the country. There had never been a survey to find out the causes of the diseases, but there are strong indications that adulterated foods could be the culprit. Million of poor people may be the hardest hit because they buy cheaper foods in small amounts from bazaars

#### UNICEF says globally almost half of all new infections are occurring among young people. The declaration urged the leaders to include in their programmes issues

disease.

For instance, if one wants to go to Motijheel from Karwanbazar, Monir

12 to Motijheel is also the same. The drivers alleged that as they pay high amounts to the vehicle

At present, the owners charge Tk An on-duty sergeant of the Traffic

### 'We are prepared to take legal action upon complaints," he added

FROM PAGE 12 pay a visit to the US and highlight the secular characteristics of the "This team would hold discussions

oposal, Saber added.

Tangail and elsewhere, he said.

he told reporters.

#### commented. "We know what has to be done, but we don't know how to do it." As it has been pledged in the declaration, money is not a problem, but getting it to the people who

against HIV/AIDS. But it was also

vulnerable groups should be given top priority ' for achieving large scale reductions in the number of people infected and affected.

meet Khaleda

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday including garment industry, should be

About the existing problems in the garment sector, the highest export

The prime minister reiterated her

M Mostafa Golam Quddus, Annisul Hug and ANM Saifuddin also spoke. Mahmud Chowdhurv. Prime Minister's

ing guota- free access of readymade garments to Canada.

But the government has to find out how much could be cut without hurting