

'25-yr accord prevents Bangladesh from solving problem with India'

The following is the remaining part of Tuesday's JS proceedings

He said time has come whether we would take the policy of appeasement or confrontation with our neighbour. He also demanded of the government to check intrusion of alien culture and literature with immediate effect.

The NDP leader said there was no communal tension in Malaysia where Muslims constitute 55 per cent and non-Muslims 45 per cent. In Bangladesh too there was no communal tension excepting that of one during the closing days of the ousted President Ershad's rule.

Arduing the attention of the Education Minister and Deputy Leader of the House, Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, the NDP leader urged him to take step to stop import of books of alien culture and called off all high educational programmes with neighbouring India.

Salauddin Yusuf

Speaking next on the adjournment motion, Mr. Salauddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) said he had given the adjournment motion on a specific issue but deplored that irrelevant subjects were being brought into discussions on this motion.

He said it was the responsibility of the government to protect the lives of Bangladesh nationals but the government had failed to live upto the expectations.

The opposition member said it was a matter of concern that the Indian border guards were indulging in certain activities for some time past and also wondered why weapons like the mortars were used by the Indian force in these incidents.

Mr. Yusuf, while condemning the Indian intrusion into the Bangladesh territory and killing of the Bangladesh nationals, criticised the government for its failure to come out with adequate reaction on the incidents.

'Mere expression of anxiety is not enough' the Awami League member said, adding the Prime Minister did not visit the site of occurrence.

Mr. Yusuf accused the government of following a 'weak-kneed' foreign policy and expressed doubts if the interest of the nation could be well preserved by the 'spineless' government.

Several members of the Treasury Bench burst into laughter as the Awami League member was accusing the BNP government of following a 'weak-kneed' policy as regards to India.

Mr. Yusuf said the Awami League government had extracted 44,000 cusecs of the Ganges waters from India but later it was settled for 34,000 by the subsequent governments.

The opposition member condemned the Indian actions along Bangladesh border and demanded unconditional apology from New Delhi for these incidents. He also demanded compensations for the victims and the injured.

The opposition member suggested that these problems should be taken up at the summit level with India by Bangladesh.

Akbar Hossain

The chair then requested Mr. Akbar Hossain (BNP-Comilla) to take part in the discussions.

Mr. Hossain thanked Awami League member Mr. Yusuf for expressing concern at Bangladesh's sovereignty by Indian action.

But he referred to a clause in the 25-year Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty and said that particular clause prevented Bangladesh from solving any problem with India other than talks with India. This is a policy of appeasement because you cannot take your case to anyone other than India' the Treasury Bench member said.

At this stage many Awami League members protested his observations and their orchestrated shouting made the proceedings of the House inaudible. The noise gradually led to a pandemonium in the House and several members were in no mood to relent but to stand on their feet.

Mr. Akbar Hossain said for a small country like Bangladesh it was not possible to embark on a war with a big country like India. India could conquer us but it could not destroy us, he stressed.

He said we could face a big country like India if we were united and if there were no Fifth Columnists.

Mr. Akbar Hossain said Bangladesh wanted to establish good neighbourly relations with India on the basis of sovereign equality.

Mr. Akbar Hossain said since the birth of Bangladesh in 1971 India had launched attack on our small country 279 times.

Maulana Sakwat Hossain expressed his concern at the frequent attacks of Shanti Bahini on the army personnel and people at Chittagong Hill

Mr. Suranjit Sengupta (Gonotrant Party-Sunamganj) was seen trying to speak something but the chair repeatedly asked him to take his seat. "You always try to take chance unnecessarily," Deputy Speaker observed. The situation later subsided.



Sheikh Hasina

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, taking the floor, said adjournment motion had always been a privilege for the opposition and only opposition members were supposed to speak on this.

The chair disagreed with her and said Rules of Procedure contained nothing like this and Treasury Bench members could also take part in the discussions.

Sheikh Hasina also said that discussions on the motion must remain confined to the subject involved in the motion. The Deputy Speaker said he would request the members to talk on issues relevant to the subject involved but in no way Treasury Bench members could be barred from taking part in adjournment motion.

Intervening, the Deputy Leader of the House, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, said all have the right to speak on the issue. Members belonging to both the Treasury Bench and Opposition side should be allowed to speak with reference to relevant issues, he added.

Mr. Suranjit Sengupta said it was the privilege of the opposition to speak on an adjournment motion. There is no scope for distributive justice in this matter, he added.

But the Deputy Speaker disagreed with the contention of Mr. Sengupta saying that there was no substance in his argument.



Moudud Ahmed

Jatiya Party leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed said he did not differ with the Deputy Speaker. He, however, pointed out that adjournment motion is the privilege of the opposition according to convention.

The Deputy Speaker said discussion on an adjournment motion could not be prototype. Its nature might vary. At the same time he said that two thirds of the speakers on an adjournment motion would be from the opposition side.

Resuming his speech Mr. Akbar Hossain said there are three ways to resolve a dispute with a neighbouring country. These are war, discussion and raising the issue at an international forum. But under the 25-year Treaty signed between India and Bangladesh any dispute between the two countries could not be brought to any outside forum without consultations with India, he said.

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Tracts. He regretted that problems of Angorpota, Dahagram and Talpatty had not yet been solved.

Mr. Nurul Islam (Ind-Barguna) said the Leader of the House should have been present in the House when the Sangsad was discussing important national issues. If the government really thought that the national sovereignty and independence was at stake, the Sangsad should discuss the issue exclusively by suspending all other businesses of the day. He suggested that the House should discuss the issues, threatening the national sovereignty Wednesday by suspending all other programmes.

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Mr. Rashed Khan Menon (Workers-Party-Barisal) regretted that more often the external issue was utilised to meet

internal situation of the country. In this connection he pointed out that during the Pakistan period border incidents were used to be played up prominently to suppress the movement for democracy. At a time when the people of our country were looking for the establishment of parliamentary democracy, the border incidents were taking place one after another, he said.

He expressed his concern over the move to push the country toward communal divide. During the Ershad's regime attempt was made for a communal divide. This trend is manifest even after the successful mass upsurge, he added.

The Workers Party leader said certain quarters were making taunting remarks about culture and seasonal festivals including Baisakh celebration.

He said with political will and unity of the people we can face any outside treat to our sovereignty.

Mr. Surenjit Sengupta (Gonotrant Party-Sunamganj) said the people of the country are concerned over the intrusion of Indian Border Security Force into our territory and its attack on our BDR personnel. The intrusion of BSF personnel at the border belt of Meherpur with most modern arms and their attack on BDR and people the other day have made all of us alarmed.

Criticising the silence of the government, he said although the BSF had launched its attack on our BDR a few days ago, Bangladesh Foreign Office took up the matter with the High Commissioner of India here only Monday.

He lashed out at some political parties which remained vocal against the 25-year Treaty between India and Bangladesh while they were in opposition but remained silent when in power.

Mr. Sengupta called for stopping smuggling. He also laid stress on making the country self-reliant economically so that it does not have to live on the mercy of others.

Mr. Latifur Rahman (Jamaat-Nawabgonj) said the Indian citizens were crossing into Bangladesh frequently under the cover of BSF. He described the attack of BSF on our BDR and people as a threat to our sovereignty and called for taking effective measures to resist them. We would have to evaluate our problems in the light of existing situation and find out solution to them objectively. No problem could be solved by dragging the past unnecessarily, he added.

He suggested stopping smuggling and illegal trade between the two countries effectively and increasing the number of BDR personnel at the border belt. The number of BDR personnel guarding the border is too small compared to the need, he said.

Mr. Asaduzzaman (AL-Magura) said the people of the country wanted to know what steps have been taken in respect of Talpatty and protecting the border of Bangladesh from outside attack.

He demanded a full-dress discussion on the 25-year treaty, its loopholes and frequent attack on our border belt.

Mr. Fazole Rabbi (Jamaat-Bhola) participating in the discussion said the BSF had been engaged in 'provocative' activities along the border for a long time.

He charged the BSF with terrorism looting and killing of Bangladesh in the border areas.

The JP member said if such acts of the BSF were the results of the weak-kneed foreign policy of the past government, the new government should assert itself to safeguard country's independence and sovereignty.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina requested the chair to allow Awami League General Secretary Sajeda Chowdhury to speak before her but the Deputy Speaker, did not agree with her.

At this point many members from the opposition including the Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, CPB and Baksal rose on their feet and demanded that they should be allowed to speak.

The Deputy Speaker stuck to his decision but the Opposition and Treasury Bench members continued to shout creating a noisy scene in the House. At this stage the chair requested the Leader of the Opposition to speak but Sheikh Hasina said how she could deliver her speech in a noisy situation. Taking the floor Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury said the motion could not be discussed beyond two hours which, he said, was already over.

He also requested the chair to take action as per Rules of Procedure against the members creating noise.

The Deputy Speaker then said the motion had already been talked out as the discussion crossed two hour time frame.

Mr. Tofael Ahmed said the nation had witnessed many

events including the long march for Farakka water but the quantity of Bangladesh's share came down from the 44,000 cusecs which Bangladesh had brought.

Mr. Tofael Ahmed said the mover of the motion Mr. Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury had read many books but he (Chowdhury) did not see that India had 'ratified the border agreement through ninth (Constitutional) Amendment.'

The Awami League member referred to a news item published recently in an English Daily 'The Nation' from Pakistan where he said Bangladesh and Pakistan were described as one nation but two countries.

He wanted to know how such an article could be published in the supplement, sponsored by the Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad.

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something for the welfare of farmers who constituted bulk of our people.

He referred to the bunglings that existed in the sugar industry and said unscrupulous people were given scopes to make their fortunes through sugar at the cost of country's sugar industry.

Mr. Mont said how Beximco had made its wealth through sugar permits was a well-known fact and the question before the nation today was whether to protect the Beximco or the farmers.

The independent member opined that both government and the opposition should work in concert for the welfare for the farmers who produce sugar cane.

Mr. Mont, referring to the proposed increase in the land tax in the sugar mills areas, asked if the government was not capable of meeting this increased tax rather than charging the farmers and producers for this.

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