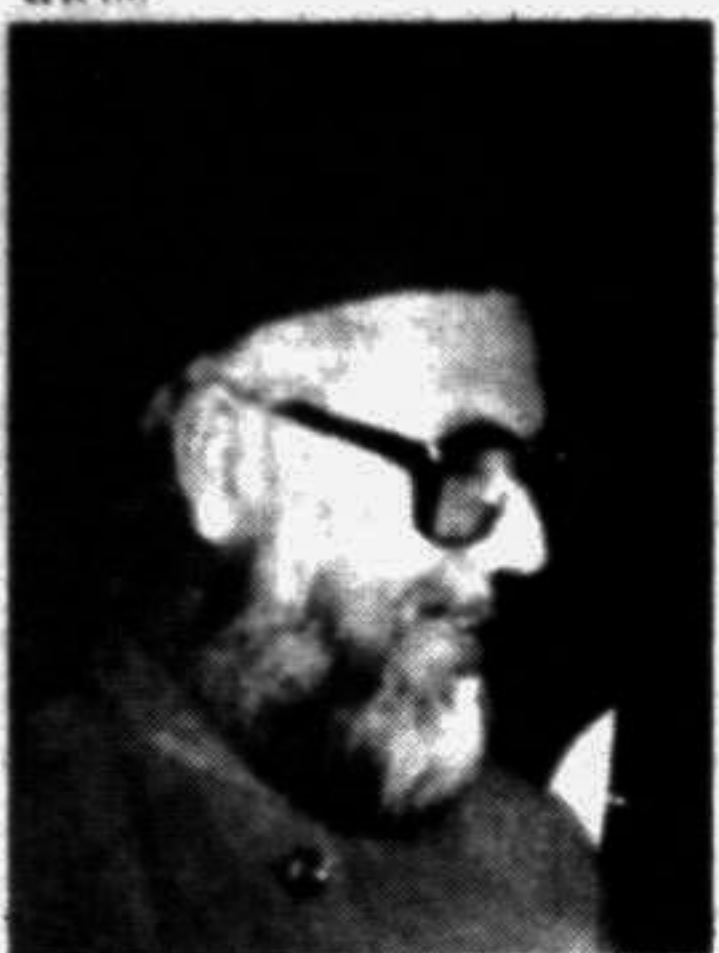


# 'Government unstable under a parliamentary system'

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 10.42 am Wednesday with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, reports BSS.

After Tilawat-e-Quran, the Speaker moved an obituary reference for those who were killed in tornadoes and floods in different parts of the country including Manikganj, Pabna, Bogra and Habiganj districts.



**Matiur Rahman**

The House adopted the reference unanimously and offered mounajat seeking divine blessings for the peace of the departed souls. Mohammad Matiuir Rahman Nizami (Jamaat-Pabna) led the prayer.

Taking the order of the day, the Speaker said the questions and answers would be deemed to have been tabled in the House. He, however, corrected some printing mistakes in the question-answer set.

Then the Speaker disposed of the two special privilege notices from Mohammad Abdus Shahid (AL-Moulvibazar) and Mohammad Shamsul Huq (AL-Mymensingh).

About the privilege notice from Shamsul Huq regarding the position of the Jatiya Sangsad member in the warrant of precedence, the Speaker advised the Member concerned to bring a bill in the House in this connection.

But apparently not being satisfied with the reply, Huq rose to his feet on a point of order and said he had come to the House with great expectations for finding a solution to the manifold problems of the people and the country. He regretted that his hopes remained unfulfilled.

But before the prorogation of the House Wednesday, he said, he wanted to go back home after restoring the dignity of the members of the House. He demanded that the position of the Jatiya Sangsad members should be refixed at least in accordance with the warrant of precedence of 1974 as it was decided by the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Members of both the Treasury and Opposition Benches supported the contention of Huq through thumping of the table.

The Speaker then, disposed off two call attention notices regretting that he could not accept them due to shortage of time.

**Shawakat Ali**

At this stage, Col (Retd) Shawakat Ali (AL-Shariatpur) took the floor on a point of order and said, on April 11 he gave a call attention notice to the House regarding a news item published in a Pakistani newspaper undermining the sovereignty of Bangladesh. On that day, the Deputy Leader of the House, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, had assured him of making a statement in this connection.



**Badruddoza**

Prof. Chowdhury took the floor immediately and said he had promised to make a statement provided he was supplied with a copy of that paper. He regretted that he did not receive the copy.

The Deputy Leader of the House told the chair that he wanted to move a resolution and requested him to suspend the relevant rule of the rules of procedure. For a Minister a two day notice is required for moving a resolution.

The Speaker suspended the relevant rule, allowing the Deputy Leader of the House to move his resolution.

Moving his resolution Prof. Chowdhury said, in view of the devastating cyclone in the coastal districts and tornadoes and floods in other parts of the country, the House should take a decision to postpone the elections to the ten vacant

seats of the Jatiya Sangsad, scheduled to be held on June 11, for three months.

**Abdus Samad Azad**

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, supported the resolution which the House adopted unanimously.

**Azizul Haq Mollah**

Participating in the discussion, BNP Member Azizul Haq Mollah (Bogra) said because of her consistent policy and uncompromising attitude, the image of Begum Khaleda Zia was brightened both at home and abroad. He paid tributes to all those who laid down their lives during the anti-autocracy movement.

Mollah said it was Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman who restored multi-party democracy in the country which was taken away by the Awami Leaguers, now clamouring for democracy. He said because of honesty and fairness, Zia's image continued to remain very high in the minds of the people and it was proved in the last elections. He asked the Opposition to refrain from making any unkind remark on Zia.

The BNP Member said though Awami Leaguers now speak for democracy, it was their leader Sheikh Hasina who welcomed the taking over of power by autocrat Ershad. Even Awami League's mouthpiece Banglar Bani work an editorial hailing Ershad's taking over of power. He said by participating in the elections under Ershad, the Awami League helped prolong this autocratic rule.

Mollah said although this government came to power only the other day, the international community had expressed confidence in it. A large quantity of relief materials have already arrived in the country in aid of the cyclone victims. He said this was for the first time that Saudi monarch King Fahd had opened a special fund in aid of Bangladesh cyclone victims.

**Mozammel Hossain**

Taking the floor, Awami League Member Dr. Mozammel Hossain (Bagerhat) paid tributes to all those who had laid down their lives in the Liberation War and the subsequent movements for the overthrow of autocratic rules. He said the Acting President in his address touched on a number of important issues facing the nation which included economy, population, poverty and unemployment.

Dr. Hossain called upon the ruling party to do away with the upazila courts which he said had become a mockery to justice. He alleged that judgement could be purchased at upazila courts and said if BNP values the commitments made during the movement it should cancel the decentralization of judiciary.

He called for taking necessary steps for improving communications in his constituency where he said people were suffering for lack of roads. He also called for excavation of a canal to overcome the problem of water logging which affects a large area in Bagerhat.

**Alamgir Kabir**

BNP Member Alamgir Kabir (Naogaon) paid tributes to the memory of Ziaur Rahman for restoring multi-party democracy in the country. He differed with the observation of the Acting President asserting that the justice was not sitting on a heap of explosives, rather he was standing on the threshold of democracy.

Alamgir Kabir described Ziaur Rahman as the architect of Bangladesh nationalism and said it was Zia, who by launching the idea of regional coop-

eration, became the real pioneer of SAARC. He lamented that the opposition criticised Ziaur Rahman, but they failed to mention the qualities of Shaheed Zia.

**Abdul Khaleque**

Taking the floor Abdul Khaleque (AL-Bagerhat) said the Acting President for the first time depicted the national scenario from neutral point of view instead of taking a partisan stand as taken by other presidents.

Khaleque said the Khulna region was being neglected. He said the communications infrastructure there was in a deplorable condition. He said even the second sea port Mongla had failed to draw the attention of the successive governments. He said 70 per cent of our exports were made through Mongla port. Though it has a population of about 50,000 yet there was no hospital in Mongla. He demanded the construction of a bridge over the river Rupsa for direct road communication between Mongla and Khulna city.

The AL member said though late President Ziaur Rahman had laid the foundation stone of a medical college in Khulna, yet it was far from being completed. The 500-bed hospital pledged by late President Ziaur Rahman for Khulna was reduced to a 250-bed hospital by autocrat Ershad, he said.

Khaleque demanded of the government to introduce mechanised ferries on the river Rupsa immediately for easier flow of traffic.

He said 19 lakh people of Khulna city were facing acute shortage of drinking water. He demanded immediate government steps in this regard.

**Harun-ar-Rashid**

Participating in the discussions Sheikh Harun-ar-Rashid (AL-Khulna) thanked the Acting President for portraying in his candid speech the prevailing situation in the country.

He said those who had come to power without votes in the past did not want to relinquish the highest office but the Acting President was very honest in this regard and he had expressed his desire to quit power.

Sheikh Rashid said the people had voted in the last elections to give democracy an institutional shape. But he regretted that no move was taken by the Treasury Bench to fulfill the commitment made in this regard in the joint declaration of the three alliances.

He said the Leader of the House and Prime Minister did not come to the House nor the members were informed about the quantity of relief materials coming from abroad.

The Awami League Member was critical about a comment made by the Minister of State for Food, Najmul Huda, that the present Parliament was a sovereign one.

He said, in the same way the previous government used to term the Jatiya Sangsad as "sovereign".

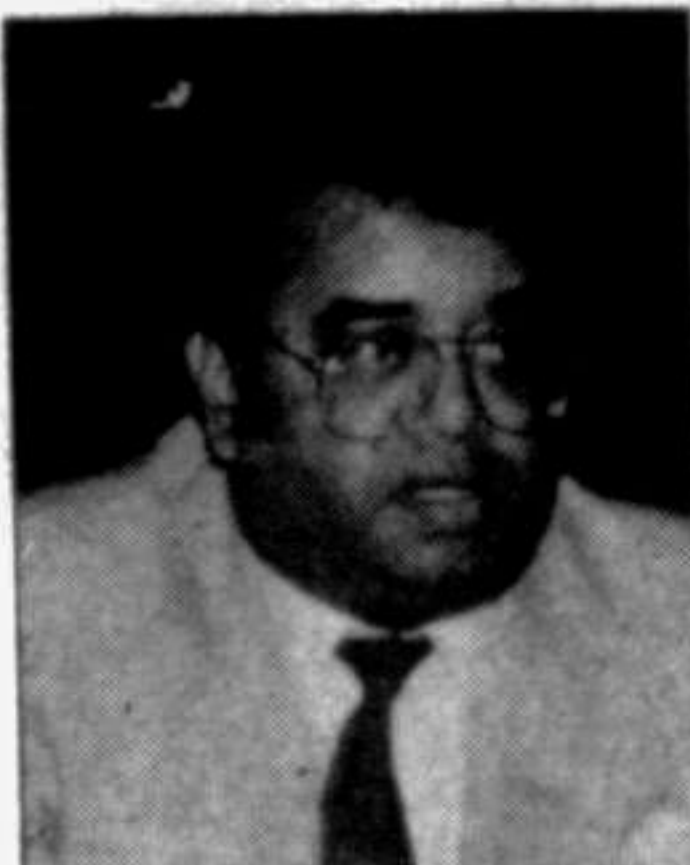
Sheikh Rashid referred to February 27 Parliamentary polls and said black money had played an important role to influence voters.

In this context, he said, despite the fixation of election expenditure of a candidate to Taka three lakh by the Election Commission, Taka three crore had been spent in many places including the Dhaka City.

He said an enquiry could reveal such unlawful practices. Turning to his constituency Sheikh Rashid demanded construction of Khulna-Dakope road, establishment of a medical college for 19 lakh people of Khulna City, construction of a bridge on the river Rupsa and supply of drinking water by WASA.

**Nazmul Huda**

As the Awami League member completed his speech,



State Minister Nazmul Huda took the floor on a point of personal clarification.

He said that the joint declaration itself stated that the present Parliament was sovereign.

At this, the opposition members strongly protested the comment. A noisy scene continued for a few minutes till the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad took the chair that it had become a habit of the State Minister to make comments frequently wasting the time of the House.

Samad said BNP leaders including Abdus Salam Talukder and Delwar Hossain knew well what had been mentioned in the joint declaration of the three alliances.

The House then resumed the discussion on the speech of the Acting President.

**Mosharrar Hossain**

Invited to the floor, Mosharrar Hossain (BNP-Bakerganj) said deposed President Ershad and his associates had plundered national resources during the last nine years.

He urged the government to recover those looted wealth and deposit them with the national treasury.

He paid tributes to late President Ziaur Rahman and expressed the hope that the BNP government would take timely steps to rebuild the shattered economy which it inherited after coming to power.

Referring to his constituency the Treasury Bench member urged the government to save his area from the river erosion.

**Mostafizur Rahman**

Participating in the discussion, Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman (AL-Dinajpur) said the Acting President deserved thanks for depicting the real socio-economic and political scenario of the country in his inaugural speech to the fifth Parliament.

Referring to the Prime Minister and Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia's announcement in the House that agricultural loans upto Taka 5,000 with interest were waived, the AL member said he came to know that in fact agricultural loans totalling upto Taka 5,000 including interest, were being exempted. He demanded a clarification from the government in this regard.

Rahman said people had participated in the movement against autocracy for making the Jatiya Sangsad sovereign. He pleaded for taking steps in that direction so that people's aspiration could be fulfilled.

Referring to his local problems, Rahman said Dinajpur was facing drought. He said deep and shallow tubewells should be sunk to ameliorate the sufferings of the farmers and to increase rice production. He demanded of the government to raise subsidies on fertilizers and insecticides.

**Mujibur Rahman**

No sooner the AL member completed his deliberation, the State Minister for Finance, Mujibur Rahman, took the floor and said the Cabinet had taken the decision to exempt payment of agricultural loans upto Taka 5,000 with interest. The AL member demanded

of the government to save the farmers in the border areas from harassment by the members law enforcing agencies.

**Noorjahan Yesmin**

Begum Noorjahan Yesmin (BNP-Mymensingh) began her speech recalling the memory of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and praying for peace of the souls of those who had sacrificed their lives in the movement to overthrow the autocratic regime and those who were killed in the recent natural calamities.

Refuting the opposition claim that people voted for the parliamentary system of government in the last elections, Begum Yesmin said people were not concerned about the form of the government when they went to the polls. Their concern was to elect a representative government which would work for their welfare, she maintained.

She said people would remember for ages the Acting President for holding free and fair elections.

Begum Yesmin reiterated the BNP's demand for publishing a white paper on the misdeeds committed during of the autocratic regime of Ershad.

Drawing the attention of the Education Minister, the BNP member pleaded for making the Anandamohan College a university college.



**Suranjit Sengupta**

Suranjit Sengupta (Ganatantra Party-Sunamganj) said the 15-page speech of the Acting President appeared exceptional to the nation.

He said "we may have difference of opinions, but if we have discord on the fundamental issues, the nation and the parliament cannot be protected."

Quoting from the speech of the Acting President Sengupta said the Acting President had expressed his desire to be relieved of his post. He said there were three ways of relinquishing the Acting President from his job. He said the three ways are by determining the form of the government in the House, or by making provision for the transitional period in the constitution or by holding presidential elections.

He said "we can't tell the people anything except that we passed two black laws in the present House"

Suranjit Sengupta said "if you have to remain in power by holding presidential elections, the framework of the joint declaration formed on the basis of the unity of the entire people of the country will have no meaning."

He said the holding of the presidential election and becoming members of the council of ministers under Article 58 of the Constitution could not go together. He said the members of the Treasury Bench had to down the joint declaration of the three alliances in that case.

He said deposed President Ershad and vice-president Moudud Ahmed resigned from their posts on the basis of the joint declaration. He said it was again the joint declaration of the three alliances through which the selection of the Acting President was possible.

He said the spirit and the inevitability of the joint declaration was finally legitimised by the election of parliament and the assuming of power subsequently. Quoting the famous Latin maxim "vox populi vox, suprema," he said if we believe that the voice of the people was supreme we have no option at all to go beyond the wishes of the people.

He said there was no scope for us to accept one part of the joint declaration and reject the other in that case, he said "Ershad stays".

Suranjit Sengupta said the joint declaration called for the establishment of "full democracy" resisting the trend of killings, coups and conspiracies.

Disagreeing with the suggestion of the Treasury Bench that this Parliament was sovereign, he said if it was so, the joint declaration would not have been necessary. He said a sovereign parliament could do anything and everything without making a man woman and a woman man.

He said the present Sangsad did not have legislative, economic and constituent powers. He said even for ordinary law making the bills were to be sent to the President for his assent. He said under Article 145(A) of the Constitution, the President, if he so considers, cannot lay before the parliament the treaties with the foreign countries.



**Abdul Matin Chowdhury**

Participating next, Abdul Matin Chowdhury (BNP-Narayanganj) defended the presidential form of government saying that it could ensure stability and bring about welfare to the people.

The BNP member said in 1975, the Awami League leaders had switched over to the presidential form of government because they felt it to be a better way to serve the people.

Strongly refuting the contention of Suranjit Sengupta, that the present Sangsad was not sovereign, Chowdhury said "this parliament can hang a President". Besides, the House can pass the annual budget, five-year development plans and even the 20 years perspective plans, he added.

The BNP member said the opposition members were speaking in favour of the parliamentary form of government just for the sake of political reasons. But not for the welfare of the people, he added.

The BNP member said people of the country in the past had given their verdict in favour of the presidential form in 1978 and 1981.

Abdul Matin Chowdhury said the oppositions being afraid of their sure defeat in the coming presidential election were opting for parliamentary form.

Referring to the incidents under parliamentary form of government during the Pakistan days, Chowdhury said Speaker Shahed Ali was killed

in the House. Recalling the government of Abu Hossain Sarkar he said during that time people had also witnessed the instability of government under the parliamentary system.

The BNP member said the opposition often linked autocracy with the performance of ex-President Ershad and criticised the presidential form. In fact, Chowdhury said, Ershad did not come to power through elections but grabbed it by force of arms. The elections held under him (Ershad) were marked with vote-dacoty, riggings and capturing of polling centres like occupying chairs.

The opposition must not judge the presidential form of government in the light of the performances of ex-President Ershad.

He referred to the days under shaheed president Ziaur Rahman and said President Zia under the presidential system took up pragmatic programmes for the all-round development including achieving self-reliance in foodgrain production.

Even President Sattar during his about three months rule restored discipline in every sphere of the national life, Chowdhury said.

The BNP member pointed out that ex-President Ershad who came to power through the back door was an autocrat. People had ousted him through waging a movement and ex-President Ershad who was involved with the international ring of gold smuggling was now under trial.

Chowdhury referred to the situation following the recent devastating cyclone in the coastal districts and said the BNP government had tackled the situation successfully.

Dismissing the opposition criticisms and press reports about floating of human bodies in the affected areas and mismanagement in relief distribution, Chowdhury said those were not true.

Abdul Matin Chowdhury referred to the Acting President's speech in which he mentioned the non-realisation of Taka 10,000 crore as industrial loans and demanded of the government for taking appropriate steps to realise this huge amount from the defaulters. He also demanded reopening of all mills and factories which were closed down by the autocratic regime.

He pleaded for the development and protection of the handloom industry which was producing 80 to 85 per cent of the requirement of cloths.

He concluded his speech with a call to all for checking the growth rate of population for the sake of sheer existence of the country.

The Speaker then adjourned the House at 1.15 pm to resume at 3 pm.

**Mosharrar Hossain**

The House resumed its sitting at 3-10 pm with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair.

Taking part in the discussion on the President's speech, Mosharrar Hossain (AL-Faridpur) said tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, four national leaders killed in the jail, and martyrs of the anti-autocracy movement.

Mosharrar also called upon the Members of Parliament not to betray spirit of the joint declaration of the three alliances regarding the establishment of a sovereign parliament.

Taking the floor next, MA Matin (BNP-Chandpur) urged the government to provide house building grants and agriculture loans to the people of the cyclone affected areas.

He also stressed the need for rapid industrialization for removing the curse of unemployment.

Speaking next, Abul Hasanat

Abdullah (AL-Bakerganj) demanded trial of the killers of August 15 night of 1975.

He called upon the government to waive the loans of the poor and to introduce unemployment allowance.

Abdullah also urged the MPs to create a fair political environment by introducing parliamentary democracy.

**ATM Alamgir**

Participating in the discussion, ATM Alamgir (BNP-Comilla) said priority should be given to poverty alleviation programmes as 85 per cent population of the country was living below the poverty level.

He suggested to evolve a poverty alleviation programme which might be started simultaneously in all the 460 upazilas, involving different government and non-government organisations.

Alamgir said he represented Laksam upazila, which he added, had always been neglected.

He said Laksam had been hit thrice by tornadoes recently affecting over 100 villages. But he regretted that no relief goods had reached there to provide succour.

He demanded re-excavation of the Dakatia river and construction of Laksam-Choddagram road.

He also pleaded for the establishment of a medical college and an Agriculture University in Comilla.

**Enamul Huq**

Speaking next, Enamul Huq (Jamaat-Cox's Bazar) thanked the Acting President for his successful holding of a free and fair election which he said had enhanced the image of the nation.

The Jamaat member appealed to the leader of the House to bring a bill before the House for the restoration of a parliamentary form of government with a view to making Parliament more effective.

Huq said, in his constituency 25,000 people, out of 400,000 had been killed in the recent cyclone and tidal surge. Over one lakh cattlehead and 70,000 dwellings also perished in the calamities.

He alleged that required relief materials were not reaching the affected areas.

**Abdul Hamid**

Speaking next, Advocate Abdul Hamid (AL-Kishoreganj) said both the BNP and Jatiya Party had been against the Special Powers Act passed during the Awami League regime. But he wanted to know as to why these two parties which ruled the country for nearly 16 years did not repeal this law.

Hamid said he had suffered two years' imprisonment under the Special Powers Act during the BNP rule.

The AL member urged the treasury bench to honour the outline of the declaration of the three alliances to establish democracy.

He demanded withdrawal of the upazila courts as corruption was rampant in those places.

Referring to his constituency, Hamid said the haor areas in Kishoreganj remain under water for six months annually. A haor development board had been set up by the Awami League government but former President Ershad dissolved the board to the detriment of the people.

Hamid said land tax for haor areas should be one-third of the tax fixed for the developed areas.

**Nizamuddin Khan**

Nizamuddin Khan (BNP-Manikganj) said the Acting President in his speech had outlined various problems but he did not say anything about their solutions.

He said we should not waste time in the House where Taka 10,000 was being spent per minute.

Referring to the population problem, Khan said Bangladesh had a population of only 4.50 crore in 1960 which was now reached the 12 crore mark. He said all our development efforts would be futile if we failed to control the population boom. He suggested setting up of a separate ministry for Family Planning to check the population explosion effectively.

Khan demanded a white paper on unrealised industrial loans of Taka 10,000 crore. He also demanded of the government to bring to book the defaulters.

The BNP member alleged that 24,000 bales of yarn were smuggled into the country from across the border annually and thereby causing a loss of revenue of Taka two crore.

He called upon the government to widen the Dhaka-Archa road in an effort to minimise road accidents. He also stressed the need for establishment of hospital for the disabled at Manikganj.

Incomplete

## Plea to announce Pay Commission

Following is the remaining part of Tuesday's Jatiya Sangsad proceedings.

**Begum Ahsanullah**

Taking part in the discussion BNP Member Begum Shamsunnahar Khwaja Ahsanullah thanked the Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, for conducting a free and fair election. She, however, expressed her disappointment at the Acting President's address to the Parliament, which she said had only contained a sense of pessimism.

Begum Ahsanullah said because of a number of good projects taken by President Zia, the country had moved towards prosperity in agriculture, industry and other sectors.

He said the canal digging programme and the policy for industrial and farm revolution had created great enthusiasm among the people. It was Zia, who had introduced the slogan, "If 68,000 villages survive

the Bangladesh would survive," she said.

**Motia Chowdhury**

Begum Motia Chowdhury (AL-Sherpur) asked why the naval ships and BAF aircraft valued at crores of Taka were destroyed despite repeated warning of the Meteorological Department about the impending cyclone. She also complained mismanagement about relief distribution and looting of relief goods. State Minister for Food Barrister Nazmul Huda rising on a point of order wanted to know whether Begum Motia Chowdhury was in the House to criticise the government or to rake part in the discussion on the Acting President's speech.

Begum Matiya Chowdhury said the Acting President in his address had raised the very important issue of the transferring power suggesting how that could be done on the basis of the joint declaration of the three alliances. She said whatever the contention, whatever

the interpretation fact remained that the present Parliament was not sovereign and that the country had a presidential form of government.

She said it was not fair to criticise Ershad when his system was being upheld. She said the Awami League, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina wanted to repeal, all constitutional amendments starting from 4th Amendment to establish democracy on a firm footing. Without naming any party, Begum Motia Chowdhury said it was unethical to enjoy the benefit of a system, but criticise it according to convenience. She asked the BNP to come forward with a clean mind to bring necessary changes in the Constitution to make it genuinely democratic document.

Begum Motia Chowdhury contested the claim of BNP members of attaining food sufficiency during their period by reading out records from economic survey. She also quoted

economic survey on GDP growth to dispel the claim of BNP members.

The Awami League member called upon the government for an early announcement of the Pay Commission reports. She said that employees should be given such salaries by which they could live honestly.

Referring to the call of the Acting President to find out ways to relieve him (Acting President) at the earliest Begum Motia Chowdhury said that could be done easily by introducing a parliamentary system of government. She said that 51 per cent people voted in favour of parliamentary system of government. She said if the present government honoured the verdict of the voters they should opt for the parliamentary system. If that is done, the transfer of power would be made easier, she said.

**Fazlur Rahman Patal**

Fazlur Rahman Patal (BNP-Natore), taking part in the dis-

ussion on the address of the Acting President said, which form of government would run the country was now the main question before the nation. He, however, said since this was a very important issue, it needed serious consideration.