# Awami League has lost a lot: Samad Azad

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 11-45 A.M. with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, reports BSS.

The proceedings of the day began with recitation from the Holy Quran.

As the scheduled hour-long question-answer session on the order of the day had ended the Speaker disposed of the call attention notices moved by several members.

The Speaker, however, accepted the call attention notice moved by Advocate Dhirendra Devanath Shambhu (AL-Barguna) on the pollution of environment in the city areas through emission of black smokes by different kinds of vehicles.

At this stage, several members wanted to know the fate of their notices on different is-

One Awami League member said he had given a call attention notice on the 'Babri Masjid issue" in India but he was shocked to see that it was not admitted.

Asaduzzaman

Asaduzzaman (AL-Magura) said he had given a notice of and adjournment on the "Babri Masjid" issue since the decision by the BJP in India to

construct a Temple in place of the mosque had caused deep commotion and hatred in this

country. The Speaker said he would look into these notices later since he could accept only one notice under Rule 71 of the Rules of Procedure.

Matia Chowdhury (AL-Sherpur) drew the attention of the chair to her notice on the reported censorship of political leader's letters in Rangour district.

The Chief Whip of the opposition Mohammad Nasim said the notice of Begum Matia Chowdhury was an important one and there must be discussions on this.

#### B Chowdhdry

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said the Prime Minister and the government were not aware of the censorship of the letters of political parties in Rangpur.

Leader of the Opposition took up the issue and said it was a serious matter since the actions of the government ran rights of the people.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia refuted the allega-

tions and said the BNP government was more concerned than anyone else on the democratic rights of the people. The



who had introduced one-party rule. They also know that it was the BNP that restored multi-party system, she said.

The chair then adjourned the House at 1-15 pm till 3-30

#### **Abdus Samad Azad**

When the House resumed contrary to the democratic its sitting at 3.45 pm with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad

Azad took the floor and criticised the statement of the Leader of the House made in the morning sitting.

He said, we should see that the environment in Parliament is not made dull by raking the past. He said egoism also should not be shown in the House. Azad said, we extend hands

of cooperation all the time if the government does anything good. He said we did not mention the killing of Colonel Taher and 250 army jawans during the time of Ziaur Rahman. At this remark, some of the Treasury Bench members shouted at Azad. The Speaker asked Azad to take his seat. But the Awami League members started shouting in chorus to allow Azad to speak. Standing on a point of

order. Chief Whip Delwar Hossain wanted to know under what rule of the rules of procedure Azad was speaking. He said Azad was not giving reply to the statement of the Leader of the House and his replay had no link with her state-

In the midst of shoutings from the Awami League members, the Chief Whip continued his speech but it was not audible. He requested the Speaker to follow the order of the day.

The Speaker said under Rule 71 of Rules of Procedure, the call attention notice of



Dhirendra Devanath Shambhu had been accepted in the morning sitting. He said though there was no provision for speaking after that he (Speaker) had given the floor to the Leader of the Opposition after the speech of the Leader of the House.

The Speaker wanted to take up the order of the day but Azad insisted on allowing him

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said there was no use throwing stones at Awami League. He said Awami League had lost much, including four leaders, Sheikh Russel and others.

He said, we have difference of opinion and ways but we tried to come to national consensus on certain matters.

He said the Speaker could declare any day as the private members' day and place the constitution amendment bill submitted by Awami League. He criticised the Treasury Bench for the delay in submitting their constitution amendment bill.

Azad concluded his speech with a call for a congenial atmosphere in the House.

#### Mohiuddin Ahmed

Mohiuddin Ahmed of BAK-SAL, rising on a point of personal explanation, said he did not want to go to the meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party Sunday as was reported in a section of the

He said when he came to know that it was the meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP), he left the place.

Participating in the discussion on the Finance Bill. Salahuddin Quader Chwodhury (NDP Chittagong) described the budget as disappointing



and said the proposal for Taka 700 crore additional tax could be avoided by cutting the expenditures in various public sectors which have been running at a loss over the years.

He said the Finance Minister had referred to the organisations namely BRTC. Railway, Jute and Textile sectors which were incurring huge losses. He

suggested that these bodies should be disinvested to avoid further losses.

Chowdhury criticised the Finance Minister for not submitting the total amount of relief received by the previous government during the last

nine years. He said the Finance Minister had stressed accountability in various spheres of national life. But, he said, "if we want to establish accountability it

has to start from the top". In this connection, Chowdhury urged the government to furnish the fact about the Fairfax Company which was engaged to locate the money deposited to foreign bank by the members of Ershad regime. He said the company was paid 250,000 Dollars but it could not locate even Taka 250,000

Chowdhury said the Indian government of Prime Minister VP Singh had also engaged the Fairfax at a cost of seven million dollars to find out Rattv Gandhis' wealth outside India. But nothing could be found, he

He suggested the matter should be discussed in a select committee of parliament.

" (Incomplete)

# Law and ordersituation worsens in country

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting Saturday at 11.30 am, one and a half hours behind the schedule, after an eight-day recess for Eid-ul-Azha. Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas was in the chair, reports BSS.

The day's proceedings began with recitation from the holy Quran.

The Speaker extended Eid greetings to all Members of the Sangsad.

Taking the floor Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury also extending Eid greetings to the speaker on behalf of the Sangsad Members.

#### Shahjahan Siraj

Shahjahan Siraj (JSD-S) wanted to knew the reasons for the delay in starting the sitting of the House by one and a half hours. Such delay was against the rules of procedure of the House, he said.

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) also greeted the speaker.

Fazle Rabbi (JP-Gaibandha). Nurul Islam Moni (Ind) also

raised by the members, the Speaker said he had turned up at 9 am and came to know that parliamentary parties of both the Treasury and the Opposition Benches were holding meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban. This caused the delay, he added

Besides, he said, he was informed that the House still lacked quorum and the sitting began immediately after the quorum was achieved.

Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) said the parliamentary parties of both the government and the Opposition Benches were holding their respective meet ings and this caused the delay He said those who had raised questions have no parliamentary parties and they were lone members of their respective parties.

Fazlul Karim Selim (AL-Gopalgani) said the issue could be discussed after the question-hour.

# Shamsudoha

Shamsudoha (CPB-Nilphamari) said it was not the meeting of the Opposition but that of the Awami League parliamentary party.

Tofael Ahmed said Awami League was playing the role of the Opposition under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

# Suranjit Sengupta

Suranjit Sengupta (Ganotantree-Sunamgani) said the condition of Bangladesh would not be so precarious if quantity meant everything. There is a need for quality too, he said. At times, you would need the help of the minority group, he added.

### Salahuddin Yusuf

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) drew the attention of the Speaker to rule 2(ta) of the Rules of Procedure in regard to the definition of the Opposition.

### **Mohiuddin Ahmed**

Mohfuddin Ahmed (BKSAL-Pirojpur) said he found a news item that the Parliamentary Party of the Opposition was going to meet at 9.30 am Saturday at the Sangsad Bhaban. He said he went to attend the meeting but he was denied entry into the room on the plea that it was Awami League Parliamentary Party meeting.

At this stage, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Abdus Samad Azad, took the floor and said the Opposition members are united. He said the Leader of the Opposition and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina after meets the members of the entire Opposition. But, he said, Saturday the Awami League Parliamentary Party had held its meeting. He said if they knew that Mohiuddin had gone there to attend the meeting. he would have been certainly

welcomed. Menon (WP-Barisal) said Awami League should not take the role of the Opposition singularly.

#### Salahuddin Quader

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury (NDP-Chittagong) said. our number is small in the "Private Members" Bench. He said the bell should start ringing on schedule. If there is a lack of quorum, the House would not sit and the Speaker has the authority to decide whether the House would sit that day or not.

Drawings the attention of the Chair, Chowdhury said supported Shahjahan on the now-a-days it was found that the Speaker moved the obitu-Appreciating the question ary resolution and the Members of ten demand expunging some deliberations because he did not just like it. He said these tendency should

# Mohammad Nasim

Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim (AL-Sirajganj) said Awami League respects all the Members of the Opposition including BKSAL, CPB, Jamaat and JP equally. He said the parliamentary party of both the Awami League and the BNP were holding their meetings in the Sangsad Bhaban and as a result there was no quorum of the House which caused the

Moulana Matiur Rahman Nizami (Jamaat-Pabna) said Precedence should not be created to delay the sitting of Jatiya Sangsad just because Parliamentary Party meetings of two parties were held. He said, we have to see that quorum should not be affected

frequently. As the Speaker said that Questions and Answers were deemed to have been tabled, a number of Opposition Members stood up and protested against the decision.

# Rashed Mosharraf

Awami League Member Rashed Mosharraf termed the decision an infringement on the Members' Privileges and wanted to know why the question answer hour had been suspended.

# Fazlul Karim Selim

Another Opposition Member, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, said there was no Precedence of such suspen-

The Speaker said a similar practice was adopted in 1980 during the Budget Session. He said the Privileges of the Members are not curbed by such practices because when the questions and answers are tabled, they become part of the Proceedings.

# Hafizuddin Ahmed

Independent Member Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed drew the attention of the Chair to a letter issued by the Parliament Secretariat relating to the status of the Parliament Members. He said according to the letter the position of the

MPs was 14 in the Warrant of

Immediately, a large num- | House. ber of MPs from both sides stood up and criticised the

The Speaker urged the members to take their seats and said of the eight notices he received Saturday, five related to the status of the MPs. About the letter, the Speaker apologised and said he would look into the matter as to how it was issued. He said instructions have been issued to send corrected version of the letter to the concerned quarters.

#### **Tofael Ahmed**

Awami League Member Tofael Ahmed recalled the assurance of the Leader of the llouse about determining proper status of the Parliament Member and said the MPs enjoyed the status above the government officials under the Warrant of Precedence prepared in 1974. However, that position was altered first in October 1975 and finally in 1986, during the period of Ershad. He said a democratically elected government cannot follow a decision of an autocratic ruler which lowered the status of people's repre-

sentative. Tofael Ahmed urged the Leader of the House and Prime Minister to comment on the issue.

**Delwar Hossain** Chief Whip Delwar Hossain said as per an earlier decision, the issue of the Warrant of Precedence will be decided on the basis of the recommendations made by the privilege committee to be constituted with members from all parties. He said unfortunately that

committee has not been formed yet. The Chief Whip, however,

expressed the hope that once the form of government was changed to parliamentary .ype, the status of the MPs wili certainly be elevated. He said very soon all apprehensions of Members about their status will be removed. Deputy Leader of the

Opposition Abdus Samad Azad demanded withdrawal of the letter which, he said insulted the members. Speaker Abdur Rahman

Biswas said the letter has already been withdrawn.

Tofael said under no circumstances the Warrant of Precedence prepared by an autocratic regime be accepted by a democratically elected government. He said he could have suggested acceptance of the Warrant of Precedence prepared during the Awami League regime, which had placed MPs above government servants and three services Chiefs, but kept the issue left open for the House to decide.

Taking the floor, Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain said Awami League Members in the House were now speaking against the Warrant of Precedence of 1986 in strong terms although many of them had been members of the Jatiya Sangsad at that time. Had they been vocal at that time against the Warrant of Precedence it could have been changed, he added.

He, however, said the Leader of the House had earlier stated that a Privilege Committee would be formed and a new Order of Precedence would be prepared in accordance with its recommendations.

The Chief Whip urged the Precedence, but the letter did Opposition Members to abide not say who are the persons by the rules of Procedure of above and below the MPs, he the Sangsad for smooth conduct of the business of the

To set the controversy over the Warrant of Precedence at rest the Speaker said the Leader of the House had already held out an assurance about constituting a Privilege Committee. The Privilege Committee, he said, would determine the status of the MPs. Pending this, the circular issued earlier in this respect would be withdrawn, he as-

Standing again. Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed said he did not think that Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain would create a controversy over this issue because "I did not say anything accusing BNP in this connection" he pointed out that it was he who had Proposed Amendment to the Warrant of Precedence of 1986 for upgrading the status

Nurul Islam Moni Independent Member from Borguna Nurul Islam Moni took exception to certain remarks of Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain and called upon the Chair to expunge them from the Proceedings of

the House. The Chief Whip immediately stood up and withdrew his certain remarks. He said everybody knew will what government under Khanker Moshtaque Ahmed was in power in 1975. Certainly it was not BNP's government, he

He said he did not want to create controversy by telling the historic truth because 'Sometimes truth is bitter." He then appealed to all to bring an end to this controversy for go-

ing to the order of the day. As Delwar Hossain resumed his seat, four to five Awami League MPs stood up at a time to speak. The Speaker urged the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to counsel the members of his side.

Awami League Member from Shariatpur Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali said although the Warrant of Precedence had undergone changes here and there in the past, the status of the MPs had remained unchanged. According to him, there was no necessity of constituting a Privilege Committee to determine the status of MPs. The Sangsad itself was capable of determining the status of the MPs, he added.

# Razzak Ali

When the House resumed sitting at 4-15 pm Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali proposed that if the cut motions on the demands for grants could be considered as not proposed or withdrawn, the time so saved could be utilised for holding discussions on the Finance Bill.

# **Abdus Samad Azad**

The Deputy Speaker sought opinion of the opposition and have the floor to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad. Azad said he could not give his opinion without discussing the subject with the Leader of the Opposition.

#### Sudhangshu Shekhar At this stage Sudhangshu

Shekhar Halder (AL-Pirojpur) took the floor and said he had received a letter from the Parliament Secretariat informing the members that a copy of the Holy Quran, Geeta and Tripitak would be given to each Muslim, Hindu and

Buddhist MP respectively. He said again the question of Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian was being raised and demanded withdrawal of the letter. He said, he would, how ever, like to have copies of the Holy Quran and Tripitak. The Deputy Speaker said,

he did not know anything about the letter and assured that he would look into it.

#### Promod Mankhil

Promod Mankhil (AL-Mymensingh), taking the floor, said he had received a similar letter where no mention was made about the Christian members. He, being a Christian, demanded a copy of the

The Deputy Speaker said there was no use of discussing this subject during discussion on the supplementary budget and gave the floor to the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

### Sheikh Hasina

Sheikh Hasina referred to the letter and wanted to know why there was no mention about the Christian members in the letter.

Speaking about the supplementary budget, Sheikh Hasina said she could not give any opinion on the proposal of the Deputy Speaker without consulting the members who had proposed the cut motions on the demands for grants.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury supported the proposal of the Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker adjourned the House at 4-23 pm for 10 minutes to facilitate discussions among the members on his proposal on the cut

When the House reassembled at 4-45 pm Sheikh Hasina informed the Deputy Speaker that the members had agreed to accept the proposal of the chair about not moving the cut

Sheikh Hasina said it was a misfortune that this government and the Jatiya Sangsad had to pass the supplementary budget of the past autocratic government. She pointed out that many of these expenditures were made in the unproductive sectors and not in social welfare or productive areas. She said it was not understandable why these additional

expenditures were made. The Leader of the Opposition said the law and order situation in the country had deteriorated but additional expenditures were made in this sector.

She also said that the budget was not prepared in a proper manner. The Deputy Speaker thanked the members for ac-

#### cepting his proposal. Badruddoza

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury thanked the Opposition members for their acceptance of the Deputy Speaker's proposal. He said after nine years we have been able to establish a meaningful and significant Jatiya Sangsad and start a democratic process.

The Deputy Speaker then gave his ruling that the cut motions on the demands for grants were deemed to have not been moved. The House passed 67 de-

mands for grants amounting to

Taka 3885 crore 66 lakh 74 cation by voice vote. thousand by voice vote moved by different ministers and state ministers for their respective ministries for meeting necessary expenditures for the year ending June 30, The demands for grants year to meet certain part of

were passed without moving the cut motions, according to an understanding reached between the Treasury and the Opposition benches.

#### Mohiuddin Ahmed

Mohiuddin Ahmed (BAK-SAL- Pirojpur) demanded division when Finance Minister moved Demand No.15 on behalf of Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman for the foreign affairs sector. The Opposition member, however, withdrew his demand for division at the request of the Finance Minister.

#### ASM Firoz

Awami League member from Patuakhali ASM Firoz wanted to know from the Finance Minister what he meant by special expenditures in Demand No 57 (A). He sought clarification from the Finance Minister on the mat-

The Finance Minister told the House that the amount was used for sending Bangladesh troops to Saudi Arabia and repatriation of Bangladeshis from the Gulf areas during the Gulf war.

Raising again, Firoz said "we were told by the then government that the Bangladeshis were being brought

# back with foreign help."

AKM Jahangir At this stage, AKM Jahangir Hossain (AL-Patuakhali) took the floor and said the State Minister for Manpower had told the House in reply to a Question that half of the expenditures was borne by foreign governments while the rest would be borne by the Bangladesh government. He wanted to know from the Finance Minister whether there was any malpractice in this matter by the last auto-

# cratic government.

Saifur Rahman The Finance Minister said the demand for grants in the special expenditure sector are: Taka 27,71.19,000 in Saudi Arabia, Taka 35,31,62,000 for Biman, and Taka two lakh spent by Bangladesh missions

in the Gulf region. Saifur Rahman, however said a considerable amount of money had been received from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Deputy Speaker gave

the floor to the Finance Minister to move the Appropriation (Supplementary) Bill, 1991 for the financial year ending June 30, 1991. The House adopted the Appropriation (Supplementary Bill, 1991. Granting additional

sums of Taka 4175,49,48,000

from the consolidated fund to

carry out the work for the

outgoing fiscal year ending June, 1991. After the adoption of the Appropriation (Supplementary) Bill, 1991, the Deputy Speaker adjourned the House for 30 minutes for Magreb

When the sitting resumed after Magreb prayer, the Finance Minister moved for an allocation of Taka 3,308 crore 84 lakh 90 thousand, out of the consolidated fund for fiscal 1991-92 to meet certain part of the expenditure of various ministries beginning July 1.

The Finance Minister then

The House granted the allo-

moved the Appropriation Bill (Vote on Account) Bill, 1991 granting in advance Taka 4.091 crore 87 lakh 94 thousand, out of the consolidated fund for the 1991-92 financial

ministers. The House passed the bill

the expenditure of various

by voice vote. But before the bill was put to vote, Sudhangsu Shekhar

Haldar said there was a scope to discuss the bill. The Deputy Speaker said according to the Rules Procedure, there was no provision to discuss the bill. He said since 1973 there was no

discussion on this bill. The Finance Minister said it was a legal completion to pass the bill.

The Deputy Speaker said the members could put some questions on the bill, according to the Rules of Procedure. Haldar said he had no questions to put. He said, however, let it be in the proceeding that the members have the right to

#### discuss the bill. Ansar Ali

The chair then invited Ansar Alt to take part in the discussion on the Finance Bill. Ali (Jamaat - Satkhira) deplored that new laws and to be enacted by the House for the

passage of the Finance Bill in-

stead of passing laws to benefit The member touched on several subjects including the income tax laws which, he said, were discriminatory and

not in conformity with the needs of time. The Jamaat member was critical of taxes on alcohol, saying alcohol itself should have been banned since no religion

approves drinking. Referring to the allocation for the police in the budget, Ali said it was unfortunate that the Police had played the role of silent spectators when the Leader of the Parliamentary Party of Jamaat- c Islami was attacked when he went to Dhaka University campus for attending a meeting of political leaders convenced by the Vice

Chancellor. Where is the security for the national leaders - tomor row leader from another party could be attacked by his opponents" he said and also criticised the role of a group of

# teachers on the attack.

Abdul Matin Khasru Speaking next on Finance Bill, Abdul Matin Khasru (AL- Comilla), said government imposed taxes in different items without realising that the less fortunate class of the society had to bear the

For instance, he said, nothing substantial was done in the budget presented by Finance Minister for the next fiscal for the farmers although all of us shed tears for them. The Opposition member

brunt of the increases.

demanded withdrawal of reduction of taxes and duties on number of items and said such measures must be taken before the Finance Bill was passed by the House. Khasru referred to the VAT and said this kind of tax as

proposed by the Finance Minister in the budget could not be applied in Bangladesh since conditions were differ-He called for simple living

and austerity on part of government and other leaders. **Abdul Malek** 

# Khandker Abdul Malek

(BNP- Sylhet) said VAT system would not yield the desired results in our country because of our administrative system and mentality of the people. He, therefore, urged the Finance Minister to defer this system and instead raise sales tax and excise duties to meet the deficit in the budget. He expressed his concern

over the losses to the tune of

take two thousand crore in the public sector corporation and said the present BNP government should not own these liabilities of the past autocratic government. The people of this country should also be relieved of the liability of losses of thousands of crores of Taka incurred by the nationalised

He suggested open, free and frank discussions in the Sangsad on how to save the nation from continuous losses in these sectors so that we could give a healthy system to our posterity. He said the government would accept the constructive suggestions from the opposition side in this respect. Time has now come to

industries, he added.

through full-dress discussions to overcome the malaise on the economic front, he said. Khandker Malek called for taking comprehensive flood control measures to save greater Sylhet district from

the menace of flood, he also

proposed exploitation of natu-

ral resources of this district

adopt realistic measures

# for the wellbeing of the peo-

Khan Tipu Sultan Khan Tipu Sultan (AL-Jessore) severely criticised the VAT system describing it as a blue-print of the donor coun-

tries to destroy all productive means of Bangladesh. He said that the allocation in the education sector was 21 per cent in the budget of 1972-73 but it came down to 15.5 per cent in the budget for the next fiscal. He was highly critical of raising taxes on ball point pen, fertilizer, diesel,

petrol, kerosene and other essentials. The Awami League member said a deep-laid conspiracy was now no to destroy our indigenous industries, process of milk production and other enterprises through VAT system. The country would lose its economic sovereignty if proper steps were not taken right now. He further said that VAT system had been dis-

carded by many under development countries of the world. This system could not work in a country like ours where the income tax and customs officials were corrupt. He cited example of how even customs inspectors were minting

#### money through corrupt means. Ataur Rahman Khan

Maulana Ataur Rahman Khan (BNP- Kishorgonj) said preparation of an ideal budget was a difficult task for our country which was destroyed by the autocratic regime in a systematic way during the last

He hailed the budget for the

next fiscal for containing measures to overcome the problems accumulated over the years.

nine years.

He said Shaheed Ziaur Rahman pursued a policy to build a self- reliant Bangladesh. Had his policy continued uninterrupted during the last nine years it would have been easier for the incumbent Finance Minister to present a likeable budget to the nation, he added.

Turning to local problem,

he called upon the govern-

ment to ensure the supply of

natural gas to Kishorgonj dis-

trict to solve the acute problem of fuel wood. He also demanded sufficient allocation of fund to connect all the upazilas with the district headquarters by well- knit roads. As Maulana Ataur Rahman Khan concluded his speech,

the Deputy Speaker adjourned the House at 9 pm Saturday until 11-30 am Sunday.