

Awami League has lost a lot: Samad Azad

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 11:45 A.M. with Speaker Abdul 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 Dharendra 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 issues.

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 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 Rangpur 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 Chowdhury

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 contrary to the democratic rights of the people.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia refuted the allega-

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



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 pm.

Abdus Samad Azad

When the House resumed its sitting at 3:45 pm with Speaker Abdul 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 statement.

In the midst of shoutings from the Awami League members, the Chief Whip continued his speech but it was not audi-

ble. 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



Dharendra 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 to speak.

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 press.

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 Chowdhury (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 divested 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 so far.

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 Rajiv Gandhi's wealth outside India. But nothing could be found, he said.

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 Abdul 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 extended Eid greetings to the Speaker on behalf of the Sangsad Members.

Shahjahan Siraj

Shahjahan Siraj (JSD-S) wanted to know 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 Mont (IND) also supported Shahjahan on the issue.

Appreciating the question 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 meetings 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-Gopalganj) 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 (Ganantrec-Sunamganj) 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(a) of the Rules of Procedure in regard to the definition of the Opposition.

Mohiuddin Ahmed

Mohiuddin Ahmed (BKSAI-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.

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 Precedence, but the letter did not say who are the persons above and below the MPs, he added.

Immediately, a large number of MPs from both sides stood up and criticised the letter.

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.

Standing again, Awami League member 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 of MPs.

Independent Member from Borguna Nurul Islam Mont 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 what government under Khaker Moshtaque Ahmed was in power in 1975. Certainly it was not BNP's government, he stressed.

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 going 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) Shaikat 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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the expenditure of various ministers.

The House passed the bill by voice vote.

But before the bill was put to vote, Sudhangsu Shekhar Halder said there was a scope to discuss the bill.

The Deputy Speaker said according to the Rules of 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.

Halder 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.

The chair then invited Ansar Ali 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 instead of passing laws to benefit the people.

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 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 autocratic government.

Where is the security for the national leaders - tomorrow 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.

Speaking next on the 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 brunt of the increases.

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

The Opposition member demanded withdrawal of reduction of taxes and duties on a 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 different.

He called for simple living and austerity on part of government and other leaders.

Turning to local problem, he called upon the government to ensure the supply of natural gas to Kishorgonj district 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.

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