

Call to work together for democracy

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 Hasina's remarks he said it was Khandakar Mushtaq Ahmed who had promulgated the first martial law. The people knew which party he himself and his ministers belonged to. Late president Ziaur Rahman had expedited the withdrawal of martial law rule. The second martial law was imposed by former President H M Ershad, he said adding that a certain person had commented at that time I am not unhappy.

About attempts to compare Ershad with Zia he said Zia was a great freedom fighter while Ershad was an associate of occupation forces. Zia had ended martial law rule which was brought afresh by Ershad. Zia did not dissolve any parliament or depose any elected President while Ershad had done both.

Dr Chowdhury who also holds the education portfolio said during the last 12 years the politics of Shaheed Zia has been rooted into the soil of Bangladesh, and that he would be a source of inspiration for the future.

Referring to the debate over who declared independence Dr Chowdhury said, how could we deny that the historic declaration over Chittagong radio by the then Major Zia had inspired eight crore people in the war of independence?

He said nobody raised questions on the rule of Bangladesh

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during the pro-liberation period. He was criticised for his activities in the post-independence period on political grounds. "We consider the one-party system introduced through the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution as undemocratic", he said.

He welcomed all opposition members for supporting the introduction of the bills and said history would record the role of not only BNP, but also of Awami League, Jamaat and other parties, the three-alliances for the restoration of parliamentary democracy, he said.

Ganatantri Party member Suranjit Sengupta said introduction of the Constitution Amendment Bills would go down as a rare moment in the annals of the history of the nation. Tracing the history of the framing of the constitution in 1972 with which he was associated, Sengupta expressed his contentment that the nation was once again accepting the parliamentary system.

A veteran parliamentarian, Sengupta said switching to the parliamentary form was not enough. The main element of democracy were tolerance and respect for each other's opinion.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia reviewing a graduation parade of BAF Academy at BAF Base Matur Rahman, Jessore Wednesday. — ISPR photo

Gunbattle at JN College

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The JCD workers then positioned themselves in the two blocks of the hall while the ousted BCL activists took shelter atop different buildings of Shakhari Bazar, west of the Dr. Milton Hall. From noon till evening both the groups exchanged gunshots injuring the pedestrians and locals.

While visiting the area, this correspondent found BCL JCD activists exchanging fire from atop the Milton Hall and the Shakhari Bazar buildings. Activists of both the sides were also shooting at the curious people looking at them.

Pedestrians and shop-keepers of the area were seen running helter skelter now and then with the armed men threatening them and sometimes shooting at them. Business establishments of Victoria Park, Sadarghat and Shakhari Bazar areas could not operate during the whole day Wednesday. The shop-keepers were found closing down the shutters of the shops. But opened soon after gun shots stopped for a while.

Police forces deployed in the hall area did not resort to action against the clashing armed youths during the day time. Rather, they were seen fleeing along with the panicky people. Asked a police officer said, they did not receive any order from the higher authorities in this regard.

Later at about 6-30 pm a huge contingent of police stormed into the Dr. Milton Hall when armed activists of both the groups fled away from the area. None was arrested.

UNB adds: Police, however, said three people were injured including a student Habibur Rahman. Two others were identified as a street urchin and a rickshawpuller.

Supporters of Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Chhatra League (A-A) resorted to armed violence at the College premises immediately after police raided an abandoned house turned into a student dormitory beside Dr. Milton Hall at early hours Wednesday sources said. Chhatra League was reportedly controlling the dormitory.

The sources said police raided the abandoned dormitory at around midnight Tuesday and recovered 2 pipe guns and some ammunition. Few outsiders residing there along with some students ran away after police entered there.

Jamuna erosion takes worse turn

SIRAJGANJ, July 3: Erosion by the swelling Jamuna has taken an alarming turn destroying homes and hearth of some 1200 families in the district, reports UNB.



Three of the victims, including children, with bullet injuries they received in the JN College area Wednesday, under treatment at different hospitals. — Star photo

VAT system

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 under sales tax and excise duty with no refund or deduction facilities, he maintained.

He noted, the scope for tax evasion will be minimal under VAT. The scope for discretionary elements, involved in earlier sales tax and excise duty, will be limited under VAT and it will be easier to administer VAT with transparency and clarity, he said.

The NBR Chairman assured all concerned that the individual cases where the application of VAT would create any anomaly or adverse effect would be looked into, as and when they would be brought to the notice of the authorities. Admitting that there may be some transitional problems, he however observed that the benefits of VAT would ultimately be reaped by all.

He said, the introduction of VAT has been designed perfectly in accordance with the "unanimous recommendations" of a committee, comprising government officials and representatives of the private sector. The committee visited earlier a number of countries in the region and outside to examine the VAT operations there. "Nothing has been done beyond what the committee had specifically suggested for," he added.

Replying to a question, the NBR Chairman said that the representatives from the private sector in the committee included those from the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Bangladesh

Chamber of Industries (BCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

About a question on introduction of VAT in India, the NBR officials said that the operation of VAT on an extended scale was delayed there because of the federal structure involving dual controls in taxation. While the federal government in India controls excise duty, the provinces retain controls on sales tax known as countervailing duty, they added.

They said, the net additional revenue increase because of VAT will be Taka 250 crore in 1991-92. Total collections under VAT will be about Taka 1679 crore including the additional receipts of Taka 250 crore, they added.

Explaining this, they pointed out that Taka 1429 crore out of the total estimated VAT receipts would be the earnings, on a net basis, on account of replacements of sales tax and excise duty.

About a question why major areas like tobacco or cigarette manufacturing, gas and petroleum products which are excisable have been kept outside the VAT in 1991-92, the NBR officials said, this was done mainly because of "administrative reasons". The existing excise duty on such items are however much higher than the VAT rate of 15 per cent. A detailed report on VAT appears on to-day's Business Page.

AL bill

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then both the constitutional amendment bills of the ruling party and the opposition might be sent to a select committee or special committee of Parliament for reaching consensus between the treasury and the opposition benches.

Meanwhile, opposition parties in Parliament expressed their dissatisfaction on certain provisions of the proposed 12th constitutional amendment bill of the ruling party.

Salauddin Qader Chowdhury (NDP), Rashed Khan Menon (Workers Party) and Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim, while talking to UNB, pointed out certain provisions regarding floor crossing, appointment of 20 per cent ministers from outside parliament and the procedure of election to the office of the President as "undemocratic" and "unconstitutional".

Meghna bridge

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Giving details of Japanese economic cooperation with Bangladesh, ito said it was the largest recipient of Japan's grant aid. Its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Bangladesh covers wide areas of basic human needs, agriculture, flood control, industry and infrastructure development. It also helps solve the country's balance of payments problems, Ito said.

Japan is also increasing its share of debt relief assistance to Bangladesh to mitigate its international balance of payment problems.

He said his country topped the list in disbursement of aid in 1987, Japan's disbursements totalled \$357.60 million followed by \$250.81 million by IDA.

Attorney General lashes out at Ershad

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The Attorney General became angry at this remark and shouted at Ershad, "Would you please stop. You should not attack personally. If you have anything to say you can say it to the Court. At this stage the accused has no right to say anything to the Court except consult with his lawyers."

Then all other Defence Lawyers rose to their feet and started rebuking the Attorney General. They said "You stop. Don't overdo. This is too much."

The Prosecution lawyers assisting the Attorney General also grew furious and reproached the Defence Lawyers. However at one stage Ershad became cool and expressed his sorrow for his unethical remarks to the Attorney General.

Later Defence Counsel Yousuf Hossain Humayun also went to the Attorney General to lessen the bitterness between Ershad and the Attorney General.

Later Judge Mohammad Ali Khan issued an order to the jail authorities to send a report on the facilities provided to Ershad in the jail. The matter ended there.

Later talking to journalists the Attorney General provided a description of the facilities given to Ershad in jail.

It is learnt that when Ershad was barred to meet any of his relatives or Defence Lawyers directly and a bullet proof glass and an intercom system were arranged to allow him to talk with his lawyers and other relatives, the Defence started making allegations of less facilities.

The Attorney General said that the two-room house provided for Ershad was very much adequate.

He said that one room has an attached bathroom with a low commode. There is also an attached kitchen.

The second room of the house is quite open and that was meant for his spending his past-time. The Attorney General said that Ershad could go to the kitchen freely and sometimes if he wished enjoy his hobby of cooking.

He also refuted the allegations of the Defence that the place was a solitary confinement like the cells where convicts have been confined.

He said that one orderly and one gardener were given by the jail authorities to look after Ershad. Besides one prisoner was given as an assistant to his cook.

Facilities beyond normal scale

The Attorney General Aminul Haque also said that Ershad was being provided with daily rations at more than the normal scale fixed for any first class prisoner under the jail code.

The foodstuff included one kg pilau rice and 250 grams of dalda every alternate day.

Besides, every day his is being supplied with fine quality rice-2 kg chicken-one; fish-850 gram; apples-500 gram; green coconuts-two; bananas-4; curd-250 gram; butter-60 gram; ripe papaya-500 to 800 gram; bread-400 gram; suji-250 gram; millet-500 gram; pasteurised milk-300 gram; sugar-300 gram; jelly-60 gram; honey-60 gram and vegetables-one kg.

Besides, the jail authorities also supply semai, thankuni pata, pulses of different varieties; brinjal, kachumukhi, corolla, lal aul, panghash peti, magur and shrimps at times.

Besides, three newspapers, the Daily Ittefaq, Khabar, and

the Bangladesh Observer are supplied to him by the government, while he gets a complimentary copy of the Daily Janata.

He also buys two other newspapers, the Daily Star and the Daily Sangbad.

He is also getting many other weekly newsmagazines including Asiaweek, Time, Newsweek, Sunday, Desh, Bichitra, Sugandha, Sananda, Khabarakhbar etc.

Many books from the jail library are also being supplied to him. He is also allowed to listen to a one-band radio.

Attorney General Aminul Haque further said that by now the police has intercepted three letters written to different persons by him and since then the jail authorities became cautious so that he could not exchange any letter any of his visitors and arranged a bullet proof glass so that he could only talk from inside the glass.

Trunk of Taka produced
 The Prosecution produced the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate as witness no five.

Deposing before the court the CMM said that the Inventory Committee formed after the locking and sealing of the house on December 12, 1990 started functioning from December 19, 1990.

The Inventory Committee, he said he made inventory of the articles found in the Sena Bhaban and the Bangabhaban, belonging to Ershad.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate submitted a 103-page report prepared by the Inventory Committee to the Court. He also produced the inventory list of the articles found in the Bangabhaban.

Azizul Haque Bhuiyan said that Assistant Military Secretary to the President Li

PM

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tions.
 The graduation parade was held here this morning at the BAF Academy parade square. The Prime Minister reviewed the parade and took salute at the impressive parade as chief guest. She also distributed trophies, wings and certificates among the outstanding cadets.

Begum Zia said the BAF cadets must try to enrich their professional skill, knowledge and efficiency. She asked them to ensure best use of arms and ammunition procured with the hard-earned money of the people. She told them that the 'improvement of professional efficiency should be their only target after passing a hard phase of training.'

The Prime Minister mentioned about the recent cyclone in the coastal areas and said the Air Force had special responsibility during such natural disasters. She said it was the Air Force which could reach the affected area at the earliest to help the distressed people. She told the cadets to keep themselves ready to face such disasters in future. "One cannot become patriot without love and affection for the people", she added.

At the function, the Prime Minister presented the 'Academy Colour' for summer term to Number 2 Squadron which was adjudged the best all-round squadron for feats in different competitions.

Flight cadet wing under officer Md Touheed Aziz Khan of GD(P) course was adjudged the best 'all-round' cadet and awarded the coveted 'Sword of Honour' while flight cadet Sgt AFM Shamimul Islam received 'Osmani Gold Medal' for outstanding performance in academics of the 22nd GD(P) course.

Cadet Md Moazzem Hossain of the ground branch course got 'Commandant's Trophy' for best performance in academic subjects.

The parade was rounded off with a spectacular fly-past by squadrons of different aircraft of the academy. The Prime Minister also visited the BAF officers' mess and talked to the newly commissioned officers and others.

US independence

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ing to the American people and wished their continued peace, progress and prosperity.

In her message of felicitation Begum Khaleda Zia said, "On behalf of the people and government of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I have great pleasure in extending to your excellency, and through you to the people and the Government of the United States of America, our heartfelt greetings and warmest felicitations on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of your great country."

The Midnight File

Slovenia starts peace talks

LJUBLJANA (Yugoslavia), July 3: Breakaway Slovenia started talks today with the Yugoslav army on how to arrange for federal troops to return to barracks after days of fighting over the republic's independence bid, reports Reuter.

Nepal devalues currency

KATMANDU, July 3: The Nepalese government on Wednesday devalued its currency by 12.33 per cent against the dollar, in the second devaluation against the US currency this week. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala told the parliament that the government had taken the measure in line with the devaluation of Indian rupee, reports AP.

Medellin ends drug war

BOGOTA (Colombia), July 3: The Medellin drug cartel announced today that it is ending its bloody terrorist campaign against the government. The cartel is led by Pablo Escobar, who surrendered to authorities two weeks ago, reports AP.

Private sector

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 over the growth in support of the donors at the recent Aid Club meeting in Paris "after what your country has been through." Then, he stressed that in their approach to the question of assistance to Bangladesh, "adequate attention to priority and efficiency are what the donors would look for."

On the same subject, this writer referred to the feeling prevailing in Bangladesh that there are too many macro and micro conditionalities attached to the aid support. "Would it not be better to replace these numerous conditionalities by only one macro conditionality, namely, increase in public savings every year to be tied to increase in external assistance?" he asked.

Conable replied, "This would be important and critical, but not sufficient. Development is a complex process, more than simply marshalling of resources. Allocation of those resources based on priority and their efficient use would be very important in the total context of a development programme and support. We shall continue to draw the attention of the government to these issues."

The question of linking assistance to a developing country to a possible cut in its military budget also came up for a reference.

When asked how the Bank would determine what level of military expenditure was adequate for a particular country, Conable suggested that the matter should be discussed at high levels in governments as well as between governments and donors.

"This is not a subject which can be left to be handled by bright young economists or MBAs," he added with a smile. However, he rounded off his views on this subject by referring to the analysis by UNDP

showing that in many developing countries, military expenditure exceeds those on education and health. "This is certainly not desirable. We are working with many developing countries on appropriate priorities of public expenditure," he said but without indicating if the Bank has so far asked any country to reduce its military budget as a condition for assistance.

The interview touched on a number of other development issues such as the Bank's role in reducing poverty, the question of structural adjustments in poor countries, the organisation's relationship with other aid-giving UN agencies and the Bank President's own satisfaction over what he called the "good shape" in which he would be leaving the institution in two months' time.

The interview ended with Conable denying that there is a gradual weakening of the World Bank since "decisions are in many cases taken outside the Executive Board." While conceding that there have been occasions of stress and strain, the Bank chief said firmly, "the cooperative character of the institution has been retained."

(Details and extracts from the interview — Page 4)

Steps taken to waive agri loan

By Staff Correspondent
 Finance Minister Saifur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) Wednesday that the Bangladesh Bank had issued a circular on June 15 to give effect to the decision to waive agricultural loan upto Taka 5000 and interest on such loans.

Replying to a call attention moved by Principal Nazrul Islam of Awami League he said those farmers who would benefit from this decision of the government would be eligible for fresh loans.

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