

Plea to re-examine projects approved by Planning Commission

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 4-16 pm on Wednesday with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair.

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

As there was no question hour session on Wednesday, the Deputy Speaker wanted to take up the order of the day.



Mohiuddin Ahmed

Mohiuddin Ahmed (BKSAL-Pirojpur) spoke on a point of order and referred to newspaper reports on July 22 that a clinic in Gulshan was carrying out anti-social activities in the name of giving physiotherapy treatment.

He said, the newspapers also published names and photographs of the persons including Major (Retd) Enamul Haq Khan, Moazzem Hossain and Sanowar Hossain who were arrested by the police for their involvement in the anti-social activities.

Mohiuddin wanted to know whether one of the arrested persons Major (Retd) Enamul Haq Khan holds any high position in the Sports Control Board. He also wanted a statement from the concerned minister in this regard.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Choudhury said the concerned minister was not present in the House and the answer would be given when he comes.

prizes must be flushed out and sense of responsibility should develop among the officials and employees.

She proposed that the two grounded ATP aircraft of Biman be sold out and new ones bought. She continued her speech when the House resumed its sitting after a break for Asr prayer with speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair.

Drawing the attention of the Prime Minister, she said the utility of the projects undertaken by the Planning Commission should be assessed. "Many bridges, embankments and mills-factories losing their utility have become the burden of the people" she alleged.

Referring to the newly introduced Value Added Tax (VAT) system, she said as it was beneficial, it had been introduced in many countries of the world.

However, she opined that the system should go into full operation after making the people aware of the system.

She demanded reintroduction of self-employment projects, initiated by Shaheed Ziaur Rahman.

Mrs. Jahanara Begum also demanded allocation of money for construction of Rajbari-Kushia road, nationalisation of Rajbari Adarsha Mahila College and setting up of Faridpur Medical College.

Zobed Ali

Zobed Ali (AL-Netrokona) participating in the general discussion on the budget, criticised it as being against the interest of the poor people.

He said the Finance Minister had not kept in view the problems of the contemporary society while preparing the budget. The budget was totally dependent on foreign assistance he said and added that the country would turn into an import-oriented one if the proposed budget was passed.

Referring to the education sector, where the highest allocation was given, the opposition member said unless congenial atmosphere was restored in the educational institutions, the allocation would become meaningless.

He also referred to the rising corruption in society and said no efforts were made by the government to contain it effectively.

Mr Zobed Ali demanded of the government to immediately take decision on the upazila system to facilitate the members of parliament to exercise their authority over their constituencies. He also demanded that the government should take drastic measures to recover the huge loans from the defaulters.

Sheikh Selim

When the House re-assembled after Magreb prayer with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, Awami League member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim rising on a point of order, demanded a full-dress discussion in the House on terrorism on the campus all over the country. He pointed out that everyday one college after another was being closed down due to terrorism. Elections in the colleges and universities have also been postponed due to this factor he said adding this issue warranted urgent discussions in the House.

The Speaker told Sheikh Selim that since he had already spoken on the national budget he should request other MPs of his own party to raise the issue of terrorism on the campuses in their budget speeches.

At this point, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed said that he would request the Education Minister to make a statement on this issue in the House Thursday. He said this matter needed immediate solution and we would have to evolve ways and means to solve these problems. The Prime Minister has already discussed this matter with the leaders of different political parties and she would do so in future too to resolve this problem, he added.

Abdul Wahab

Taking the floor, Mr Abdul Wahab (BNP-Jhenaidah) said the Finance Minister had to make the budget in the backdrop of a totally shattered economy left behind by the past government.

He termed the budget a pro-people one and said the nation would benefit by it. He said, by giving the highest priority to the education sector, the Finance Minister had done the right thing.

He said, proper emphasis was given on the agri-sector which would help achieve economic emancipation of the country's peasantry.

Turning to some local problems of his constituency and home district, Mr Wahab called upon the Education Minister to give due importance to the educational institute, including the under-construction Islamic University.

He also demanded help from the relevant Ministries to develop mosques, madaris and madrasas of his area.

The BNP member called upon the Irrigation Minister to provide deep and shallow tubewells at nominal cost or free of cost for providing irrigation facilities to the farmers.

Narrating the pitiful condition of the roads and highways of his district, Mr Wahab urged the Communications Minister to allocate necessary financial allocation to develop communication infrastructure. He also demanded immediate commissioning of Palli Biddut scheme in his locality.

Majeed Talukdar

Mr. Abdul Majeed Talukdar (BNP-Bogra) appealed to the Government to provide opportunity to those who were con-

victed under the Martial Law rule to seek review and reconsideration of their punishment. Those people should get a chance to appeal, he said.

Mr. Talukdar demanded immediate construction of the Jamuna bridge. He said in the absence of a bridge transportation of goods, including fruits and vegetables, between the two parts of the country was facing problems, affecting the price level as well.

Mr Azizur Rahman Chowdhury (Jamat-Dinajpur) criticised the budget and said due to the budgetary proposals price hike has occurred in the agricultural inputs. This has hit the peasants very hard, he said demanding subsidies in the agriculture sector.

Mr Chowdhury urged the Government to immediately take control of the ibtetal and

other madrasas in the interest of the development of the national education system.

He urged the Government to provide flood protection embankment in Hakimpur and improve the road communication condition in the area.

Mr Chowdhury also drew the attention of the Government to the fact that cows and bulls were being smuggled into the country from across the border. If these cattlehead are legally imported the Government could earn a lot of revenue.

Khalilur Rahman

Mr. Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury (JP-Habiganj) asked the Government to withdraw VAT which, he thought, could, however, be experimentally introduced in future. He said many advance countries in Europe failed to

realise the desired results from the VAT system. In the situation of Bangladesh, VAT system cannot succeed, he said.

The Speaker told the House that the Education Minister had time and again said situation on the campus would be discussed in the House. He, however, said since Thursday is the Private Members' Day it would be better if the issue is discussed in the House on Saturday.

Oli Ahmed

The Communications Minister suggested that the House could resume its sitting at 3 p.m. on Sunday instead of usual 4 p.m. to discuss it. But the Speaker expressed himself in favour of holding discussions on it on Saturday.

Rising again, Mr. Oli Ahmed said many of the MPs would go

to their respective constituencies after the adjournment of the House on Thursday and would remain outside Dhaka on Saturday. So it should be discussed on Sunday.

Supporting the suggestion of the Speaker, Awami League leader Mr. Tofael Ahmed said it would be better if the issue was discussed on Saturday. Earlier it was decided that the House would also sit on Saturday. He hoped that this decision would be implemented.

He further said as the Constitution Amendment Bills would come on Sunday, the House should not take up other matters skipping over the Constitution Amendment Bills which are very significant.

Mr. Oli Ahmed said the date of discussion on the situation on the campus would be fixed through consultation with the Speaker.

Ohidul Alam

Speaking next, Syed Ohidul Alam (BNP-Chittagong) congratulated the Finance Minister for preparing a balanced budget. The Finance Minister deserved thanks for the simple reason that he had been able to prepare a budget for a country the economy of which was shattered during the nine years of the autocratic rule. Implementation of the budgetary provisions in different sectors would take the country on the road to progress, he said.

He said the budget made many concessions for the people of the low income group. He described the highest ever allocation in the education sector as a historic step.

The BNP member from Chittagong urged the Education Minister to identify the problems of the Chittagong University and take steps for its proper and regular functioning.

Syed Ohidul Alam called for solving the flood problem of his area by taming the Haldia river. He demanded nationalisation of one college, one high school and one madrasa in his area.

Mr. Mohtuddin Ahmed (BKSAL-Pirojpur) said the budget had no direction and the Finance Minister did not prescribe the ways to realise the objectives of the budget.

He said to expedite industrial development, agricultural development should be strengthened on priority basis. He suggested supply of agricultural inputs to the farmers at fair prices to increase agricultural production and solve the problems in this sector.

Referring to flow of unauthorised arms in the country, he cautioned the nation and the House that use of these unauthorised arms were destroying all hopes of our independence. He wanted to know from where these arms were coming.

Pointing to development of science and technology all over the world, he said this had contributed to the improvement and increase of production and distribution system. But Bangladesh was far away from the impact of this development.

Referring to the economic grouping of the countries in different regions of the world, the BKSAL chief said SAARC should be strengthened. He said many forces were trying to create differences among the countries of the South Asian region.

Mr. Mohtuddin said foreign loans were not utilised properly in the productive sector and as a result repayment capacity was weakened.

Criticising the arrival of the US Task Force in Bangladesh to participate in the cyclone relief operation, he regretted that nobody had spoken against it.

Referring to Bangladeshi Jatiyatabad he said this was done to allow the Pakistanis to sell out their properties in Bangladesh under the pretext of "Bangladeshi Jatiyatabad".

Speaking about local problems he said it takes 26 hours to travel from his constituency to Dhaka due to bad communication system. He demanded improvement of the communication in his constituency.

Abdus Sobhan

Rising on a point of order, Abdus Sobhan (Jamat-Pabna) objected to some remarks of Mohiuddin Ahmed of BKSAL and said the Jamaat-e-Islami had supported BNP to form government in the national interest.

He demanded that the remark of Mohiuddin be expunged.

The Speaker assured him that the remark would be expunged if it was found objectionable under clause 270 of the Rules of Procedure.

Farida Rahman

Treasury Bench members Farida Rahman and Jahanara Begum also strongly objected to some remarks of Mohiuddin.

The House witnessed a

heated scene when Jahanara Begum was making remarks on the role of some leaders of the liberation war.

The opposition members vehemently protested against the remarks.

The Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Naim threatened to stage a walk out if the entire speech of Jahanara Begum was not expunged.



Badruddoza Chowdhury

The Speaker said he would examine the speech of Jahanara Begum and expunge the objectionable part under clause 270 of the Rules of Procedure.

Salahuddin Yusuf

Even after apparent solution of the issue following the verdict of the Speaker, Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) rose on his feet and vehemently objected to the remarks of Prof Jahanara Begum. The Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas once again assured the Awami League members that he would personally look into the remarks made by Prof Jahanara Begum and Mr Mohtuddin Ahmed in their speeches and expunge those in accordance with rule 270 of the Rules of Procedure.

Motia Chowdhury

Today's last speaker in the budget discussion was Begum Matia Chowdhury (AL-Sherpur), who said the pre-

sent budget would lead the nation toward more foreign dependency. She said this year's budget has once again proved that the government of Bangladesh has no accountability to the people but their allegiance was always to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Chowdhury alleged that each and every step of the government, right from the fixation of power and gas charges to the appointment of people in different offices, is being directed by the World Bank. She said at the directive of the World Bank government appointment has been stopped this year.

Begum Motia Chowdhury said, the GDP of the nation has not increased, rather a group of people individually became richer by grabbing national resources. She wanted to know what happened in the name of privatisation and said, "For God's sake please keep some control over the private sector."

She said, the Finance Minister had said in the first part of his budget speech that the policy of the former regime was not so bad but the implementation process was wrong. By saying so Mr. Saifur Rahman endorsed all the economic policies imposed upon former President Ershad by the IMF, she said.

She demanded that the Finance Minister should disclose the "Policy Formulating Paper" (PFP), the secret document between the IMF and the government. The people want to know each and every provision of that secret document, she added.

Mrs. Motia Chowdhury said, there are no fundamental differences between the economic policies of BNP and JP governments. Giving detailed account of the voting patterns in the five Rangpur constituencies from where former President Ershad contested the last election, Mrs. Motia said that the votes received by BNP, Awami League and JP clearly indicated that the BNP cast their votes in favour of Ershad only to stop Awami League. So she added that there was also no fundamental differences in the politics of BNP and JP. The Speaker then adjourned the House at 10.05 pm to meet again at 4 pm Thursday.

Motia Chowdhury

sent budget would lead the nation toward more foreign dependency. She said this year's budget has once again proved that the government of Bangladesh has no accountability to the people but their allegiance was always to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Chowdhury alleged that each and every step of the government, right from the fixation of power and gas charges to the appointment of people in different offices, is being directed by the World Bank. She said at the directive of the World Bank government appointment has been stopped this year.

Begum Motia Chowdhury said, the GDP of the nation has not increased, rather a group of people individually became richer by grabbing national resources. She wanted to know what happened in the name of privatisation and said, "For God's sake please keep some control over the private sector."

She said, the Finance Minister had said in the first part of his budget speech that the policy of the former regime was not so bad but the implementation process was wrong. By saying so Mr. Saifur Rahman endorsed all the economic policies imposed upon former President Ershad by the IMF, she said.

She demanded that the Finance Minister should disclose the "Policy Formulating Paper" (PFP), the secret document between the IMF and the government. The people want to know each and every provision of that secret document, she added.

Mrs. Motia Chowdhury said, there are no fundamental differences between the economic policies of BNP and JP governments. Giving detailed account of the voting patterns in the five Rangpur constituencies from where former President Ershad contested the last election, Mrs. Motia said that the votes received by BNP, Awami League and JP clearly indicated that the BNP cast their votes in favour of Ershad only to stop Awami League. So she added that there was also no fundamental differences in the politics of BNP and JP. The Speaker then adjourned the House at 10.05 pm to meet again at 4 pm Thursday.

Delay in formation of Public Accounts Committee under fire

Azharul Islam

Following is the remaining part of Monday's JS proceedings.

Participating in the discussion on the Budget, Azharul Islam (AL-Nilphamari) spoke bitterly against it. Tracing history, Islam said autocracy was not only limited for nine years of Gen. Ershad, but in fact it began soon after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. The Awami League member alleged that during the two autocratic regimes, after Bangabandhu's death, Bangladesh was converted into a country within the sphere of influence of foreign capitalist and the present budget was its proof.

He said it was unfortunate that the country despite being under democratic rule has plunged into acute lawlessness so quickly and was subjected to such unusual price-spirals of the essential commodities. The opposition member held the Value Added Tax (VAT) fully responsible for the price hike and strongly pleaded for its withdrawal.

Referring to the prevailing lawlessness in the country, Islam said the law and order situation has turned so bad that even the Prime Minister was forced to use stained-glass in her car-windows for protection. It was disgraceful for a democratically elected Prime Minister, the member commented.

He also referred to a recent incident in his constituency in which, he alleged, police led by the Officer in Charge of a police station, illegally tortured the innocent villagers and injured several women who protested against the police excesses.

Mahbubul Alam

As the opposition member concluded his speech, Treasury Bench Whip Mahbubul Alam took up the microphone, saying that Islam had made some objectionable remarks about the Prime Minister. Alam said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia does not require any special protection nor she fears anyone because her protection was ensured by the 12 crore people of the

country.

Md. Azizur Rahman

Mohammad Azizur Rahman (BNP-Rajshahi) thanked the Finance Minister for presenting a development oriented budget despite the country's resource constraints.

Refuting the charges of the opposition, Rahman said people were informed about VAT the most realistic system of direct taxation through the mass media including the radio and television. He, however, agreed that some unscrupulous businessmen had raised the price of some essentials in the pretext of the VAT. He called for taking measures for controlling the price hike of daily needs.

Referring to the closure of the only national daily published from the northern region of the country "The Baria", the BNP member said the paper was founded by Shaheed Ziaur Rahman and it was closed down by autocrat Ershad on the advice of one of his cronies. He urged the government to take steps for its resumption so that voice of the

people of the north could be reflected.

AKM Asjad

Participating in budget discussion AKM Asjad (Jamat-Rajbari) said smuggling and black marketeering had to be dealt with an iron hand for the good of the nation.

He said internal resources had to be mobilised and the habit for savings must be developed. He said the condition of the peasants who account for the 85 per cent of the national income had to be improved to help achieve self-reliance.

He said the Value Added Tax (VAT) was a most modern method of taxation but the people should have been motivated before its introduction in a modified scale.

Asjad said the country could export foodgrains worth crores of taka if the projects in the northern districts were successfully completed.

The Speaker, Abdur Rahman Biswas, then adjourned the House at 10-03 pm till 4 pm Wednesday July 24.

Metropolitan

Garments account for 55 per cent of Bangladesh exports to Germany

This so-called show window of the developing countries is no mere showpiece but a major avenue for marketing in Europe and Germany can quite honestly be considered as the effective gateway to the larger European market", stated Md Abdur Razzak Mondal, Director of Bangladesh's Export Promotion Bureau while giving an assessment of his country's participation at the Import Fair Berlin 1991, reports INP.

The annual fair that draws developing countries from the world over in a truly major marketing offensive to reckon with. Not surprisingly, the Berlin fair has become a 'must' in the appointment diaries of European importers as well as in those of the developing countries in a sharply rising interaction commercially. By the same token, the fair is being perceived as an indispensable export promotion avenue for exporters struggling to find a foothold in the difficult markets of Europe in the light of the impending Single European Market in 1992 and the changed scenario of political and economic changes in Eastern Europe.

The eleven Bangladeshi firms that made a collective presentation under the aegis of the national Export Promotion Bureau indicated a growing shift towards innovations and adaptations in their products so as to captivate the European consumer and stir the beginnings of a captive European market as well. The aesthetic and eye-catching display of colourful garments, ceramics, porcelain, jute and jute carpets, gift articles, furniture, handicrafts and leather goods made a visual impact and the brisk negotiations that were evident throughout the four-day fair testified to the consolidation of business interests. As in previous years, the Berlin fair was the recipient of special tariff preferences granted by the Commission of the European Community in certain textile categories and allocated to the participants at the fair. Also known as quotas, these were in addition to the annual import quotas enjoyed by the developing countries and formed a predominant attraction for exporters whose numbers were naturally rising each year. Bangladesh did not need to avail of this facility, however, as it did not come

under the purview of quotas.

Bangladesh's exports of readymade garments to Germany have been growing steadily, rising from a mere DM 16.36 million in 1985 to some DM 103 million in 1990, accounting for nearly 55 per cent of total German-Bangladesh exports of some DM 160 million (1990). Indeed, the country's exports to the countries of the European Community (EC) have also been impressive. "If three years ago, Bangladesh featured 36th in rank in terms of general exports to the EC, it is now ranked 22nd, and we expect to be within the first ten within the next three years", said Mr Mondal. He acknowledged the assistance rendered in his country by the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) through its product-oriented marketing advisory services as well as its role in facilitating the participation of Bangladesh in the Berlin fair and other specialised German trade fairs. The Berlin Company for Exhibitions, Fairs and Congresses (AMK) also extended its support towards

Bangladesh's significant presence at the fair.

The Import Fair Berlin is now unrivalled as an avenue for helping to remove the structural imbalances that exist in world trade, serving to boost imports from the developing countries and there by eliminate or reduce deficits in their balance of trade and payments. For the first time, the fair found firms from the countries of Eastern Europe ranking alongside manufacturers from the Third World. Interestingly, some 13 per cent of the new groups of buyers who thronged the fair this year came from the new German federal states whose growing number of consumers added 4.7 per cent in volume to Germany's imports of goods worth DM 573.4 billion in 1990 as compared with that of 1989.

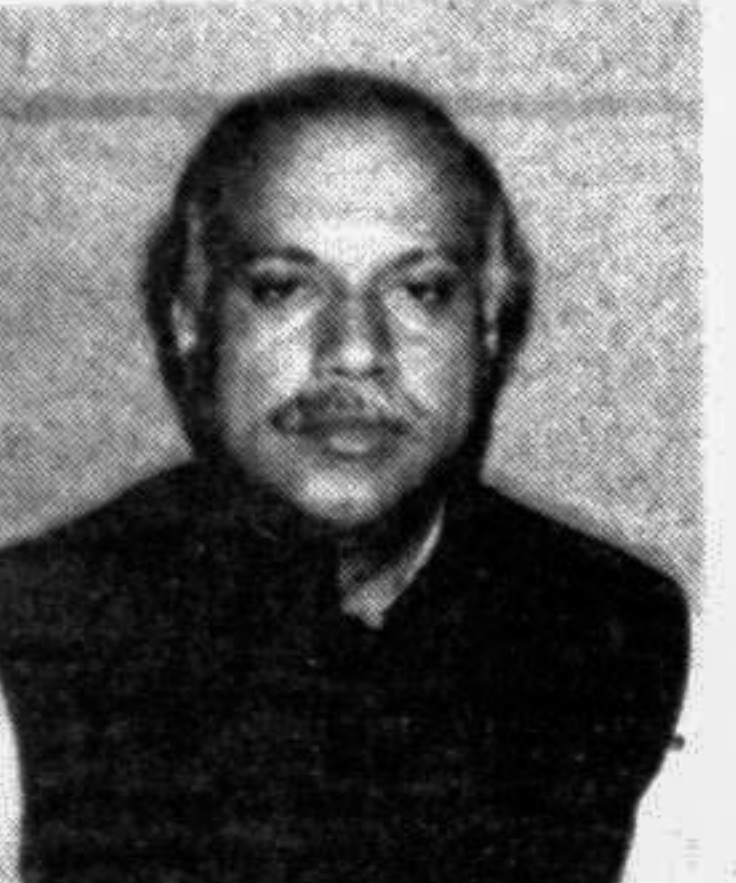
The Berlin fair being a quota-dominated one, speculation was rife among the exhibitors about the continuance of the fair and its special status in the future inasmuch as it was held theoretically plausible that a Single European Market in 1992 would have no com-

pulsions to continue a system whose rationale had much to do with a divided city and nation at the time of its inception. developing countries were unanimous, however, that the fair was indispensable for access to the German and there by to the enlarged European market. They pointed out that the creation of an additional 16 million consumers as a result of German unification was itself reason enough for expanding quotas in textiles and clothing correspondingly. The fate of these sectors at the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has also encouraged the view that supplier countries from Eastern Europe may also have to be regulated by the imposition of quotas.

The Import Fair Berlin was previously known as the Overseas Import Fair, and now reflects its smooth adjustment to the changing international trade situation in Europe and the Third World. Some 1200 exhibitors from 88 countries took part in the Berlin event this year.



Bangladesh registered its consecutive presence at Berlin's annual "show window of developing countries" — Import Fair Berlin 1991 — where eleven firms made a collective presentation of their export products that included garments, ceramics, porcelain, jute carpets, furniture, handicrafts and leather goods. Bangladesh exports some DM 160 million worth of goods to Germany annually, with nearly 55 per cent thereof accounted for by readymade garments. Seen here is a view of the national pavilion at the Berlin fair.



Mohammad Nasim

The Deputy Speaker then called Mohammad Nasim (AL-Sirajganj) to move his call attention notice on urgent matter of public importance regarding the situation created due to serious river erosion in Kazipur upazila under Sirajganj

Majedul Haq

Later, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister Majedul Haq gave a statement on it.

Nurul Islam Moni

Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna), Rashed Khan Menon (WP-Barisal), Major (Retd) Hafizuddin on behalf of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury (NDP-Chittagong) and Nazrul Islam (Jamat-Satkhira) placed proposals to amend some sections of the rules of procedure.

The Deputy Speaker sent the amendment proposals to the standing committee on the rules of procedure.

Tofael Ahmed

Taking the floor, Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) wanted to know from the chair about the fate of the Constitution Amendment Bill of Salahuddin Yusuf (AL) seeking separation of the Judiciary from the Executive.

The Deputy Speaker said Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas, who was in the chair when the bill was accepted for discussion in the House, would give his decision later on.

The House then started general discussion on the national budget.

Jahanara Begum

Initiating the discussion, Jahanara Begum (BNP-Rajbari-Faridpur), said the proposed budget had given guidelines for the development of national economy in many ways.

Highlighting the positive sides of the budget proposals, she said priority had been given to education and agriculture sectors. She welcomed the proposals for patronisation of private sector and involvement of womenfolk in the development activities.

Mrs Jahanara Begum said the House should consider the way and means for minimising revenue expenditure and limiting the size of the government. "We must justify the utility of the huge administrative structure", she pointed out.

She said corruption and inefficiency in the public enter-