

# Amendment Bills processed by Select Committee in 100 working hours

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 4.20 pm Saturday after a day's break with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, reports BSS.

When the day's proceedings began after recitation from the Holy Quran, the Speaker disposed of notices on several privilege motions brought by the members.

## Abdus Samad Azad

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad raising on a point of privilege under Section 165 (1) of the Rules of Procedure, drew the attention of the chair to some news items as well as Friday night's radio and TV news bulletins regarding the meeting of the Prime Minister and some BNP leaders with the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Samad said according to the reports in the newspapers Saturday, the Prime Minister had expressed her grave concern over the political motive of a section of the members of parliament on the Constitution Amendment Bills placed in the House for changing the form of government from the existing President to the Parliamentary system.

He said the press also quoted the Acting President as saying that he would relinquish his office straightaway if the Constitution Amendment Bills were not passed.

Samad said, the report has evoked nation-wide concern. If the Prime Minister had noticed something which could cause concern about the passage of the Amendment Bills, she should have first let the House know about it. It is the right and privilege of each and every member of the House to know if there was any such cause for concern which the Prime Minister expressed to the Acting President.

Abdus Samad Azad said, the members had earnestly wanted to perform their sacred and historic responsibility to expedite the work of passing the budget and the constitutional amendment bills and thus agreed to suspend question-answer session and other business.

While proceeding toward achieving that objectives, Samad said, "Last night's remark of the Prime Minister has created a controversy at the national and international levels."

Samad said although news-

papers had reported that the Prime Minister had mentioned "some members'" political motive to the Acting President, the radio and the TV news had referred to "a certain party" behind the motive.

Samad said, the discussion on the amendment bills was going on smoothly in the House, and "to the best of my knowledge no member in this House had ever seen any obstacles in this connection."

He said if the Prime Minister had noticed anything, she should have come here and informed the House before going to the Acting President who had even threatened to resign.

The Speaker observed that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition under the rules of procedure should have given a written notice which he did not give. However, considering the importance and proximity of the matter, he allowed Samad to raise the matter, the Speaker added.

Taking the floor again, Azad said it is a very unfortunate matter. The Prime Minister should be present in the House at this moment to inform the members where the crisis lay.

Samad said although Awami League's important extended party meeting was going on, we have come to the House. The government party should have brought the Amendment Bills much earlier. We are not liable for the delay, he added.

Samad said we have been extending our all out cooperation to the adoption of the bills. He said we are all working together to pass the bills in accordance with the joint declaration of the Three Alliances. He wanted clarification on the matter as he said "the comment of the Prime Minister has created misgivings in the House."

## Badruddoza Chowdhury

The Deputy Leader of the House Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury took the floor next and drew the attention of the chair to some press reports saying "AL to resist any move to pass Amendment Bill".

Chowdhury said according to these reports, Sheikh Hasina has openly criticised the bill's provision for secret ballot for President's election and the 10 per cent quota-reserve for non-PMs in the cabinet.

Chowdhury pointed out that

the bills were processed by the select committee in about 100 working hours in 36 sessions in which the opposition members were also represented. And so it is the Treasury Bench which could raise objection to such comments, he said.

Chowdhury said such comments had also breached the select committee's rights and privileges. We have discussed the bills and will discuss them more in future, he added.

Chowdhury called upon the members to dispel all misunderstandings to pave the way for passing the bills as per commitment of the Three Alliances to the nation to create a memorable chapter in the national history.

Taking the floor again, Abdus Samad Azad said, it was not an offence to criticise any provision of the bills. It was rather decided in the select committee that although the bills were adopted unanimously, there would be scope for the members to discuss everything so that the bills could be more effective and meaningful.

Samad said the government party should also have brought the bill for separation of the judiciary from the administration. But because of the delay on their part we had to bring the bill. He said any time-consuming policy over taking decision on the bills by the government party would not yield any good to the nation. He however, called upon all members to stop mud-slinging and take effective measures to pass the bills.

## Mirza Golam Hafiz

Taking the floor next, the Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz said the Speaker should have allowed discussion on the issue after receiving written notice from Samad.

"All of us should follow the rules of procedure to run the business of the House smoothly," he added.

At this point, a number of members from the opposition rose and tried to say something. Mirza Hafiz requested them to be quiet saying "when you spoke we listened to you patiently and respectfully, and you should demonstrate the same feelings when we speak".

Recalling his personal experiences, Mirza Golam Hafiz said he had forced the Parliament in 1955 to accept the privilege motion brought

by himself.

Mirza Hafiz read out a news report which said "AL will resist the move to pass amendment bills brought by the government". In this connection, he pointed out that there are some references in the reports regarding Acting President and said "We should not discuss it as it relates to the personal conduct of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed."

Referring to the discussion in the House on the 11th Amendment Bill regarding Justice Shahabuddin's return to his former position, Mirza Hafiz said we have witnessed how rich tributes were paid by the members for the personal achievements and contributions of the Acting President.

Mirza Hafiz said "both have committed mistakes" by making public statements.

Making a reference to Sheikh Hasina's remark, Mirza Hafiz said, "I do not know whether she had said so, but what appears in the newspapers is that, among other things, she has criticised the provision of referendum". He said at this moment there is no scope to oppose the provision. It was finalised in the select committee meetings. "Even we had to adjourn the select committee meeting to facilitate Samad to obtain necessary opinion of his party in this regard", he added.

Mirza Hafiz said referendum was necessary to amend the constitution. He also pointed out that the very constitution of the country provided that "all power of the republic lies with the people". Yet he recited a piece of poetry which contains, "there is none above mankind" (sonoray manush bhai shabar uparey manush sattyah tahar uparey nai).

Mirza Hafiz said referendum is not an undemocratic step nor it is against the interest of the people.

## Shahjahan Siraj

Rising on a right of privilege under rule 165 of the Rules of Procedure, Shahjahan Siraj (JSD-S-Tangail) wanted to know from the chair under which rule and on what basis the business of the House was being conducted for the last two days. He said the business of the House was conducted on last Thursday in the same manner as was being done today.

Siraj said two Constitution Amendment Bills had been

moved by the Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz on the basis of unanimous decision of a select committee formed by this House.

He said he himself and members of some other parties were not included in three committees. "So only we have the right to discuss the bills", he said adding those who were in the committee and their leaders have no right to speak on the bills now.

The lone member of JSD (S) called upon the Speaker to take up business of the House according to its programme of today. He said their privilege as was being hindered as the House was not being conducted according to Rules of Procedure.

At this stage, Awami League members stood and many of them raised points of order and tried to draw the attention of the chair.

Amid noisy scene, Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas said none of them had given any notice on the issue. But he had given the floor to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad to speak on the issue as it was an important one. Later the Deputy Leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury gave a reply. He said Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz had also made the points clear. So, he said there could not be any more discussions on the issue.

Immediately after the ruling of the Speaker, almost half of the members belonging to the Awami League rose on points of order and tried to draw the attention of the chair by shouting at the top of their voice.

But the Speaker announced the names of the members one after another asking them to take part in the discussion on the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill. The names were not audible amid noisy scene.

## Shahjahan Chowdhury

The Speaker gave the floor to Shahjahan Chowdhury (Jamaat-Chittagong) to participate in the discussion on the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill. The Jamaat member tried to speak but he was inaudible as most of the members belonging to Awami League began shouting and thumping the desk. Failing to deliver his speech, Shahjahan Chowdhury sought protection from the chair.

Referring to the shouting members, the Speaker said you would be allowed to speak. The Speaker adjourned the House amid shouting by the AL members for 20 minutes for Aar prayers.

## Tofael Ahmed

As the House resumed after Aar prayers with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, Tofael Ahmed promptly stood up and said the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition can bring anything to the notice of the chair without citing any rule from the Rules of Procedure. He said in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader Abdus Samad Azad had drawn the chair's attention to today's newspaper reports about the 12th Constitutional Amendment Bill.

He said what had been stated by the Deputy Leader of the House about a reported comment made by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in a section of the press, was in fact, a report created by the news agency, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). He said "BSS is a news agency of the government".

He said the BSS report appearing only in Dainik Bangla and Meilait was different from that published by others on the same subject.

Tofael said the report created by BSS and carried by Dainik Bangla and Dainik Meilait has been contradicted by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

Tofael Ahmed said since the first day of the fifth Jatiya Sangsad, Awami League was speaking about the establishment of the parliamentary form of government on the basis of the joint declaration of the three alliances.

He said only one member from the Awami League, Anaduzzaman (AL-Magura), had spoken on the Twelfth Constitutional Amendment Bill. He said there had been national accord and consensus on the question of parliamentary democracy. He said the Constitutional Amendment Bills which had been raised in the House at the cost of the blood of shaheeds would be passed in the House with the participation of every member of the Jatiya Sangsad.

Taking the floor again, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad

quoted a headline of an English daily on the issue which read "evil means to undo bills to be retested".

He said he wanted only to know where was the obstruction? "We would have been benefited if the Prime Minister had made it clear," he said adding the nation had been confused by this.

## Shahjahan Chowdhury

Shahjahan Chowdhury (Jamaat-Chittagong) resumed his unfinished speech which he had started before the Aar prayers. He said the whole nation was eagerly looking at the Jatiya Sangsad. He said the Twelfth Constitution Amendment Bill must have to be passed in the House on the basis of consensus.

The Jamaat member called for holding elections in the country under a neutral caretaker government to make it free and fair. He hoped that the bill submitted by Jamaat Parliamentary Party Leader Matiar Rahman Nizami in this regard must be presented in the House.

## Abul Hasan Chowdhury

Taking part in the discussions, Abul Hasan Chowdhury (AL-Tangail) described the Constitution as a sacred document of a country and said any discussion on it was also equally important.

Quoting from the Holy Quran, he said almighty Allah has called the human beings as the best of his creations but Allah has also said that they become the worst of the worst.

It is the deeds of the human beings that are important, Chowdhury said.

Abul Hasan said the discussions Saturday on the issues involved were very important and this parliament must show whether it did all the right things to adopt the Constitution Amendment Bills.

He referred to the Indemnity Act and said its inclusion in the sacred Constitution must be done away with specially when the House was discussing the Constitution Amendment Bill.

Tracing the history, Chowdhury said Bangladesh did not come into being in one day and the creation of the country owed to a long and chequered past. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is an inseparable part of this history as he resisted attempts by the vested quarters to deprive the

Bangalees of their political, economic and cultural rights in the erstwhile East Pakistan, he said.

Chowdhury said such a man, who symbolised an institution, was killed along with most of his family members. But the Constitution contains provision against punishment of this heinous crime.

"We must wash away our crimes at this moment when we are going to make history by reverting to parliamentary system," he said and appealed to all to erase the Indemnity Act from the sacred document.

## Mostafizur Rahman

After Chowdhury concluded his speech, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman drew the attention of the chair and said he wanted to make a statement in the House under Rule 300 of the Rules of Procedure.

"I am a man six feet tall but have so far failed to draw your kind attention", he said in a lighter vein addressing the chair.

The Speaker smilingly said the Foreign Minister could certainly make the statement since he not only had caught his attention but also made it felt that he should make a statement.

Mostafizur Rahman, making the statement, referred to a news report in the Indian press that "Bangla extremists out to kill L K Advani", and said the newly elected democratic government did not believe in the politics of killings, whether at home or abroad.

The Foreign Minister described the reports to this effect published in the two national Indian dailies — the Statesman and The Times of India — as totally baseless and without any foundation.

He reiterated Bangladesh's willingness to strive for better relations with India since the new Indian government's taking over power almost coincided with the installation of new democratic government in this country.

He urged all quarters in India to work for harmonious bilateral ties since both the countries have minorities and nothing should be done to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere. **Incomplete**

## Feature Development

# Old Hands and Wise Heads

by Jervis G. Hamer

TWO thousand retired British executives are putting their experiences of a lifetime to rewarding use in the developing countries and enjoy doing so through an independent voluntary organisation called British Executive Service Overseas (BESO) which was founded in 1972. Its prime objective is to provide both private and public sector enterprises in the developing countries with the highest level of professional, managerial and technical expertise by sending men and women on short term assignments to develop resources, facilities and to improve work performance, production and profitability through the introduction of improved methods, know-how and transfer of technology.

BESO 'clients' do not pay for the assistance they receive but they are asked to provide for the Experts and spouse's accommodation, subsistence and local transport needs during the course of the assignment.

British executives are putting their lifetime experience to rewarding use in the developing countries.

These days men and women retire earlier and have longer life expectancy and many more remain healthy and energetic. For the volunteer executive the assignments are a means to be engaged in a purposeful activity overseas, possibly in exotic locations, by putting to good use the knowledge and experience gained during successful personal careers.

vers public and private sectors from which they are likely to receive requests for assistance. BESO does not normally handle requests for direct help in medicine or dentistry because for them other channels exist. Nevertheless, BESO do have some members of these professions on their books primarily to resolve problems in administration and organisation which can arise in hospitals and clinics.

No assignment is too far away or too remote for BESO. A volunteer carried out a feasibility study for a commercial bank on the wind swept island of St. Helen. Another executive, Berick Dale, formerly a BP Chemicals Manager, went to help the Kikuya tribesmen in Kenya whose sales from their rubber products had fallen by 50%. Cost of manufacture was reduced by 40% and quality control improved.

Dr. Eva Crane, a world authority on bee keeping has helped farmers in war torn Uganda to boost production of honey. Also in Vietnam she is advising the Ministry of Food. Later she hopes to leave for Laos where another assignment awaits her.

Retired ship's captain Peter Norman, formerly with Shell, travelled to the East Borneo jungle to help a shipping com-

pany organise its fleet of dredgers and barges more effectively.

A former colliery manager in Wales went to a problem coal mine in Indonesia. The mine was troubled with cave-ins and low production to such an extent that the owners had considered closing it down completely. Shortly after Mr. Lewis's arrival on the site, 2 cave-ins occurred but he bravely entered the mines to inspect the damage. He prepared a complete recovery plan for the rehabilitation of the mine and stayed to implement it. Miners were instructed in safety procedures and proper use of mine supports. Cave-ins ceased, the faulty ventilation system were improved, followed by better methods for removing and transporting coal from the face. Every day work began in the mine and ended with Mr. Lewis lecturing the miners on

modern coal mining methods and practices. Today, the Loa Uland mine is a model of mining efficiency, it makes a profit and the miners work in complete safety.

For his services to coal mining in the developing countries Mr. Lewis was awarded the DBE and as a Rotarian, made a Paul Harris Fellow. In China, Robert Walsh assisted the Kai Feng Boiler Factory in its manufacturing programme. In the Bahamas, Rodney Robinson, a highly qualified civil, mechanical and electrical engineer accepted an assignment to help training courses on the installation, planned maintenance and repair of refrigeration and air conditioning units. Ex Head of BBC Television sound-Gordon Mackie, volunteered to undertake an assignment for System Television Malaysia, a commercial broadcasting organisation with 450 employees and who wished to upgrade skills and knowledge in line with the latest techniques and developments in sound broadcasting.

The television company and staff involved benefited from having the services of such an authority. For Gordon Mackie it was an invigorating and enjoyable experience.

Finance for BESO is provided by voluntary donations from industry, commerce and charities. For every £1 donated in this way, the British Government will give BESO an extra £3 through the Overseas Development Administration.

But the private sector contributions determine the levels of BESO funding and the number of assignments it can undertake each year.

To date, over 1,800 assignments have been completed in 81 countries. These embrace the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, Latin America and Central Europe. Over 70 assignments have been completed in China.

If anyone wishes to call on this comprehensive service, please contact, The Director, BESO, 164 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2RB, UK Telex 918802 DPG. Fax 071 630 0624 or British High Commission, Dhaka.

Jervis G. Hamer was a consultant to Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory.

# Further IFAD Aid for Bangladesh

Farhana Haque Rahman

The exact number of men, women and children killed in the cyclone that swept the Bay of Bengal last April will probably never be accurately counted, the total cost in homes and livestock and fields destroyed never fully calculated. What is certain is that a few hours of terrifying winds, and monstrous tidal waves have left millions of already desperately poor and frighteningly vulnerable families to face even greater poverty, that thousands of families have now joined the growing ranks of the rural landless. Be that as it may, the GNP of this country, in a matter of a few hours, was reduced by more than 2%.

Such massive loss of lives, such devastating destruction of that on which the lives of survivors depend is mind and heart wrenching. But lamentation, justified as it is, is not enough. Action is needed, action that will help the people rebuild what they have lost, recover their capacity to feed their families and take steps to guard themselves against future storms.

As part of the massive efforts being undertaken by the government, and in line with its mandate to assist the poor of the rural poor work their way out of the poverty trap, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has designed a special assistance project soon to be implemented in the country's most disaster-prone areas. This US\$18.7 million initiative, to be financed by a US\$15.4 million loan, will help some 83,400 households — small farmers, artisanal fishermen and landless — in the coastal area increase productivity and incomes and, through cyclone preparedness measures, to strengthen their defenses against nature on the rampage.

This new effort comes on the heels of another recently approved US\$15.08 million Small Livestock Development Project aimed at assisting hundreds of thousands of landless and near-landless people, a majority of whom are women, become more productive and self-reliant. With a US\$10.83 million IFAD loan,

supplemented by cofinancing from the Danish International Development agency and the Government of Bangladesh, the project seeks to improve the nutritional standards and increase the incomes of the rural poor through supporting expanded poverty and goat production on home compounds. The loan agreement was signed on 10 July 1991 by IFAD President Idriss Jazairy and H.E. Waliur Rahman, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Italy.

Traditionally, most small livestock has been raised to meet immediate family needs. One of the chief objectives of the project is to promote collective, more sophisticated enterprises that would increase both food supplies and incomes. Since it is women who are primarily engaged in raising these animals, women — many of them heads of households — will be the major target.

Self-help groups of men and women, each assisted by locally recruited village workers, will be the key to success. These groups, most of them comprised of women, will serve as focal points for training in such activities as establishing hatcheries, raising chicks, mixing feed, vaccinating poultry products. It is estimated that the annual production of chicks would increase by over 65%.

Increasing the supply and improving the quality of chickens is the chief but not the sole aim of the project. Duck-rearing farms in Chittagong, Khulna, Narayanganj and Rajshahi will be helped to increase their capacity to distribute ducklings, while small-scale raising of improved varieties of ducks in other areas will be supported. Goat raising on existing duck-rearing enterprises in Rajshahi and other places in the project area will also be supported.

Initially concentrating on 30 upazilas, project activities would eventually extend to 80 upazilas in six sub-divisions in the region west of Dhaka. The experience gained would serve as a model for similar efforts throughout the country.

## Sweet Smell of Vanilla Disappearing from Comoros

MILDEW is devastating vanilla farms in the tiny Indian Ocean nation of Comoros, reports Ali Moindjie from Moroni, and is threatening one of the country's most important sources of foreign exchange.

The disease affects more than half the vanilla plants in the productive regions of northwest Njazidja and experts predict a 40% fall in production. The spread of vanilla mildew has been aided by rapid changeover between drought and heavy rains and been exacerbated by farmers neglecting to destroy mildew-infested plants and cross-pollinating from diseased flowers to healthy ones.

The Agriculture Ministry admits that a vigorous awareness campaign must be started among small farmers on how to halt the mildew infestation, but says it takes at least three years to take effect. — PANOS



A farmer preparing the field for the next crop.

—Star Photo