

# Historic fifth Parliament goes into session

The first session of the Fifth Jatiya Sangsad began here Friday morning at 9-07 with the outgoing Speaker, Mr. Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, in the chair, reports BSS.

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

As soon as recitation was over, some members from the Opposition Bench stood up and wanted to draw the attention of the chair on a point of order. But the Speaker said there could be no point of order before he reads out the order of the day.

Monirul Haq Chowdhury of Jatiya Party, citing Article 172 of the Rules of Procedure, pointed at the vacant seats allocated to their party members. They later staged a walk-out apparently protesting against the absence of their party leaders.

### Speaker's name proposed

At this point Treasury Bench member and Minister of State for Labour and Manpower, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Meah, proposed the names of Abdur Rahman Biswas and Sheikh Razzak Ali as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively, which was seconded by Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

The Speaker told Barrister Rafiqul Islam that two names could not be proposed simultaneously. At this, Barrister Rafiqul Islam proposed the name of Abdur Rahman Biswas (BNP-Bakerganj) for the Speaker. His proposal was seconded by Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim — from the opposition Awami League Bench, drew attention of the chair and said after the Speaker had taken his seat no outsider could remain inside. He was indicating the presence of the large number of photographers in the well of the House.

Tofael Ahmed (AL) also tried to draw the attention of the Speaker to his proposal for a new Speaker.

Before the Speaker could reply to his queries, the leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia proposed that the House be adjourned for 30 minutes for discussion.

The Speaker adjourned the House for 20 minutes.

As the House re-assembled after 20 minutes of adjournment, the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina requested the Speaker to allow to propose the names of the new Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

### Tofael Ahmed

Tofael Ahmed (AL) proposed the name of Salahuddin Yusuf as the Speaker which was supported by Habibur Rahman, Habibur Rahman proposed the name of Asaduzzaman as the Deputy Speaker and Jobed Ali seconded.

The Speaker said he had received the Treasury Bench proposal for Abdur Rahman Biswas as the Speaker at 7-30 am while that of Salahuddin Yusuf at 7-55 and as such he wanted to put the first proposal to voice vote.

After the voting, the Speaker said "it seems that 'yes' has won the vote."

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina immediately demanded a division on the issue.

The Speaker drew attention of the Leader of the House, Begum Khaleda Zia who said if

the Opposition withdraw their proposal then there would be no problem in selecting the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Baksal Chief Mohiuddin Ahmed, JSD Chief (Straj) Shahjahan Straj and Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon also deliberated on the issue and called for resolving it through discussions and understanding.

BNP leader Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury requested the Speaker to adjourn the House for 10 minutes. The Speaker acted accordingly.

National Democratic Party leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury said all were trying to maintain the tradition of the Jatiya Sangsad by electing the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker unanimously.

### Badruddoza Chowdhury

Taking the floor, Education Minister, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury said we have the tradition to elect the Speaker of the House unanimously. He said the treasury bench wanted time for reaching an understanding in electing a new Speaker.

At this stage the Speaker gave the floor to State Minister for Information Nurul Huda, to propose the name of the Deputy Speaker. Huda proposed the name of Sheikh Razzak Ali (BNP) as Deputy Speaker which was seconded by Barrister Rafiqul Islam Meah (BNP).

Azizur Rahman (AL) proposed the name of Asaduzzaman as Deputy Speaker which was seconded by Jobed Ali (AL).

Taking the floor on a point of order, Mr. Tofael Ahmed referred to Rule 8 (4) of the Rules of Procedure and said the motion for electing the Deputy Speaker should come after the election of the Speaker.

The Speaker, however, put the proposal for the election of the Speaker to vote.

After the voice vote, the Speaker announced election of Abdur Rahman Biswas as the new Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina took the floor and demanded division, citing Rule 8 (4) of the Rules of Procedure. All the members belonging to the Awami League at this stage stood on their feet in support to the demand of leader of the Opposition.

The Speaker said if the members wanted he would put the proposal to division. He said division could be given even after voice vote as per the convention of different parliaments including the House of Commons.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad, took the floor and submitted to the speaker that as an experienced Speaker, Shamsul Huda Chowdhury had earned a good name. But he (Azad) failed to understand why the speaker was not allowing the house to decide the election issue of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker amicably.

The Speaker at this stage requested the Leader of the Opposition not to presume things.

### Suranjit Sengupta

The Ganotantrree Party member Mr Suranjit Sen Gupta said that they had hoped to maintain the tradition of the



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia making a point to the Speaker.



Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and Deputy Leader Abdus Samad Azad, Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed (in the front row) and others rising on their feet in protest against refusal of the chair to admit their plea over election of the new Speaker.

house by electing the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker unanimously. He pointed out that in the 1986 parliament, the Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury was elected Speaker unanimously. Suranjit pointed out that when they had been successful in establishing democracy through united movement in the streets, why they would not be able to reach a consensus in the election of the speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition at this stage again reiterated her demand for a division.

The Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia took the floor and said for maintaining the tradition of the house, she would expect that the opposition would withdraw their nominations for the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad said such a move by the Leader of the House could have taken earlier. Now there was no scope for withdrawing the opposition proposals. He said, adding, however the issue could be settled through discussions. He requested the

chair to adjourned the house for some time.

### Mahiuddin Ahmed

Baksal leader Mohtuddin Ahmed said they had assembled in the house in the backdrop of a bloody struggle and were pledge-bound to establish democracy. He referred to his involvement in parliamentary politics since 1954 and said he had never seen such a precedence of election of a speaker through division. He said still there was time to reach a consensus. If we elect a speaker through division, he (speaker) would always remain controversial. Tofael Ahmed said if the house wanted to reach a consensus regarding the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the proceedings involving the voice vote should be expunged.

The Workers Party member, Rashed Khan Menon, took the floor and submitted to the chair to adjourn the house for five minutes allowing them to reach consensus on the issue.

The BNP leader and Education Minister Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury took the floor and said enough discussions were held on the issue.

The Speaker then adjourned the house for 10 minutes.

As the House resumed its sitting after a brief recess, Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury wanted to know from the Leader of the House whether any understanding has been reached between the ruling and the opposition parties on the choice of the new Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

At this stage Education Minister Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury requested the chair to give some more time saying that the Leader of the Opposition has not yet returned to the house. After sometime Leader of the House Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia went out of the house only to return within a few minutes.

Thereafter, Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury urged the members supporting the candidature of Biswas for the office of speaker to stand up. Members belonging to BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of National Democratic Party,

Shahjahan Straj of JSD (S), and Independent members Nurul Islam Moni, Major (rtd), Hafizuddin Ahmed and Redowan Ahmed, supported the candidature of A. R. Biswas.

Members belonging to Jatiya Party, Suranjit Sen of Ganotantrree Party and Maulana Obaidul Haq of Islami Oikya Jote abstained from voting for the election of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

Biswas got 187 votes in his favour, 97 votes of the MPs of Awami League and its allies went against him. Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury declared Biswas elected as the New Speaker of the Fifth Parliament. Sheikh Razzak Ali was elected Deputy Speaker in the same process securing 187 votes. Here again 97 votes of the MPs of Awami League and its allies went against him. Sheikh Razzak Ali got the support of all the MPs who backed the candidature of Biswas for the office of the Speaker.

Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury congratulated the new speaker and expressing his greetings to all. He said "with your beginning my 'end comes' and adjourned the house for 20 minutes.

The Speaker asked minister for Law and Justice Mirza Golam Hafiz to table 44 ordinances promulgated between the two sessions.

Leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Parliamentary Party proposed that the house be adjourned for Jumma prayer.

Awami League's Tofael Ahmed taking the floor said since the present parliament was formed following sacrifices of hundred of martyrs, it was expected that the house would show due respect to their memory. He demanded that one minute silence be observed to show respect to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the restoration of democracy.

Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia stood up and said it was time for Jumma prayer and demanded that the house be adjourned for the purpose.

The Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas adjourned the house at 12-40 for the prayer and said it would resume its session at 3 p.m.

As the house resumed its sitting at 3.08 pm after the break for Jumma prayer with the speaker, Abdur Rahman Biswas, in the chair the National Democratic Party Member Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury took the floor on a point of order.

Chowdhury said the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed could not address the house under constitutional provisions since he was not an elected President and as such he could not enjoy this privilege provided in the constitution.

He, however, recorded appreciation for the Acting President for his role in helping the nation by taking over the interim government as well holding the elections in a free and fair atmosphere.

At this stage, the Speaker intervened and said that he had got Chowdhury's point.

Suranjit Sen Gupta said the present Sangsad was the product of a mass movement and suggested that a bill should be brought to the house for removing discrepancies, if any, as mentioned by Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury. The leader of the house that a bill to this effect would be introduced in the house.

But Awami League Member Sudhansu Shekhar Haldar said the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was the President of the country under constitutional provisions.

"We have legalised everything since the change over of December 6 last year", Haldar said there was no (no) constitutional bar to the Acting President addressing the house.

The Jatiya Party Members rose on their feet to draw the attention of the Speaker but nothing was audible.

The Speaker said Sudhansu Shekhar Haldar had clearly refuted the point raised by Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury and invited the Acting President to enter the house to address it. As the Acting President entered into the house to the tune of bugle, members of both the Treasury and Opposition Benches greeted him by thumping tables. The Jatiya Party members, however, staged a walk out.

After the National anthem, the Acting President began his inaugural address.

After President's 30-minute address, the Speaker adjourned the house at 4 p.m. to resume at 11 am on April 7 (Sunday).

## Obituary reference

Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas Friday read out the list of 26 Parliamentarians, politicians, artists litterateurs and educationists who had expired between the last session of the Parliament and today, reports BSS.

Biswas read out the obituary references after assuming the chair following his oath as the newly elected Speaker. He also mentioned the names of three prominent leaders in Muslim countries.

The obituary reference included the names of 105 persons who had been killed during the movement against autocracy.

The names of Parliamentarians, politicians and educationists are as follows:

Syed Abdus Sultan MNA, Habibur Rahman Bhandari, MNA, S Ibrahim, MNA, A K Latifur Rahman Chowdhury, MP, Abul Mansoor Ahmed, MP, Ashrafur Islam, MP, Nizamuddin Ahmed, MP, Abdul Ghafur Chowdhury, MP, Munshi Abdul Ali, MP, Abdus Sattar Master, MP, Abdul Aziz Khan, MCA, Principal Abul Kashem, MPA, Serajul Islam Chowdhury, MPA, MD Jatnul Abedin, MPA, Veteran politician Mont Singh, MRS, Benita Roy, Member of President's Council of Advisers, Justice Mohammad Sohrab Ali, Eminent Painter Quamrul Hasan, renowned litterateur Anis Chowdhury, renowned exponent of vocal song Mamtaz Ali Khan, renowned composer Nazrul Islam Babu, renowned industrialist A K Khan, Naimuddin Ahmed, MPA, renowned journalist Abdullah Al-Sagor, renowned litterateur and Director Shishu Academy, Begum Zubeda Khanam and Al-Haj Ahmed Ali Khan, MPA.

The three prominent personalities of the Muslim world whose names were mentioned are: Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdur Rahman, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE Sheikh Rashid Bin Sayeed Al-Maktum and the former Secretary General of OIC, Habib Chatti.

Several opposition members raised questions regarding the list and asked that all those killed during the anti-autocracy movement be included. Munajat was offered for the peace of the departed souls.

## Farewell to Shamsul Huda Chowdhury

The newly-elected Parliament members on Friday bade farewell to outgoing Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury who presided over the inaugural session which elected the new Speaker and Deputy Speaker, reports UNB.

As he relinquished the office of the Speaker he was holding since 1986, Chowdhury wished the success of members of new parliament and left the house saying "Khuda Hafiz."

Talking to newsmen at his Sangsad Bhaban chamber, the outgoing speaker, apparently in a jovial mood said, "I feel fine".

He expressed the hope that the new parliament would work for the welfare of the people. "We betray the people but they never betray us", he remarked.



Leader of the House Khaleda Zia beaming a smile when Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina hurled a caustic remark to the Speaker of the dissolved Fourth Parliament Shamsul Huda Chowdhury over the issue of election of new Speaker. Sitting by her right side is Mirza Golam Hafiz, a former Speaker.



'You're still here?' Hasina was seen telling Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury in recess. Chowdhury's reply was drowned in a hearty laughter.