

Leader of the House says

# Jail incidents outburst of pent-up resentment

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 11.02 am with the Speaker Abdul Rahman Biswas in the chair. The day's proceedings began with recitation from the Holy Quran, reports BSS.

Jail incident



Sheikh Hasina

After recitation from the Quran, the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina took the floor and drew the attention of the Chair to the incident at Dhaka Central Jail, reported in Tuesday's newspapers, from where 30 prisoners escaped and many others injured.

She said recent incidents in different jails in the country and in the Dhaka Central Jail were indications that the law and order situation had deteriorated. There was also a sense of insecurity among the people, she said.

Sheikh Hasina said that some opposition members had already brought adjournment motions for discussion on the issue. She demanded a statement from the Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia who is holding the charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

As the Leader of the Opposition resumed her seat, the Speaker disposed the two privilege motions and said that there were eight adjournment notices awaiting decision. Of them, the Speaker said, six related to the incidents in different jails in the country. Moreover the Leader of the Opposition also raised the issue at the out set of Tuesday's session demanding a statement from the Home Minister.

Giving decision on the adjournment motions, the Speaker rejected them. The Speaker also rejected another adjournment motion moved by Suranjit Sen Gupta on the flash flood in Sunamganj and the other by Abdus Sobhan (Jamaat) on the attack on Muslim community at Faridabad in India.

The Speaker, however, said that he would request the Leader of the House and Prime Minister, holding the charge of Home Affairs, to make a statement.

But apparently not being convinced with the decision of the Speaker regarding the adjournment motions, a good number of opposition members rose to their feet and voiced their demand once again.



Tofael Ahmed

Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) pleaded that the Speaker should accept the adjournment motion, because of the session situation in the Dhaka Central Jail. He said both the Treasury and Opposition Benches should be unanimous in ensuring security in the prisons.

Ahmed referred to the incidents of the Dhaka Central Jail in 1975 in which four national leaders - Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Capt (Retd.) Mansur Ali and Kamaruzzaman - were brutally killed. He said the sense of insecurity in the prisons should be removed.

Badruddoza

At this stage, Deputy Leader of the House, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said that the Leader of the House and Prime Minister will make statement on the jail incidents on Tuesday.

Suranjit Sen

Ganatantra Party member Suranjit Sen Gupta also pleaded that the adjournment motions on jail incidents should be accepted by the House to find ways for ensuring security in the jails.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina said that the incident at the Dhaka Central Jail was very tragic. She said many people were killed and many prisoners fled. She said it was a singular incident and the House should adjourn its activities to discuss the issue.

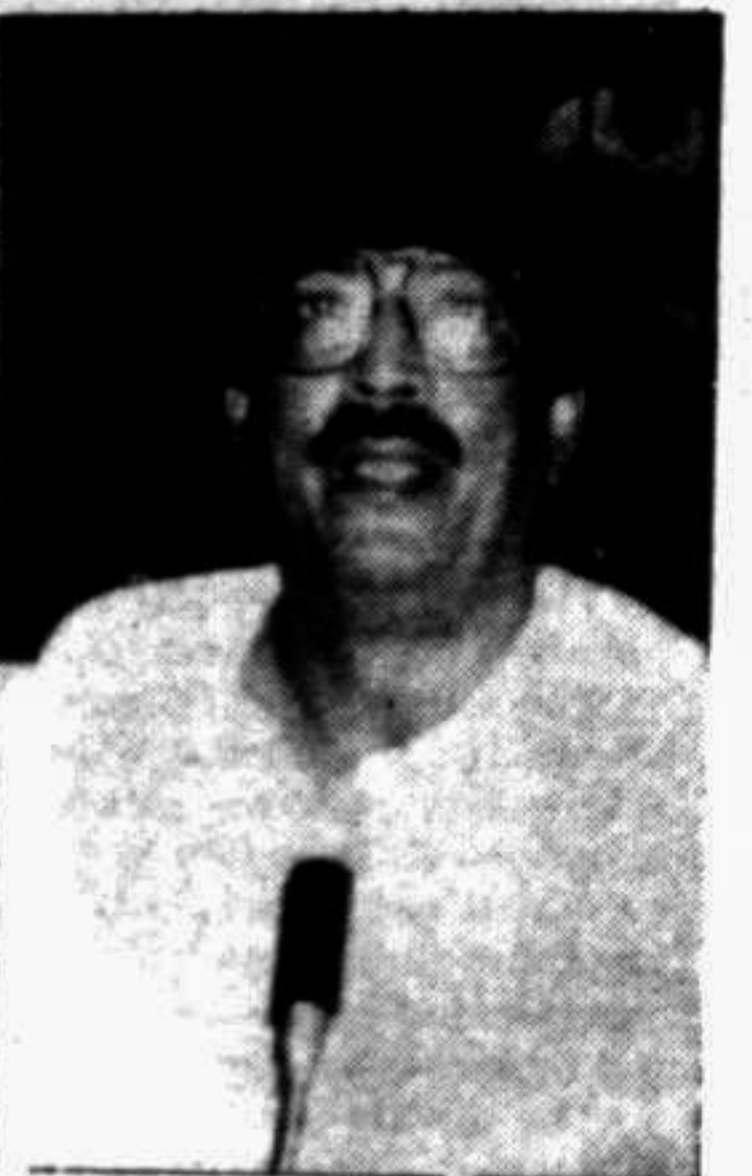
Sheikh Hasina said a solution to the problem could be found through discussions. She said none wanted undesirable incidents in jails. Rather, the improvement of law and order situation everywhere in the country was desired by all.

She pleaded to the chair for allowing discussion on the jail incidents before the Leader of the House made a statement on the issue.

Delwar Hussain

Khandaker Delwar Hussain (BNP-Manikganj) said that the jail incidents had become a regular event and there was no scope for the opposition members to discuss it under an adjournment motion. He said incidents had been taking place in various jails of the country since December last year.

The Treasury bench member also pointed out that the matter was subjudice because an enquiry commission had been set up to investigate it. But Hussain's arguments were not audible following loud protests from the opposition benches.



Shahjahan Siraj

With the permission from the Chair, Shahjahan Siraj (JSD-S) wanted to know from the Speaker as to why his adjournment motions which he had submitted on April 7 and 8 were not brought before the House. He said under relevant provision of the rules of procedures, the adjournment motions brought by the members must be brought before the House the same day.

The JSD Leader then referred to the tragic jail incident that occurred in 1980, saying that during the previous BNP government several hundred people were killed and many other inmates of the Khulna Jail injured.

As most of the opposition bench members were then trying to speak at a time, Speaker Abdul Rahman Biswas requested the members to cooperate with him in conducting the House in an orderly manner.

Siraj, however, could not finish his speech.

Matiur Rahman Nizami

Supporting the adjournment motion, Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami, the leader of Jamaat-e-Islami parliamentary party, said that the government party was unnecessarily complicating a very simple issue. If this trend continued, he said, he was doubtful about the smooth functioning of this parliament.

Maulana Nizami also said that the jail incident had taken a tragic turn and the untoward incident of Dhaka Jail had been widely covered in various national dailies. He also said the tragic incident involved a series of bomb blasts and indiscriminate use of weapons. The Jamaat leader also pointed out that the whole nation was now suffering from an acute sense of insecurity and the house had every right to discuss the issue without further delay.

He said that many of the leaders who were at present sitting on the Treasury Bench also had enough experience of jail life. Besides, he said, as the Deputy Leader of the House

Asaduzzaman

Asaduzzaman (AL-Magura) said unless adjournment motion like this was allowed, democracy cannot function. He said the tragic incident in the Dhaka Central Jail Monday deserved elaborate discussion by the members of parliament to stop recurrence of such incidents.

Supporting the motion, Rashed Khan Menon, the lone Workers Party member, said the nation had every right to know what was happening in the country's jails for quite some time. These incidents must be stopped and proper measures should be taken on the basis of the suggestions, arrived at after a thorough review, he added.

ASM Firoz

A.S.M. Firoz (AL-Patuakhali) then argued that the jail incidents had already become a national issue. Such incidents have also been causing image problem for the country abroad, he added. He supported the adjournment motion, saying that the House must discuss the motion without delay.

JP stages walkout

At this stage, some Jatiya Party members sitting in the back rows of the floor became noisy with a view to attracting the chair's attention. But failing to do so, some of them including Advocate Fazle Rabbi (JP-Gaibandha) started thumping the table with the help of his paper file.

The Speaker then warned Rabbi by name for "unruly behaviour" and said he was giving him "notice" for such unparliamentary behaviour of the floor. Some of the JP members were seen objecting to the Speaker's observation. After some time they staged a walkout.

Salahuddin Quader

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, the lone NDP member, who strongly supported the adjournment motion, referred to the tragic jail incidents in which he and another member of this parliament had lost their fathers. But he did not identify the other member only saying that he too belonged to the opposition bench.

Chowdhury, who supported the motion, then referred to article 56(1) of the constitution and said the present BNP Council of Ministers including the Prime Minister were only to "aide and advise the President," not more than that. The NDP member also argued that when the BNP Council of Ministers was holding the authority of the government then why they were trying to take the responsibility to the government, which is under the authority of the President. Chowdhury had uttered some words which the Speaker later expunged.

Shamsuddoha

CPB group leader Shamsuddoha said, the adjournment motion brought by the Leader of the Opposition should be discussed in the House as "we want no more bloodshed and we want that to mother should further" lose her beloved children."

He said, many of our friends in the House had experiences in undergoing imprisonment and as such we feel the security and safety of the jail life should be protected.



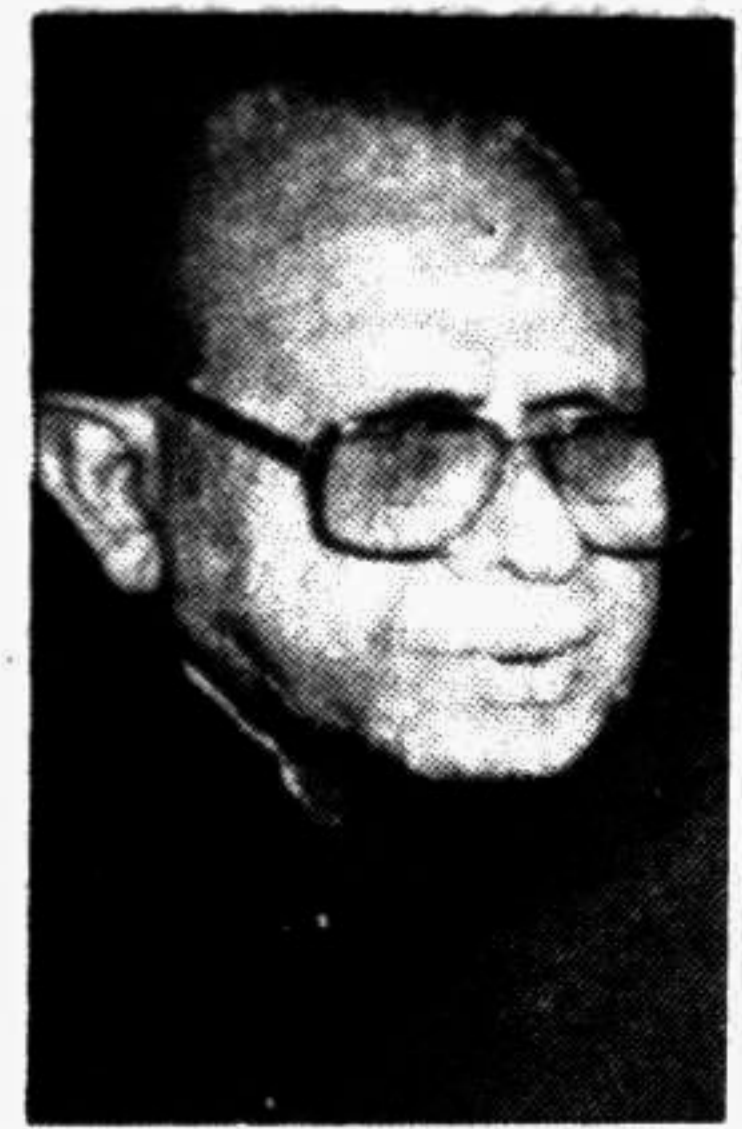
Abdur Razzak

Abdur Razzak of Baksal termed the jail killing as an "inhuman act" Razzak said this process began in the country with the killing of four national leaders in Dhaka Central Jail on Nov 3, 1975.

In this connection, he claimed that such an attempt on his own life was also made in Comilla Jail but fortunately, his life was saved. He, however, did not mention the date when this attempt was made.

He said that many of the leaders who were at present sitting on the Treasury Bench also had enough experience of jail life. Besides, he said, as the Deputy Leader of the House

had accepted the importance of holding a discussion on the issue, there should not be any bar to do it immediately.



Abdus Samad Azad

Taking the floor next, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad said, the incident which took place in the Dhaka Central Jail Monday had created serious concern for the entire nation and aggrieved it. "We can not do any business in this House bypassing the anxiety of the entire nation," he said.

Samad said that during the last three days, Tofael Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta and some other members had tried to draw the attention of the House to discuss several sporadic incidents that took place in various jails of the country. "If the issue were allowed to be discussed, the unfortunate incident in Dhaka Jail might not have taken place", he observed.

Narrating the paramount importance of discussing the matter immediately, Samad said, "If solutions could not be found out in this House, similar incidents may flare up in other jails of the country too."

Abdus Samad referred to the speech at the inaugural session by the Acting President who expressed his deep concern over the "jail revolt" and said the issue demanded immediate discussion pending all other proceedings of the House.

Samad further alleged that a type of torture like that of the middle ages was let loose in the Dhaka Central Jail according to information received from inside.

Mohammad Nasim

Mohammad Nasim (AL) congratulated Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury for unveiling the fact that fathers of two MPs in this House also died in the Dhaka Central Jail. But he clarified that Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury's father Fazlul Quader Chowdhury died of disease while his (Nasim's) father Capt. Mansur Ali was brutally killed.

Nasim said that they were demanding a discussion on the issue not being led by any emotion but with a sincere intention to make the jail life secure. "We want to help the government as the issue of ensuring safety and security were also important for them."

Akbar Hossain

The Speaker then gave the floor to Akbar Hossain (BNP) who pointed out that he suffered imprisonment for 14 months under five different terms and as such he was aware of the tragedy of the jail life.

Terming the Dhaka Central Jail incident as "a terrible incident", Hossain said the solution to the problem might be found out through discussion by the members of both the Treasury and the Opposition Benches. But, he said, the House could not discuss the issue before the Leader of the House gave a statement on what had actually happened inside the jail.

Akbar Hossain said, the press report may not be always true and starting a discussion on the basis of newspaper reports would be like that of the "blind man's view of the elephant."

The Speaker, however, said even if the adjournment motion were accepted Tuesday, there was no scope to discuss it right at the moment. After accepting the motion, a date had to be fixed to discuss the issue.

The Speaker closed discussion on the issue saying that after having a version from the Leader of the House, adequate scope would be given to the members to reopen the discussion.

Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed

The Speaker gave the floor to Communications Minister Col. (Retd) Oli Ahmed to introduce bills.

But the Leader of the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina, took the floor and drew the attention of the Speaker to Rule 71 of the Rules of Procedure and said the matter was a issue of public importance. She said the issue being discussed in the House was related to public security.

Sheikh Hasina said it was

not a matter of regularity rather it was a separate issue. She said the previous jail incidents had been referred to by the Acting President in his speech in the floor of this august House while we want an adjournment on the issue that occurred later. She said a commission had been formed for the previous jail incidents not for the Dhaka Jail incident Monday.

The Leader of the House called upon the Speaker to adjourn the House by admitting the motion.

In protest of non-acceptance of the adjournment motion, Sheikh Hasina led the entire Opposition members at a walk-out for two minutes.

Immediately after the walk-out by the Opposition, the Speaker gave the floor to the Communications Minister Col. (Retd) Oli Ahmed.

The Communications Minister introduced the Eastern Railway Servants Group Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 1991, and the Eastern Railway Servants Benevolent Fund (Amendment) Bill, 1991.

The Speaker then gave the floor to State Minister for Labour and Manpower Barrister Rafiqul Islam Meah who introduced the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill, 1991.

Initiating the second day's discussion on the motion of thanks to the Acting President for his speech on the inaugural session of the fifth Jatiya Sangsad on April 7, Akbar Hossain (BNP-Comilla) thanked the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed for completing a free, fair and historic election. He said he has seen media coup and vote dacoity in the past and we have bitter experience in this regard.

Salahuddin Yusuf

The Speaker then gave the floor to Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna).

Yusuf said the Acting President in his speech had rightly pointed out the country's serious economic crisis.

He hoped that the democratic process which had been set in motion through the neutral and impartial elections held would be consolidated to fulfil the hopes and aspiration of the people.

He, however regretted that the ghost of autocracy was still lingering.

Referring to the issue of Ganges water sharing between Bangladesh and India Yusuf said the government of Bangladesh had ensured 44,000 cusec of water for Bangladesh through an agreement.

Terming the agreement as historic, Yusuf said under the agreement, the flow of Ganges water could not be diverted without the concurrence of Bangladesh.

He mentioned that the government which came after 1975 could ensure only 34,000 cusec of water. He regretted that though the Joint River Commission time and again, the result was zero. He said the government of President Ershad never initiated any move to solve the Farrakka problem. He hoped that the new government would take appropriate steps to keep flow of the Ganges water and save the mother region of Bangladesh from drought.

Yusuf also pointed out the Talpatti problem and wondered why the Indian army was there. He demanded of the ruling party to take immediate measures for solving the problem.

He then referred to the problems in coastal shrimp-bed areas and said influential and vested quarters were occupying cultivable land from peasants under the pretext of shrimp cultivation and causing them immense sufferings. In the past the vested quarters took shelter under the government in power. He hoped that the present government would not allow such elements to resort to such malpractices.

Yusuf also appealed to the ruling party to take immediate measures for solving water logging problem prevailing in Bill Dakatia area to redress the suffering of 37 lakh people living there.

Yusuf said nobody could conceal the facts of history because truth prevails despite all attempts to suppress it.

In this connection he pointed out that the father of

# Law and order situation deteriorates: Hasina

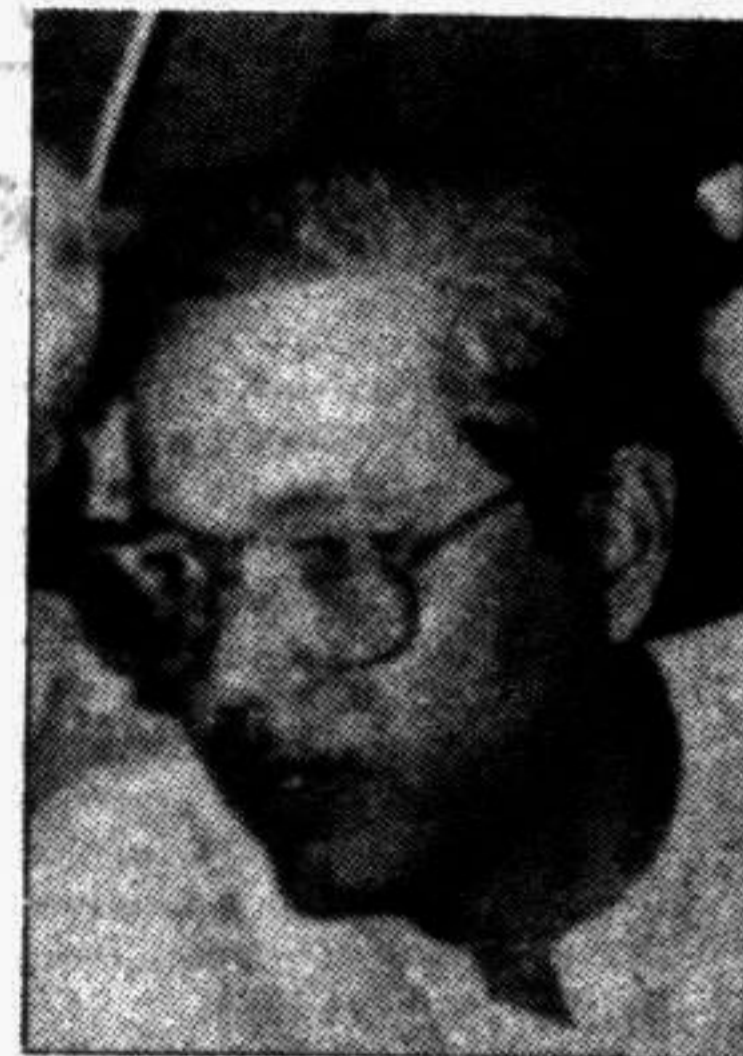
nation Bangabandhu was the real architect of our independence who had rendered hardships and suffered jail terms for the emancipation of the people. Through his long process of struggle, Bangabandhu prepared the people to make any sacrifice for realising their rights. Ziaur Rahman declared the independence in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He said, "We do not want to underestimate anybody's contribution, including Ziaur Rahman's towards the independence of the country."

He demanded the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu to stop recurrence of such incidents. Had the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman been punished, another tragic incident, like the killing of Ziaur Rahman, would not have taken place, he said.

Yusuf said he could not find any reason for the long unusual silence of the government on the question of sovereignty of parliament.

The House was adjourned at 1.05 pm for Zhor prayer till two pm.



Badruddoza

The House resumed its session at 2-05 pm after Zhor prayer with Speaker Abdul Rahman Biswas in the chair.

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL), continuing his speech said the paramount task before the nation today was to ensure the sovereignty of parliament which was the main objective of the historic joint declaration of three alliances during the recent mass upsurge that toppled the autocratic government.

The Opposition member said the parliamentary form of government ensured greater accountability because it would prevent any unconstitutional change in the government. He



Suranjit Sen

deplored that no parliament in the post-independence era could complete its full term and expressed the hope that this House would see the completion of its full five year term.

Mir Shawkat Ali

Taking the floor next, Lt. Gen. Mir Shawkat Ali Bir Utam (BNP), Dhaka said it was his maiden speech in Parliament as a peoples' representative and the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed deserved praise for holding a free and fair elections that had made the coming into being of this House possible.

The Treasury Bench member said he would like to refer to some historical past because certain information was necessary to be mentioned here in the context of discussions on the motion of thanks to the President for his speech.

Gen (Retd.) Shawkat said the Acting President in his speech mentioned some big problems facing the nation like the population boom, unemployment, industrialisation, agricultural production etc. and added that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman was the first President of the country who had turned his eye to all these problems.

He said President Zia wanted to stage a revolution in checking the population explosion, initiated several steps to boost agricultural production, took measures to stimulate the industries and also conceived certain new plans to utilise the vast youth force. It was during his time people saw the prospect of a happy and healthy society. The country had also attained self-sufficiency in food, Gen. Ali said.

The member referred to

the long struggle of the people for nine years to dislodge autocracy and said this period could have been shortened if all the parties involved in the movement were sincere in their purpose.

The existence of the 1986 parliament certainly came as a boost for the autocratic government and helped lengthening its illegal tenure, he said, adding, that the stand taken by Begum Zia that no elections under the tyrannical regime would be free and fair proved correct and this spoke of her political sagacity.

Gen Ali turning to the different problems, called for realisation of all bank loans from those who had so far tried to play with public money. He proposed step similar to that which present a person who had not repaid his loans, from taking part in the Union Council elections, be extended to higher elections as a step to recovery of such loans.

The Treasury Bench members demanded a white paper on the cases of corruption that had taken place during the past regime and also wanted to know who was that single person responsible for trouble in the entire garments industry.

Hasan Chowdhury

Speaking next, Abdul Hasan Chowdhury (AL-Tangail) paid tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and said as a new member, he would remember him most today because the country would not have come into existence without long and able leadership of the late leader.

"Bangabandhu is synonymous with Bangladesh and any amount of conspiracy to downplay his role as the architect of this nation would never carry any water," he said.

Chowdhury also raised such freedom fighters like late Gen. Ziaur Rahman, Khaled Mosharraf and colonel Taher and said it would be improper not to give one, one's due.

He also had a pat for his previous speaker Lt General (Retd) Shawkat Ali for receiving gallantry award in the Liberation War and said all had responded to the call of "Bangabandhu" to take arms for the independence of the nation. But Chowdhury disputed the observation of Gen Shawkat that the country was self-sufficient during the time of late President Ziaur Rahman because the information was not true.

The young opposition member thanked Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed for taking the responsibility of the nation at a critical time and steering the country through this phase. But he stressed that, the task before the nation was to switch over to the parliamentary form of government which alone could institutionalise democracy in the country.

Chowdhury demanded release of valiant freedom fighter Kader Siddiqui and wondered how the killer of "Bangabandhu" were moving freely in the country. He wanted proper utilisation of the local resources like export of pineapple of Tangail and honey of Modhupur.

Jahanara Begum

Prof Jahanara Begum (BNP) demanded a white paper regarding the nine-year rule of deposed President Ershad.

She said trial of deposed President Ershad alone would not do. All those who collaborated with Ershad during his regime must also be brought to book without fail.

One must not forget, she said that hundreds of students and common people were subjected to various types of harassment and many lost their lives - what was the consolation for the near and dear ones of those who had lost their lives, she asked.

Prof Jahanara told the Sangsad that it was under the uncompromising leadership Begum Khaleda Zia, the masses of the people could bring about the downfall of Ershad's autocratic regime. The criminals responsible for the autocratic rule of nine-years must be punished, she said.

Altat Hussain Gollandaz

Altat Hussain Gollandaz (AL-Mymensingh) forcefully demanded a parliamentary form of government which he said, was the core of a consensus between the three opposition alliances before the fall of President Ershad.

If this was realised, then, he said, the members of this fifth Jatiya Sangsad would find a pride of place in the annals of our national history, none should back out from this stand point in the greater national interest, the Awami League member said.

Rafiqul Islam Meah

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Meah (BNP) congratulated the Acting President for correctly

projecting the real picture of the national economy and other aspects of the national life in his address in the parliament.

Giving tributes to both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition for their role in the struggle for re-establishing democracy, Islam said that this Sangsad was an outcome of the relentless struggle of the people.



Khaleda Zia

Therefore he said, this Sangsad had to play its due role to translate into reality the high hopes and aspirations of the entire nation.

Ansar Ali

Ansar Ali (Jamaat-Satkhira), in his turn, paid tributes to those who laid down their lives during last anti-autocracy movements.

He thanked the Acting President for his speech in the Jatiya Sangsad on April 5 saying Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed should be thanked because he was a neutral person and conducted the freest and fairest elections ever held in the country.

Body to be set up to probe jail incident

At this stage the Leader of the House, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who is in charge of Home Ministry, made a statement in the House announcing the setting up of a commission to probe into the Dhaka Central Jail incident.

The Prime Minister said one prisoner had died while trying to escape by scaling the wall from injuries sustained during the attempt. She said that 13 prisoners had escaped by creating terrorists through explosions of cocktails and hand bombs.

Tracing the background of the incidents she said the autocratic regime of deposed President Ershad let loose a reign of terror and repression on the people during its 9-year rule and sent many people to jail. Five thousand prisoners were lodged in Dhaka Central Jail which could accommodate only two thousands.

The incidents in jails, she said were the outburst of the pent-up resentment of prisoners internal by the autocratic regime and the demand for their release.

Begum Zia said since taking over the Home Ministry she had been trying to take steps to overcome the problems of the jails and the prisoners so that they could not disturb peace through terrorist in future.



Rafiqul Islam Meah

After the statement of the Leader of the House Prime Minister and Home Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, the Ganatantra Party leader Suranjit Sengupta took the floor.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, then took the floor and drew the attention of the Chair.

The Speaker wanted to know from Azad whether he would say anything on the jail incident.

Samad said the issue was an important one hence further discussion was essential. He asked the House to allow discussion on the issue today (Wednesday) to find out some tangible suggestions for the solution to the problem.

The Speaker adjourned the House at 4.03 pm till 11 am today.