# Khaleda seeks cooperation of all for democracy Form JS body on jail reform: Hasina

The Jatiya Sangsad Wednesday resumed its second sitting at 2.05 pm with the Deputy Speaker. Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair, reports

Earlier, The House had a two-hour long morning sitting when discussions on the jail situation took place.

But, proceedings of the morning sitting were not covered by the newsmen who had observed a 3-hour token strike in response to the call given by the DÛJ.

## Leader of the opposition

Immediately after the resumption of The House, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina requested the Chair to allow discussion on the jail sit-

The Deputy Speaker said the discussion on the subject should be short so that the House could take up the order of the day. He sought the opinion of the Leader of The House Begum Khaleda Zia in this respect.

#### Leader of the House

The Leader of The House expressed herself in favour of a discussion on the jail situation. but she suggested that the discussion should not be lengthy. She further suggested to limit the discussion on the subject to one hour.



## **Matiur Kahman Nizami**

Initiating the discussion, Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami, (Jamaat) regretted that charges and countercharges and attacks and counter-attacks were made in the House centering this issue. Disapproving of such debates, he said none should create a situation that would allow autocracy to overtake the country again. In this connection, he recalled how autocratic rule had overtaken the country in

He said there could be two factors responsible for the cur rent situation in different jails of the country. One is political motive as hinted by the Prime Minister in The House Tuesday, he said and urged the government to inform The House about it in detail and the measures to contain unrest.

Maulana Nizami said many innocent persons and been lodged in jails for political and other reasons. This created resentment in their minds which found reflection through agitation and unrest in jails, he

Maulana Nizami stressed the need for bringing about reforms in jails and supported the formation of a committee in this regard.

Referring to the demand for sending ex-President Ershad to jaff, the Jamaat leader said all should judge this issue realistically and objectively. The power, privilege and dignity of the Sangsad should be determined before taking any major step by the government, he



## Salahuddin Quader

Participating in the discussion on the issue, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury (NDB) said many members of the parltament had expressed their concern about the deteriorating law and order situation in the country. Many doubted whether there existed a government at all in the country. he added.

Chowdhury stressed the need for bringing about jail reforms without losing any further time. He was of the view that no reforms could deliver the desired results unless the process of trial was expedited

and the Special Powers Act

He suggested that all prisoners should be treated as innocent until their guilt was proved in the court. In this connection, he said the efficiency of police officers should be linked with the success of the prosecution cases.

## **Md Nasim**

Speaking next, Md. Nasim (AL) said Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury had referred to the death of his father in jail. He said he had also the painful memory of the killing of four leaders of the country, including his father, in the jail. He regretted that the trial for the killing of the four national leaders was blocked by the Fifth Amendment. He said he was convinced that there would be no trial for this gruesome killing and the government party would not do it.

Nasim said trouble broke in different jails, including Khulna and Rajshahi, when the BNP government was in power in the past. During that period many army officers and personnel were killed. Many of them were not even given the opportunity of self-defence to prove their innocence, he

As Nasim was levelling his charges against the BNP government of the past the Treasury Bench members protested his remarks. Nasim's voice was drowned from time to time. The noise in the House reached its peak when Nasim charged Alamgir and Shahjahan Omar, two MPs of the ruling party, with committing serious crimes. How these two men with criminal records could enter the Sangsad, he

The Awami League member urged the government to repeal the Special Powers Act forth with in fulfillment of the pledge of the joint declaration of the three alliances.

Nasim said the government had sought shelter from the opposition. What he meant by it was not clear in the noise raging in The House at that time. But the Leader of The House Begum Khaleda Zia took exception to the expression of the word "Shelter" saying that her party was voted to power by the people of the country "Why should we seek shelter?" she asked.

Nasim demanded transfer of the ex-President Ershad from Gulshan sub-jail to Dhaka Central Jail. At this stage the Leader of the House said it was not the responsibility of the government alone. The opposition too had a responsibility in this matter, she said adding the government would send the deposed president to the Dhaka Central Jail immediately if the Leader of the Opposition so demanded.

# Alamgir Hossain

Rising on a privilege motion. Alamgir Hossain(BNP)-Rajshahi said the statement of Mohammed Nasim accusing him of his involvement in the stealing of a rifle had not only been an aspersion on him as a member of this House, it has also belittled the image of the House itself.

# Salam Talukder

The Minister for Local Government and Cooperative. Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder told the House that since Alamgir had fell hurt by the statement of Nasim. Alamgir should be given a chance to speak.

The Leader of The Opposition Sheikh Hasina took the floor and said Tofael Ahmed was not given the chance when an oblique reference was made on him by a member. She said many remarks are also being made about many distinguished persons and they are not getting the right to defend themselves as they are not members of the

She said, "We expected that we will be free to express our opinion in a most constructive way in the Jatiya Sangsad won through a blood-drenched anti-autocracy movement". But she said the attempt of some



Salam Talukdar

Khaleda Zia

people knew it well who were

the people enjoying the facili-

ties of the then government.

She said the truth could not be

erased with mere statements.

Shajahan Siraj

han Straj (JSD-S) said the dis-

cussion on the jail issue

seemed to have been losing

relevance since the delibera-

tions centered more on past

references than on the matter

at stake. He said this would not

Fazle Rabbi

problems of the Dhaka Central

Jail had been accumulated over

the years and efforts must be

made to solve these. He said

Awami League, BNP and his

own party were in power and

parties, when in power, ap-

peared to forget that someday

they would have to its in op-

position and could also go to

shifting former President Er-

shad to Dhaka Central Jail was

fraught with dangers and if he

was really sent to the jail un-

der the present uneasy situa-

tion there, the government

would be fully responsible for

At this stage, members of

any situation that would arise.

both the Treasury Bench and

the opposition Awami League

protested the opinion of Rabbi

and proceedings of the House

were lost in the din for some

Jahanara Begum

she was put in a cell of the

Ramna Jail along with the male

politicians during the 1986

mass movements when Ershad

regime cared little for the

minimum dignity of the politi-

cal prisoners. She demanded

that Ershad be shifted to the

**Abdul Matin Khasru** 

Comilla said past would not

help in finding solutions to the

present problems and all

should concentrate on solving

the intolerable problems

within the jail. He demanded

that deposed President Ershad

be shifted to jail without any

Matia Chowdhury

said she suffered imprison-

ment during Ayub. BNP and Ershad government and she found the conditions in the

jails, even for the political

prisoners as highly intolerable.

"I had to live with the crimi-

nals of murder cases," the op-

the House and the Leader of

the Opposition for sending M

Ershad to jail, Begum Matia

Chowdhury said Begum Zia

should file a case against Er-

shad for being involved in Zia

said Begum Zia had earlier

suspected Ershad behind the

murder of President Zia and

urged the Leader of the House

to lodge a case against Ershad

herself being the complainant.

Begum Matia Chowdhury

Supporting the Leader of

position members said

murder.

Begum Matia Chowdhury

Abdul Matin Khasru (AL)

Central Jail.

further delay.

Jahanara Begum (BNP) said

Rabbi said demand for

Fazle Rabbi (JP) said the

help reach a fruttful outcome.

Taking the floor, Mr. Shaja

members to engage themselves in mud-slinging had marred that.

At this point the members belonging to the Treasury Bench stood up and tried to speak. The speech of Shetkh Hasina was drowned by the din in the House.

Sheikh Hasina said the deposed President Ershad was still in Gulshan and he was not being taken to prison.

The Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia took the floor and said Ershad will soon be sent to prison after complying with the government rules and procedures. She declared that no one was above law. She said herself was not above law. She Said. "We wanted to

send Ershad to the prison but that was not possible because of the Acting President." She said since the question had been raised by the Leader of the Opposition and the House had expressed its sentiment in that direction the deposed President must be sent to the

Sheikh Hasina said the Leader of the House once said that trial of Ershad would be held in seven day's time and he would be sent to the gallows if her party goes to power. She said the BNP had gone to power on March 20 but nothing had been done as yet in this regard.

She said, it was not known what were the impediments standing in the way of Ershad's trial. She said."if any secret al liance between Ershad and BNP is standing in the way of the trial we have the right to know it on behalf of the people



# B Chowdhury

Education Minister and Deputy Leader of the House Prof. B. Chowdhury said Sheikh Hasina had told the International Time on December 24 last year that there was no need for the trial of Ershad .

Taking the floor Begum Khaleda Zia said she had once spoken of "Seven days" time to hold the trial of Ershad. But she said there were certain requirements of law which to be fulfilled to hold the trial.

Begum Zia told the House that Sheikh Hasina had once said they were not required to be sent to the prison while under arrest. She also said Sheikh Hasina also did not demand that Ershad should be sent to the prison.

Contesting the contention of Begum Khaleda Zia, Sheikh Hasina said she had demanded trial of Ershad, wherever he was --in prison or anywhere

She said her party had demanded the trial of Ershad first after the killing in the Awami League procession in Chittagong on January 24. 1988. She said many were absolutely silent then. She said ," we want to read in tomorrow's newspaper that Ershad has been sent to jail."

Shetkh Hasina said when her party demanded trial many became stlent about that apparently having received various facilities in many ways. The members of the Treasury Bench stood up en-block and protested the remarks of shefkh Hasina.

Begum Khaleda Zia again took the floor and said the

Abdur Razzak (BKSAL), said the Prime Minister had earlier spoken of conspiracies behind the jail trouble and urged her to name the quarters involved.

He said there were many inmates in the jail who were languishing for years but many of them did not know even after several years in prison what their crimes were. Razzak called for improving the condition in the jail and also urged the government to look into the affairs of prison administration because smuggling of huge arms into the prisons could not have been possible without their connivance.

Rashed Khan Menon (Workers Party) demanded repeal of the Special Powers Act. He said in the eye of law all citizens are equal.

Menon said former President should be sent to the jail immediately. He called upon the BNP government to improve the condition of jails in the country.

At this stage, the Speaker gave the floor to Foreign Minister A. S. M. Mustafizur

Rahman read out a letter received from the Indian High Commission to Bangladesh regarding the leading of an Indian Air Force helicopter in Bangladesh said the Indian High Commission had conveyed that the Indian helicopter was forced to land on Bangladesh territory due to extremely inclement weather. Quoting the letter, the

Foreign Minister said the Indian High Commission had expressed the hope that the landing incident would not hamper the friendly relations between the two countries. Sheikh Hasina said the de-

posed President Ershad was still in Gulshan and he was not being taken to prison.

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She said, if was not known what were the impediments standing in the way of Ershad's trial. She said, "if any secret alliance between Ershad and BNP is standing in the way of the trial we have the right to know it on behalf of the peo-

# Shawkat Ali

Col. (Retd) Shawkat Ali (AL-Shariatpur) said Martial Law was promulgated twice in the country in 1975 and 1982. He said similar types of Martial Law courts were formed and many people were convicted on both the occasions. These people, he said, deserved review of their cases. He said people who were in jails without trial also deserved review of their cases.



Taking the floor, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina said she had bitter experience of the jail. She said as a daughter of the father of nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman she had seen him in jail on several occasions. He was put into the jail because he protested against the Pakistani atrocities and deprivations.

Quoting the relevant article of the Constitution, Sheikh Hasina said every citizen had the right to take protection of the law. She said situation in the jails called for special attention of the government.

Drawing attention of the Chair to a news item published Wednesday, Sheikh Hasina said four push cart loads of sharp lethal weapons were recovered from the Dhaka Central Jail. She wanted to know where these weapons from. This information was vital for the security of the prisoners as well as the nation, she said.

Sheikh Hasina said killing of four national leaders in jail on November 3, 1975 was not redressed. She said injustices were bound to increase if the killers got shelter adding the current jail incident was the

The Opposition Leader said all citizens irrespective of their status had the right to seek justice. She said that the prisoners did not get the opportunity of justice.

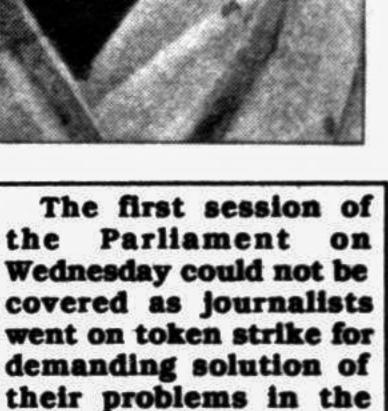
Leader of the Opposition

# **Business Advisory** body discusses JS functioning

The parliamentary Business Advisory Committee held its first meeting Wednesday at Sangsad Bhaban and discussed smooth functioning of the House, reports BSS.

Presided over by Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas. Chairman of the committee. the meeting took a number of decisions after discussing in detail matters relating to transaction of business of the House, JS sources said.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Matiur Rahman Nizami, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Sheikh Razzaq Ali. Rafiqul Islam Mia, Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Farida Rahman, Manirul Hug Chowdhury, Shamsuddoha and Prof AQM Baduruddoza Chowdhury attended the meet-



urged the ruling party to form a parliamentary committee on jail reform. She said, we want security because many of our workers are in jails on different grounds including convictions under Martial Law. We also want security of the prisoners for justice.

newspaper industry.

Referring to the jail incident, Sheikh Hasina demanded of the government to disclose the names of the conspirators connected with the incident. On the request of the

Leader of the House, the Speaker allowed Meah Mohammad Mansur Ali (BNP-Chuadanga) two minutes to participate in the debate on the jail incident.

# Mansur Ali

Mansur Ali narrated his experience of the jail during the Awami League rule. He said hundreds of workers opposing Awami League were put behind the bar.

The BNP member said none was sent to the jail during the regime of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

Sheikh Hastna said law and order situation had deteriorated throughout the country. She said people of five villages of Jessore were fleeing their homes because they were feeling insecure.

Quoting Article 31 of the Constitution, the Leader of the Opposition said provision of this article was being violated. She said the government had to ensure security of life and property of the people. This. she said, was invariably the responsibility of the Minister in-Charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Shetkh Hasina said a way could have been found out had the adjournment motion been allowed in the House Tuesday. Referring to the remarks made by the members on the past, Sheikh Hasina said fruit-

less discussion on the past

would not help any one and congenial atmosphere would not be found thereby. "We have seen some of these people both in and outside power, "she said adding that "if we take the biodata of each of us we will get a clear picture. The cat would come out of the bag "she observed.

She said under Article 27 all are equal in the eye of law. She said father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed on August 15. The killers were pampered and engaged in the embassies of Bangladesh abroad, she said.

The Leader of the Opposition said former President should be taken to the jail. She said the government wanted approval of the House "we all support this cause" Sheikh Hasina said we want to see a news item in today's (Thursday) newspapers that the former President Ershad has been taken to the jail.

### Khaleda Zia

Making a statement in the Jatiya Sangsad on the situation in the country's jails, the Leader of the House, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, sought the cooperation of all quarters for consolidating democracy, maintaining peace and tranquility and safeguarding national sovereignty.

She said all should work together to achieve the cherished national objectives.

Begum Zia attributed the unrest in different jails to pent-up resentment of prisoners for a long time resulting from lack of reforms in pris-

She said her Government was indeed capable of solving the jail problems and had already taken necessary steps in that direction and referred to the Constitution of a threemember Commission to enquire into the recent unrest in Dhaka Central Jail.

The Prime Minister assured the House that the deposed President Ershad would be sent to the Central Jail as soon as possible in accordance with the law of the country.

She said that her party had waged the movement along with the people. That was why, she said, she sought the consensus of the House for transferring Ershad to the Central Jail from the Gulshan Sub-Jail.

The Deputy Speaker, taking up the order of the day, asked Mr. Suranitt Sengupta to raise his call attention notice on the deteriorating flood situation in Sunamgani which had been threatening the standing boro

# Majedul Huq

Replaying to the call attention notice Irrigation Minister Majedul Huq told the Sangsad that adequate steps were being taken to save the crops.

Answering a specific question from the member from Sunamgani, the Minister further told the Sangsad that he himself and the State Minister for Relief would visit the affected areas within the next few days and that the government would do its best to save the people affected by the sit-

The Deputy Speaker adjourned the House at 4.16 pm to meet again today (Thursday) at 11 am.

