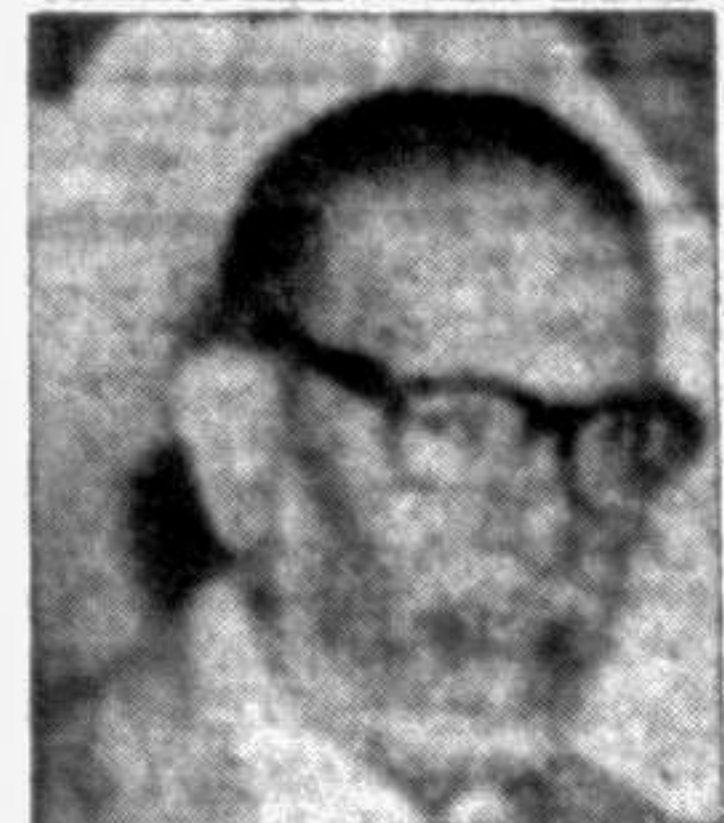


Parliament

Probe into purchase of allegedly low quality machine ruled out

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 11-40 am Saturday with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, reports BSS.



Mirza Golam Hafiz

The day's proceedings began with recitation from the Holy Quran. After the recitation, Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz requested the chair to set a time limit for the members to take part in the discussions on the bills to be passed today.

He said five bills have to be passed by the House and authenticated by the Acting President today.

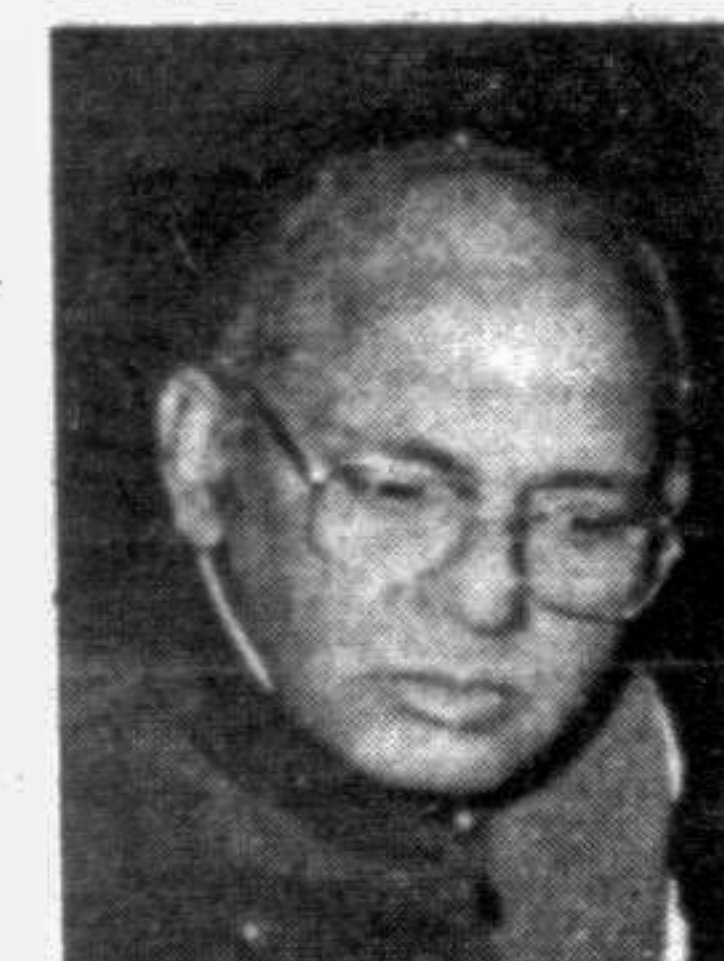
Mirza Hafiz said it was observed from the previous experiences that normally two to three hours time was required to pass any bill by the House. In this regard he referred to rule 291 of the rules of procedure and suggested that the Speaker limit discussions on a bill to 30 minutes only.



Suranjit Sengupta

Suranjit Sengupta (GP-Sunamganj) rising on a point of order, said that the sovereignty of Parliament would be curtailed if the time limit was fixed by the minister. He said it was the responsibility of the Speaker to set a time limit if the discussions were prolonged unnecessarily.

Gupta said how the question of time limit could be raised when the bill itself was not even placed for consideration.



Tofael Ahmed

Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) then tried to draw the attention of the chair to a news item, published in Saturday's paper. But his contention was expunged by the Speaker, saying that Ahmed was not given the floor.



Abdus Samad Azad

The deputy leader of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad, seeking permission from the chair, said that it was a matter of great regret that the government could not yet furnish the appraisal report to the foreign missions on the extent of loss due to the cyclone and the requirement of relief for the cyclone affected people.

He referred to the newspaper report and said the foreign missions had alleged that they had not got the report. The Speaker then informed the House that seven notices on breach of member's privilege had been received, five being on one subject while two others by individual members of other matters. He said he would give ruling on these notices later on.

He said he had received 13 call attention notices Saturday.

The one given by the Deputy Leader of Opposition Abdus Samad Azad had been admitted.

Biswas said Friday 23 call notices were received of which the notice by Sheikh Harunur Rashid (AL-Khulna) had been admitted.

Badruddoza Chowdhury

The Deputy Leader of the House and Education Minister Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury took the floor and said that the House had a lengthy discussion on the situation in the cyclone battered areas.

"We want to discuss this issue every day," he said. Prof Chowdhury informed the House that the Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had gone to the affected areas.

He suggested that the Speaker could fix up a time in

the evening to discuss the situation created by the cyclone and the relief operations. Meantime, we can pass the pending bills, he said.

His suggestion was greeted by the opposition members through thumping of table.

Azizur Rahman

The Speaker, then gave the floor to Azizur Rahman (AL-Moulvibazar) for moving his call attention notice.

Moving his call attention notice, Azizur Rahman said that the authority of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust had purchased the worst type of Italian machine at a high price of 40 lakh US dollars for Tabani Beverage Company ignoring the expert opinion. The Trust authority did not buy the best quality machine, made in USA at a low price of 38 lakh US

dollar, he said. He demanded that such an irregular purchase should be stopped to save the welfare trust, considering shahed families were being given allowances from the income of the trust.

Majidul Haq

Replying to the motion, Agriculture Minister Majidul Haq, who is in charge of the Ministry of Defence in the Sangsad, gave a detailed report and said that allegations of irregularities regarding the purchase were not based on facts and statistics. As such, he said the demand for cancelling the contract and holding judicial enquiry did not arise.

After disposing of the call attention notice, the Speaker took up the day's legislative business and invited the Law and Justice Minister to table his bill.

But Suranjit Sengupta took the floor on a point of order and said Anwar Hossain (JP-Pirojpur) was arrested from the precincts of the Sangsad Bhaban in the presence of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and he himself.

Referring to the relevant rules of procedure, Sengupta wanted to know whether the Speaker had given permission to arrest Hossain.

The Speaker said he had already received some notices on the matter, he said he would give decision on the matter later.

At this stage, the Law and Justice Affairs Minister, Mirza Golam Hafiz said the point, raised by Sengupta, did not fall under any point of order. It could be a point of privilege. He advised the member to discuss the issue under the relevant rule of the rules of procedure.

The Speaker said he would allow discussion on the arrest of Anwar Hossain for an hour today (Sunday). Manirul Haq Chowdhury (JP-Comilla) also took the floor on a point of order and wanted to know about the arrest of Anwar Hossain. The Speaker gave Chowdhury the same reply he had given to Sengupta.

The Speaker then asked Minister for Law and Justice Mirza Golam Hafiz to move the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1991 for immediate consideration, which Mirza Hafiz did.

Sudhansu Shekhar Halder

Abdur Rahman Biswas then invited Sudhansu Shekhar Halder (AL-Pirojpur) to move his amendments. Taking the floor Halder demanded adequate time for discussion on all bills set for Saturday.

Halder criticised the provisions in the bill to raise the punishment saying only by increasing punishment, crimes would not be contained. He alleged that some provisions of the Special Powers Act have been quietly incorporated in the Penal Code. He asked the minister to remove those provisions of the Special Powers

Act from the bill and also to circulate it for eliciting public opinion.

Salahuddin Yusuf

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) said by enhancing period of punishment, the crimes could not be reduced. He said what is important is how the law will be used. Yusuf said since the bill was very important, it should be discussed thoroughly. He alleged the bill smells of elements of autocracy. Yusuf suggested that the bill be sent to elicit public opinion.

Dhirendra Devnath Shambhu

Taking the floor, Advocate Dhirendra Devnath Shambhu (AL-Barguna), called for sending the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1991 to elicit public opinion.

Abdur Rahman Biswas

The Speaker, Abdur Rahman Biswas, adjourned the House at 1:10 pm till 3 pm this afternoon.

As soon as the House resumed in the afternoon, Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas invited discussion on the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1991.

Asaduzzaman

Participating in the discussion, Asaduzzaman (AL-Magura) said there was a scope for chaos and indiscipline during the last general elections but the situation no more existed now.

He said no law was being enacted to round up those businessmen who took crores of Taka as loans from bank from 1980 to 1990 and did not repay them. He said there would be no scope for criticism of the government if the bill was passed in the House.

Nurul Islam Moni

Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna) said it would have been better to be with the affected people in the cyclone battered areas than to participate in the discussion. He said he would still do it as the bill was very important.

Fazle Rabbi

Advocate Fazle Rabbi (JP-Nilphamar) said the bill was nothing more than a black law. He said it only contained provisions for enhancing the sentence.

Rashed Khan Menon

Rashed Khan Menon (Workers' Party-Bakerganj) said the bill was framed under special circumstances which did not exist now.

He said "we must refrain from doing anything which will help continue autocracy under the garb of democracy". He said the aim of the bill was not to stop forcible extortion of money. But, he said, it was aimed at curbing the activities of the parties which accepted contribution (Chanda) from the people and in return, wanted to work for the cause of the people.

Shawkat Ali

He urged the House to send the bill to select committee. Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali (AL-Shariatpur) said the bill would give a handle to the government and also to the law enforcing agencies to use it for the repression of political rivals.

Mohammad Abdus Sobhan

Mohammad Abdus Sobhan (Jamaat-e-Islami-Pabna) said the government wanted to enact a black law in the House. He referred to the devastating cyclone that hit the coastal areas of the country on May 29 and said the cyclone had killed three to four lakh people.

He said the government had brought the bill in the House at a time when the distressed humanity in the cyclone battered areas needed help and assistance. The Jamaat Member described it as a repressive bill and said the bill was designed to harass the opposition workers.

Suranjit Sengupta

Suranjit Sengupta said the bill would not play any role in the transition to democracy. He said the provision on nomination at every step of appointment of officials of the

delimitation was promulgated by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who was chosen by the parties that waged the movement against autocracy. That's why it was obligatory on the part of those who fought untidily against autocracy to help passage of the bill. He requested members belonging to Opposition Bench to extend their support in this regard.

Taking part in the discussion on the bill, Awami League member A S M Firoz demanded that the delimitation of constituencies for 1973 and 1979 parliamentary elections be retained. He said since the current bill was not the property of the BNP, it should be withdrawn.

Jamaat-e-Islami member Sheikh Ansar Ali said since the bill was prepared by the autocratic government, it should be withdrawn and sent to elicit public opinion.

The proposals of sending the bill for eliciting public opinion and sending to the select committee were rejected by voice vote.

Then the Deputy Leader of the House and Education Minister Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury placed the representation of the people (seats for women members) (amendment) bill, 1991, for adoption in the House.

Participating in the discussion on the bill, ASM Firoz (AL-Patuakhali) said that the women members of the House after their election went to the mazar of Ziaur Rahman to place floral wreath there. He said so they should also have offered a bouquet to the deposed President Ershad for having made the opportunity for them to come to the House.

Giving his points of view in supporting the passage of the bill, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said the initiative of electing women members was taken by the members who were seated before me at the moment. He said, "I must thank them for that" but, he said, the provision of 15 women members in the House was inadequate and the Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman increased the number to 30 subsequently.

He called upon the members of the Opposition to help pass the bill unanimously as they did in case of the passage of the two other bills in the House yesterday.

The Representation of the People (seats for women members) (amendment) Bill, 1991, was then passed by the House by voice vote.

The Election Officials (Special Regulations) Bill, 1991, was unanimously passed by the House after A F M Jahangir Hussain (AL-Patuakhali) withdrew his amendment.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury hoped that all of us would be able to face the national disaster through united efforts in the same spirit as the bill was passed.

Reciprocating the sentiment of Prof Chowdhury the Opposition Chief Whip Md Nasim said they too wanted to face the national disaster putting in united efforts and rising above narrow outlook. We want to continue this process, he said and hoped that the Leader of the House would make an appeal in this respect with open mind.

The Deputy Speaker then adjourned the House at 12:45 am Friday until 11:30 am Saturday.

'Foreign investors to feel discouraged'

The bill was then passed by voice vote after incorporating the amendments as suggested by Chief Whip Delwar Hossain.

Tofael Ahmed

Participating in the discussion on "Bank-Company Bill, 1991," Awami League member Tofael Ahmed alleged that some of the provisions in the bill was contrary to fundamental rights. He further charged that the current bill was actually drafted by the previous government. Therefore, it needed careful examination.

Ahmed called for deletion of undemocratic provisions from the bill.

Taking the floor, Jatiya Party member Moudud Ahmed said, this bill was very important for the growth and rejuvenation of the economy. He said banks which dealt with public deposits should be armed with such laws that could be trustworthy and protected public interest. He mentioned that the bill was the outcome of the considerations of a highpowered committee that recommended necessary measures for the protection of public interest. He mentioned similar bills were in existence in Pakistan and India.

This bill should not be discarded only because it was drafted during the previous regime, he commented.

Moudud Ahmed opined that there should be provisions in the bill which provided the scope for inclusion of Bangladesh nationals in the board of director of foreign banks as it was in other countries. He also said that banks being an important institution must have social commitment, which the private banks now lacked. Nationalised commercial banks alone should not be burdened with the responsibility of extending credit for economic development, he said, adding private commercial banks should also share the responsibility.

Moudud Ahmed demanded only Sonali Bank be left as the only nationalised commercial banks and other nationalised banks be privatised.

Sheikh Hasina

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina wondered as to why they Treasury Bench became so serious to pass the "Jatiya Mahila Sangstha Bill, 1991", in which calls for appointing every official in the Sangstha, not through election, but by nomination.

She said she would not have any objection if the interests of the women could be served through this bill.

She said there was no need for the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha as the rights of the women were well protected in the constitution of the country. She said the money that would be spent for the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha could instead be used for the education of the womenfolk by establishing more schools and colleges for women in the country.

Sheikh Hasina also pleaded for having a dialogue with the representatives of the 47 women's organisations which participated actively in the anti-autocracy movement.

She said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave due honour to the women. She said Bangabandhu gave 'Beerangana' titles to the women subjected to distress during the liberation war.

She said during the regime of Ziaur Rahman 150 women in northern Bangladesh voluntarily registered their names as prostitutes being driven by the pangs of hunger after a famine that visited that area in 1979. She called for the withdrawal of the bill for enhancing the dignity of women.

Defending the bill State Minister for Women's Affairs Tariqul Islam said the bill was withdrawn after introducing it earlier to incorporate amendments to it.

He said the amendments suggested by the Chief Whip of the Treasury Bench and those by Suranjit Sengupta and Mohiuddin Ahmed were duly considered for inclusion. He also requested the Chair to incorporate the amendments in the bill before its passage.

Nurul Islam Moni

Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna) pleaded for incorporating his amendments in the bill before its passage.

Suranjit Sengupta

Suranjit Sengupta said the bill would not play any role in the transition to democracy. He said the provision on nomination at every step of appointment of officials of the

delimitation was promulgated by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who was chosen by the parties that waged the movement against autocracy. That's why it was obligatory on the part of those who fought untidily against autocracy to help passage of the bill. He requested members belonging to Opposition Bench to extend their support in this regard.

Taking part in the discussion on the bill, Awami League member A S M Firoz demanded that the delimitation of constituencies for 1973 and 1979 parliamentary elections be retained. He said since the current bill was not the property of the BNP, it should be withdrawn.

Jamaat-e-Islami member Sheikh Ansar Ali said since the bill was prepared by the autocratic government, it should be withdrawn and sent to elicit public opinion.

The proposals of sending the bill for eliciting public opinion and sending to the select committee were rejected by voice vote.

Then the Deputy Leader of the House and Education Minister Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury placed the representation of the people (seats for women members) (amendment) bill, 1991, for adoption in the House.

Participating in the discussion on the bill, ASM Firoz (AL-Patuakhali) said that the women members of the House after their election went to the mazar of Ziaur Rahman to place floral wreath there. He said so they should also have offered a bouquet to the deposed President Ershad for having made the opportunity for them to come to the House.

Giving his points of view in supporting the passage of the bill, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said the initiative of electing women members was taken by the members who were seated before me at the moment. He said, "I must thank them for that" but, he said, the provision of 15 women members in the House was inadequate and the Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman increased the number to 30 subsequently.

He called upon the members of the Opposition to help pass the bill unanimously as they did in case of the passage of the two other bills in the House yesterday.

The Representation of the People (seats for women members) (amendment) Bill, 1991, was then passed by the House by voice vote.

The Election Officials (Special Regulations) Bill, 1991, was unanimously passed by the House after A F M Jahangir Hussain (AL-Patuakhali) withdrew his amendment.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury hoped that all of us would be able to face the national disaster through united efforts in the same spirit as the bill was passed.

Reciprocating the sentiment of Prof Chowdhury the Opposition Chief Whip Md Nasim said they too wanted to face the national disaster putting in united efforts and rising above narrow outlook. We want to continue this process, he said and hoped that the Leader of the House would make an appeal in this respect with open mind.

The Deputy Speaker then adjourned the House at 12:45 am Friday until 11:30 am Saturday.

pointed out that the clause to remove a sponsor director after six years, would create vacuum in banking. He demanded examination of the bill by an experts' committee before placing it in the House.

Sheikh Ansar Ali

Jamaat-e-Islami member Sheikh Ansar Ali said the bill should be sent to elicit public opinion.

Mujibur Rahman

State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman said the present bill has been brought to control the private banks in the interest of the economy. He said the provision of continuing the tenure of sponsors directors for unlimited period has generated favouritism leading to squandering of the money deposited by people. Many of the sponsor directors took huge loans from the banks and never repaid them. No step could be taken to recover the loans from the defaulters, neither any action was taken against the defaulters, he added.

He said the provision of six years duration for sponsor-directors in the private banks has been made in the bill to restore discipline in the national economy and run the banks smoothly.

Thereafter, the Opposition move for sending the bill for eliciting public opinion was rejected by voice vote.

Salahuddin Quader

Moving his amendment to the Bill, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury said the honest desire expressed by the State Minister for Finance in the bill might not be effective because of the lacuna in it. He pleaded for incorporating the provision of challenging the government decision to the Supreme Court in the bill.

S.S. Halder

In his amendment S S Halder (AL-Pirojpur) strongly opposed the provision of limiting the duration of sponsor directors of banks to six years.

Akbar Ali

Akbar Ali (BNP-Strajgonj) also criticised some provisions in the bill and said its passage would have adverse effects on the stock exchange.

Rashed Khan Menon

Workers Party member Rashed Khan Menon said, since the bill is related to persons who deal with peoples' deposit, it demands careful scrutiny. He asked for taking opinions of the private sector banking and chambers about the bill.

Suranjit Sen Gupta of Ganotantri Dal said, since the bill curtails the rights of the sponsor directors, it was destined to discourage those who would take initiative to float a bank. He called for removal of the discrepancy in the bill.

Akhtaruzzaman Babu

Awami League member Akhtaruzzaman Babu described the bill as a product of the autocratic regime and mentioned that a copy of the bill reached him seven months ago. He said banking laws needed to be amended, because those are outdated.

But the amendment, must be aimed at improvement while not to make the laws undemocratic, he opined. He

Abdul Matin Khasru

In his amendment Abdul Matin Khasru (AL-Comilla) said if the bill was passed in its present form foreign investors would feel discouraged to invest their capital in Bangladesh.

He argued that the provision of fixing the time limit of the sponsor directors of private banks to six years was un-

democratic in nature. He narrated how the autocratic regime had used the banking sector for political purpose and looting money of the people and thus destroyed the economy.

In this connection, he referred to the address of the Acting President in the Sangsad in which he mentioned that Taka ten thousand crore advanced to the industrialists was still unrealised. He further said that as banking is controlled by the government. The bill, if passed in its present form would allow the power of control to be misused by a government if it were not a pro-people one.

Taking the floor, Mujibur Rahman said a provision has been made in the bill so that the deposit of he people could not be misappropriated.

Regarding the limitation of tenure of the sponsor directors to six years, he said such a system was in practice in India, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

Then the amendment proposals by Sudhansu Shekhar Halder, Akbar Ali, Abdul Matin Khasru and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury were placed before the House. The proposals were rejected by voice vote.

The House passed the bank company bill, 1991, at 11:18 pm.

Education Minister Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, who is in charge of the Election Commission Secretariat in the Jatiya Sangsad, placed "The representation of the people (amendment) bill, 1991" for immediate consideration.

A S M Firoz

The Deputy Speaker invited A S M Firoz to move his resolution to circulate the bill for eliciting public opinion.

Firoz moving his resolution said that the Deputy Leader of the House had said that he would place the bill in another form fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people.

He said if the bill was now passed in the present form then the nine year movement against the autocratic government would be meaningless.

Khalemul Islam (AL-Thakurgaon), Advocate Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu (AL-Barguna), Sheikh Ansar Ali (Jamaat-Satkhira) moved their resolutions and called for eliciting public opinion before passing the bill.

Sheikh Harunur Rashid (AL-Khulna) and Khan Tipu Sultan (AL-Jessore) called for sending the bill to the select committee.

Pro Badruddoza Chowdhury participating next said that the bill would be passed with amendments brought by Treasury Bench member from Munshiganj Wing Commander (Retd) M Hamidullah.

Both the resolutions of eliciting public opinion and sending it to the select committee were rejected by voice vote.

Wing Commander M Hamidullah then placed the amendments to the bill which was passed unanimously by the House.

The House later unanimously passed the representation of the people (amendment) bill, 1991.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury extended thanks to the Opposition Bench for unanimously passing the bill.

The Delimitation of Constituencies (Amendment) Bill, 1991, was unanimously passed in the Sangsad.

Earlier winding up the discussion on the bill, Deputy Leader of the House and proposer of the bill Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury said the passage of the bill was a must for in holding of ten by-elections.

On the comments of the Opposition members, Prof Chowdhury said ordinance on

delimitation was promulgated by Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who was chosen by the parties that waged the movement against autocracy. That's why it was obligatory on the part of those who fought untidily against autocracy to help passage of the bill. He requested members belonging to Opposition Bench to extend their support in this regard.

Taking part in the discussion on the bill, Awami League member A S M Firoz demanded that the delimitation of constituencies for 1973 and 1979 parliamentary elections be retained. He said since the current bill was not the property of the BNP, it should be withdrawn.

Jamaat-e-Islami member Sheikh Ansar Ali said since the bill was prepared by the autocratic government, it should be withdrawn and sent to elicit public opinion.

The proposals of sending the bill for eliciting public opinion and sending to the select committee were rejected by voice vote.

Then the Deputy Leader of the House and Education Minister Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury placed the representation of the people (seats for women members) (amendment) bill, 1991, for adoption in the House.

Participating in the discussion on the bill, ASM Firoz (AL-Patuakhali) said that the women members of the House after their election went to the mazar of Ziaur Rahman to place floral wreath there. He said so they should also have offered a bouquet to the deposed President Ershad for having made the opportunity for them to come to the House.

Giving his points of view in supporting the passage of the bill, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said the initiative of electing women members was taken by the members who were seated before me at the moment. He said, "I must thank them for that" but, he said, the provision of 15 women members in the House was inadequate and the Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman increased the number to 30 subsequently.

He called upon the members of the Opposition to help pass the bill unanimously as they did in case of the passage of the two other bills in the House yesterday.

The Representation of the People (seats for women members) (amendment) Bill, 1991, was then passed by the House by voice vote.

The Election Officials (Special Regulations) Bill, 1991, was unanimously passed by the House after A F M Jahangir Hussain (AL-Patuakhali) withdrew his amendment.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury hoped that all of us would be able to face the national disaster through united efforts in the same spirit as the bill was passed.

Reciprocating the sentiment of Prof Chowdhury the Opposition Chief Whip Md Nasim said they too wanted to face the national disaster putting in united efforts and rising above narrow outlook. We want to continue this process, he said and hoped that the Leader of the House would make an appeal in this respect with open mind.

The Deputy Speaker then adjourned the House at 12:45 am Friday until 11:30 am Saturday.

Act from the bill and also to circulate it for eliciting public opinion.

Salahuddin Yusuf

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) said by enhancing period of punishment, the crimes could not be reduced. He said what is important is how the law will be used. Yusuf said since the bill was very important, it should be discussed thoroughly. He alleged the bill smells of elements of autocracy. Yusuf suggested that the bill be sent to elicit public opinion.

Dhirendra Devnath Shambhu

Taking the floor, Advocate Dhirendra Devnath Shambhu (AL-Barguna), called for sending the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1991 to elicit public opinion.

Abdur Rahman Biswas