

'Politics of wheat a familiar phenomenon in country'

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 11.17 am, one hour 17 minutes behind schedule, with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair, reports BSS.

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

Explaining the reasons for delay of the day's sitting, the Deputy Speaker said the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad had informed him that the Members of the Opposition Benches had a meeting in the morning and so he had been requested to delay the sitting.

The Deputy Speaker said, moreover, the State Minister for Finance, Mujibur Rahman, was supposed to make a statement in the House. But the State Minister could not turn up as he (Rahman) was discussing some important matters with the Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. Mujibur Rahman would turn up soon, he said.

The Deputy Speaker then gave the floor to Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna) to raise his question.



Nurul Islam Moni

Badruddoza Chowdhury
After the question-hour, Deputy Leader of the House Prof. A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury informed the House that eight persons were killed and 22 others injured in an accident in the Ghorasal Fertilizer Factory Wednesday night.

He said the injured persons included one General Manager, one Manager and 13 foreign specialists. Those killed included technical personnel fifty persons were on duty at that time, he added.

Prof. Chowdhury said fire service ambulances from Dhaka and Narayngdi immediately responded to the call and rushed to the spot.

He said the accident occurred due to explosion in the carbon dioxide cylinder and Amonia Plant but no fire was caused.

He said Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan and high officials of the Ministry were on the spot now.

The House observed one minute silence as a mark of respect to the victims of the accident and offered munajat for peace of the departed souls.

At the proposal of Prof. B Chowdhury, the House also adopted a condolence resolution.

Begum Motia Chowdhury (AL-Sherpur) proposed that copies of the condolence resolution should be sent to the family members of the victims. The House accepted the proposal.

Abdus Samad Azad demanded a detailed statement on the accident in the afternoon sittings.

Ashraf Hossain
Whip Ashraf Hossain proposed inclusion of the name of late poet and litterateur Milon Mahmud in the condolence resolution. The Chair accepted the proposal.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury
Rising on a Point of Order, Abul Hasan Chowdhury (AL-Tangail) said the Relief Ministry had allocated wheat to all the parliament members in Tangail excepting him. He said he wanted to know this through his Special Privilege motion, but it was rejected by the Chair.

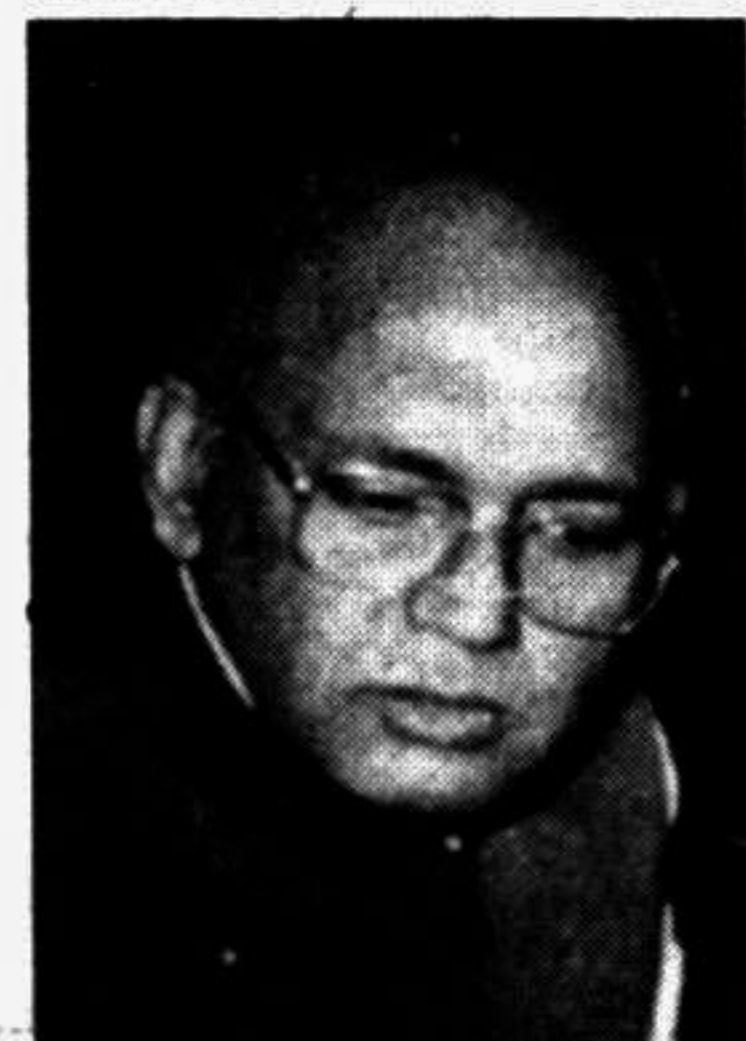
Lutfur Rahman Khan
In his clarification, State Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation Lutfur Rahman Khan said 26,000 tonnes of wheat were allocated for Test Relief (TR) programmes during the rainy season for distribution through parliament members.

He said the wheat was allocated area-wise on the basis of population and not in the name of any parliament member.

The State Minister said wheat was not allocated only to the partymen and the exclusion of Chowdhury might be a stray incident and not international.

He further said, that earlier, TR wheat used to be allocated through and Upazila Parishad committee as a result of which there were misuses.

He said this time commitments were taken in the project proposals that the wheat should have to be spent on the advice of local parliament members. This statement of the Minister was contested by a number of Opposition Members.



Tofael Ahmed

Tofael Ahmed
Taking the floor, Tofael Ahmed (AL) said he did not know about the decision of the government to involve the members of parliament in the allocation and distribution of wheat in their respective constituencies.

If a decision in this regard has already been taken, the Members must get a copy of this, he said.

He referred to Sangsad leader Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's assurance that the privilege committee would soon be formed. The committee had not been formed as yet, he said.

At this stage several Members from the Opposition Bench sought to speak something on the matter.

ASM Feroze
ASM Feroze (AL-Patuakhali) urged the State Minister for Relief to inform the House of the allocation of wheat made to the members of parliament.

"We have not received any such allocation but the people

might misunderstand us when they will come to know about the allocation of wheat involving the MPs" he said.

The Deputy Speaker intervened to say that the Minister did not say that allocation of wheat had been made in the names of the members of parliament.

Shawkat Ali

Colonel (Retd) Shawkat Ali (AL-Shariatpur) said the project for which wheat had been sanctioned had to be completed before June 30 but he wondered how it would be possible since several days before that deadline there would be Eid Holiday.

He urged the State Minister for Relief to clarify what exactly the Minister meant by his statement involving the members of parliament for the distribution of wheat.

Maulana Obaidul Haq
Maulana Obaidul Haq (Islamic Oikko Jote Sylhet) said roads in his constituency had been destroyed by floods but no allocation of wheat was for this area. Even if the allocation has been made, he is not in the know of such allocation, he said.



Rashed Khan Menon

Rashed Khan Menon (WP) said "politics of wheat" was not an unfamiliar phenomenon in the countryside. He urged the government to be careful and clear about distribution of wheat.

Menon said how the Members of Parliament had been involved in the distribution of wheat and what would be their responsibility were still unclear. He said the Upazila Chairmen and the UNOs might have already decided on the distribution of wheat without consultations with the Members of Parliament if such allocations had been made.

Motia Chowdhury

Begum Motia Chowdhury (AL-Sherpur) called for removing anomalies in the system of distribution of wheat and said harmonisation of the system was necessary.

She also made it clear that wheat allotment mentioned by the Minister might have been received by the local administration but not by the respective Members of Parliament.

The Deputy Speaker Ali said it seemed that wheat was an interesting issue for all and as such more members were keen to take on the subject.

Ansar Ali

Ansar Ali (Jamaat-Satkira) said the report published in the newspapers Thursday that many former Members of Parliament did not clear telephone bills had already tarnished the image of the Members before the people.

The allocation of wheat was

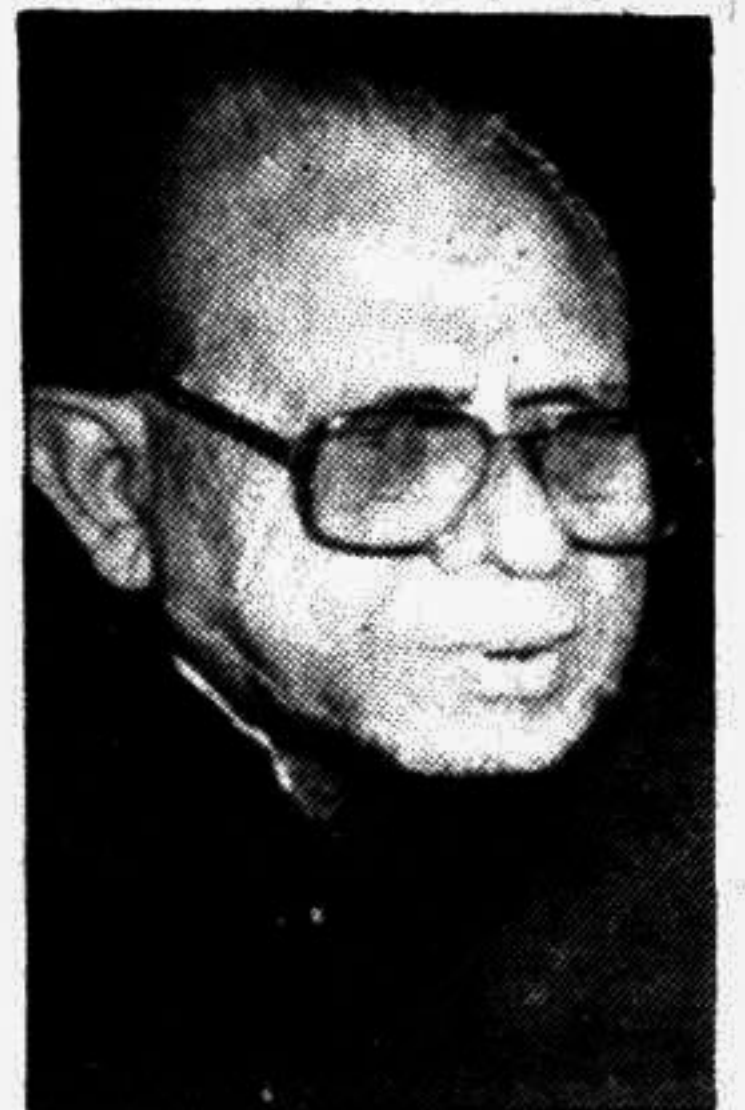
also a potentially dangerous issue to further tarnish their image, he said and added that there must be clearly specified guidelines if the MPs were given responsibility of distribution of wheat.

Begum Ahsanullah (BNP) said the members belonging to the Treasury Bench were also not involved in this distribution.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad told the Chair that he would speak on different issues when the House would resume after the break.

Ziaul Haq Zia (BNP) said a good system must be there to deal with wheat distribution.

The Chair adjourned the House at 1.08 p m till 4 p m.



Samad Azad

When the House resumed its sitting at 4-18 pm with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad, demanded inclusion of oppositions' constitution amendment bills in today's order of the day.

Ziad insisted that if the bill was cleared by the President, "let us introduce the bill and continue discussion on it right from now and save the nation from being in suspension."

He regretted that though the bill by Awami League was submitted on April 14 for introduction in the first session of Parliament, their hopes did not materialise. The Treasury Bench also did not move any such bill, he said.

He said the main objective of the anti-autocracy movement was to establish a sovereign Parliament through impartial polls where power would be vested in the Parliament and the government would also be accountable to the Parliament.

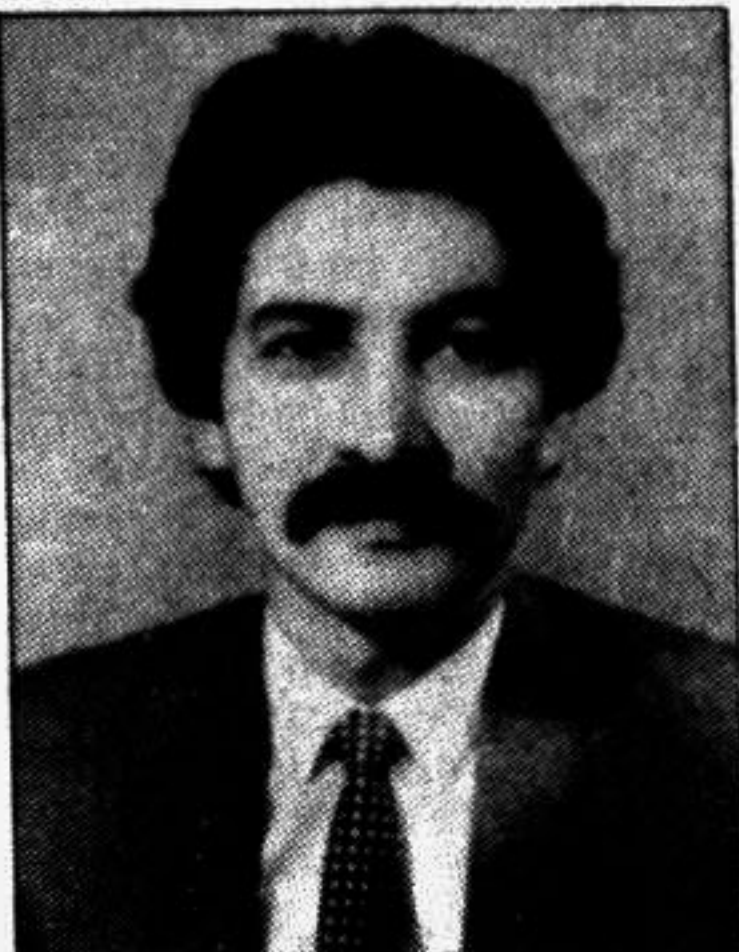
Azad said the bill passed through the select committee, Sangsad Secretariat and the Election Commission very quickly after fulfilling the requirements, but it got stuck up in the Law Ministry for the last three days from where it was to go to the President for his consent.

He said national consensus was needed on the important national issues like the constitution, law and order and the campus situation for the existence of the nation. Rashed Khan Menon (Workers Party-Bakerganj) said, we need a national consensus on important national issues and understanding of the two national leaders.

He said we supported the bill prepared by Awami League and included some supplementary points of our bill.

Referring to the increased intolerance being shown all over the country, he said so far students clashes used to be

held between Chhatra League and Chhatra Dal. But now it was occurring between different factions of Chhatra League also.



Nurul Islam Moni

Participating in the discussion, Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna) called for reaching an understanding between the Bangladeshi and Bangalee nationalisms. He said, we have to reach a national consensus on vital national issues.

Moni said he had filed a constitutional amendment bill with the relevant quarters on March 28 but knew nothing about its fate though three months had already passed.

He said he had also filed another amendment to the constitution for approving the actions of the interim government formed after successful mass upsurge.

The independent member said Parliament in the past had approved all the actions taken under Martial Laws. Then why should we not approve the actions taken by a government that had given us the most fair election? he asked.

Posing a question, Moni said the Law Minister could have met the Acting President Wednesday instead of Thursday for taking his recommendation on the bill. He said if the people became frustrated then everything would be proved futile.

Referring to the increase of age limit for government service, he said the door for employment still remained closed. He said the Treasury members off and on mentioned the success of the mass movement but they were doing everything but short of implementing the objectives of the movement.

Hafiz Uddin Ahmed

Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed (Ind-Bhola) said he had given notice under Article 33 of the constitution for amending the Public Safety Act but no action was taken so far by a government that had been installed through mass upsurge, he said.

In a civilised world, there was no law under which a man could be put behind the bar without trial. Such a law is only found in this country which should be abrogated immediately, he added.

Major Hafiz demanded of the government to repeal all black laws including Printing Presses and Publication Act and Special Powers Act.

He said when the whole nation was demanding repeal of all black laws, the government had passed another black law that permits, the administration to arrest, convict, and sentence anyone to seven years imprisonment for criticising the President and the Prime Minister.

Asaduzzaman

Speaking on the constitution amendment issue,

Mohammad Asaduzzaman (AL-Magura) said this House is the product of mass upsurge and aimed at establishing Parliamentary form of government. He expressed his anguish to see that no steps had been taken so far in this regard.

Asaduzzaman said the opposition members including the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad, had given notices for amending the constitution. He said the constitution amendment bill filed by them had got passage of the scrutiny committee.

If the scrutiny committee, he said, did not take recourse to any delaying tactics then what was the reason for the delay in placing it before the House.

He called upon the Treasury Bench to adopt the constitutional amendment bill to be brought by the opposition to end diarchy and fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people.

As the House resumed its sitting after the break for Asar prayer, the Deputy Speaker asked Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim to take the floor.

Mohammad Nasim

Nasim said he did not have much to say except that the opposition expected to hear something concrete from the Treasury Bench on the Opposition's Constitution Amendment Bill.

"We do not want to take part in any meaningless discussions on the issue and as such are looking forward to meaningful discussions on this," he said.

The Opposition Chief Whip said the opposition would decide its next course of action after hearing from the Law Minister.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Gislam Hafiz then took the floor and explained details government's position on the bill submitted by the opposition and its own bill on the issue.

The Minister said he had taken the bill to the Acting President today and brushed aside opposition criticisms that government dragged its feet on the issue. "We took it to President despite your non-compliance with the formalities involved with such bills," he said sought opposition cooperation in dealing with the bill.

Abdus Samad Azad

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad said, "we have fulfilled all the conditions for bringing the Constitution Amendment Bill in the Sangsad."

He thanked the Law Minister for his exercise to facilitate the introduction of the said bill in the Sangsad. But Azad at the same time wanted to know why it was taking so much time to send the bill to the President for his recommendation.

The Deputy Leader of the opposition said we thought the amendments we proposed to the constitution would involve no expenditure. He wondered why the Constitution Amendment Bill could not be sent to the President so long when the Select Committee had okayed it.

Azad said the Law Minister had just now informed the House that he went to meet the President in connection with this bill, but he did not tell the House whether the

President has given his recommendation to it. He wanted an explanation from the Law Minister as to how the Law Ministry stood as a barrier between the Sangsad and the President. He pointed out that the Law Minister had no right whatsoever to create any impediments and block the bill.

Pressing the urgent need for bringing the bill to the Sangsad, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia had explicitly stated that her party would abide by the decision of the Sangsad with regard to the implementation of the outline of the joint declaration of the three alliances: It is beyond my comprehension where lies the snag in bringing the bill the Sangsad and who is blocking it, he added.

Azad said the Law Minister, in his speech, admitted that he had to work in a very subtle way to process the constitution amendment bill. This aspect merited close scrutiny as to why the Law Minister had to conduct in this manner to bring this bill to the Sangsad elected by the people.

Azad further said the Law Minister must have to state in clear terms what he had taken to the President and what the latter had given him. He hoped that the Law Minister would inform the House whether the President had given his recommendation to it. He also hoped that their bill would be accepted.

After Azad concluded his speech, several members stood up at a time to speak on the issue under discussion.



Suranjit Sengupta

Suranjit Sengupta, who was given the floor by the Deputy Speaker, said the statement of the Law Minister was full of sound and fury but its produced nothing. He castigated the ruling party for the inordinate delay in bringing the bill to the House saying none had the right to squander tax payer's money by wasting time. He described the delay as an act of irresponsibility and said it also involved the question of accountability.

The Gonotantree Party leader said the responsibility of bringing the bill in the Sangsad squarely lay with the ruling party. So the ruling party, he said, must own the responsibility for the delay in bringing the bill to the Sangsad. In this connection, he pointed out that this Sangsad was the result of the mass upsurge that was built up on the basis of joint declaration of the three alliances. There was a conspiracy in a section of the ruling party to foil the pledge given to the nation through the joint declaration. But the young MPs of BNP had foiled the conspiracy by expressing themselves strongly in favour of parliament

ary form of government, he said and congratulated the young members in the ruling party for this.

Suranjit Sengupta regretted that though the ruling party had been speaking about parliamentary form of government from different platforms it was reluctant to say so on the floor of the House. He said that none could ignore and bypass the joint declaration announced on November 19, 1990. The movement launched on the basis of the joint declaration by both sides in the House ousted the autocratic regime and brought them to this Sangsad, he said.

He once again said it was the responsibility of the ruling party to bring the bill to the Sangsad. We have not come here to hear about technical legality and procedural snag, he added.

Gupta said the country was now being run by dual government but the dual government is not government. The country was now witnessing violence in the campus. Law and order had deteriorated sharply and prices of essentials had shot up. All these phenomenon are the results of dual government, he said.

He said the contents of the constitution amendment bill were clear and straight. Such a simple bill could only be brought by those who have political honesty and sincerely believe in it, he said.

The Gonotantree Party leader expressed the hope the ruling party would announce a definite date for bringing their own bill in this respect. They must say, he went on to add, whether they would bring it on June 26 or June 27. Cooperation of all sides would be needed for the adoption of the bill, let us talk heart to heart to create history in the establishment of unalloyed democracy. Let us give something to our posterity for upholding the principles of democracy and setting in motion the democratic spirit, he said.

As the House reassembled after the Maghreb prayer, five members placed their respective private members' resolutions. They are: Md. Abdus Shaheed (AL-Moulvibazar), Mizanur Rahman Manu (AL-Dinajpur), Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna), Sharifuddin Ahmed (AL-Habiganj) and Tabibur Rahman Sardar (AL-Jessore).

Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali ruled that discussion on the matters will be held later.

Moulana A Sobhan

Speaking on the issue of introduction of Amendment Bill on the Parliamentary system of government, Moulana Abdus Sobhan (Jamaat-Pabna) said the Law Minister had informed the House candidly about the steps he had taken to pave the way for placing the Amendment Bill in the House. But, he said, the Amendment Bill submitted by the opposition had not been introduced in the House.

He said Jamaat-e-Islami was in favour of Parliamentary form of government, as was announced earlier. He said his party expected the introduction of the Amendment Bill on the parliamentary form of government at the first available opportunity.

Incomplete

Metropolitan

161 to contest JUCSU polls

JU Correspondent

The Election Commission of the JUCSU (Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union) and hall unions has presented the lists at 482 candidates for the forthcoming elections.

Among the nominees, 161 were qualified for 16 posts of JUCSU while 321 others were selected for 78 posts of six different halls.

In total, seven students organisations are taking part in the JUCSU election scheduled to be held on July 6.

Only three students parties namely, Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-A) and Bangladesh Students Union (BSU) were capable of providing candidates for the 16 JUCSU and 78 hall unions' posts.

Meanwhile, BCL (S-A) Wednesday declared their 'Jahangir-Shapan' panel. Earlier BCL (S-A) submitted four candidates for the posts of Vice-President and General Secretary. Thursday was the last day for withdrawing nomination papers.

Senate meet today

The annual Senate meeting of Jahangirnagar University will be held today (Friday) at 9 am at the newly-built adminis-

tration building of the university.

The Senate will consider the previous budget and prepare a new budget for the current fiscal year of the University.

Rheumatic fever project opens

By Staff Correspondent

Project activities of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Diseases formally were inaugurated Ishwarganj upazila health complex recently. Ahmed Hossain Bhuyan, Chairman Upazila Parishad presided over the meeting.

Dr KMHS Strajul Haque, Project Director and Dr Md Abdul Basit, Civil Surgeon, Mymensingh were present as chief guest and special guest respectively.

Among others Yutaka Kuno, and Dr S Takeshi Japanese Experts of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Diseases Project spoke on the occasion. Speakers discussed various aspects of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Diseases including its prevention, says a press release.

New BIWTC Chairman

Faruque Alam has joined BIWTC as its Chairman. He got his Civil Engineering degree from Erik Dhalbergs Technical College of Sweden. He also obtained higher Education in Wood Processing Technology from Sweden.

Prior to joining BIWTC, Faruque served as Consultant and Deputy Chief Engineer for 7 years at Dhaka Sonargaon Hotel.

19, 409 tons condensed milk imported

Shipping Minister MK Anwar informed the Jatiya Sangsad on Thursday that Bangladesh imported 19,409 tonnes of condensed milk, spending a foreign exchange equivalent of Taka 88.71 crore in the 1989-90 financial year, reports BSS.

The Shipping Minister was replying to a question from Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury (JP—Moulvibazar) at the Sangsad in the morning on behalf of the Commerce Minister Keramat Ali, who is indisposed. He said letter of credit worth Taka 83.78 crore has been opened for the import of condensed milk upto April this fiscal year.

Tk 3,990cr trade deficit with 39 countries in 8 months

Shipping Minister MK Anwar told the Jatiya Sangsad Thursday that Bangladesh had a deficit of about Taka 3,990 crore in its import-export trade with 39 countries in the first eight months of the current fiscal, reports BSS.

In a written reply to a question from Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna), on behalf of the Commerce Minister Keramat Ali who is indisposed, Anwar said the trade deficit with Singapore was Taka 714.29 crore which is the highest followed by South Korea Taka 388.28 crore and Hong Kong Taka 375.70 crore.

He said the country's trade deficit with India stood at Taka 352.16 crore and with the United Arab Emirates, Taka 256.78 crore. He said the deficit with Japan was Taka 241.30 and with China, Taka 174.01 crore.

The Minister said the trade deficit with Saudi Arabia stood at Taka 123.34 crore and with Pakistan, Taka 43.38 crore. He said the country's trade deficit with Venezuela was Taka 0.06 crore, which is the lowest. Anwar said Bangladesh earned Taka 2131.04 crore from exports of readymade garments upto April of this current fiscal. He said the for-

ceramic materials, paper, par-tex hand and cutting tools, raw materials for medicines, specialised textiles, jute carpet, and handicrafts, etc.

He said a proposal was also there for the creation of special trade arrangement (STA) for the exchange of goods worth 40 million US dollars between the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh and Indian State Trading Corporation. He said on the basis of that a draft agreement for the exchange of goods worth 10 million US dollars was now under the active consideration of the state trading corporations of the two countries.

In reply to a question from Kazi Abdur Rashid (AL-Gopalganj) on behalf of Commerce Minister Keramat Ali, who is indisposed, the Shipping Minister said a bilateral meeting was held in Dhaka on September 9-10, 1989, to review the trade between the two countries. He said the meeting recommended some measures to narrow down the trade gap between the two sides.

He said proposals were made for the export of some new items favourable to bilateral trade aimed at removing the imbalance between Bangladesh and India. He said, the goods and items recommended were: Sanitary wares, electric and telephone cables, super enamel copper wire, GI Pipe, shaving blade, diesel engine,

ceramic materials, paper, par-tex hand and cutting tools, raw materials for medicines, specialised textiles, jute carpet, and handicrafts, etc.

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In reply to another question from Md Abdus Sobhan (Jamaat-Pabna) the Shipping Minister said Bangladesh exported goods worth Taka 865.58 crore to Pakistan from fiscal 1982-83 to fiscal 1989-90. He said goods worth Taka 768.16 crore were imported from Pakistan during the same period.

Replying to another question from the same member, the Shipping Minister said goods worth Taka 487.49 crore were imported from India in the 1989-90 fiscal and Bangladesh exported goods worth Taka 66 crore to India during the same period.

FBCCI concerned over harassment to businessmen

Star Economic Report

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) expressed on Thursday its concern for what it alleged, harassment of businessmen by the Textile Ministry and Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC).

In a press release, the Federation observed that a section of BTMC officials were trying to blame the private sector in their efforts to cover up this inefficiency, mismanagement and other corrupt practices.

It said the prices of yarn of the BTMC were higher than those in open market but the corporation pressurised the will owners to take their 'quotas'.

Though the Corporation reduced the prices but it was impossible on the post of the private sector mills to take the yarn from the corporation because this would force them to incur losses. Because of non-lifting of yarn quotas, the corporation cancelled the agreements with the parties and lodged cases against them.

The Federation urged the government to take necessary measures for the renewal of licences and stop harassing.

65 DU teachers slate behaviour to Lutfur Rahman

By Staff Correspondent

Sixtyfive Dhaka University teachers condemned the behaviour of some teachers who compelled Dr SM Lutfur Rahman, Associate Professor, Bangla Department, to leave the Conference Room during the Conference of Teacher's Association without delivering his speech.

In a joint statement issued on Thursday they alleged that some newspapers had published false news against him.

BCL (N-S) wins Khilgaon College Students' Union

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra League (N-S) (Pro-JSD) swept in the election of Khilgaon Model College Students' Union held Tuesday.

The BCL (N-S) backed Awlad-Jewel panel bagged 17 posts out of 18 while the only post of female Welfare Secretary went to Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal.

Meanwhile, the BCL (N-S) won the GS and a member post of Abujar Giffari College Students Union and the post of Female Welfare in Mirpur Model College.