

# BNP-AL differences

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one bill, for constitutional amendment for switching over to parliamentary system, and enabling the Acting President go back to the Supreme Court Bench.

Besides differences on floor crossing and inclusion of non-MPs in the cabinet, BNP and AL also differ on the mode of election of President, the requirement of not of a referendum to further amend the Constitution.

Leaders of the 5-party alliance separately called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina on Saturday, and put forward their suggestions to narrow the differences between the two major parties in Parliament.

During their meeting with the Prime Minister, alliance leaders differed on the rigid provision to check floor crossing proposed in the BNP bill.

They expressed their solidarity with the essence of the bill but differed on the provision, which barred a Member of Parliament from contesting election for next five years.

Among the five-party leaders Rashed Khan Menon, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Hasanul Haque Inu, Khalequzzaman, Subhrangshu Chakraborty, A F M Mahubul Haque, Moinuddin Ahmed Khan Badal, Nazrul

Islam, Nayeem Jahangir, Haider Akbar Khan Rono and Nirmol Sen were present.

The Workers Party MP Rashed Khan Menon was in favour of allowing up to one-tenth of ministers from non-MPs, instead of one-fifth proposed in the 12th amendment bill by the BNP.

They also opposed the proposition of vesting the authority of election of the President from the Election Commission to the Speaker.

The five-party leader also said the introduction of the bills in Parliament was the result of the struggle against autocracy for the last nine years.

They suggested incorporation of certain provisions in the proposed amendment bills including necessary provisions for restraining conspiracy to grab state power by trampling down the Constitution.

They also suggested certain amendments regarding judiciary.

The Constitution eleventh and twelfth amendment bills introduced by the government are expected to be referred to a 15-member select committee (or special committee) today (Sunday) for scrutiny. The AL bill and four other bills introduced by Rashed Khan Menon will be taken up on the next private members' day on Thursday.



Five-Party leaders called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Secretariat office on Saturday. — PID photo



Indian Army Chief of Staff General Sunith Francis Rodrigues being received by Chief of Army Staff Lt General Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan at the Zia International Airport Saturday. — ISPR photo

# DU reopens

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Ahmed, President and General Secretary respectively of the organisation.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal rally was addressed by Habibunnabi Sohel and Ali Akkas Nadim, President and General Secretary respectively of its Dhaka University unit.

Speakers at the rally demanded immediate arrest and trial of the killers of Mahabubur Rahman and Dr Milon.

They accused the BCL (A-A) for terrorism on the campus and said a conspiracy was being hatched by them to make the BNP government unstable. But they had already been rejected by the people, the speakers added.

BCL (A-A) rally was addressed by Golam Mostafa Suzan and Quamruzzaman Ansari, President and General Secretary respectively of BCL's (A-A) Dhaka University unit.

Speakers denied the accusation that their organisation was responsible for the killing of Mahabubur Rahman and said it was suicidal. They demanded release of some of their workers from jail and said the police were harassing their party workers while not arresting the actual terrorists.

Sources said a large number of resident students could not enter into their respective halls for not having identity cards with them.

Some students while talking to The Daily Star termed this system as 'bogus' and said it may not continue more than a week. They further alleged that huge quantity of arms had already been taken to some of the halls despite strict vigilance of the police forces on the campus and of the hall authorities at the hall gates.

They also alleged that no resident is allowed to enter into halls after 10 pm which created problems for many of the working students for their survival in Dhaka. It was not being possible under present circumstances, some student alleged.

They exclaimed with grievance that the general students were not supposed to suffer for a few terrorists those who could easily be caught by the law-enforcing agencies if the government and the major political parties cordially wanted.

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# Syndicate team

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campus of illegal arms.

They said political parties could help reduce rivalry and tension between student organisations and urged the Acting president to convene a grand meeting of political parties for obtaining a pledge from them against arming their respective student fronts.

They blamed the police's indifference during the recent incidents of exchange of fire between rival student fronts in the university campus. They said the police should have acted on their own to stem the violence.

The Acting President agreed with the delegation that the campus must be free from violence but disagreed with their views that the police were indifferent at the time of the violent activities of the students in the campus.

He reminded the delegation that the police have to take all steps in the campus in consultations with the university authorities and that the police are to exercise utmost restraint in such matters.

# Sino-Bangla

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for carrying out the study. She also thanked the experts of the two countries for 'putting in very hard and dedicated work' to complete the study.

The Prime Minister told the visiting Vice-Minister of China her government attached high priority to the flood control measures. She said the government would give serious consideration to the recommendations of the report for their implementation.

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the Chinese government would again come forward to provide financial and technical support for implementation of the work envisaged in the study report.

She emphasized the need for continued technical cooperation in the field of flood control and water management between Bangladesh and China on a long-term basis.

Begum Zia also underlined the necessity for giving the current cooperation an institutional shape.

The Prime Minister recalled her recent visit to China and described it as 'very fruitful and successful.'

Begum Zia requested Wang Shouqiang to convey her best wishes to Chinese President Yang Shangkun, Premier Li Peng, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Jiang Jemin and the people of China.

PM

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of science and technology and also formulation of realistic planning for their proper implementation for socio-economic progress.

Recalling late President Ziaur Rahman for formulating the National Science and Technology Policy in 1980, Begum Zia said it was aimed at broadening the base of national productivity for accelerating development and achieving self-reliance.

The Prime Minister said the government had been taking realistic steps in fulfilling the basic needs of the people.

Referring to some environmental hazards confronting the country, she called for resolving the problem by 'our own acumen' and creating public awareness about the adverse effects of environment. Natural calamities could be contained through application of proper technology, she pointed out.

Later she visited different stalls at the exhibition.

Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury called upon the county's scientists, architects and thinkers to devote themselves to new scientific innovations appropriate to national needs.

Principal Yunus Khan underscored the need for successful usage of science and technology to build a self-reliant economy.

# BCCI operations suspended

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banks operating in Dhaka.

Panic gripped the banking circle immediately after the closure of the branches of BCCI in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Bank, in its order, said all operations of the BCCI branches have been suspended in the interest of the public until further order.

BCCI has two branches in Dhaka, one in Chittagong and one in Khulna. It operates 3 booths in Dhaka and two in Chittagong. Customers' deposits with the Bank totalled approximately Taka 500 crore, the sources said.

According to authoritative sources, BCCI operations in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Thailand and Japan were also suspended on the day but later the orders of suspension were withdrawn. Bangladesh Bank did not withdraw the order till writing this report at 9 pm Saturday.

Bangladesh Bank sources said the action was taken under the Banking Company Act, 1991.

'Such an action is a part of normal regulatory activities in a country to protect the interests of the depositors and allow an orderly conduct of banking business in the country,' the sources said.

Another source said in view of appointment of a receiver for the BCCI in Cayman Islands in the West Indies, BCCI's controlling office in Abu Dhabi instructed its chief executive in Bangladesh not to open business.

On receipt of this report and also the reports from other central banks, Bangladesh Bank reviewed the situation and gave the directive to suspend the banking operations.

The central bank has also instructed the scheduled banks in the country not to make any transactions with the BCCI.

All banks have been cautioned that before entering into any deal with the overseas branch of the BCCI, they have to ensure themselves that such branches have not been restricted from undertaking transactions by the regulatory authority in that country.

Bangladesh Bank sources said all assets and liabilities of the BCCI are now being ascertained. Auditors have also been appointed for this purpose, the sources said.

Some banking experts, commenting on the closure of the Bank's operations in Bangladesh, said there has been no run on the Bank's customers' deposits. 'We are really surprised to hear the closure order,' they said.

Said an executive of the Bank, public sentiment has become jittery on the suspension of the Bank operation. There will be adverse repercussions in the whole banking system here.

He said, 'It's just a Bangladesh affair and Bangladesh Bank should view it from its own position.'

He said foreign exchange is strictly regulated here by Bangladesh Bank and unlike European countries, there has not been free hard currency business here. So the suspension of the banking operation cannot be justified, he said.

Many customers of the BCCI made queries at newspaper offices on the closure of the Bank's operations till late at night on Saturday. One thing shaped up from their impassioned queries: 'Are they going to get back their own deposits?'

An informed circle told The Daily Star that non-profiting loan of the Bank is believed to be one of the highest (as compared to other foreign banks operating here) in Bangladesh.

Since its operations in Bangladesh and gradual expansion, the size of the business and staff was made broad-based but there was no major reorganisation in the Bank's management after reports of some non-banking activities by the Bank in Bangladesh.

More reports on Business Page

# UAE to protest BCCI seizure

ABU DHABI, July 6: Abu Dhabi, whose ruling family is the main shareholder in the troubled Bank of Credit and Commerce International, will launch a global campaign against seizure of the firm's US and European assets, sources said Saturday, reports AP.

Bank officials said an official protest over seizure of the bank's assets will be released by Abu Dhabi. They said the Emirate will launch an international campaign against the move.

The Abu Dhabi-based banking group was once among the world's largest private banks.

Sheik Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the United Arab Emirates, left Saturday in what was officially described as a private visit to Europe. His exact destination was not disclosed.

BCCI officials said London's move came only a week after British authorities agreed to a plan by BCCI to restructure its operations, adding that the government was angered at not being notified of Friday's action.

Reuters adds: British court-appointed liquidators moved in Saturday to investigate the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), whose assets have been frozen pending a fraud investigation.

# JUCSU

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A), Students Union (BSU), Chhatra League (N-S), Jatiya Chhatra Dal and Jatiya Chhatra League.

About 1500 policemen were posted in the dormitories and at several strategic points in the campus under the supervision of a Police Superintendent.

Movement of motor vehicles was restricted and students' identity cards were checked thoroughly as part of the security measures.

Right after the election, ballot boxes were taken to the Arts Faculty under tight security where counting will take place. Official source said, counting would start at 9.30 pm Saturday and results would be published today (Sunday) morning.

Vice-Chancellor and JUCSU president Kazi Saleh Ahmed and the Chief Election Commissioner Prof Enamul Haq Khan went to the polling centres to witness the balloting.

They were satisfied with the polling arrangements.

The Chief Election Commissioner said that police would stay on the campus to tackle the post poll situation.

However, many students were seen leaving the campus soon after the polling apparently fearing post election violence.

Meanwhile, Bashmotti Lata Das of JUSAC was elected uncontested Commonroom Secretary of Fazilatunnesa Hall.

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# The Midnight File

## Bush's message to Gorbachev

WASHINGTON, July 6: President Bush sent Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev a message Saturday dealing with arms control, a senior administration official said. Jack F Matlock Jr, the US Ambassador to Moscow, delivered the oral message, said White House spokesman Roman Popadiuk. Popadiuk said he had no details about the message, but the administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity said "it dealt with arms control," reports AP.

## Fighting in Azeri-Armenian border

MOSCOW, July 6: Fighting broke out along the Azeri-Armenian border after Moscow ended an 18-month state of emergency and pulled out its troops from the troubled region, reports from Thearea said today. Local journalists said about 300 Azerbaijani special forces moved into the border zone early on Saturday, touching off gunbattles with members of the Armenian minority, reports Reuter.

# 100 injured in N'ganj clash

NARAYANGANJ, July 6: At least 100 people were injured, five seriously, in a clash between passengers and the ferry ghat leaseholders at Bandar Saturday, reports UNB.

# VAT

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They will continue to remain within the fold of business turnover tax as before.

At Narayanganj yarn market, trading stood at very thin levels after the introduction of the VAT. Reports said the yarn merchants were unwilling to sell yarn against any receipts while the bulk buyers insisted on it to take the advantages of the VAT.

The VAT provides for avoidance of tax cascading effects (or tax on taxes). Any input, used in processing or manufacturing on which the VAT was earlier paid, are entitled to refund the paid amount of the VAT when the manufacturers or users of the inputs will pay the VAT on the final value of their output. This ensures transparency in accounts, greater tax compliance and plugging the holes responsible for tax evasion, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) sources said.

They added, the areas which were earlier covered under excise duty had been brought under the VAT. The genuine business enterprises which had been paying excise duties before under the existing rates have nothing to lose under the VAT, they said while noting that there would be greater inducements under the VAT to file proper returns to take the benefits of the allowed refund. The VAT has been levied at a uniform rate of 15 per cent, at both importation and manufacturing stages.

According to the NBR, the VAT should not at all affect the prices of 85 per cent of the items covered under it. At best the general price level can go up by only one per cent, they said.

The official sources said, no new excisable manufactured item had been included under it. All the items were subject to excise duty before, they noted without ruling out the possibilities for tax evasion under the earlier arrangements.

Asked about extension of the VAT to some new services sectors, the sources said, eight new services sectors were included under the VAT. The same thing could have been done under excise duty if the VAT was not enforced, they added.

# Body to probe leakage of SSC questions formed

The government has constituted an enquiry committee for identifying persons responsible for leakage of the questions of both papers of English subject of SSC examination of this year under Comilla Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board with Justice Abdul Matin Chowdhury as its chairman, reports BSS.

The committee will submit its report to the government within three weeks, the handout added.

# AL wants consensus

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its 'eleventh' Constitution amendment bill for the transfer of power before making parliament sovereign.

About the twelfth amendment bill introduced by the BNP, the AL working committee maintained that though the bill was for establishing parliamentary system, it curbed the status and democratic rights of the MPs.

The committee said that the BNP's move was an indication of establishing 'parliamentary autocracy', and its bill was introduced in a partisan angle. The meeting claimed that the AL bill was acceptable to all.

As regards the BNP's bill on the transfer of power, the AL resolution said that the introduction of this bill before establishing a sovereign parliament has created doubt and confusion.

The AL meeting expressed fear that after the passage of eleventh amendment bill for the transfer of power, the BNP might withdraw the twelfth amendment bill under some plea and continue presidential system after holding presidential election under its government.

The AL meeting deplored the ruling of the Speaker on July 4 that changed the heading of the AL bill and said that the nation was surprised at this ruling.

The AL meeting criticised the appointment of BNP partymen at different positions in the local government administration and alleged that the BNP was avoiding elections though the party came to power through elections.

The meeting mentioned appointment of BNP partymen as mayors in the city corporations of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi and said that the trend was against democratic norms and values.

The meeting also criticised repressive measures on the officers and employees in different spheres of administration and said that the measures would hamper the establishment of a neutral administrative system.

In another resolution the AL working committee expressed deep regret and concern at the violence in various academic institutions in the country including Dhaka University, Chittagong University and Jagannath University College.

The meeting concluded that the government has failed to maintain law and order in the campuses and to restore the academic atmosphere due to its party outlook.

The meeting also noted the deteriorating law and order situation in the country that started after the election.

The meeting also demanded immediate release of AL working committee member, Kader Siddiqui and student leader Mohiuddin Ahmed, one of the leaders of the movement against autocracy.

The meeting also demanded the release of all political prisoners in the country including members of the Awami League.

The meeting also expressed deep concern over the unusual hike in prices of essential items after the budget announcements.

In a resolution, the meeting expressed deep resentment at the lack of effective programmes for rehabilitation in the coastal areas and the alleged irregularities in relief distribution.

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