

Five per cent upper class people own 20 pc GDP

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 4.18 pm Monday with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair, reports BSS.

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

The question-answer session took more than its scheduled one hour time due to growing interest by the members of both the opposition and Treasury Benches on a question put by Haji Rashed Mosharrar (AL-Jamalpur) on the loans taken by the directors of the private banks from various nationalised banks.

The particular question alone took about half an hour and continued even after the Asr prayer.

As the Deputy Speaker switched over to the order of the day, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman made a statement on a controversial article published in 'The Nation' of Pakistan in its supplement on Bangladesh Independence Day this year.

The Foreign Minister said the Bangladesh High Commission in Pakistan had lodged a protest with the newspaper against the article and necessary steps had been taken in this regard. He also pointed out that the article 'two countries, one nation', was not approved by the Bangladesh government, although such articles meant for special supplements require approval of the concerned government before publication.

The newspaper concerned had regretted for the unauthorised publication, he added.

Thereafter, Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola), thanked the Foreign Minister for the statement, but pointed out that several Bangladeshi business houses including some banks had supported the nation's supplement by having their advertisements in the paper. In reply, Mostafizur Rahman said that the government had sought explanations from the concerned parties in this regard.

being hampered seriously. He demanded immediate steps by the government in this regard.

State Minister for Irrigation, Ansar Ali Siddiqi later in a statement on the issue, said that the government was fully aware of the problem and that a study was underway to save the area from continuous water-logging. He said soon after the study was completed, the government would take a project to remove the water on emergency basis.

The Deputy Speaker then informed the members that he had received four notices on privileges and explained why he could not accept them. One notice by Begum Matia Chowdhury had been sent to the relevant committee for further examination.

to say that it was true that she lost the direct election but the Leader of the Opposition was rejected by the people from two constituencies.

Several opposition Awami League leaders, apparently befuddled by the observation of Mrs Rahman, sought to say something.

Razzak Ali

Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali appealed to them not to involve themselves in the affair that so far remained confined within two women members. But on insistence, gave the floor to Chief Whip of the opposition Mohammad Nasim.

Mohammad Nasim said that Mrs Rahman made certain objectionable remarks on the leader of the opposition while

defending herself.

"I told this House earlier also that this lady was associated with the Awami League till August 15, 1975, but betrayed the party," he said adding that she could also betray the party which now she belonged to.

Nasim said Mrs Rahman lost the direct elections but became a member as one of the 30 'alankar' (decoration pieces) under a law initiated by the Ershad government.

Begum Matia Chowdhury was right when she said directly elected members should not have less responsibility than those who came in the House as 'alankars' the opposition Chief Whip said.

The comments of Nasim brought several women members rise to their feet and the

chair gave the floor to Jahanara Begum of BNP (Rajbari-Paridpur).

Jahanara Begum

Mrs Jahanara Begum said it was unfortunate that mudslinging was going on about women members in the House and added that such a tendency was improper since women constituted half of the country's population.

She said if any newspaper had described the women members as 'alankars' in the past, such comments certainly amounted to tarnishing the image of the women members because every member enjoyed the same status and rights.

She said reserved seats for half of the country's population — the women — was necessary since no other provision had

been made for adequate representation of women in Parliament.

Awami League member Begum Sajeda Chowdhury was also a nominated member in this House in 1974 and as such any remark from the opposition bench taunting the status and rights of the members elected on the reserved women quota was really unfortunate, she said.

The Treasury Bench member said one must not point a finger at others in this House on this issue since this would only vitiate the atmosphere, she added.

The chair then adjourned the House at 18-50 hrs for the Maghreb prayers.

When the House re-assembled after Maghreb prayers with Speaker Abdur Rahman

Biswas in the chair, Ashraf Hossain (BNP-Khulna) initiated Monday discussions on the national budget.

Ashraf Hossain

Describing the budget for the fiscal 1991-92 as pro-people one, Ashraf Hossain said preparation of a budget for a country like ours was really a very difficult task. He pointed out that during the nine years of autocratic rule, mills and factories and all productive sectors were destroyed in a planned way.

Tracing the economic condition of the country immediately after the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation, he said the then government had nationalised the jute, sugar and textile mills and took over the management of the industrial units of the non-Bangladeshi nationals. These industrial units incurred heavy losses due to mismanagement and corruption, he said.

He said when the BNP government came to power after the political change-over in 1975 it took certain concrete steps to augment production in these nationalised mills and factories through efficient management. The then BNP government also took many vital steps to boost the national economy. As a result, production in industrial units and agricultural farms started increasing. In fact, some of the industrial enterprises began earning profit. The country also produced surplus foodgrains at that time, he added.

The BNP member regretted that at a time when the economy of Bangladesh started picking up the autocratic regime usurped state power. The autocratic regime returned many mills and factories to their former owners at almost throw-away prices. These owners of denationalised industrial units took bank loans worth crores of takas in the name of BMR but in turn either squandered this fund or transferred it to foreign countries. Consequently, a large number of mills and factories were closed down resulting in unemployment of workers and disruption of economic activities, he said.

Ashraf Hossain said during the autocratic regime no new mills and factories were set up

in the country. Under the patronage of the autocratic regime, the industrialists used bank loans for personal aggrandisement instead of investing them in industries. Things have come to such a pass that 21 per cent of GDP is now owned by mere five per cent of the upper class people. Again 20 per cent people of the country now share 46 per cent of GDP while 70 per cent of the country's total population is landless, he added.

He disagreed with those who blamed the workers for losses in mills and factories saying that inefficiency of the persons holding managerial position and their lack of initiative and drive were responsible for losses in these enterprises. He also repudiated the claim that the public sector mills and factories had surplus workers. Citing an example, he said the number of workers in Adamjee Jute Mills is now much less than what was during the Pakistan period. Paying tributes to workers, he said these people had played a bold role during all democratic movements, war of liberation and anti-autocracy movement.

Opposing the investment of foreign capital, Ashraf Hossain said independence of a country was held hostage by foreign donors. Though the foreign investors come to an underdeveloped country with some technology and capital they take away more than what they invest, he observed.

Hossain demanded construction of a bridge over the river Rupsa, establishment of a university in Khulna division, restarting of Khulna Medical College, direct road communication between Dhaka and Khulna and reopening of the fish processing industries and the closed down industries in Khulna.

Matia Chowdhury

Begum Matia Chowdhury (AL-Sherpur), taking the floor, said each nominated woman member had been given the developmental responsibility for ten constituencies while the elected members had only one constituency at their disposal.

We are directly elected by the people but those who lost direct elections and later found entry in the House through nomination had now more importance, she said.

Farida Begum

This observation infuriated Mrs Farida Begum (BNP-Jessore Satkhira) who said the members elected for the reserved women seats had very much been chosen as members of the House constitutionally and by the Election Commissioner.

As such none had the right to cast aspersion on those who had been elected for the reserved women seats, she added.

Remarks and counter remarks by two women members — Begum Matia Chowdhury and Mrs Farida Rahman — one directly elected by the people while the other through the reserved women seat — heated the atmosphere in the House.

Begum Matia Chowdhury at one stage, without naming Mrs Farida Rahman, said those rejected by the people in the direct elections should not have a bigger say than those elected directly by the people.

This led Mrs Farida Rahman

for taking emergency measures for the return of Bangladeshis to Kuwait free of cost.

Enamul Haq

Enamul Haq (Jamaat-Cox's Bazar) appealed to the government to give urgent attention to the issue of returning the Bangladeshi expatriates to Kuwait. These expatriates were now living miserable life after their return home penniless in the wake of the Gulf war. He welcomed the initiative of the BNP government for sending the expatriates back to Kuwait.

Mahbubul Alam

Mahbubul Alam (BNP-Feni) described how the BNP government headed by Begum Khaleida Zia had been trying sincerely for sending the Bangladeshis back to Kuwait. He said that the Prime Minister during her recent visit to Kuwait had discussed the matter with the leaders of that country. The Kuwaiti government had given assurance to our Prime Minister in this matter, he said.

Alam said JP member Monirul Haq Chowdhury was trying to use this humanitarian issue politically.

Ebadur Rahman

Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury (JP-Moulvi Bazar) suggested formation of a special committee to evolve suitable steps for

the remaining part of Sunday's JS proceedings.

Monirul Haq

Monirul Haq Chowdhury (JP-Comilla) in his speech on matters of urgent public importance said that about 70,000 (seventy thousand) Bangladeshis were compelled to return home from Iraq and Kuwait during the Middle East war. He said the government of former President Ershad had sent an army contingent during that period to safeguard Kaba Sharif and Medina Sharif. The decision of the former government in this respect was correct, he added.

He urged the government to take steps so that the Bangladeshi expatriates could return to Kuwait immediately. He also pleaded for releasing former President Ershad from jail to enable him to take initiative for the return of the Bangladeshis to Kuwait.

Azizur Rahman

Azizur Rahman (AL-Moulvibazar) urged the government to instruct the manpower recruiting and exporting agents to give priority to expatriates in sending them to Kuwait. He also requested the government to see to it that the expatriates who deposited dinars with the Kuwaiti banks after return to Bangladesh got back their money. He called

urgent to Saudi Arabia was a wrong step.

He regretted that Jatiya Sangsad was not informed anything about the visit of the Prime Minister, Begum Khaleida Zia, to the Middle East.

Md. Nasim said that mere statement of the Labour and Manpower Minister in the House would not solve the problems of the Bangladeshi expatriates. Foreign policy of our country was involved in this matter. Our present relations with Kuwait and Iraq should be discussed in the house in the light of our foreign policy, he added.

He further said the return of the Bangladeshi expatriates was now a matter of urgent importance. Acknowledging their contributions to Bangladesh economy, he said these expatriates had helped their motherland by remitting huge amounts of foreign exchange earned by the sweat of their brow.

Fatema Chowdhury (BNP-Sunamganj-Sylhet) also spoke on the issue.

The Speaker then adjourned the House at 10-35 pm to meet again at 4 pm today.

Call to send workers to Kuwait free of cost

The remaining part of Sunday's JS proceedings.

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Reconstruction of Kamaphuli bridge urged

CHITTAGONG, July 22: Acting President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry S M Abul Kalam today called upon the Communications Minister Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmad to take necessary measures for reconstruction of the Kamaphuli Bridge damaged during the April 29 cyclone and tidal surge, reports BSS.

Chittagong, branch of Bangladesh Muslim League and Fazlul Kader Chowdhury Smriti Parishad held Quran Khwani, Milad Mahfil and discussions on the occasion in the city and at the late leader's village home at Gohira.

Special prayer was also offered at the Milad Mahfil for the peace of the departed soul.

'No fund for maintaining roads'

There are 16,238.09 miles of road and 11,307 bridges in the country under 61 district councils, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar told the Jatiya Sangsad on Wednesday, reports BSS.

The District Councils have no fund for maintenance of these roads, the minister said.

Rejoinder

The Jiban Bima Field Officers Kalyan Sangathan in a rejoinder to the accusations made by 'so-called Jiban Bima Field Officers Welfare Association' published in our issue of July 18 said the allegations were not only distortion and fabrication of facts but devoid of any truth.

Fazlur Rahman, President and Altafur Rahman, General Secretary of the Jiban Bima Field Officers Kalyan Sangathan in a joint statement said there was no existence of the welfare association in Jiban Bima. A handful of trouble mongers who lost the last election tried to disrupt the inaugural session of the council meeting and installation ceremony of the elected office-bearers of the association namely, the Jiban Bima Field Officers Kalyan Sangathan when the function was in progress, the statement added. The statement further alleged that the rowdy elements also attempted to shift their misdeeds to the shoulders of the invited guests at the function, e.g. Shamsul Arefin, M A Wahed, Moinul Hossain Shaheen, Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, Mesbahuddin Munshi, M A Kasher, M A Bari Khan, Yunus Mian and M A Wadud, the elected leaders of the staff union of the Jiban Bima Corporation.

Among the so-called council leaders, Enam Sayed Khokon along with two other accomplices were taken to police custody in connection with the incident, the statement added.

Kalyani helps the handicapped get new lease of life

Going towards Mouchak market from Maghbazar area through the Outer Circular Road — one small sign board may catch your attention. By seeing that you may think for a while and just pass over without paying much attention to it. On the sign board it is written Kalyani Manoshik Protibondhi School.

The name itself is quite suggestive.

The school is not like other private schools which spread over the city like mushrooms. Its an institution with a difference. Kalyani Protibondhi School is a project of Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation. Situated at 12, Outer Circular Road, Dhaka, the school is meant for the mentally and physically handicapped children.

When we reached the school premises at around 10:30 in the morning, normal activities were being carried out as it was a working day. We went straight to the Principal's office, which is situated on the ground floor of a two storied building. The building is now owned by the school. As the principal had left for higher studies we were received by Mrs Sufia Akhter Rahman, the acting Principal. She seemed well conversant and acquainted with the situation. She has been with the school since its inception. The school was founded in May, 1984 with a view to help the mentally and physically handicapped children.

According to Mrs Sufia Akhter there are about 84 regular students of different ages (4 yrs to 26 yrs) in the school. There are 18 full time teachers — out of which 15 did Masters in Psychology. Besides they have one volunteer, two paediatricians, one music teacher, one art teacher, one games teacher, two accountants and other supporting staff.

Asked how the students came to know about this school - Mrs Sufia replied that they had supplied leaflets to different hospitals and chambers of paediatricians. So, when they go for treatment they come to know about the school. But some parents bring their children directly to the school — specially when they



think about further development of their children. Some paediatricians also refer their patients to the school.

When a child is brought for admission, several tests are done to assess the child in a clinic called Shishu Bikash Clinic, which is situated inside the school. The child is examined by a paediatrician — then psycholinguistic tests, such as Denver Developmental Screening Tests are done to determine what the child lacks or in other words what can be done for mental and physical development of the child. There are two physiotherapy teachers who were given two years training by physiotherapists of VSO (a British voluntary organisation). They provide physiotherapy to children when it is needed and also train mothers to deal with their wards. There is also one speech therapy teacher who helps children who have difficulties in talking.

Mrs Sufia Akhter showed us different parts of the school. There are several small classes situated on the first floor of the building. Instead of the conventional way — the class rooms are identified by the names of flowers such as Komolokhi, Champakoli, Korobti etc. Different classes have different age groups. There were not more than ten students in any class and each class had at least two teachers. The teacher-student ratio is much higher than any normal school.

As we went through differ-

ent classes we found teachers deeply involved with their students. There were different types of students — some with downs syndrome, some were severely mentally retarded and some were physically handicapped. As we passed by we marked that more emphasis is given on physiological as well as mental development rather than the conventional learning. There is arrangement for giving physiotherapy, speech therapy and special education to the cerebral palsy children. We noticed that some mothers were waiting outside while some were inside the classes helping their children. Actually there is a three way approach — among the teacher and the student — and the teacher and the parent.

There is also distance training programme for children who live outside Dhaka. The programme is called package programme. Parents of handicapped children are trained how to manage their children through booklets. After a certain period re-assessment is made and further courses are advised. There are about 650 cases like this spread all over Bangladesh. For this service there is no fixed charges. Parents pay according to their ability.

Kalyani has got another school at Balitha Union of Dharmraj upazila (45 km from Dhaka) where there are arrangements for normal educa-

tion, vocational training, education for the handicapped and adult education.

We asked Mrs Sufia Akhter how they meet the financial requirements. She said that Unitarian Service Committee of Canada in Bangladesh (USCC) has been funding Kalyani school for years. Besides Bishop Bekkers Foundation, Netherlands, provided them with different educational materials. The school also receives local donations. At times cultural shows are arranged to raise funds. While talking she mentioned about her teachers. Though they are not well paid they seem to enjoy their jobs as they are rendering service to a special kind of children. She mentioned that those teachers are being paid half of the salary for some time as funds of 1990 and 1991 have not been cleared by the concerned local authority.

As we were about to depart we were requested to go upstairs. There we saw all children together having a music session. As some of them were singing chorus — two senior students Shanta and Yasmin Ara Khan were dancing — just like other normal girls. After a short while they had stopped dancing and we started coming back to our office — with a very lively memory — and on the way we were thinking about Kalyani — how it helped those children to get back the rhythm of life.

7 day workshop on editorial writing concludes

A seven-day workshop on editorial writing concluded here Monday at the Press Institute of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Director General of the Institute Enamul Haq distributed certificates among the 13 participants.

The course contents included origin of editorial, art of writing editorial, post editorial, language of editorial, and letter to the editor.

Senior journalists, university teachers and lawyers conducted different sessions of the workshop, said a press release.

Patenga-Kumira dam to be built

CHITTAGONG, July 22: State Minister for Environment and Forest, Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah al Noman said that present government was committed to construct a permanent 18 km protective embankment from Patenga to Kumira to save Chittagong city and important industrial installations from repeated inundations by sea water, reports BSS.

He said this while visiting the embankment at Patenga, Jaliapara and Export Processing Zone (EPZ) sites to see the progress of repair work of its breaches created by cyclonic storm and tidal surge of April 29.

The Water Development Board (WDB) took up the repair work of breaches on emergency basis under food for works programme.

The Minister was apprised of the progress of repair work on the embankment so far achieved.

Anniversary of Fazlul Kader's death observed

CHITTAGONG, July 22: The 18th death anniversary of AKM Fazlul Kader Chowdhury was observed here today, reports BSS.

Chittagong, branch of Bangladesh Muslim League and Fazlul Kader Chowdhury Smriti Parishad held Quran Khwani, Milad Mahfil and discussions on the occasion in the city and at the late leader's village home at Gohira.

Special prayer was also offered at the Milad Mahfil for the peace of the departed soul.

'No fund for maintaining roads'

There are 16,238.09 miles of road and 11,307 bridges in the country under 61 district councils, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar told the Jatiya Sangsad on Wednesday, reports BSS.

The District Councils have no fund for maintenance of these roads, the minister said.

Rule Nisi on Vice-Chancellor Selection of 2 DU Profs challenged

Supreme Court Correspondent

A Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court has issued a Rule Nisi on July 16 upon the Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University and others calling upon them to show cause as to why their action with regard to selection of two professors by applying the method of restructuring without filling up the vacant post of professorship having fallen vacant due to absence of Dr Raunaq Jahan and Dr Ataur Rahman should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority and of no legal effect. The rule is made returnable within four weeks.

The rule was obtained by Dr Md Mustafa Chowdhury, Dr Gharuddin Mollah, Dr Shawkat Ara Hossain, Dr Dalem Chandra Barman, Dr UAB Razia Akhter Banu and Dr Harun-or-Rashid, Associate Professors of the Dept of Political Science of the University of Dhaka.

Mr Md Nurul Huq, senior Advocate with Mr ABM Khairul Hoque and Mr AKM Shahidul Hoque appeared for the petitioners.

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Labour situation reviewed

State Minister for Labour and Manpower Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia Saturday said the present democratic government was trying its best to establish a cordial relations between the employees and employers in mills and factories to boost production, reports BSS.

He was reviewing the latest overall labour situation with the leaders of Samik-Karamachari Oikkya Parishad (SKOP) in Dhaka.

Couple held for torturing maid

By Staff Correspondent

Demra police arrested Nurul Islam and his wife Hosne Ara on Monday for allegedly torturing their maidservant Asia.

The arrested persons attempted to kill Asia at their residence at Muradpur under Demra police station. She was earlier beaten by Hosne Ara.

Besides, police arrested 88 persons from different parts of the city on Monday on charge of various offences.

The mobile units of the traffic police filed 53 cases against owners of different vehicles who violated traffic rules. The charges include reckless driving, emission of black smoke, etc.



The Rotary club of Dhaka cosmopolitan, Rotaract club of cosmic, Dhaka Cosmopolitan, Dhaka University, Lalbagh Fort and Interact club of Dhaka cosmopolitan jointly held a blood donation programme at DU campus on Saturday. —Star photo