

Bangladesh can earn Tk 4,000 crore by developing shrimp culture'

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 10:35 am Tuesday with Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas in the chair, reports BSS.

The proceeding of the House began after recitation from the Holy Quran.

The Speaker disposed of the notices given by different members saying these were under examination.

Salahuddin Yusuf

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulai) stood on his feet and told the Chair that the Select Committee which was flamed on August one to examine the constitution amendment bill seeking independence of the judiciary from the executive could not complete its report.

Initially three days were given to the committee which was extended by another four days.

Yusuf, a member of the Select Committee, proposed further extension of time and said the Law Minister who is chairman of the committee could say something about the time required.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Gulam Hafta said since he was heading a number of select committees and parliamentary committees he was preoccupied with their activities. The minister said he would also remain busy with party affairs during the coming by-elections. He, therefore, proposed extension of time limit for the Select Committee by two months.

Salahuddin Yusuf agreed with the proposal of the Law Minister.

The Speaker extended the time limit by two months.

Dhirendranath Shambhu

The Speaker then gave the floor to Dhirendranath Shambhu (AL-Narail) to participate in the budget discussion.

Shambhu criticised the budget and said there was no mention in it of any steps for development of the northern region and the Mongla Port.

He suggested subsidy on

agricultural inputs to boost production. Referring to local problems, he demanded development of physical infrastructures in his area.

Qamruddin Yahya Khan Majlis

Speaking next, Qamruddin Yahya Khan Majlis (BNP-Srangjan) said the budget had given a direction for development of the country.

But he said it was not possible to fulfill the commitments for economic development of the people in a single financial year.

Welcoming the increased allocation in the budget for education sector, he suggested integration of madrasa and school education system to introduce a single education system in the country.

Khan Majlis said his constituency Shahjadpur was famous for handloom industries. But about 90 per cent of the looms were closed for high price of yarn and other raw materials, he said and suggested providing yarn at fair price to the weavers.

Mohammad Golam Rabban

Rising on a point of order, Mohammad Golam Rabban (BNP-Joypurhat) said the new members were seldom given opportunity to speak. He also said that a treasury bench new comer was allowed only five minutes while the opposition members were given 10 to 20 minutes.

The Speaker said the budget had been placed by the government party, so the treasury bench members were given less time. He said the Finance Minister would speak for an unlimited time. He then gave the floor to Akhtarruzzaman Chowdhury (AL-Chittagong).

Akhtarruzzaman Chowdhury

Akhtarruzzaman Chowdhury said although he could not thank the Finance Minister for

his budget, he thought the minister deserved thanks for projecting him (Chowdhury) as the richest man of Bangladesh and Nurul Islam Moni, as the runners up.

He thanked the Finance Minister for disclosing the names of the defaulters-loanees who had established banks and industries without repaying their loans. He demanded punishment for these people.

The Awami League member said Bangladesh Bank had published the lists of defaulters who had taken loans more than 250 crore at the pressure of the donors. Only one or two names of bank directors had been included in the lists, he said.

Demanding punishment against those who were not repaying loans, Chowdhury called upon the government not to defame those who did not take loans. He denied to have taken any project loan although he owned many industries.

Referring to private banking, Chowdhury said permission for setting up United Commercial Bank was given to the father-in-law of a former BNP minister. "But I was only a director of the bank and I did not seek any favour from the Ershad regime," he said.

Urging the government not to tarnish the image of those industrialists who were not members of the House, he said these people had played a big role in the development of the country.

He said without encouraging the private sector market economy could not be expected as desired by the Finance Minister.

Akhtarruzzaman Chowdhury said the democratically elected government of BNP had come to power after the fall of autocratic regime. The present budget, he said, was prepared by the autocratic. It was also true that the BNP government's Finance Minister did not get time to go through the budget.

He demanded that the government repair the Karnafuli

bridge immediately. He said the development of Chittagong was the development of the country as it is the main port city. He said Bangladesh could earn taka 4000 crore by developing shrimp cultivation in greater Chittagong alone.

Khairul Anam

Taking the floor next, Kairul Anam (BNP-Lakhipur) thanked the Finance Minister for presenting the nation with a development oriented and balanced budget.

He said sound economy could not be expected without a good budget. People are the best judge of the budget, because they would be affected by its measures.

Criticising the people who opposed the VAT, Anam said these people were opposing this system because their was little scope for evading tax. The VAT system would consolidate our economy, he said.

He demanded development of Lakhipur district headquarters. He also demanded expediting the setting up of a fertiliser factory, a fire service station and cottage industries in his district.

Mosharrif Hossain

Participating in the budget discussion Mosharrif Hossain (AL-Faridpur) said the hopes of the people could not be reflected in the budget formulated by the Finance Minister.

He said the Value Added Tax (VAT), introduced for the first time in the country, had hit the people, multiplying their sufferings.

Mosharrif Hossain then pointed out the problems of the people of his constituency were facing. He made a dispassionate call to start work on the medical college proposed to be set up in Faridpur.

Shahjahan Chowdhury

Speaking next, Shahjahan Chowdhury (BNP-Cox's Bazar) disagreed with the suggestion that the Finance Minister had presented a bad budget in the

House as he was defeated in the last election. He said there was no fault in losing an election.

A scholarly man like Dr Kamal Hossain who was the chairman of the constitution drafting committee in 1972 also lost the last election. He said Finance Minister Saiful Rahman was also a renowned scholar.

He said the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad who once failed to return had again won the election and came back to the House.

Referring to the problems in his constituency Cox's Bazar, he called for special attention to the area ravaged by the unprecedented cyclonic storm in April last. He demanded to implementation of the Taka 450 crore development plan placed before the government.

He said about Taka eight thousand crore could come from shrimp cultivation in the area.

He urged the authorities to develop Cox's Bazar with a special budgetary allocation.

Disagreeing with the suggestion that the price of Hilsa fish increased due to the introduction of VAT, Shahjahan Chowdhury said the real reason for this increase might be the damage and destruction caused to about five thousand fishing boats in the last cyclonic storm.

Moulana Habibur Rahman

Moulana Habibur Rahman (Jamaat-Chudanga) said a budget is formulated in the light of existing condition of a country. Still, he said the budget presented by the Finance Minister would not be able to solve the problems of the people.

He said a capitalistic economic system based on interest could not deliver the goods to the people.

Moulana Rahman then drew the attention of the House to the problems of his area and stressed the need for

construction of Darshana-Muhibnagar road immediately.

Mohammad Shahjahan

Speaking next, Mohammad Shahjahan (BNP-Noakhali), said the last nine years in national life witnessed widespread financial mismanagement and today's government was finding it extremely difficult to clear the again stables created by the autocratic regime.

Despite this, he said, the Finance Minister's bold step in revitalizing the economy was reflected in the budget for the year 1991-92. The present democratic government certainly deserved commendation for this, he added.

Referring to the VAT system, he said certain misconception existed about this new system but the fact was that such pragmatic idea was welfare for the nation.

Many essential commodities had been left out of the purview of this system and this spoke of the government's concern for the common people, Shahjahan said.

He sought to scotch criticism that the budget lacked any direction and said it had a definite political commitment to create a healthy society.

He mentioned local problems and drew the attention of the concerned quarters towards communication problem in his district town and demanded the setting up of a textile mill, other industrial units and also a medical college there.

Khan Tipu Sultan

Khan Tipu Sultan (AL-Jessore) said he opposed the budget on principle since the direction contained in it could not be the economic policy of an independent nation.

The budget is heavily dependent on foreign aid, he said adding that the Finance Minister did not say anything how the nation is benefited by the projects aided by the donor nations.

Eighty per cent of the aid is consumed by the consultants.

Fifteen per cent by the middlemen and only five per cent is left for the people, the opposition member said.

Many countries openly said they are not under obligation to pay back the loan and interest if the donor-aided projects were not found to be effective for their national interest, he added.

Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had taken a bold step in this regard but he was killed because of his such bold nature, Sultan said. He demanded that the House must repeal the Indemnity Act to facilitate the punishment of his killers.

The opposition member expressed concern that a tender had been floated to demolish the Jessore-Benapole railway line without first setting up a new line and said this had caused great commotion among the people.

He demanded that Jessore airport be upgraded to international standard and also called for setting up an agriculture college in the district.

Shahiduzzaman Beltu

Shahiduzzaman Beltu (BNP-Jhenaidah) paid rich tributes to late President Ziaur Rahman for giving a direction to the nation when he was in power and said it was heartening to note that his party was now making efforts to follow his policy.

He said an unnecessary VAT and dry had been raised on the VAT system and added that this system came as a boon for many a developing country including our neighbours.

Nevertheless, he said, the government had withdrawn the VAT from 22 essential commodities considering the sentiment of the common people.

Beltu called for providing financial grant for the non-government primary schools to encourage education. He also urged the government to take steps for improving electricity in the rural areas. (Incomplete)

Some VCs reluctant to call police for campus peace : Minister

Following is the remaining part of Monday's JS proceedings.

Prof Chowdhury said the committee would look into different aspects of the issue like the sources of arms in educational institutions, enhancement of stricter laws for punishment for extortion of toll and pledges by the political parties not to harbour hoodlums.

He called for soul searching and purifying the minds to know if all were sincere in finding a solution to this crucial problem of campus violence.

Prof Chowdhury told the House that the proposed parliamentary committee, among other things, could consider formation of a university police force or law enforcing agency for campus since some Vice-Chancellors were hesitant to call police to maintain peace in the universities.

He also said in details about his recent visit to the Chittagong University to see for himself the situation there. He had met the Vice-Chancellor and his wife. Both of them expressed their unwillingness to leave the campus when he wanted to know from them, he said.

The House reassembled at 4.40 pm with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair, who gave the floor to Alhaj Syed Abul Hossain (AL-Madaripur) to initiate the discussion on the national budget for 1991-92.

Hossain said they got the opportunity to discuss the national budget in this House today because of Bangabandhu under whose leadership the country achieved independence.

He said the budget was prepared as per the wishes of the donors and as a result the hopes and aspirations of the people had not been reflected in it.

Criticising the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT), Hossain said this new tax system had frightened the people as they are finding its effects quite against their interest, he said VAT could be avoided if some other sources were found out as had been done for the Jamuna Bridge fund.

He said the BNP came to power with the people's verdict but now its support had declined due to the financial measures taken by the Finance Minister.

Prof Waliullah

Discussing the national budget, Prof Mohammad Waliullah (AL-Noakhali), said the budget lacked guidelines for national development as it was designed to protect the interest of a vested group.

Prof Waliullah criticised the withdrawal of subsidy from the agricultural sector. To attain food autonomy, there was no alternative to subsidy in this sector, he categorically said.

Criticising the budget he said, though a direct taxation system, the VAT had increased the sufferings of the people by way of indirect taxation as many businessmen were taking advantage through it, exploiting people's ignorance. He demanded its withdrawal.

He criticised the setting up of new taxation offices in the new districts and said this would increase overhead expenses and sufferings of the people.

The Speaker at this point told the members that when they spoke of the problems of their respective constituencies, concerned officials took notes for information of the relevant quarters. He said due attention is given about the local problems. Some members had earlier wanted to know what happened after they spoke about their local problems. Taking the floor, State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman, said he himself took notes about the local problems mentioned by the members since there is no provision to take notes from the gallery.

The Speaker intervened to say that there is no bar on the part of the officials to take notes and they could always do it.

Taking part in the discussion on the budget, Dr Kamruzzaman (BNP-Comilla), paid tributes to late President Ziaur Rahman and also congratulated Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed for organising a free and fair election in the country.

Referring to the VAT system, the Treasury Bench member said it was a new system but was in practice in many countries he expected the system to work in Bangladesh and said efforts should be made for its successful implementation.

Dr Kamruzzaman

Dr Kamruzzaman called for a pro-people health policy and said as a doctor he felt that the health sector needed greater attention. Recalling that the Prime Minister had mentioned earlier about setting up a medical university, he called for financial allocation for the purpose in the budget.

He demanded reopening of Juba Textile Mills there which already owed the government Taka 7.50 crore, he suggested that if the owner of the mill failed to reopen it, the government should take over.

Dhirendranath Shambhu

Speaking next Dhirendranath Shambhu (AL-Barguna) demanded development of his area as a tourist spot. He said there was a point in the Sundarbans in Barguna where tigers, deers and crocodiles could be seen together.

He also demanded development of the newly built 60 km kucher road from Barguna to Bakerganj as a regional highway.

The Speaker agreed and said the committees are necessary. Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain said he was equally anxious about this and had talks with Prime Minister and the Law Minister on the issue. There would be no dearth of efforts to announce the committees at the earliest.

He suggested giving unemployment allowance to unemployed youths as a measure to curb terrorism.

Aminul Islam

Nizamuddin Khan (JP-Manikganj) in his speech on the budget thanked those who went to see him at the Casualty Ward of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Narrating his sad experience during his stay at the Casualty Ward, he said when he was admitted to the hospital with his several ribs broken there was no doctor and no nurse to attend him. He pleaded for increasing the number of doctors, cabins and beds of this hospital substantially to ensure better treatment to the patients. He also urged the government to see to it that the patients at the hospitals got improved diet.

Mr Khan said population explosion and unemployment were the two main problems confronting the nation. Now he urged the government to take steps for making the country self-sufficient in the production of contraceptives and said that population of the country could not be kept at the desired level by depending on the supplies from donor countries.

Referring to unemployment problem, he said there was scope for employment of one to two million people in the Middle Eastern countries. He pleaded for appointment of political ambassadors in the Middle Eastern countries saying that career diplomats were no good in finding employment for our youths in those countries.

The Speaker said both the Health and the Relief Ministers were away from the House at the moment. He hoped that the concerned ministers would take note of what Rouf had said.

Referring to local problems Mr Ahmed demanded power supply in the char areas of Narsingdi and handing over of the distribution lines from the Power Development Board to the Rural Electrification Board.

He also alleged irregularities in the gas bills in Narsingdi with unexpectedly inflated amounts.

He demanded reopening of the J