



The Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, the Acting Chief of Naval Staff Commodore Fokhrudin Ahmed and the Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Altaf Hossain Chowdhury paid a farewell call on Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the President's Secretariat on Tuesday. —PID photo



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presenting a bouquet to President-elect Abdur Rahman Biswas at the Sangsad Bhaban cafeteria on Tuesday. —PID photo

Major changes in CPB constitution, structure

By Staff Correspondent

The six-day fifth congress of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) concluded Tuesday with some major changes in the party constitution and structure.

The congress which began here on October 3, initially dwelt on the report of the central committee presented by party General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and the delegates later discussed other matters.

The delegates and the central committee members for six days deliberated on the current national and international scenario with the focus on the recent changes including the 'setbacks' to socialism in some parts of the world.

While polemics over the international communist movement vis-a-vis Marxism and Leninism dominated the deliberations of the delegates, most delegates are learnt to have stressed that socialism is the inevitable outcome of the class struggle in the society and hence the struggle for socialism has to be reinforced.

According to the late night report, the CPB expanded its central committee from 43 members to 77 members.

Till writing of this report, the delegates were voting to elect 77 members of the central committee.

The elected central committee members will elect the party President, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, the Presidium and the Secretariat.

Saifuddin Ahmed Manik is expected to be elected as President but Nurul Islam Nahid and Mujahidul Islam Selim would be contestants for the post of General Secretary, party sources said Tuesday night during voting. The result of election would be available Wednesday morning, the sources added.

At a press briefing in the evening (Tuesday) party spokesman Mozammel Hossain termed the congress a total success even amid changed situation in world politics. He said that "we narrowed our

Swearing-in

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tight-lipped about his future plan. Sources close to his family told The Daily Star that he might give up the job of Chief Justice to avoid any controversy.

He wants to maintain the dignity of the office of President and keep untarnished the spectacular success that he has achieved in leading the nation through a critical period to parliamentary democracy.

Justice Shahabuddin took over power as Acting President from HM Ershad, who bowed out of office of President in the face of the mass upsurge last year.

During his period as head of the government Justice Shahabuddin held a free and fair election to the parliament.

When asked about his future plan at the oath-taking ceremony of the BNP government under the changed Constitution on September 19 at Bangabhaban, Justice Shahabuddin said, "only God knows".

Victory procession

Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal brought out victory procession in the city yesterday afternoon soon after the ruling BNP nominee had been declared elected President of the country.

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differences of opinion at the congress which was a little bit acute in different sessions in previous days.

The 22-page constitution adopted 22 amendments of which the most important was making the President the chief executive of the party. Previously the General Secretary was the chief executive.

The 592 delegates present out of 698 also changed the name of congress. From now on, it will be named as national conference which will be held once in every four years.

This is for the first time that the CPB adopted a provision of Presidium in its party constitution which would be composed of one-fifth members of the central committee. The provision of the council of delegates has also been constituted at the congress.

Conditions for getting party membership has been relaxed and expression of different opinions inside the party liberalised.

The only Article inserted

in the constitution on recommendation from hardliner Mujahidul Islam Selim was that the ideals Marx, Engels and Lenin would be the basis of party.

On the concluding day reports of Control Commission, Audit Committee and Credential Committee were presented before the delegates and were approved.

During the discussion of Control Commission report Manjurul Ahsan Khan challenged his expulsion order from the central committee last year and demanded voting on the issue. He however later withdrew his voting proposal, a delegate to the closed-door session said. The other two reports were passed smoothly, the source added.

The congress honoured 18 partymen including Rabi Niogi, Ashu Bharadwaj, Santosh Banarjee, Ilona Das and Shanti Datta for their contribution to the party.

The six-day congress cost about Taka five lakh 30 thousand, according to the organisers.

Presidential poll

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Awami League Members of Parliament under the leadership of their Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim had earlier entered the Parliament chamber at 2-15 pm to formally lodge their protest against holding of the presidential election in the Parliament chamber.

Addressing the Chief Election Commissioner Nasim said that his party had been urging the Election Commission not to hold the presidential election in the parliament chamber and an application was submitted to the Commission Tuesday morning by Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Mohammad Nasim said that they did not get any reply. Instead election was being held at the chamber. He requested the Chief Election Commissioner to change the venue of the election.

In reply Justice M A Rouf said that the Election of President Act, 1991 provides for holding of election at the parliament chamber, and at this stage it was impossible for him to change the venue. Two cases were also lying with the Supreme Court in this regard.

The Chief Election Commissioner urged the Opposition MPs to cast their

votes and help smooth conduct of the election in the national interest.

Earlier, Awami League's bid to project Justice Chowdhury as the consensus candidate of the opposition failed because other component parties in the opposition took exception that they were not consulted before the submission of the nomination paper of Justice Chowdhury.

Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azad and six others, Jamaat leader Sheikh Ansar Ali and Jatiya Party leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed had filed writ petitions seeking stay of the election and rule as to why the Election of President Act 1991 which provides for open election should not be declared as ultra vires of the Constitution.

A single vacation bench of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, after three days of hearing, on Monday refused to stay the election. And the election was finally held on schedule.

The gates of the chamber and the lobbies were guarded as usual by Jatiya Sangsad security guards. No visitor was allowed in the galleries.

A large number of policemen, both uniformed and plain-clothes, were posted. There however, was no untoward incident. Instead the Members of Parliament be-

longing to BNP and Awami League shook hands and exchanged pleasantries inside the chamber. They awaited the announcement of results in their respective benches.

Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, officially the third in line in BNP's chain of command entered the chamber silently and casting his vote left silently without exchanging greetings with other leaders.

Talking to newsmen just after casting his vote Abdur Rahman Biswas said that with his party BNP commanding 170 of the 330 seats in the Parliament it was a matter of simple arithmetic to conclude that there was no question of his losing the election.

Replying to a question he said "I am lucky and happy that the representatives of the people are reposing their unconditional confidence in me under the amended Constitution."

"In a democracy the voice of the majority represents the voice of the people. I will do my best to discharge my responsibilities, faithfully and honestly to fulfill the expectations of the people."

Before the start of voting all the major parties and groups including BNP, Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat and Communist Party had meetings in the Parliament building.

Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury was present at the meeting of the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

Addressing the meeting the former Chief Justice said "You have defeated autocrats, but autocracy is yet to be defeated. Those who would refrain from casting votes would only push the nation towards complexities."

Thanking those who had proposed and seconded his nomination as presidential candidate he said, "I shall feel proud even if I get only one vote in addition to those of the proposer and the seconder", he added.

Parties explain

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on the issue like the 12th Amendment to the Constitution which would have consolidated democracy further.

Shamsuddoha, the leader of CPB Parliamentary Party, told newsmen Tuesday morning in the Sangsad Bhaban that his party MPs would not cast vote in the election, according to a party decision taken at its congress. He did not elaborate but other party sources said that the decision was taken mainly due to Justice Chowdhury's meeting with Golam Azam which was criticised by the congress.

The Five Party Alliance in a statement while clarifying its position bitterly criticised both BNP and Awami League and alleged that these two parties were engaged in party politics only. The statement said that BNP had no confidence in its MPs which led it to choose open ballot system which was against the fundamental principles of universal franchise.

Five Party maintained that Justice Chowdhury was, in true sense, a party candidate of Awami League but the AL did not discuss with any other party before nominating him.

JSD MP Shajahan Siraj said his party decided to abstain from voting in consultation with other opposition parties because both BNP and AL nominated their candidates without consulting them. The election of the President could be held avoiding all controversies and that was desirable, he observed.

Prof Abdul Hafiz MP of NAP told The Daily Star that his party decided to abstain from voting because Justice Chowdhury's meeting with Golam Azam created confusion and made him controversial.

Moulana Obaidul Haque MP of Islami Oikta Jote said that he abstained from voting since the election was not held on the basis of consensus. He also opposed the open ballot system it the election.



Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina protesting the holding of election in the parliament chamber to the Chief Election Commissioner. —Star photo

20 injured

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Later Shibir at a press conference at the Chittagong Press Club said the clash ensued when some armed JCD workers tried to kidnap one of its worker from the hostel. It also called a half-day hartal on Thursday if arrested ICS workers were not released by Wednesday noon.

Arifuzzaman. The other 14 minor injured belongs to Shibir, sources said.

Eyewitness said that a group of armed ICS workers stormed a hostel of the Institute which was known to be a stronghold of JCD. The Shibir activists opened fire on the JCD workers in an attempt to occupy the hostel.

The JCD workers retaliated and the gunfight ensued. Over one hundred rounds were fired and several dozen cocktails blasted during the clash.

Tuesday's clash was said to be a sequel of a previous rivalry.

Shootout on DU campus: JCD, BCL blame each other

By DU Correspondent

Mohsin Hall, Suryasen Hall, Jasimuddin Hall, Ziaur Rahman Hall and Bangabandhu Hall are the strongholds of JCD while that of BCL (S-A) one Zahurul Haq Hall, SM Hall and Jagannath Hall.

Meanwhile, the JCD and the BCL (S-A) held separate processions and rallies on the campus Tuesday calling for campus peace and accusing each other of spilling it.

JCD rally held in the DUCSU building premises blamed BCL (S-A) for Monday night's incident and said this was done deliberately to foil the peace-initiatives by the JCD leadership.

CEPZ

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goods worth Taka six crore imported by those organisations under false declarations.

The Customs Intelligence recovered within a period of one week contraband items including a huge quantity of silver about 400 pieces of VCR and other spare parts imported under the declaration of cotton yarn.

Cases were lodged against the owners of those units.

Meanwhile the owner of the Pakistani enterprise "taxfab" Rais Khan a Pakistani national escaped arrest by police.

A senior official told this correspondent that the authorities had stepped up vigilance over the operational activities of all the industrial units based at the EPZ after the detection of such illegal trade by those organisations. The wrong doers will be seriously dealt with, he added.

Hartal

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Later on Monday night he was stabbed again at the Munshiganj Hospital bed allegedly by the same group. He was rushed to the DMCH from Munshiganj in a critical condition.

After receipt the news of his death, the BCL workers went on rampage and damaged several shops in the town Tuesday.

The BCL accused JCD of the killing.

The Midnight File

Former Soviet Communist Party official commits suicide

MOSCOW, Oct 8 : A former chief administrator for the Soviet Communist Party jumped to death from his eight-floor study in a suicide identical to that of his successor in the powerful post, Tass news agency said today. Georgy Pavlov, 81, killed himself on Monday just six weeks after his successor plunged to death from a fifth-storey window, reports Reuter.

NATO to cut nuclear aircraft bombs

BRUSSELS, Oct 8 : NATO plans to cut its stockpile of nuclear aircraft bombs in Europe by up to half in the latest move in a new disarmament race to slash cold war arsenals, sources in the Western alliance said today, reports Reuter.

UN inspectors verify Iraqi super guns rendered useless

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 8 : UN weapons inspectors on Tuesday supervised the destruction of two Iraqi "super guns", watching them be cut up with welding torches so they can never be fired, reports AP.

Arduous journey

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Jatiya Party, Jamaat and other smaller opposition parties virtually made him an Awami League candidate.

The ruling party candidate Abdur Rahman Biswas got 170 votes of his own party, the BNP and two independent members, hailing from his home district.

The scenario unveiled the weakness of both the BNP and the Awami League. Both the parties are alienated from their former allies mainly due to their go alone policy.

The smaller partners of both the parties alleged that they were ignored in decision-making specially in nominating the presidential candidate.

The Jamaat-e-Islami, which lent its support to the ruling party in forming the government in March and in the election of a Speaker, felt hurt as BNP government did not fulfil any of its demands including the granting of citizenship to Prof. Golam Azam, implementation of the judicial inquiry report on Chittagong University and action against those who assaulted Jamaat leader Matiur Rahman Nizami on the Dhaka University campus. Besides, Jamaat leaders were aggrieved as BNP leaders did not apprise them of the situation arising out of the promulgation of the Ordinance and the subsequent developments.

The promulgation of the controversial ordinance by the BNP also influenced the Jamaat decision to abstain although Jamaat leaders were consulted before nominating Abdur Rahman Biswas.

Political analysts see Jamaat's stand on the election as a tactical move to maintain its opposition stance without harming the BNP. The Jamaat-e-Islami helped the ruling party through abstention, an

otherwise thought to be an uneventful occasion turned out to be a significant one due to the ruling party's mishandling of the election.

The promulgation of the Ordinance regarding presidential election was the biggest blunder committed by the BNP.

The ruling party saved the situation by rescinding the Ordinance. But it will perhaps take some time for the wounds to heal.

Hasina

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opposition's unity," she said and mentioned that everything was okay even the night before the election, but the situation changed Tuesday morning.

The AL chief deplored that the BNP could not rise above its party interest and said that it was expected that the ruling party would come forward to support a consensus candidate.

Sheikh Hasina alleged that Justice Chowdhury was taken to the Prime Minister's house at midnight and was offered high positions to withdraw from election race. "This was against democracy," said Hasina and praised the courageous role of Justice Chowdhury.

Suranjit Sengupta, the Ganotantri Party MP and other AL MPs were present during Hasina's press briefing.

Shahabuddin

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democracy. He called for coordinated and concerted efforts of all individuals and groups for the elimination of poverty which exerted negative influence of development and the political processes. The Acting President urged public servants to remain incorruptible and set examples of fair and simple living.

The Acting President thanked the officers and employees of the President's Secretariat for their wholehearted co-operation in discharging his responsibilities. Senior officials of the police forces also made a farewell call on the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at his official residence.

Appreciating their sincere services during his ten-month long tenure, with particular reference to their aid and assistance in the holding of peaceful elections, the Acting President urged them to serve the nation without fear or favour.

Inspector General of Police Taubuddin Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

A pass for a newspaper

By Staff Correspondent

The Press Information Department (PID) miserably failed to issue entry passes to journalists to cover the presidential election at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

The PID is generally responsible for issuing passes to journalists covering government functions, particularly those in parliament. But this time the PID issued only a few passes to journalists — due to reasons unknown.

When contacted the Acting Principal Information Officer Moqbul Ahmed said that they tried to issue one pass for each newspaper and to correspondents in Dhaka representing the foreign news media.

He said there were only 80 seats for journalists in Parliament and the PID issued 80 entry passes.

But it was observed that more than one-third of the total seats in the press boxes were empty during the presidential election.

The Acting PIO further said that the Election Commission gave 80 passes for journalists which he said were distributed among the PID officers, radio and television staff and journalists.

When asked how they fixed the priority in distributing passes, PIO Moqbul Ahmed said that he distributed the passes assessing the priority among the media and gave one pass to each newspaper irrespective of its being a daily or a weekly.

According to sources the Principal Information Officer did not inform the Information Minister Nazmul Huda about the quantity of passes required for newsmen who always cover Parliament.

However, when the matter was brought to the notice of the Information Minister Nazmul Huda he rang the Acting Principal Information Officer to know about the matter.

But it was too late and many journalists who usually cover Parliament failed to get the passes.