

Budget indifferent

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More than 20 members from all sides of the House took part in the general debate on the budget yesterday.

UNB adds: Akbar Hossain (BNP-Comilla), a retired colonel, spoke more on policy than the budget itself. He said the present sorry state of affairs as pointed out by the opposition members are the cumulative effects of the past misdeeds.

He felt that the developing nations should unite to secure a just redistribution of facilities. He indicated the possibility of a serious conflict between rich and poor nations in no distant future if the developed countries fail to appreciate the problems of the poor.

Touching upon internal problems, Akbar, a former minister, said the opposition must remain within the bounds of law if they really want rule of law. 'If you demand release of Ershad who was convicted by the court of law, you must also seek release of all the thieves and thugs thrown into jail by the court', he said pointing to Jatiya Party benches.

Earlier in the afternoon session, AL leader Begum Matia Chowdhury criticised the cut in taxation on luxury items and imposition of taxes on essential commodities.

She said tax-cut on refrigerator, coloured TV, perfume etc will create a tendency of hedonism in one hand while its imposition on wheat and dry chilly will only increase the misery of the people.

Matia Chowdhury discussed the sector wise performance of the BNP government and revealed the failures in achieving the targets in the vital sectors of industries, agriculture, health and family planning during the fiscal 1991-92 compared with the previous fiscal 1990-91.

She said due to inefficiency of the government the allocated funds earmarked for ed-

ucation, health and family planning were left unutilised.

The ruling party members, however, praised the Finance Minister for presenting 'a document of welfare' for the people and the economy.

Former State Minister of the BNP government Ansar Ali Siddiqui welcomed the budget terming it as 'a certain document of welfare'. He said the present reforms in taxation system will help increase the revenue earning substantially. Siddiqui, however, feared that the unguarded free economy will put the local industries into a stiff competition with the foreign goods.

Siddiqui observed that the reduction in the prices of diesel, agricultural inputs and irrigation system would have encouraged increased production in the agriculture sector.

Flag tearing

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Shilpakala Academy auditorium which was foiled by a police lathicharge, he added.

Razzak alleged that a police Sub-Inspector took away the national flag from one of their workers and tore it. The Superintendent of Police, Kushtia apologised for the incident, he added. Razzak further observed that such an incident had created a commotion among the public in general.

In reply, the Home Minister said that immediately after the incident the Police Super of Kushtia inquired into and found that the allegation was not correct.

Matin Chowdhury further said that the Additional DIG of Police, Khulna Range made a local inquiry July 13 and the DIG opined that the allegation was not true.

The Minister further added that every member of the Police force was committed to uphold the prestige of the national flag.

The reply of the Minister failed to satisfy the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad sought leave to speak. Reminding Samad Azad that such an appeal was against the Rules of Procedure, the Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali gave him the floor.

Samad Azad said that he was shocked by the statement of the Minister as it was no different from the statement made earlier. He said that Razzak did not accuse the police force rather the accusation was against an individual. He asked the Speaker to give a ruling whether there would be any inquiry into the incident by Parliament.

The Speaker regretted saying that under the Rules of Procedure he was not allowed to give such a ruling as it was a matter of contention between the Treasury bench and the Opposition.

Taking the floor, Majedul Huq, Minister for Flood Control and Water Resources (in the absence of the Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury) said that democracy did not mean that every word of the Opposition would have to be accepted.

Defending his colleague, Majedul Huq observed that once a Minister made a statement under Article 300 of the Rules of Procedure there should not be any debate. However, he added, the Home Minister had assured the Opposition and the matter should end there.

Immediately after Tofael Ahmed stood up and shifting from the stand taken by Samad Azad, said that police investigation against a police officer could not give the correct picture. He proposed that the Minister suggest investigation by any independent person or a judge.

The Home Minister then stood up to repeat his earlier assurances and the House, immediately after, was adjourned to meet at 10 this morning.

Continuity of his stay in the country, required of a citizen as per Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary) Provisions Order 1972, was not possible for the circumstances, he said.

AJM clash : 27 arrested

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, July 20: Police arrested 27 people for their alleged involvement in Sunday's armed clashes which left at least 30 workers injured in Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM), thana sources said Monday.

Joydevpur Agrani Bank incident: 7 arrested

From Our Correspondent
GAZIPUR, July 20: Police arrested seven people today in connection with the disappearance of a bag containing over Tk 12 lakh from the Joydevpur branch of Agrani Bank yesterday.

Six of them are bank employees.

The arrested are: Sajal Kumar Gupta, cashier; A K M Nazrul Islam, officer; Mesbahuddin Ahmed, cashier; Md Hazrat Ali, senior officer; Md Abdul Mannan, caretaker; Babul, guard and Md Rajab Ali, a peon of a local tobacco company.

Human traffickers taken on police remand

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, July 20: Eleven people, arrested in connection with human-trafficking on Sunday, were taken on five-day custody remand at the Sonargaon Police station for questioning Monday.

The accused were produced before the Sonargaon Thana Magistrate Monday and he, on a prayer by Sonargaon police, granted five days' remand.

Editor : S. M. Ali
Executive Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over the cabinet meeting held at Bangabhaban yesterday. —PID photo

Hearing of UZ parishad case ends 'Political use of local govt should be resisted'

Running upazila by bureaucrats after dissolving the upazila parishad is unconstitutional as the constitution provides for people's representative body, reports UNB.

This was stated by Barrister Amirul Islam in his submission yesterday before a full court bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court hearing appeals against the High Court.

AL MP

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The marauders allegedly came from a procession brought out in the town protesting the no-confidence motion brought in parliament by Mirza Azam against LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, also Secretary General of the ruling party.

Activists of Jatiyatobadi Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal, youth and student wings respectively of BNP, staged the demonstration against the AL MP's no-confidence motion.

Those injured in the violence were identified as BSS district correspondent Zafar Ahmed, Mustafa Manzu of Akker Kagoj, Weekly Jamalpur's Editor Laboo Ansar and Advertising Manager Ihabib Raihan and Chhatra League leader Ali Ahmed Shamim.

Judges have taken oath to uphold the constitution as

whole not any part of it', he said.

Besides, if any article of the constitution is needed to be made ineffective than it would have to be clearly mentioned in the constitution. Barrister Islam argued.

He termed Article 7, 11, 59 and 60 of the Bangladesh Constitution as unique and said such those do not exist in any other constitution of the Subcontinent.

Barrister Islam argued that Article 59 and 60 remained suspended when the upazila ordinance was promulgated.

Contradicting with the argument of the Attorney General that fundamental state policy cannot be made affected by court, he said all articles of the constitution should be treated with equal importance.

He said we need to resist the process of using local government according to the political will of the government with the changes of governments.

It was hinted in the constitution that the objective to form local government was a permanent and continuing concept and such fundamental things cannot be changed by laws.



Jahanara Imam, Convenor of the Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, addressing a public meeting in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Nirmul body

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Jamaat meeting Saturday. Samannaye Committee Convenor Jahanara Imam chaired the meeting organised to protest the Kushtia incident.

In her brief speech, Jahanara Imam called for launching a mass movement to resist the Juba Command activists whom she termed terrorists. 'These terrorists, supported with foreign money, are misleading the innocent youths of the country', she said. The young generation is being pushed off the right track and falling in the trap of the anti-liberation forces.

Imam also made a fervent call to guardians to save their wards.

A fresh course of action would be announced if the government did not check the terrorism of the anti-liberation elements, she announced.

Abdur Razzak, MP of the Awami League accused the government of using the Juba Command 'terrorists' to foil the Samannaye Committee programmes and blamed it of ruling the country in an autocratic manner in the name of democracy. 'People know how to put an end to authoritarian rule', he added.

Condemning the 'illegal' termination of the weekly Bichitra Executive Editor Shahrir Kabir, Razzak commented such action would fail to stop the Samannaye Committee movement.

He termed three incidents including the Home Minister's statement in Parliament defending the police official who tore the national flag, 'omnibus' and threats to the country's independence.

the so-called leaders of the journalists community, mainly because of their adhoc and a somewhat secretive approach to a difficult question, we must find a way of setting things right so that we can move on with our responsibilities to a free and responsible media.

It is most important that the bill giving the Press Council enhanced powers be circulated among a cross-section of our people to elicit opinions of concerned quarters. We should then hold seminars and meetings to discuss the issues involved.

The statement of Minister Huda issued on Sunday has thus given us a welcome opportunity of returning to the subject with this concrete suggestion.

Unfortunately, the statement by the Information Minister leaves out all references to our opposition to his new proposed advertisement policy, linking it to what he had termed as 'objectivity' of a newspaper instead of its circulation.

The silence of the Minister on this subject raises the hope that he is probably doing some rethinking on the points raised in our recent commentary on the issue and that he will soon announce a policy that will be definitely better — than the existing system.

Let's end confusion

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that they had no mandate to discuss a matter, far from reaching an agreement on it, that concerned the profession as a whole. We have no information if these representatives sought advice on the issue in advance from their own decision-making bodies or reported back the 'agreement' to their colleagues in their executive committees.

The cancellation of the accreditation of a newsmen for alleged misreporting concerns not just an individual journalist but also the newspaper he or she works for, the newsdesk that handles the offending copy and finally the editor, who must take the legal and moral responsibility for its publication. If the editor cannot abdicate his responsibility in this matter, he must not also be bypassed by the Press Council in dealing with the case. At what stage the editor himself must appear before the Press Council to answer any charge of misreporting depends on how the proposed new law for the press body is being formulated.

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Jamaat leaders

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incident, charges were brought against the seven people under Sections 143 and 324 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr P C).

The victim, Munir, was a Joint Convenor of Ward No. 67 unit of Jubo League, a source said.

Cabinet discusses transfer of BPC enterprises to private sector

The regular weekly meeting of the cabinet was held yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair at Bangabhaban, reports UNB.

The meeting, among other things, discussed the proposals of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism regarding the phase-wise transfer of commercial enterprises of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) to private ownership.

The discussion on the topic took place unconformity with the cabinet in its meeting held on February 24 this year.

Minister, state ministers-in-charge of different ministries and divisions attended the meeting.

Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and other concerned officials were present.

Jamuna Bridge: Prequalifications of bidders okayed

The Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (JMB) Authority in its board meeting yesterday approved the recommendations of prequalification of the bidders for the JMB project consisting of four components, reports UNB.

Sixty-two consortia comprising 112 international companies applied for prequalification for the four components, of which the prequalifications of 22 consortia were approved in the meeting, held with Communications Minister Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed in the chair, said an official handout.

International bidding for the 428-million-dollar project for construction of the bridge over the river Jamuna will take place on September 1 next, as announced earlier, the meeting noted.

Stricter law

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Shahjahan Khan of Awami League rose to his feet to remind the minister of his promise to bring back the gold ornaments of the wife of Suranjit Sengupta MP, which were snatched away in the broad day light.

Those who had snatched the gold bangles away from the tender hands would shortly be arrested and the ornaments be recovered,' promised again a smiling Home Minister.

Nizam

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newed her husband's pledge during a meeting with Azam before forming her government.

'The meeting was held in early March and I am witness to it,' Nizam said declining to disclose the venue of the meeting.

Acting Amir Abbas Ali Khan, Publicity Secretary Abdul Kader Mollah and other leaders were present at the conference held on the third floor of the Dainik Sangram office at Magbazar.

Reading out a five-page written statement, Khan said, 'We have shown our patience against all misdeeds of the so-called gana adalats, but there is a limit.'

He said the 'gana adalats' were pushing the country towards 'civil war' and by withdrawing the sedition case against 24 'people's court' sponsors, the government was being indulgent to them.

Khan said it should have been decided in court whether sedition charges brought against them were valid or not.

The agreement signed outside the House was 'undemocratic' and also tarnished the image of Parliament.

'If anybody can prove the war crimes against our leader then we have no reservation if he is tried,' Khan said adding that 'Awami League could not frame any charge against Golem Azam during its three-year rule.'

Khan said that 'to avoid the present crisis' the government should immediately set Golem Azam free, ban activities of the 'gana adalats' and punish the killers of Jamaat-Shibir activists.

Replying to a question as to whether Atiqul Islam Dulal, one of the two victims, of Saturday's violence was their partyman, Khan said he was an activist of Shibir before going abroad, but his political affiliation was not clear after his returning.

The Acting Ameer said Jamaat will organise a mourning procession in Dhaka on Thursday and observe 'prayers day on Friday and 'terrorism resistance day' on July 30.

Rohingya issue

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entered Bangladesh following the agreement between the two countries on April 28.

In response to a supplementary question by the opposition MP, he said that the government had full control on the situation but 'there are some sporadic incidents among the 2.64 lakh refugees'.

Replying to Maksud Ibne Aziz Lama of Jatiya Party, the minister said that 800 police and Ansars had been deployed at the refugee camps to ensure law and order.

Three people were killed in a clash between the two groups of refugees at the Naikhyangchhari camp while another was still missing, he said.

BFUJ, DUJ

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pointed out that a few weeks ago the Information Minister held a meeting with the representatives of Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad, Editors Council and leaders of journalist community on the issue of further strengthening the Press Council with a view to building up responsible journalism. During the discussion, a consensus was established that it was necessary to strengthen the Press Council still further for this purpose. A consensus was also reached for reorganising the Press Council, they added.

They further said at one stage of discussion the Information Minister put forward a proposal for the cancellation of accreditation cards of the newsmen. 'We did not agree with the proposal' they said and had suggested further discussion on the matter.

The leaders of the journalist community made it clear that BFUJ and DUJ were pledged to preserve freedom of the press and pressmen. 'We have struggled much for this freedom and we think this freedom should be exercised with a sense of responsibility', they said adding 'This does not mean that this responsibility will have to be achieved through any measure.'

The joint press statement was issued by Reazuddin Ahmed and Amanullah Kabir, President and Secretary General of BFUJ, Shahjahan Mia and Altaf Mahmud President and General Secretary of DUJ.

VHP men

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He said in the first phase, over 9500 cubic feet of concrete had been laid on the platform which had come up after digging and levelling operation on undulated ground.

Besides the karsawks, over 500 labourers are engaged in the digging, levelling and rafting operations.

Four temporary six feet brick layers on the sides of the concrete base are being used as 'level markers', he said.

Meanwhile, the National Council on Babri Masjid yesterday gave a ten-day ultimatum to the centre and all secular parties to stop construction work in Ayodhya.

'If the High Court order in this regard was not implemented by this period a march would be organised to Ayodhya', the conference, organised by the district Babri Masjid Action Committee, resolved after day-long deliberation.

The Midnight File

Carrington to meet Y'slav leaders today

LONDON, July 20: The European Community's special peace envoy, Lord Carrington, will fly to Belgrade on Tuesday to talk with political leaders about the continuing violence in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Foreign Office said. Carrington expects to talk with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and other political leaders primarily about the situation in the embattled Kosovo region of Bosnia, but also the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AP.

Havel steps down

PRAGUE, July 20: President Vaclav Havel, the dissident playwright who won world acclaim for leading Czechoslovakia's peaceful revolt against Communism, stepped down on Monday. His resignation was another milestone on the road toward Czechoslovakia's disintegration, reports AP.

Lesotho King back home

KASERU, July 20: King Moshoeshoe of Lesotho returned to his homeland to an emotional welcome today after more than two years of exile in London. Ululating women, sobbing uncontrollably, mobbed him as he got down from the charter plane which flew him into Maseru Airport from Johannesburg on the last leg of his trip, reports AFP.

High mineral content

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physical disorders', according to the report on the chemical analysis done by AKM Sharif, Senior Scientific officer of the Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology, BAEC and Professor Al Mustafa of the Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology Department of the Dhaka University.

Professor MQK Talukder, a noted child specialist, talking to this correspondent, said that giving this quality of powder milk to infants 'may even damage the kidneys and affect the brain'.

The ten locally marketed brands of whole milk powder selected for the analysis were: Diploma, Elders, Red Cow, Celia, Dano, Frisiana, Nespray, Anchor, Kanny and Coast.

These ten leading brands are among a number of others imported for the internal market. This import is worth about Tk. 350 crore per year.

The report found that the concentrations of Sodium was maximum (86.05 mg per 100 Kcal) in Nespray and the minimum (40.29 mg per 100 Kcal) in the Coast brand of powder milk.

According to the FAO/WHO recommendations for an adapted baby formula, the maximum limit for Sodium is 60 mg per 100 Kcal and the minimum 20 mg per 100 Kcal.

The maximum (275.77 mg per Kcal) of potassium was found in Frisiana while the Diploma brand contained the minimum (228.58 mg per Kcal).

There is no FAO/WHO-recommended level of potassium in powdered milk.

However the maximum limit is taken to be 200 mg per 100 Kcal while the minimum is 80 mg per 100 Kcal in the United States, Canada, Thailand and Yugoslavia, according to the report.

Red Cow was found to have the minimum amount of Calcium (180.40 mg per 100 Kcal) while Anchor and the maximum (215.43 mg per 100 Kcal).

The FAO/WHO-recommended minimum level for Calcium in powdered milk is 50 mg per 100 Kcal while the maximum is not specified.

But the maximum limit for Calcium is taken to be 140 mg per 100 Kcal in the Netherlands, according to the BAEC report.

The maximum (20.35 mg per 100 Kcal) concentration of Magnesium was found in the Celia brand while the minimum (17.15 mg per 100 Kcal) in the Elders brand.

The minimum limit of Magnesium is 6 mg per 100 Kcal while the maximum limit is not specified in the FAO/WHO-recommendation.

However, the maximum limit for Magnesium in powdered milk is 12 mg per 100 Kcal in the Netherlands.

'The relatively high phosphorous content may reduce

Calcium absorption in the intestine and produce hypocalcaemia,' the report pointed out.

Professor Talukder cautioned 'any whole milk powder is unsuitable and hazardous to infants upto one year of age, even whole cow's milk is not suitable for infants. This is due to the fact that this milk contain high quantity of minerals.'

Mentioning the chemical analysis conducted by the BAEC scientists, Prof. Talukder said that the powder milk marketed in our country contained even much higher amounts of these minerals than cow's milk.

'Feeding of this diluted powder milk through dirty bottles causes diarrhoea,' he added.

The report pointed out that international limits for the maximum and minimum concentrations of Sodium, Potassium, Calcium and Magnesium is set to protect consumers from health risks.

An official of Sanwara Corporation, a leading company locally marketing this Red Cow brand of whole powder milk said that these products were not being marketed for consumption by infants.

He, however, added that this products conformed with all government regulation and standards.

The BAEC scientists, however, said that none of the 10 different brands of powder milk tested conformed with international standard and nor did they even mention the actual levels of minerals present in the brands.

The BAEC scientist felt that it was essential to print the actual mineral contents on the containers of all powdered milk.