

JS passes bill Jamuna Bridge to be opened by '97

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (Surcharge and Levy) (Amendment) Bill, 1992 while Communications Minister Oli Ahmed assured all that the bridge would have provision for road, rail, gas and electric lines, reports BSS.

The Communication Minister said the government would call tenders for the construction of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge in the first week of next month. Brushing aside all the apprehension, Ahmed assured the House that the construction of the bridge would begin in January, 1994 and is expected to be open to traffic by 1997.

Amid thumping of the table, the Communications Minister said the government was doing everything to ensure the construction of the bridge. He said the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council had already okayed the project and the economic rate of return of the bridge had been calculated by local experts.

Participating in the discussion on the bill, Awami League member Begum Moita Chowdhury urged the government to construct the bridge as early as possible. She said though the government had proposed to withdraw levy and surcharge for the Jamuna bridge to boost investment in the country, in reality a cut in the rates of interest would have a negative impact on the investment.

Defending the bill, he said a total of more than Tk 430 crore had been collected so far as Jamuna surcharge and levy out of which Tk 327.50 crore was levy and Tk 104.79 crore surcharge. He said that the money collected so far was more than sufficient to cover construction of the bridge.

CPB member Shamsuddoha said it was expectation of the people of Bangladesh to have a multipurpose bridge with rail, road, gas and electricity lines. Awami League members Abdul Matin Khasru, Rashed Mosharrif, Salauddin Yusuf, Dhirendra Nath Shambhu, Sharif Khasruzzaman, Dr Mozammel Hossain, Mosharrif Hossain, Sheikh Harunur Rashid, Khademul Islam, Khan Tipu Sultan, Shahjahan Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, KM Jahangir, Shamsul Hoq, Tabibur Rahman Sarder and Rafiqul Islam took part in the discussion on the bill.

Remove black laws

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of the citizens, combat terrorism on the campus, tackle chaos in industrial and economic front, resist anti-independence activities, protect newsmen and foreign missions, settle the problems in the Chittagong Hill Tracts politically and repatriation of Myanmar refugees.

Activities of the 'killer groups' helped create a terrible law and order situation endangering life and property of the people.

Hasina, who chaired the ALPP meeting, called for cleansing the constitution of all black laws to establish democracy as an institution and rule of law in the country.

"We're committed to maintaining the present democratic process by ensuring peace, discipline and rule of law in the country," she said and urged the people to observe the August 15 country-wide hartal to help Awami League fulfil its commitment to them.

Rohingyas

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more than one million Rohingya Muslims had left Arakan since the independence of Myanmar on July 4, 1948 because of persecution by successive Myanmar governments, particularly the military government of General Ne Win since 1962.

Hasina appealed to the people from all walks of life to make the August 15 hartal a success in support of repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance to stop once for all the politics of killing, coup and conspiracy.

Giving reference to historical past, Advocate Shafiq Ahmad said, the Rohingya Muslims had been living peacefully with the Mag Buddhists in Arakan for more than 1100 years before independence of Myanmar. It was the heinous de-Musalmanisation policy of the military government that led to the persecution and driving away of the Arakan Muslims.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Abdus Samad Azad, Salauddin Yusuf, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Shudhansu Shekhar Halder, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Azkur Rahman, Sheikh Harun-or-Rashid and Abul Hasnat Abdullah.

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Anti-terrorism bill soon: Home Minister

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday said an anti-terrorism bill will soon be introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad to curb terrorism and crimes, reports UNB.

The minister was speaking at a discussion meeting of an anti-terrorism and anti-crime ward committee of Kotwali thana at Siddique Bazar community centre in Dhaka.

The present government wants to establish a people-oriented administration and remove the gap between police and peace-loving people, he said adding that anti-terrorism and anti-crime ward committees were being formed to this end.

Addressing the meeting, the local opinion leaders demanded enactment of stringent laws to curb terrorism and to end the lengthy process of dealing with the terrorist activities.

The Inspector General of Police, Additional IG and DMP Commissioner were present on the occasion.

Salinity due to Farakka hits vast area

The salinity due to Farakka is causing damage to crops cultivation in vast area of Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts, State Minister for Land Kabir Hussain told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Replying to a call attention notice moved by Jamaat member Gazi Nazrul Islam, the state minister said the government was taking all possible measures to convert the cultivable lands of Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira into multi-crop areas. But the salinity due to Farakka was affecting the government efforts, he said.

The State Minister also informed the House that with decision of the government to exempt land revenue up to 25 bighas, over 70 per cent of the land had gone out of the purview of the land revenue. Explaining the government's policy on the collection of land revenue, he said at present the land revenue was collected only from the big land owners and the majority farmers were left out of revenue payments.

Row in JS

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President for introduction of the bill.

Several opposition members present in the House sprang on their feet at once and termed 'illegal' the very introduction of the bill and demanded its withdrawal.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni who was presiding over the House was baffled at the situation and adjourned the House for 4 minutes at 10-20 pm.

When the House resumed, the Deputy Speaker found the Opposition MPs still shouting against the 'faulty bill' and insisting its withdrawal.

"I am sorry for the fiasco", Panni said and adjourned the House till 4 pm today (Tuesday).

From the beginning, the Opposition was reluctant to take part in discussions on the bill insisting that it was a new and significant bill requiring adequate time for full-dress discussion.

But the government was determined to get the bill through last night. More than 20 members from the Opposition who spoke on the bill before Zubeed Ali (AL Netrokona) took the floor, welcomed the concept of the Open University.

Arafat hails Israeli plans, but says 'not enough'

TUNIS, Aug 10: PLO chairman Yasser Arafat welcomed on Sunday night Israeli plans to legalise contacts with the group, and urged Israel's new government to go further by negotiating directly with it to achieve Middle East peace, reports Reuter.

"This is a step to the right direction and a recognition by the Israeli government of a political reality which is obvious to everybody," Arafat told Reuters when asked to react to an Israeli statement.

Israel's Justice Ministry said earlier on Sunday it was drafting an amendment to a 1986 law banning contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The decision follows the election of a centre-left government led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Arafat added, "but this step remains a sheer propaganda act with obvious aims if the Israeli government and Rabin in particular stopped short of the necessary courage to take the decision to negotiate directly with the PLO."

Israel has so far refused to let the PLO have any public role in Middle East peace talks, which are due to resume in Washington on August 24.

The former Israeli government led by hardline Premier

Yitzhak Shamir had insisted that only Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, excluding Arab East Jerusalem, should be allowed to take part.

The PLO has played an active role directing Palestinian delegates from behind the scenes.

"Direct negotiations with the PLO are not only a political necessity, but also the base to secure the element of success to the peace process and to achieve the permanent, comprehensive and immediate solution to the Middle East problem," Arafat said.

The PLO leader said that such a solution, based on the resolution of the international legitimacy, will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and will culminate in the establishment of a confederation between Jordan and Palestine, according to the free choice of the two brotherly peoples.

A Kennebunkport report says, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin arrived today for talks with President George Bush that were to be held by candlelight because of a power outage at Bush's seaside estate.

The talks got off to a slow start because Rabin was unable to fly by helicopter from Pease

air force base in neighbouring New Hampshire due to fog and arrived instead by motorcade.

White House spokesman Walter Kansteiner said electricity at Bush's home was out along with a stretch of homes along ocean avenue, apparently because of a blown transformer.

Meanwhile, in Israeli occupied West Bank, soldiers clashed Sunday with settlers building a private house on the West Bank in the first direct challenge to a government construction ban, an AFP photographer reported.

Several Israelis were arrested and held briefly near this settlement, where some 5,000 Jews live close to Heron, when troops moved in, military sources said.

According to settlers, two were injured and the Israeli news agency quoted witnesses as saying one soldier hit a settler with his riflebutt.

Just three Israelis started the building in darkness, without an official permit, but were supported by about 300 more from Qiryat Araba during the morning, when the army intervened.

Army and police reinforcements were deployed as scuffling broke out and settlers lay down in front of army jeeps.

Nirmul Committee programme

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human and barbarous activities of the Jamaat-Freedom Party-backed terrorists," she said.

"They are bound to be uprooted in the face of united resistance by the masses."

Other speakers concentrated their deliberations mainly on the deterioration of law and order caused by what they termed the unabated terrorism by the anti-Liberation elements and the government's indifference to the issue. They also accused the ruling BNP of collaborating with terrorists. In her presidential speech Jahanara Imam called upon the people not to be misled by the Jamaat's 'misinterpretation' of Islam.

The Nirmul body-led movement helped the people identify Jamaat as their enemy and encouraged them to speak against the party's evil doings, Imam pointed out.

Nurul Islam Nahid of the CPB alleged that the government was helping the Jamaat-Shibir-Freedom Party clique to foil the Committee's movement against Golan Azam, the planner of the 71 genocide.

He further alleged that his party's veteran leader Ratan Sen was the first victim in the Jamaat plan to kill pro-

Liberation personalities.

Architect Mazharul Islam said that there was no alternative to a secular state mechanism for the country. Since the August 15 killings of 1975, falsehood was being continuously spread, he said adding that such falsehood might become the truth to the new generation.

Aysha Khanam of the Mahila Parishad warned that the nation would face dire consequences unless the fundamentalist forces were resisted. She urged the political parties and the Nirmul Committee take up effective and coordinated programmes in this regard immediately.

Fayez Ahmed of the Sammitto Sangskritik Jote proposed holding a grand conference of the pro-Liberation parties, organisations and professional groups.

Poet Shamsur Rahman suggested that the Nirmul Body carry forward its on-going movement with a lone point in the agenda — trial of the killers and collaborators of 1971.

Prof Kabir Chowdhury of the Dhaka University recommended the organising of programmes like grand rallies

of women and the children and token hunger strike by noted citizens to draw public attention and muster support for the Nirmul Committee demand.

Hasan Azizul Haque of the Rajshahi University said that the Jamaat-Shibir killer group had now opted for the path of armed struggle after being isolated from the people.

Zillur Rahman of the Awami League assured his party's continued support to and cooperation with the Nirmul Committee movement. He called for a mass movement to eliminate the anti-Liberation forces.

Former Justice K M Sobhan blamed the opposition in and outside parliament for failing to play its role as expected under a parliamentary democratic system.

Other speakers included Prof Moshuddin Ahmed, ex-VC of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, and the Samannaya Committee member-secretary Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury.

A significant number of political leaders, MPs, educationists, leaders of professional groups and student leaders were present on the occasion.

No Pak word yet

From Page 1 Col 4
two heads of government touched on regional and international issues of concern to both. There was an identity of views concerning the importance of SAARC and the need to strengthen the regional body. Both sides agreed that the time has come to give more practical shape to SAARC especially in promoting poverty alleviation programmes.

The talks were held in an atmosphere of extreme cordiality and understanding. The two Prime Ministers appeared to strive to take the bilateral relations beyond political niceties and agreed to give practical shape to the spirit of cooperation and understanding that now exists. An optimistic mood prevailed on both sides, though in concrete terms the talks failed to produce much beyond the practical steps to get repatriation process started.

BSS adds: Bangladesh and Pakistan here today signed two agreements on science and technology and exchange of plots for constructing high commissions of the respective countries.

The scientific and cultural

agreement provides for promotion of mutual cooperation in all the fields of science and technology, particularly in scientific and technical information, electronics, silicon and food processing technologies, and any other subject area of science and technology by mutual agreement.

Under the agreement, the cooperation would include exchange of books, journals and other science and technological publications, exchange of visits of scientists and technologists, grant of fellowship for short-term practical training in science and technology.

The agreement will remain in force for a period of five years and will subsequently be extended automatically for each successive period of five years at a time.

The other agreements pro-

vides for construction of high commission in the diplomatic enclaves of respective countries.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman and Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Siddiq Kanju signed the agreements for their respective countries in the presence of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her Pakistan counterpart Nawaz Sharif.

Begum Zia called on Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan at Awan-i-Sadar here tonight.

They discussed bilateral, regional and international issues covering SAARC, Rohingya problems and the plight of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

They also discussed the expansion of trade and economic relations between the two countries.

The members of parliament, Abdul Awal Mian of Awami League and Sheikh Mohammad Ansar Ali of Jamaat-e-Islami, who are accompanying the Prime Minister also took part in the discussion.

Later, Begum Zia attended a dinner hosted by President Ishaq Khan. Begum Ishaq Khan also attended the dinner.

Sindh govt asked to produce Zardari in parliament

ISLAMABAD, Aug 10: New parliamentary rules passed by the Assembly last week empower the Speaker to summon members detained without bail to attend an assembly session.

A spokesman for Bhutto's opposition Pakistan People's Party (PPP) said Zardari was expected to arrive in Islamabad on Tuesday. He is in jail in the Sindh capital of Karachi.

"We expect him to arrive by tomorrow (Tuesday) as the orders have already been issued by the speaker," he said.

The government has in the past allowed Zardari to attend assembly sessions but only after repeated requests because he is in jail awaiting trial on charges ranging from extortion to conspiracy to murder.

ers his presence necessary." Zardari was arrested in October 1990, two months after President Ghulam Ishaq Khan sacked Bhutto as Prime Minister on disputed charges of misrule.

He was elected to the National Assembly while in jail facing at least 10 criminal charges. He has been acquitted on two.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's National Assembly dissolved into a shouting match on Monday after the opposition branded the Religious Affairs Minister an infidel — the supreme Muslim insult.

The pandemonium erupted after the Deputy Speaker refused to allow an opposition request to discuss accusations by Islamic scholars that oppo-

sition leader Benazir Bhutto was guilty of blasphemy for refusing to recognise the supremacy of Islamic laws.

"Religious Affairs Minister Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi is Kafir (infidel) and I declare him Kafir," declared opposition Deputy Khurshed Shah. Khan heads the group of Islamic scholars.

Bhutto said last week she did not accept the supremacy of the Islamic court, which is empowered to overrule any law deemed contrary to Islamic injunctions.

Bhutto had only refused to accept the supremacy of the Sharia court and not the supremacy of Sharia, or religious laws, opposition Deputy Farooq Leghari said.

The Midnight File

Khaleda meets Bangladeshis

ISLAMABAD, Aug 10: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met the Bangladeshis living here at Bangladesh High Commission tonight and exchanged views with them. The Prime Minister enquired their wellbeing and advised them to contribute to the development of Bangladesh. Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Begum Rahima Khatun MP were present on the occasion, reports BSS.

King Hasan asks his govt to resign

RABAT, Aug 10: King Hasan asked his government to resign today and make way for a new administration which will supervise Morocco's first general election in eight years, a senior government source said. A new Prime Minister is expected to be named within 24 hours. The election is to begin in the autumn, reports Reuter.

Seen from Gallery

From Page 1 Col 5
grin flashed across his face while he said it too.

Humayun Khan Panni served in the Pakistan foreign ministry as an ambassador to various countries until 1977. He returned to Bangladesh in 1978 and claimed back his citizenship.

.....
The discussion on the Jamuna Bridge Bill produced, perhaps inevitably, gentle reminders to the House about who thought about building a bridge over the Jamuna to connect North Bengal with the south and east.

Awami League members including Abdul Matin Khasru, Shahjahan Khan, Shamsul Huq, Dhirendranath Shambhu and others pointed out that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had ordered a feasibility study in 1973.

Jatiya Party members talked out about the initiative taken by their leader Hussain Muhammad Ershad of Rangpur, who in 1985 introduced surcharges on telephone bills and railway fares and levied special taxes on interest earnings to collect money for the bridge.

There was no claimant for the period 1975-85, but Communications Minister Col Oli Ahmed Bir Bikram said Ershad had collected money, spent it elsewhere but hadn't built the bridge.

However, it was JP's Mantrul Huq Chowdhury who summed up the situation with a telling observation.

"Some dream about it, some start the work, some finish the work, and some others enjoy it," Chowdhury said.

As Oli Ahmed said work on the bridge would finish in 1997, by when another general election should take place, it is an open lottery as to who would 'enjoy the bridge.'

.....
How many table-thumping ovations, simultaneously from both the Treasury and Opposition benches, can a member hope to receive during a two-minute speech?

Not even one, since cross-floor ovations are as rare in this parliament as comments or speeches on the floor by the Leader of the House. However, such is not the case with the Awami League's Shamsul Huq, a burly, heavily-mustachioed man with an extraordinary voice whose oratory rises in a crescendo, filling the hall with echoes, as it reaches a climax.

A perennial favourite of the House, Huq's two-minute speech on the Jamuna Bill was greeted with no less than three unanimous table-thumpings — one even before he started speaking, one during it and the third as he thanked the Deputy Speaker before sitting down.

Attack on shops, vehicles in Paltan area

By Staff Correspondent
A group of people attacked and damaged a number of vehicles and roadside shops near Tophkana and Paltan areas Monday noon.

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Samannay Committee alleged the attackers were the supporters of Jamaat, Shibir and Jubo Command who went to the High Court to hear the judgement of Golan Azam's citizenship case.

The Nirmul Committee office at Tophkana was also stoned, it alleged a Nirmul Committee press release.

No one was arrested.

NATO move

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we'll be able to move into the Security Council early in the week."

A Geneva report says: The UN Human Rights Commission will hold an emergency session this week to examine whether human rights are being abused in former Yugoslav republics, a UN spokesman said today.

The two-day session, to be held on Thursday and Friday in the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, was requested last Wednesday by the United States.

By this morning 30 of the 53 member states in the commission — more than the required majority — had expressed their support for the special session. The spokesman said more might voice their backing by the this evening deadline.

Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton said the United States should not rule out use of air power to deal with the 'horrible' problem of detention camps run by Serbians.

Clinton said in an interview on ABC television, he fundamentally shared the same view as President George Bush on how to handle the crisis. He agreed diplomacy should be given a chance to produce results.

Meanwhile, Bosnia's Ambassador to the United Nations appealed to the international community today to provide Muslim forces with weapons and to carry out air strikes against Serb positions.

"Just give us the weapons to defend ourselves and the air cover we need to knock out supply lines and gun emplacements," Muhamed Sacirbey told Britain's Independent newspaper.

10 injured in Azimpur clash

By Staff Correspondent
Two groups of youngsters clashed at Azimpur area over a football match Monday evening.

The half-hour chase and counter-chase between the groups left at least 10 people injured. They were reportedly wounded in cracker blasts.

Lalbagh police rushed to the spot, resorted to baton-charge and lobbed teargas shells to bring the situation under control, according to police.

Police also arrested Moazzem and Harunur Rashid from the spot for their alleged involvement in the clash, police said.

DUJ 3-hr work abstention

The Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) has called a three-hour work abstention in all the newspapers and news agencies of Dhaka from 11 am today protesting termination of the Executive Editor of the weekly Bichitra Shahriar Kabir and demanding his reinstatement, reports BSS.

No-confidence

From Page 1 Col 7
sion on the motion.

Meanwhile, the opposition parties and groups in a meeting in Sangsad Bhavan under the chairmanship of Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina took stock of the outcome of the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee.

Sources said the opposition also discussed its strategy of discussion on the no-confidence motion.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Opposition Leader Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Salauddin Yusuf of Awami League, Mantrul Huq Chowdhury of Jatiya Party, Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Suranjit Sengupta of Ganotantri Party, Shahjahan Straj of JSD (Straj), Shamsuddoha of CPB and Abdul Haq of NAP.

The meeting also discussed overall political and law and order situation.

It condoled the death of Nazrul Islam, MP of Awami League and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.