

## Plea for law guaranteeing right to information

By Staff Correspondent

Politicians, journalists, university teachers and former diplomat unanimously have said that the "flow of information" or "access to information" were not unfettered in the country.

The Information Minister partly agreed with the point but said that the information was flowing free at least in Parliament and the people could get "correct information" through the representative.

These observations came at a seminar on "Flow of Information in Bangladesh: Right and Constraint," organised by the Jatya Press Club on the occasion of its 38th founding anniversary. Tuesday was the second and concluding day of the two-day "Press Club Lecture Series 1992."

But the participant differed on whether the country needed a new law for the "right to information" or the essence of the Constitution's Article 39 ensure this right.

The Information Minister said there could be further discussion on how to guarantee the "right to information" by enacting new laws.

Chaired by Ittefaq Assistant Editor Ziaul Huq who was also the convenor of the lecture series committee, discussion on the lecture was participated by

Bangla Academy Director General Harun-ur-Rashid, former foreign secretary AKH Mürshed, Awami League Information Secretary Prof Abu Syed, Jamaat's Publicity Secretary Abdul Kader Mollah, Journalist Khairul Kabir, and BFUJ President Reazuddin

Ahmed. Professor of Dhaka University Journalism Department Dr Touhidul Anwar gave yesterday's lecture.

Information Minister Nazmul Huda said that the Parliament and the judiciary were now enjoying sufficient independence and the people can gather a lot of information through those institutions.

He admitted that the government had some limitations but said that "we are trying to make administration transparent so that people have easy access to information."

But before that there should be a transparency among the journalists for "accurate treatment of information."

Huda said that his government was going to liberalise the media but free flow of information might cause uncontrollable situation in the country.

Prof Abu Syed of AL said that Parliament was sometimes misinformed and added that on an issue three types of information were provided in three sessions.

He said that the sources of information were largely controlled by different means.

He suggested establishing a national data bank to help the people.

Dr Anwar in his lecture suggested enacting a new law for the right to information like there is in the United States.

Reazuddin Ahmed said that democratic institution, independent judiciary and accountable administration can ensure the free access to information.



Jahanara Imam lighting a torch before a procession yesterday on the eve of today's Nirmul Committee programme.

## Nirmul body

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Sheikh Hasina will attend it as the chief guest.

The meeting will be addressed by central leaders of Nirmul Committee and other political parties.

Committee sources said Tuesday that an "action-oriented and militant" will be announced at the rally. This phase of the movement, another source said, would stretch till Victory Day on December 16, might include hartals.

Today's rally will also mark the climax of three and a half month long series of actions launched on June 30 last.

## Make Nirmul body rally a success: Hasina

Sheikh Hasina yesterday appealed to the people for making a success today's grand rally sponsored by the Ghatatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee to press for trial of Golam Azam, reports UNB.

In a statement, the Awami League President and leader of the opposition criticised the government for not holding trial of "war criminal" Golam Azam in a special tribunal — a popular demand.

Hasina referred to the dastardly attacks of anti-liberation Jamaat-Shibir elements on democratic pro-liberation forces in different parts of the country and demanded ban on their politics.

The government will be compelled to ban the politics of the killers of 1971 and 75 as well as withdraw the case against 24 personalities of the 'people's court', she said.

The Awami League leader said movement would continue until the fruit of liberation war was reached to commonman by trying the killers of 1971 and 75.

## Another BSF move to push in 72 foiled

CHUADANGA, Oct 13: BDR thwarted a BSF attempt to push in 72 Bengali-speaking Indian nationals into Bangladesh through the border early today.

Commanding Officer of BDR 13 battalion Maj Mahbubul Alam told UNB that his jawans resisted the push through three frontier passages at around 3 am.

The victims include 30 children and 27 women.

The Indian Border Security Force tried to push in 20 of them through Dhopakhali border in Jibannagar thana and 30 through Baradi border and 22 through Rajapur in Damurhuda thana of the district.

## Natural Disaster Reduction Day today

The International day for Natural Disaster Reduction will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world today, reports BSS.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, in its Resolution 44/236, adopted in December 1989, decided to designate the second Wednesday of October each year as an International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (INDNR).

The theme of the day this year is natural disaster reduction for sustainable development.

## General discussion

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The Speaker, while announcing the decision of the Advisory Committee said that the issue would rather be generally discussed as 'operation push in'.

Incidentally, MPs belonging to both the Treasury bench and the Opposition refused to consider the issue as 'push back' because 'India had been pushing people into Bangladesh unilaterally.'

## Hartal disrupts life in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 13: An eight-hour hartal beginning from 6 am disrupted normal life in the port city here today.

Bangladesh Chhatra League, Chittagong city unit, gave the call for today's 8-hour hartal that ended at 2 pm demanding arrest of the alleged killers of BCL activist and Chittagong Medical College student Mahbubul Alam. Mahbub succumbed to his injuries September 24 after being tortured by the activists of a rival student faction.

The hartal hours passed almost peacefully barring some incidents of cracker-blasts and chase and counter-chase between the supporters of rival student groups at different parts of the city including Anderkilla, New Market crossing, Lalkhan Bazar, Chowk-bazar, Moghailoti and Agrabad. No casualty was reported.

BCL activists started picketing from early morning and put up barricades at various points of the city, witnesses said.

None was arrested while truck-loads of police were seen patrolling the important city roads.

All kinds of vehicles stayed off the roads and highways while the shopping arcades and markets remained closed.

Both private and public offices here could not function fully due to thin attendance and banks could not operate during hartal period.

Carrying of cargo to and from Chittagong Port remained suspended during hartal hours due to non-plying of trucks, port officials said. However, cargo handling operation inside the port was carried out, they added.

The mills and factories at Nasirabad, Sitakundu Kalurghat industrial belts also suffered production losses due to hartal, sources said.

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## 2 BCL (M-I) leaders assaulted on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

A group of unidentified youth physically assaulted two Awami League backed Chhatra League (M-I) leaders on the Dhaka University campus Tuesday afternoon.

The unidentified group beat-up Motahar Hossain Rana, Bengali Masters final year student and Suhrawardy, Law fourth year student seriously on the road in front of the Zahurul Huq Hall of the university, campus sources said.

Sources said that Rana, resident of Jasimuddin Hall and a central committee leader of the BCL (M-I) and Suhrawardy of Ziaur Rahman Hall went to New Market at about 2.30 pm yesterday.

Rana who received serious injury in his head was later taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, sources said.

Meanwhile, the campus sources said sounds of at least three rounds of gun shots were heard from the Carzon Hall areas of the university Monday at about 11.30 pm.

## Three regional TV centres to be set up

The government has undertaken a project in 1991 to set up three regional television centres in the country during the Fourth Five Year Plan period, reports BSS.

The proposed sites of the television centres included Bogra. The project is being implemented under the Annual Development Programme of 1992-93.

Recently, the government, had taken a decision to set up one more TV centre at Rajshahi. With a view to selecting the site of two separate TV centres at Rajshahi and Bogra and to consider the technical aspects of the proposed centres the Information Ministry has formed a committee which has already started its work.

There was no scope of doubt or misunderstanding about setting up of two separate TV centres at Rajshahi and Bogra. The government hoped that concerned people would refrain from issuing statements or resorting to programmes on the matter.

## Step-mother kills minor boy

By DMCH Correspondent

A minor boy, Korban Ali was murdered reportedly by his step-mother at Mohammadpur in the capital Monday evening.

The body of eight-year-old Korban was found floating on the river near Dhaka protection embankment at Mohammadpur Tuesday morning.

Following a murder case lodged by the victim's father Abdul Khaleq, the step-mother, Shahera Begum was arrested and detained in the Mohammadpur police station Tuesday noon, according to police.

Family sources said that Shahera took Korban for an outing Monday afternoon. Shahera turned up at her Sheikh-er-Tek, Mohammadpur house but Korban did not, they added.

Korban's father, Khaleq is a driver and he has two wives — Shahera and Anu Bibi — who reside at the same house.

Mohammadpur police are interrogating Shahera but yet to find out the motive behind the 'murder', said police.

## University bill

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Rahman Chowdhury who agreed with his views and suggested the word ordinance be replaced with regulations. It was accepted and the bill was ultimately passed with amendment.

Earlier, about twenty members from the opposition spoke opposing the bill.

Winding up the discussion Education Minister Zamiruddin Sircar said the concept of National University is not new. In many countries like India, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia national universities are functioning efficiently to reduce pressure on residential universities.

Opposing the bill Mohammad Nasim (AL) said by making Prime Minister as Chancellor of the national university the ruling party wants to impose its supremacy in the university.

Others who spoke opposing the bill included Prof Rafiqul Islam, Kazi Shamsur Rahman, Begum Hafeza Asma, Mohammad Shahiduzzaman, Md. Abu Bakar, Md. Enamul Haque, Matur Rahman Nizami, Md. Latifur Rahman, Gazi Nazrul Islam, Md. Shakawat Hossain, Dr. AKM Azad, Md. Nasiruddin, Shah Mohammad Ruhul Kuddus, Maulana Habibur Rahman, Abu Lais Mohammad Mobin Chowdhury.

The House was adjourned till 4-30 pm Wednesday.

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## The Midnight File

### Kuwait will buy US tanks

NEW YORK, Oct 13: Kuwait has agreed to buy 236 US Abrams M1-A2 tanks after President George Bush wrote personally to the Kuwaiti Emir, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the New York Times reported today, reports AFP.

### Pak Shi'ites to launch movement

ISLAMABAD, Oct 13: Pakistan's main Shi'ite party announced here today it would launch a country-wide protest movement this week against the arrest of one of its top leaders. The Central General Secretary of Tehreek Nifaz-e-Jafria (TNFJ), Anwar Ali Akhundzada, was arrested by police in northwestern city of Peshawar on Saturday in connection with a murder case, reports AFP.

### Narasimha to visit Nepal

KATHMANDU, Oct 13: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao will arrive here Monday on a three-day official visit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced today. He is to meet Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala for talks twice — on the day of his arrival and over breakfast the next morning, reports AFP.

## From the Gallery

From Page 1 Col 5

recently in hospital after, Iluq said, being "inhumanly tortured by police while in custody".

Ministers cannot duck underneath Article 71 and that is why MPs love it. Home Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury stood up and sounded as if he was about to give a statement there and then.

"Yes, I . . .", he said, then paused and then said "Well, I will give a statement later".

Some members however nearly miss their golden chances. Take Niamatullah, better known to his friends as Sabu, of Savar for instance.

When Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali called out Sabu's name to speak on his notice under Article 71, the 100-megaton figure of the Savar MP looked somewhat startled. His face was a picture of disbelief and confusion as he leant forward, putting his 10-megaton left arm on the table.

"Well . . . er . . . sir . . .", he stammered in a sheepish voice. "What . . . what was my subject matter . . .". Ah yes, he had simply forgotten the topic on which he had given his notice under 71!

"You have to pay me fees for that", said the Speaker, without meaning a word of it.

However, when an MP from the Treasury bench stood up on another point of order, he began to talk about the price of rice.

During this time of the year, the MP said, price of rice usually goes up, but press reports indicate that this time the price has actually gone down. The government deserves a round of applause and thanks for this, he said.

Well, fine, but point of order? The Speaker couldn't have possibly found any reference to the price of rice going up or down during the Bangla months Ashwin-Kartik, or any other time of the year, in the Rules of Procedure.

For a few seconds it looked as though the Speaker would turn the MP's mike off and rule his point of order out of order. But in the end, the mike stayed on, and the point was taken with all-round table-thumping from government benches.

Not that Razaque Ali had any soft spot for obscenities on TV, films, VCR or anywhere else. It was just that the copy of Khatun's notice in front of him said she was supposed to speak on a totally different topic altogether.

Khatun was embarrassed, though not visibly, since nothing of her was visible, except a pair of thick-glassed spectacles.

### Nobel Prize

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its citation.

Born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, Becker is a Professor at the Departments of Economics and Sociology at the University of Chicago.

The Swedish Academy said Becker's contribution consisted mainly in extending economic theory to aspects of human behaviour previously covered, if at all, by other disciplines such as Sociology, Demography and Criminology.

"In so doing, he has stimulated economists to tackle new problems," the citation said.

Becker's ideas can be applied in four main areas—in investment in human capital, behaviour of the family or household, crime and punishment, and discrimination on the markets for labour and goods.

Becker's publications include his book "Human Capital," written in 1964, "a treatise on the family" in 1981, and an essay "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach" in 1968.

The academy said Becker's general theory for the household's allocation of time "turned out to be a highly useful foundation for examining many different issues associated with household behaviour."

"Becker has one even further. He has formulated a general theory for behaviour of the family—including not only the distribution of work and the allocation of time in the family, but also decisions regarding marriage, divorce and children," the academy noted.

More than 2,65,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees have been encamped in Bangladesh since March last year. They have fled their homes in Arakan, the western province of Myanmar (Burma) to escape a military crackdown.

Most refugees are reluctant to return home for fear of military persecution.

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## Accord on Azam

From Page 1 Col 8

on June 29 to end the prolonged boycott of the Budget Session by all members of the opposition parties in Parliament excepting Jamaat.

The major points of the accord were that Golam Azam would be tried as per the constitution and the existing laws of the country and that the cases lodged against the 24 members of the Nirmul Committee would be withdrawn.

Nothing that the Deputy Leader of the House A Q M Badruddoza Choudhury made the announcement of the agreement in Parliament on July 1, Nasim said "even after three months not a single point of the agreement has been implemented so far, while those 'ghataks' have gone on to file new cases".

Demanding the immediate implementation of the agreement by the government, he added "or else the (Golam Azam) issue will be taken to the streets again and the people will lose faith in Parliament".

Saying that no time should be wasted to implement the accord, Nasim added "we expect an announcement from the government soon".

Chief Whip Khandaker Dewar Hossain took the floor and readily acknowledged that it was an "important matter". However, he expressed his inability to discuss the matter at the moment as the necessary information was not available with him. At this point the Speaker ruled that both sides should sit together to resolve the issue.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad took the floor next and hoped that the treasury bench was "more specific" about holding the proposed talks.

However, he added that the blame for the attack should not be heaped on any particular side until proper investigations were carried out and charges were filed.

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## Saifur discusses joint ventures with Canberra

CANBERRA, Oct 13: Finance Minister Saifur Rahman today met the Australian Prime Minister, Paul Keating, and briefed him about the recent economic and fiscal policy undertaken by the present government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports BSS.

Rahman especially emphasized on Australia's possible investment in Bangladesh in the form of joint ventures in areas like aluminium processing, coal mining, livestock and cattle development, dairy farming and processing of hides and skins.

The Finance Minister also met the Australian Treasurer (Finance Minister) John Dawkins, Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans and Minister for Trade and Overseas Development John Kerin.

In his meeting with the Australian Foreign Minister, the Rohingya refugee problem of Bangladesh came up for discussion. The Finance Minister sought Australian cooperation in forming international opinion to resolve the issue.

Seriously injured Shamsul Alam was admitted to Manikganj Hospital and the rest were released after being given first aid.

Police seized the truck but driver of the bus managed to flee the scene.

Witnesses said the Aricha-bound truck from Dhaka skidded off the Dhaka-Aricha highway and fell into the ditch at about 5 am, knocking down the trader who died on the spot.

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## Three killed in road mishaps

CHITTAGONG, Oct 13: One motorcyclist and his companion today died on the spot in a collision with a bus at Moradpur, Sholoshahar here, reports BSS.

The victims aged between 30 to 35 could not be identified. Police seized the bus and the motorcycle, but the driver of the bus managed to escape.

Two bodies were taken for autopsy, police said.

UNB adds: An unidentified young trader was killed and four others were injured, one of them seriously, when a truck loaded with potato plunged into a road-side ditch near Bathuli in Savar today.

Witnesses said the Aricha-bound truck from Dhaka skidded off the Dhaka-Aricha highway and fell into the ditch at about 5 am, knocking down the trader who died on the spot.

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