

# JS: Govt responsible

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 sue. Some of them offered support to the government should the ruling party be willing to retract.  
 Earlier, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman had initiated the debate with a prepared statement that gave a resume of the events and the government activities to deal with the crisis.

The latest reports say that situation in the border areas is stable," Rahman told the House while informing the MPs of the steps taken so far.

The Treasury Bench members merely echoed the statement of the Foreign Minister.

Blasting the government for 'failure' in the foreign policy front since taking over nineteen months ago, the Opposition MPs were also critical of the ruling party's handling of the Rohingya issue.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia entered the House at 8:25 pm, three-and-a-half hours after the discussions began. Her absence in the House for a long time during discussion on such a crucial issue drew criticisms from the Opposition.

Jatiya Party leader and former vice-president Moudud Ahmed launched strong condemnation of India, but said the Bangladesh government had created a new problem through Article 11 of the joint communication.

Ahmed said that migrations were natural and universal phenomena, but they were guided by national policy regulations and international laws.

Ahmed said that when one crore of our people were coming back from India in 1972, New Delhi had wanted to include many Indian Bangladeshis, but the then government said no.

"We said that we would only accept those who left Bangladesh after March 25, 1971, and no one else," Ahmed said.

Moudud Ahmed suggested that Article 11 had wiped out that distinction and opened up a new area of problems which did not exist before.

Communist Party's Shamsuddoha condemned "this inhuman treatment of human beings left on the no-man's-land," and congratulated Indian political parties who had also condemned push-back.

Shamsuddoha said that people of this country were going to every corner of the world including India in search of a livelihood, as extreme poverty was the reality of their life. "We have to find a solution to this problem on a regional basis," he suggested.

Pointing out to the joint communication clause, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad alleged that the BNP government had "put the nation in a tough spot".

"To me it looks like a memorandum submitted to the Indian government and in the statements made by the Treasury Bench today they failed to show any determination to solve the problem," Samad Azad said.

Terminating the failure of the government to consult with the Leader of the Opposition

## Strike at mills

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workers' leaders on their demands. The demands include suspension of denationalisation scheme and sale of shares of the state-run mills, declaration of Wage Commission Awards, checking of smuggling of yarn and clothes and imposition of ban on import of yarn-clothes and curbing of terrorism in the industrial belts.

The government signed two agreements with the Trade Union leaders of the jute-textile sectors — the first on December 19 last year and the other on July 27 this year for materialisation of the aforesaid demands.

Yesterday's strike was called as the government was not implementing the accords and going ahead with its denationalisation plan, union leaders told The Daily Star.

They claimed that the 24-hour strike was a 'total success'.

Our Correspondent from Gazipur said, yesterday's strike was totally ignored by the workers and employees of seven jute-textile mills. All the mills remained under police guard during the whole day, he added.

Our Correspondent from Narayanjan reported, the strike at Adamjee Jute Mills was observed partially. The Chand Textile Mills at Postogola-Shyampur Industrial Area remained closed for the whole day yesterday, he added.

Our Correspondent from Narayanjan adds: Workers and employees of Kishoreganj Textile Mills observed a 24-hour strike beginning from 6 am Monday.

The workers of textile mills also brought out a procession later in the day in the town and chanted slogans in support of their demands.

and Parliament in taking a decision of national importance as a 'one eyed' policy, he said, "you should accept that it was a mistake and take the nation into confidence in solving the problem."

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mian pointed out that the Indian government assumed that anyone speaking Bengali was a citizen of Bangladesh. He also noted that the people who were being sent were included in the voters list and also held ration cards.

"This cannot be accepted under any humanitarian or international norms, no one can be pushed in unless they are proved to be Bangladeshi citizens and the onus is on the Indian government to prove it," he said.

Muhammad Nasim, the Opposition Chief Whip, blasted the government's 'lack of diplomatic initiatives' which he said also caused the deterioration of relations with neighbouring Myanmar and Pakistan.

"The Indians have seized upon the government's weakness and the failure in foreign policy to start the 'Push In' drive," he observed, adding "some people say that in our country when you are in the opposition you become anti-Indian and while in power you become pro-Indian."

Terminating the problem as a 'longstanding' one, Nasim called for tackling it bilaterally through the diplomatic process while protecting the independence and sovereignty of the country and by taking the people and parliament into confidence.

"We can't ignore the geopolitical aspects, but at the same time we can't risk our national interests," said Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party who blasted the Prime Minister for the inclusion of the paragraph on the "illegal movement of people".

"Migration dates back to the partition days, but we've never seen push back or anything of the sort before," the former Prime Minister under General Ershad said.

Condemning the "Indian design", Mattur Rahman Nizami of the Jamaat said, "This is India's internal problem which it is trying to pass on to Bangladesh."

"There is no reason for Muslim Bangladeshis to migrate to India," the Jamaat Parliamentary Party leader said, adding that "the problem is the result of an arranged game between the Congress and the BJP".

"Not any particular government, rather all the successive governments in the independent Bangladesh have adopted subservient policy giving in to Indian designs," the Jamaat leader commented.

Other members who took part in the discussion include Nurul Islam Moni, Ebadur Rahman Choudhury, State Minister for Law Aminul Haq, Choudhury, Abul Hassan Choudhury, Monirul Haq Choudhury, Abdus Sobhan, Khandaker Assaduzzaman, Sardar Sakawat Hossain Bakul, Sheikh Selim and Muhammad Akhtaruzzaman.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Shahjahan Siraj strongly criticized the government for its lack of political, diplomatic and economic strategy.

Condemning the push in drive initiated by India, Siraj said, "The Congress government in India has bowed to the communal forces in that country."

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Abdul Mannan, termed the "operation push back" drive by India as "push around, which means that atrocities are being conducted by the strong on the weak."

Refuting opposition charges about the government's 'subservient' foreign policy, the state minister noted that the transfer of the Tinbigha corridor was one of the success of the ruling party's foreign policy.

Awami League MP Shudhansu Shekhar Halder also strongly criticized the Clause 11 of the joint communication saying "every word goes against the interest of Bangladesh."

He demanded a statement from the government regarding the number of Indians who were coming into Bangladesh illegally.

Ganotantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta while condemning the unilateral Indian move termed it as "against humanity and as undiplomatic."

Awami League leader Abdur Razzak slated the Prime Minister for acknowledging the illegal immigration issue in the joint communication while offering a denial to the press.

AL leader Sajeda Choudhury noted that no time-frame was mentioned in the joint communication and asked "will Jyoti Basu be included in the 'push back' drive since he is also from Bangladesh." Condemning the Indian drive, she pointed out the inhuman way the people were being treated.



Winter vegetables have begun appearing in city markets but the prices are very high. — Star photo

# Mostafiz makes statement in JS

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The Foreign Secretary said discussions also took place between Bangladesh high commissioner in New Delhi and the Indian Foreign Secretary and two flag meetings were held between BDR and the BSF on October 10 and 11 at Petrapole border outpost and Bhomra checkpoint as a follow up of these meetings.

The Foreign Minister said another flag meeting was held in Bheramara on October 15 and all these meetings helped subside tension and the Indian nationals gathered along the border for "Push In" were taken back inside India from "the zero point" by the BSF.

Latest reports from the border speaks of a stable situation, he informed the House.

In this context, the Foreign Minister clearly said that the so-called "Push In" operation had no relation whatsoever with the problem of tribal refugees in the Indian Tripura state.

Bangladesh has time and again called upon India for co-operation in repatriation of those refugees from India. But necessary response from Indian were not available in this respect despite Dhaka's clear assurances, he regretted.

Rahman said that the Indian Prime Minister had shown political goodwill and had given assurance of cooperation on this matter during our Prime Minister's visit to New Delhi. Bangladesh is working towards return and rehabilitation of these people, he added.

"They are our people and it was our primary responsibility to bring the people back to our country," the Foreign Minister said and made it clear that the operation "Push In" and the tribal refugee problems were two different issues and could not be interlinked.

Explaining the historical background of the migration of people across India-Bangladesh border, the Foreign Minister said that before 1947 partition the people of the undivided subcontinent freely moved from one place to another.

He said during the partition of the subcontinent and creation of India and Pakistan, a massive and historic migration took place.

Even after that unprecedented migration, Mostafiz said, people of India and Pakistan continued their visits but on a limited scale.

The Foreign Minister explained the reasons for which the migration took place. Firstly he pointed out that the Radcliffe Commission which demarcated the border of the two countries did not maintain the religious continuity, and secondly, the division of the subcontinent left many families divided.

Mostafizur Rahman also said that due to these practical reasons often visits of the people of these two countries continued even after the independence of Bangladesh. He argued that the limited migration of people between Bangladesh and India was not a new phenomenon and in fact it had been continuing for the last 45 years.

The Foreign Minister pointed out that the Indian media and other circles continued to allege oppressions and large-scale migrations of Hindus to India during Pakistani days. A section of the Indian media also alleged in late seventies that thousands of Bangladeshis had migrated to Assam, thus making the people of the soil minority.

On the basis of these allegations the Indian government took an initiative to fence the border with barbed wire. Against this background, allegations also levelled against India that Muslims were being driven from Assam, Tripura and West Bengal. He also said that throughout the eighties, the Indian media continued their propaganda against Bangladesh for religious persecution.

The Foreign Minister said that on the basis of these alle-

gations Bangladesh and India held several round of talks and decided to take steps including strengthening of visa system and patrolling along 4,144 km border by posting additional BSF and BDR. The two countries also finalised border guidelines. In 1980, 1981 and 1982 the two countries held talks on Foreign Ministers and heads of government levels and decided to restrict all such migrations from both the sides.

Referring to recent developments, Mostafiz said that during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to New Delhi on May 26-28 the two prime ministers reiterated their political commitments to strengthen bilateral relations. During that summit level talks the issue of limited both-way migration was discussed and included in the joint communication, he added.

Mostafiz also told the Sangsad that the government of Bangladesh issued a rejoinder to a news item, circulated by Press Trust of India soon after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's India visit that unilateral migration was taking place from Bangladesh. He said as the follow up of the Prime Minister's visit several high-level meetings between commerce ministers, finance ministers and water resources ministers including foreign secretaries took place. He also pointed out that the agreement of Tinbigha was also implemented and initiative was taken to hold the meeting of joint economic commission.

The Foreign Minister said that it was highly regrettable and unfortunate that India pushed in 132 Bengali-speaking Indians on September 11 without giving any prior intimation and discussions. This push in took place at a time when the bilateral relations was progressing and the SAARC summit was at the door step, he added.

In this context Mostafiz stated that it was not understandable why the Indian government was doing it at this stage.

He made it categorically clear that India pushed in the Bengali-speaking Indians defying all international rules, unilaterally and illegally.

Referring to the newspaper reports at home and abroad, he pointed out that the Indian BSF was torturing the people inhumanly. Reports also were received that the Bengali-speaking Muslims from Delhi, Murshidabad and other places were being evicted from their permanent homes for pushing into Bangladesh, he said.

Referring to unilateral propaganda in a section of Indian circle, the Foreign Minister said that some of the Indian sources were saying that 80-90 lakh Bangladeshis were now staying in India. He termed such claim as utter lie and posed a question when and how these people went to India in presence of huge BSF personnel who have been posted in thousands to check illegal migration.

Mostafiz said 34 BSF battalions were guarding the border day and night and how these alleged Bangladeshis could enter India, it was not understandable.

Refuting the abnormal figure of alleged migrants, he said the figure was not scientific because it was not assessed under scientific method.

Moreover, he pointed out that India did not give any such account of alleged migrants from Bangladesh before.

He said before pushing in there was a need to identify the nationalities of the people.

The responsibility of identifying these people vested entirely on the government of India, he said, adding that this was not only the expectation of Bangladesh from India but also an undisputed rights.

# JCD workers block Ctg-Kaptai Road

CHITTAGONG, Oct 19: Vehicular traffic on Chittagong-Kaptai Road came to a standstill since this afternoon following a road block by the JCD supporters at Kuwaish in Hathazari thana, reports UNB.

Witnesses and police said JCD supporters of Burichar Degree College went berserk after Chhatra League (M-I) activists allegedly kidnapped one of their colleagues at about 1.30 pm.

## Gallery

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laughter and embarrassed looking-around among government ranks.

Rahman had trouble with the words *shampradai* *shampriti* (religious harmony) and ended up saying *shampradai* *sh...ssh...priti*; then came *dillitha* (in Delhi) which became *dills...tta...tha*; and then *shampradai* (editorial) became *sham...pi*; also *jothopajokto* (appropriate) came out as *johaj...jokto*.

The discussion produced some hot-blooded nationalist talk, both the Bangalee and Bangladeshi varieties, and some robust condemnation of both the governments of Bangladesh and India. But some members seemed to get a little carried away in their quest for points.

Parliament's only independent MP Nurul Islam Moni said of the hapless push-in deportees: "They have ration cards, they are registered voters in India, they have voted in parliamentary elections..."

He was doing well upto then, but then he added, "...and also in presidential elections."

Fact of the matter is that, the Indian president is not chosen by ordinary voters, but by an electoral college formed by members of the two houses of the Indian parliament and state assemblies. If a push-around deportee had indeed been a voter in a presidential poll, then we would have to say that he had gone far. Too far for the BSF to catch.

Treasury back-bencher Sardar Sakwat Hossain, otherwise known as Bakul, seemed to have forgotten the difference between an immigrant, illegal or not, and a refugee, in his zeal to counter-act Opposition attacks, ferocious as they were, on Article 11 of the Khaleda-Rao Joint Communication signed in New Delhi May 28.

The Sardar from Narshingdi suggested that he could interpret the words "large-scale illegal immigration of people across borders" in the article to mean the "Chakma refugees" who were referred to in Article 13.

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English by Hornby, an immigrant is a "person who has been forced to flee from danger i.e. political persecution, floods etc" and refugee is a "person who comes as settler into another country."

Who loves SAARC? Or rather who needs it? Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim of Awami League has doubts.

When Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah spoke at length about the Association and the need to solve problems on the basis of regional cooperation, Selim had a few things to add.

"The minister said the government isn't doing anything for the sake of SAARC, as if SAARC wasn't there then we'd have gone to war. We don't want war, ... but SAARC can go to hell. If I can't defend my own interests then what am I going to do with SAARC?" the politician-newspaper editor from Gopalgarj asked.

## Presidential debate

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instead of traditional personal appearances.

Bush, who was flying to Michigan Monday, staged mock debates in Washington on Sunday as his campaign tried to shake the air of inevitability settling over a race Clinton has led since July.

But even as they insisted there was time to turn the race around, many Bush advisers conceded privately the odds were long, a sentiment voiced repeatedly by academics and analysts from both parties.

Monday night's format is split. In the first 45 minutes, Jim Lehrer of PBS will serve as single moderator. The candidate questioned by Lehrer will get two minutes to respond and the other candidates one minute each to rebut.

In the second 45 minutes, Lehrer will serve as moderator and the candidates will be questioned by three journalists: Helen Thomas of United Press International, Gene Gibbons of Reuters and Susan Rook of CNN.

# The Midnight File

## Next round Ayodhya talks Nov 8

NEW DELHI, Oct 19: The third round of talks on the Ayodhya dispute between the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC) would be held on November 8, it was officially announced here today. Initiations were being sent to the representatives of the organisations for the talks, official sources said, reports PTI.

## Aftershocks shake Colombia

SAN PEDRO DE URABA (Colombia), Oct 19: Strong aftershocks shook Colombia on Monday after two big earthquakes and an eruption of fire, steam and boiling mud from a volcanic mound killed five people. Reports of injuries and structural damage still trickled in Monday from isolated villages cut off by Sunday's earthquake of 7.2 on the Richter scale and Saturday's temblor of 6.6, reports AP.

## 50 injured in Kashmir violence

NEW DELHI, Oct 19: About 50 people were injured today in India's Kashmir state when security forces dispersed scores of Muslims protesting the death of four men in police custody, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. Men, women and children marched through the streets of Srinagar shouting anti-Indian slogans and carrying the bodies of the four, including the Imam of a local Mosque, the news agency said, reports AFP.

# Scrap treaties

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 calling on Rao to go home and for an end to "all unequal treaties with Nepal."

Some protestors had also tried to block the road but were removed by police before the motorcade arrived, they said.

Earlier the communist activists had distributed leaflets denouncing Rao's visit.

Rao arrived here today for a three-day official visit to promote trade and relations at the invitation of his Nepalese counterpart Girija Prasad Koirala.

The visit comes at a time when Koirala is facing a political crisis following the controversial "memorandum of understanding" he signed in New Delhi during his visit to India on the construction of a 120-megawatt hydro-electric power and irrigation project to be built by India.

Part of the facility is being constructed on about 2.9 hectares (7.2 acres) of Nepalese territory, for which Nepal is to receive 1.2 megawatts of the total 120-

## 2 murdered

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 Fazlatun Begum, 35, resided at a house at Malakartola, Sutrapur along with her two children.

Nastruddin and his niece Namuna resided at the Proshanna Poddar Lane house, relatives said.

However, it was also suspected that the businessman was murdered following a family feud over his properties and wealth, according to a source close to the victim's family.

Namuna, a divorcee, who resided with his uncle, was taken to the Operation Theatre (OT) and was being operated upon at the SSMCH until fling of this report midnight last night. Doctors on duty said her condition was critical.

Our SSMCH Correspondent reports: A second year student of Ideal College, Mohammad Sadrudin Sohel, 18, was shot dead at Gobinda Das Lane at Armanitola at around 7 pm last night.

Witnesses said that a group of armed men shot at Sohel when he was passing through the road along with some of his friends.

Fatally wounded Sohel was immediately rushed to the SSMCH where doctors on duty declared him dead.

Sohel was a son of a businessman Shahabuddin and resided at 37 Kosaituli, Bangal.

When contacted, Kotwali police said that their forces rushed to both the spots but were yet to get details of the incidents.

No cases were lodged with them until midnight last night, according to police.

## The Daily Star

### OFFICE SHIFTED

The Daily Star announces the shifting of its editorial, news and commercial offices to Road 3, House 11, Dhanmandi Residential Area, Dhaka with effect from Saturday, October 10, 1992.

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