

34,000 Rohingyas have returned, JS told

By Staff Correspondent

More than 34,000 Rohingya refugees have returned to their homes since the start of the repatriation process and thousands others are awaiting repatriation in different transit camps, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

In reply to a question from Mirza Azam of the Awami League, the Foreign Minister said that between June 1, 1993 to September 4 some 9212 refugees were repatriated.

Replying to a supplementary question, he said the Myanmar government had issued clearance to one lakh 30 thousand refugees.

The Foreign Minister said the Myanmar authorities have permitted presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials and a technical committee was now visiting Yangon in this connection.

JS body on Foreign Ministry ends meeting in chaos

Members of the parliamentary committee on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here yesterday exchanged hot words on the appointment and promotion of 'unacceptable people' in Bangladesh missions abroad.

Opposition members of the committee, at a meeting, accused the government of 'dumping' retired army officers and 'chosen men' into the Foreign Ministry and expressed their anger on the appointment and promotion of 'self-confessed' killers of Bangabandhu in different embassies.

A source told UNB that the meeting, which began at the Sangsad Bhaban at 9 in the morning, could not proceed due to the heated debate between the members of the Opposition and Treasury bench.

Chaired by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, the meeting was attended by Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Major (Retd) Hafizuddin and Redwan Ahmed of the BNP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad and Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League and Rashed Khan

JS body on corruption meets today

The Special Parliamentary Committee, formed to probe charges of corruption, will meet today at the cabinet room in the Sangsad Bhaban to discuss the committee's terms of reference, reports UNB.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, who is the chairman of the 15-member committee, will preside over the meeting to be held at 10 am.

The committee was set up to inquire into allegations of corruption raised by Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed MP against Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Majid-ul Haq.

Businessmen-NBR

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value, he should get the benefit of the lower cost in terms of duty levy.

The reality in this regard, the MCCI president alleged, 'is contrary to the Finance Minister's announcement, because import duties are being charged on the basis of tariff value or the value certified by the approved inspection agency, whichever is higher.'

He suggested that tariff value should be discontinued in respect of all items for which the import duties were 30 per cent and below since at such rates of duty there would be very little incentive for under-invoicing.

Replies to some questions of the businessmen, Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Chairman of the NBR, said the Board has a plan to send its probationary officers to private organisations to get themselves accustomed to the needs of the private sector and for quick actions regarding any problems.

'As a citizen, I admit that there are inefficiency and corruption in our administration,' Dr Khan said. 'This causes losses to both the public and the private sector.'

On the issues of tariff anomalies, Dr Khan said the tariff commission is providing decisions on disputes but agreed that the time taken for such decisions should be shortened.

On the issue of import value fixation by inspection agencies, the NBR Chairman said the law regarding tariff value and inspection should be amended.

Taking part in the discus-

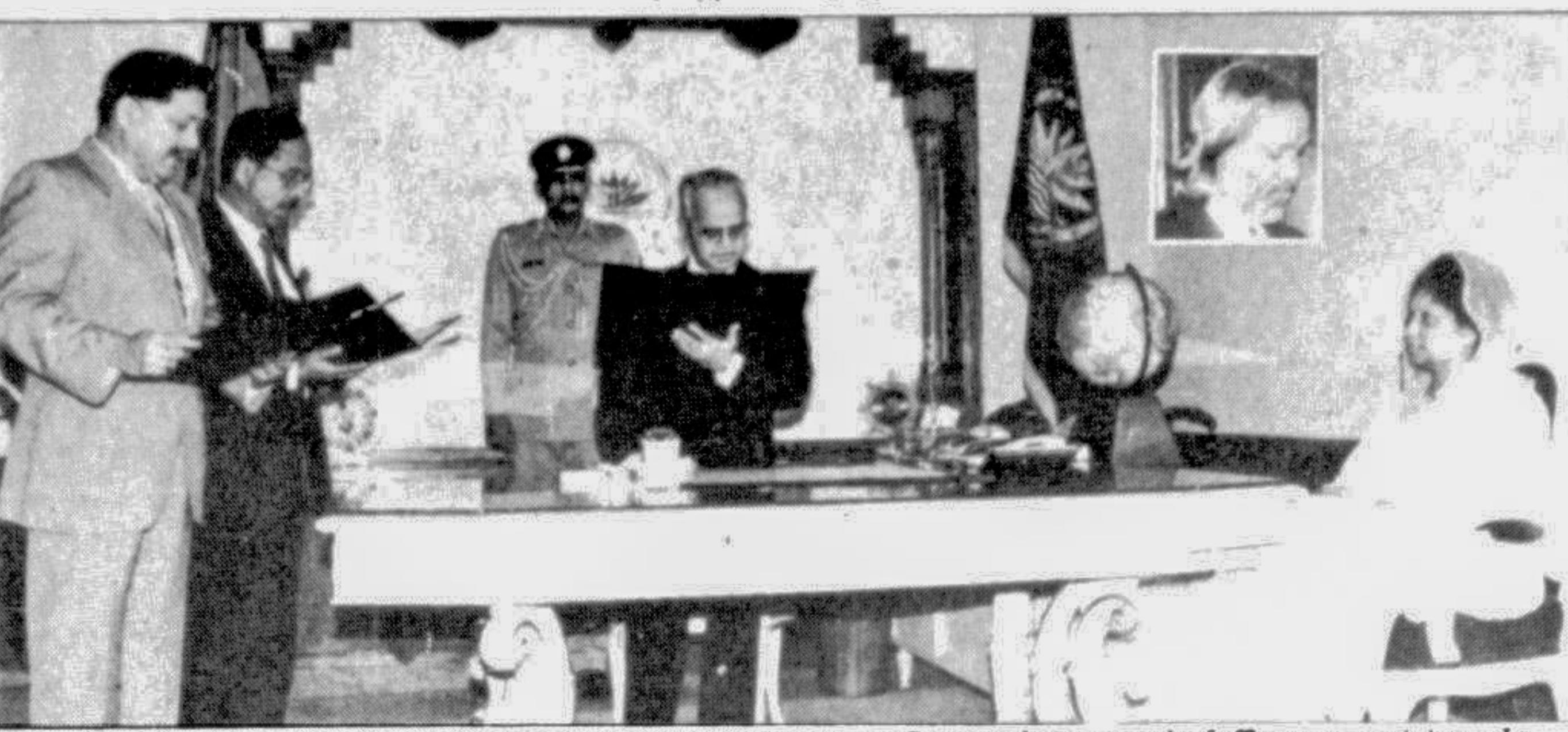
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Indo-Bangla

The talks would cover the improvement of navigability between Azmriganj and Zakiganj section of the Kushiara river, joint inspection of the channel close to Chilmari and night navigation facilities.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia watches as President Abdur Rahman Biswas administers oath of office to new ministers Lt Gen (Retd) Mir Shakhat Ali (far left), Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain and state minister Dr A. Moyeen Khan (inset) at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

— PID photo

Reshuffle

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Begum Zia following her party's victory in the February 27 polls that year, was formed under a presidential system headed by interim President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. That cabinet resigned after the Twelfth Amendment and a new one was sworn in. Several ministers of that March cabinet were changed.

State Minister for Establishment Nurul Huda resigned from his post on June 12 last and Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan resigned on health grounds day before yesterday.

All the three new ministers are members of Parliament.

Lt Gen (Retd) Mir Shakhat Ali was elected from the Dhaka-8 constituency, Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain, a former minister under Ziaur Rahman, was elected from Comilla-8 and Dr Moyeen Khan was elected from the Narsingdi constituency.

Some remarks of Information Minister Nazmul Huda in reply to Azad's statement sparked off protest among the AL members, according to the source. Huda is reported to have said that only courts can decide who are the killers and there is also nothing like 'self-confessed' killers.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman called off the meeting at 10:30 am amid a chaotic scene.

JS to debate crisis in jute sector today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) will take up the crisis in the country's jute sector for general debate in the House today. Parliament secretariat sources said.

Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers' Party submitted a notice seeking short discussion on the issue in the previous session which ended July 15.

The Business Advisory Committee of the Sangsad Saturday decided to the issue to be debated in the House during the current session.

All actions and functions of the cabinet during the period from the resignation of Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan on Sunday till the appointment of new ministers yesterday were illegal, said some constitutional experts, reports UNB.

With the resignation of Shamsul Islam Khan the number of technocrat minister in the cabinet stood at 4 — more than one-tenth — in violation of Article 56 (2) of the Constitution, said Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder, a senior parliamentarian.

Article 56 (2) says: The appointments of the Prime Minister and other Ministers and of the Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers, shall be made by the President; provided that not less than nine-tenths of their number shall be appointed from among members of Parliament and not more than one-tenth of their number may be chosen from among persons qualified for election as members of Parliament.

Halder told UNB by telephone last night that as soon as Shamsul Islam Khan resigned, the strength of the council of ministers came to 39, including 4 technocrats.

So, Halder pointed out that the Constitution has been violated and all work done by the government during this period was 'illegal and without lawful authority and all actions taken during the time should be suspended immediately.'

Consequently, he said, all files should be recalled by the Prime Minister so that constitutional provision is not violated by giving effect to those actions by the respective ministers, including the Prime Minister.

Halder recalled a similar incident in Parliament in 1979 when President Ziaur Rahman dismissed all the five non-elected technocrat ministers to meet the constitutional obligation. Hayek, 24.

He was among thousands of jubilant Palestinians blocking the centre of Jericho, the West Bank town which with the Gaza Strip is to gain self-rule under the accord.

"Now the Israelis do not stop us, we are free," Hayek said.

The cabinet yesterday met at its regular weekly meeting at Bangabhaban without the required number of ministers, as per relevant provision of the Constitution.

In similar observation, Suranjit Sengupta, PM said the government failed to meet the constitutional requirement as per Article 56 (2). The continuation of the ministers in the cabinet during the time from the resignation of Shamsul Islam Khan and appointment of new ministers was without lawful authority, he said.

He said care should be taken so that the Constitution is not violated.

Several hundred opponents of the pact chased the procession, and some stoned it.

Though supporters far outnumbered opponents, the bitterness of Palestinians who oppose peace with Israel was inescapable.

On one street, a big Palestinian flag fluttered bearing the message: "There is no selling Palestine."

BNP, AL blame each other

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At this point, contributed to the fire and fury by accusing Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda of patronising the terrorists who were involved in assaulting teachers in the Jahangirnagar University campus incident.

Tofael Ahmed of the AL, quoting a press statement of the JU teacher's association, accused the local JCD activists of physically attacking the teachers.

Tofael also alleged that the Information Minister compelled the JU authorities to withdraw and expulsion order against a JCD activist and prevailed upon the terrorists to withdraw their hunger strike demanding no disciplinary measures against them.

The Home Minister protested Tofael's statement relating to Huda and claimed that the government had set an unprecedented example by arresting the ruling party activists for the sake of democracy and rule of law.

He said, the opposition was now trying to fish in troubled waters. The Information Minister was not present during this first round of discussion on the issue.

Abdus Samad Azad, acting Leader of the Opposition, also blamed Minister Huda for his alleged involvement in the JU incident.

Barrister Huda entered the House during the disposing of the notices for adjournment motions immediately after the question-answer hour. He sought the floor to reply to the Opposition allegations made against him earlier.

Meanwhile, the AL members unitedly stood to protest against the refusal to allow the adjournment motion on the JU incident. The Chair also continued to refuse the floor to any member during disposing of the notices until Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury pleaded in favour of the Opposition members.

Taking the floor, Abdus Sa-

mad Azad, Mohammad Nasim, Rashed Khan Menon, Suranjit Sengupta and Matur Rahman Nizamul Huda of patronising campus terrorism and demanded a general discussion on the issue.

Minister Nazmul Huda finally took the floor to support the Opposition view relating to the need for a general discussion on the campus violence.

The minister, however, denied his involvement in the Jahangirnagar University incident.

Advocating for a thorough discussion on terrorism, especially campus violence, the minister said: "It was necessary to let the people know what actually happened there on the JU campus."

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni put an end to the unscheduled debate announcing that since both the benches were willing to discuss the issue, he would announce the schedule today after consultation with Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali.

2 more bills introduced

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The government yesterday introduced the Bangladesh Jute Corporation (Repeal) Bill, 1993, with a view to winding up the Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC) which was created in 1985 through an ordinance by incorporating various jute organisations, reports BSS.

Earlier, Law, Justice and Parliament Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Haque introduced the Supreme Court Judges (Leave, Pension and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 1993.

25 injured in Adamjee clash

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 13: At least 25 persons were injured in a clash between the workers of the BNP and the AL at the Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM) here this afternoon.

The one and a half-hour armed clash took place over establishment of dominance by rival workers at the New Colony inside the mills premises, witnesses said, adding that both sides used lethal weapons and explosives.

Seriously injured Kajal, Selim, Yasin and Anwar were admitted to the local health complex while others were given first aid at different clinics.

Arabs celebrate accord

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Music from a mosque filled the air and a taped broadcast proclaimed: "We shall use the brigades of Al Kassim, those who carry out operations, we shall continue till the end. Martyrs are in the thousands, God is great."

Izzedine Al Kassim is the military wing of Hamas, a radical Muslim fundamentalist group that opposes Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization and the peace agreement Arafat has reached with Israel.

He was among thousands of jubilant Palestinians blocking the centre of Jericho, the West Bank town which with the Gaza Strip is to gain self-rule under the accord.

"Now the Israelis do not stop us, we are free," Hayek said.

Soldiers stayed behind a high fence surrounding the police station, the only building in the centre of this normally sleepy oasis town not decked with flags or posters of PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

AP adds from Gaza City in Occupied Gaza Strip: For many Palestinians, Monday was a day for jubilant celebration. For others it was a day of mourning.

Thousands of Palestinians paraded through the city for hours on foot and in cars, waving Palestinian flags and chanting support for the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO.

Police said customs officials raided two shops and seized 57 pieces of smuggled sarees.

Later police brought the situation under control by resorting to baton charge on the mob.

In another incident, students of the Tejgaon Degree College clashed with some outsiders who reportedly entered the college and assaulted two students in the afternoon. Five people suffered minor injuries during the incident.

Shopkeepers of Dhanmondi Hawkers' Market clashed with police when customs officials, along with police, raided the Dhanmondi Hawkers' Market and Farmgate areas in the city yesterday.

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