



## Halder says BNP has breached Constitution

**By Staff Correspondent**

Awami League parliamentarian Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder claimed in Parliament yesterday that constitutionally there was no government in the country between September 11 and 13 since the ratio between MPs and technocrats in the cabinet was not in keeping with the constitutional provision following the resignation of the Industries Minister last Sunday.

Rising on a point of order immediately after the question-answer session, Halder said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia formed her cabinet with 41 ministers in which four were non-elected technocrat ministers. The number of Jatiya Sangsad members in the cabinet came down to 36 after State Minister for Establishment Nurul Huda resigned on June 12 and Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan resigned on September 12.

As a result, a 39-member council of ministers with four technocrat ministers was unconstitutional as per Article 56(2) of the Constitution which specifies the number of elected and non-elected members in the cabinet.

"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 quoted from the Constitution.

"The constitutional provision has been violated and all functions of the government between September 11 to 13 are unlawful," Halder claimed.

Halder informed the House that a similar situation had been created in 1979 and late President Ziaur Rahman had to dismiss five technocrat ministers to meet the constitutional obligations.

He hoped that this BNP government would also set up a similar instance by reopening all the files processed during the three days. Halder sought a ruling from the Chair regarding the matter when Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni was presiding over.

The Deputy Speaker drew attention of the Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury and asked him to explain the Treasury Bench position.

Prof. Chowdhury said that Halder had raised an important constitutional issue but "I will not say anything now."

"We will answer later on after proper study of necessary papers," the Deputy Leader concluded.

The Deputy Speaker then switched over to the next agenda.

## JS debate on jute sector

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The budget session initiated the debate yesterday twenty legislators — six including the minister concerned, from the Treasury Bench and fourteen, including the proposer, of the opposition took part in the deliberation while Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali presided over the discussion.

Initiating the discussion, Menon said that jute sector had been exposed to the deliberate and systematic conspiracies of the World Bank and other international agencies which clearly wanted destruction of the newly developed prospect of the golden fiber.

Substantiating his observation, Menon said, the jute sector in India was getting financial supports from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) but at the same time it was pressuring Bangladesh to shut down the jute mills and retrench the workers.

Menon in this connection read out several documents in the House accusing the WB of conspiring against the country's jute sector. The WB lawmaker, quoting from WB documents, said that the organisation was patronising India to produce more jute while dissuading Bangladesh to grow the natural fiber.

The WB policy would not only affect the country's prospect of future foreign currency earning, it would definitely hit more than 30 million people involved directly and indirectly with the jute sector.

Menon accused the government, especially its Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, for succumbing to WB instructions and thus betraying the national interest.

Miah Mansoor Ali of the Treasury Bench also criticised the present jute policy of the government and proposed that the ministry should immediately sit with the representatives of the jute growers, workers in the jute sector and jute traders to chalk out a "pragmatic policy" to restore the sector from "man-made catastrophe."

The Treasury Bench MP felt that the sector was being destroyed systematically because of the rampant corruption of a section of officials and employees, jute sector workers' reluctance to increase productivity and conspiracies by a neighbouring country.

Miah Mansoor demanded that the corrupt officials who made money at the cost of national interests be tried immediately.

The other MPs who took part in the deliberations also made identical allegations against the government and the WB.

Jute Minister Hannan Shah, while winding up the discussion, admitted that Bangladesh could be optimistic about its jute and jute products especially with the growing awareness of the danger of the use of artificial fiber all over the world.

"In that case, we have to reduce the production cost and ensure quality products," the Minister said adding "Presently the sector is burdened with a large number of unnecessary workers and low quality products."

Despite sincere feelings of the opposition regarding the jute sector, we would not be able to compete our rivals, especially India, at the global market, the Minister explained.

India had been offering jute goods at the international market at price much lower than our production cost with a view to replace Bangladesh as jute supplying country, the Minister informed refuting allegations that the government is surrendering to the World Bank prescriptions, the Minister said, the government was yet to sign a final agreement with the institution. He however, said that the jute sector needed a total restructuring and for that matter it also needed financial assistance from donor agencies.

The Minister informed that the government was frantically trying to mobilise fund from a few donor agencies with no interest for three years and only three per cent interest for the next 15 years.

The Minister listed the immediate measures taken by the government to improve the situation as:

- 1) the jute mills will be allowed to utilise themselves the foreign exchange earned by them from the next month,
- 2) composite jute mills will be restricted to produce yarn for export from 30th of this month — it will be done by jute twine mills,
- 3) a revolving fund of 2.5 million dollars is being raised to face the uneven competition from India and to cover the loss

**Ctg BCL leader killed in clash.**

CHITTAGONG, Sept 14: A pro-Awami League Chhatra League leader was stabbed to death in an internecine clash in Baskhali thana today, reports UNB.

Morshed Alam Chowdhury, 24, former president of Baskhali Degree College unit of BCL, was stabbed by rivals in the organisation while returning home from a party meeting.

He succumbed to his stab injuries on way to hospital.

Witnesses said the clash ensued when two factions of BCL brought out processions after their separate meetings chanting slogans against each other on the college campus. The fighting spread to adjoining areas.

Both the rival groups of BCL south district unit, one led by Nurul Afzar Chowdhury and the other by Abdul Gaffar, blamed each other for the trouble.

## Akbar takes new seat

**By Staff Correspondent**

The newly-inducted Minister for Environment and Forests Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain exchanged pleasantries with a number of MPs for the second day yesterday and took his new seat on the second row of the Treasury benches.

He was heading towards his original seat in the third row but an usher showed him his new position near Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah and Industries Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan.

Li Gen (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali who also joined the cabinet as Food Minister briefly entered the House yesterday but the new State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan did not attend the session since taking oath of office Monday.

## 'Only 450 Royal Bengal tigers in Sunderbans'

**By Staff Correspondent**

There are about 450 Royal Bengal tigers remaining in the Sunderbans, a tropical rain-forest located in the north-western part of the country.

This was disclosed by Forests and Environment Minister Abdullah al-Noman in reply to a question in Parliament on Tuesday.

The minister also informed the House that a wildlife management programme is being undertaken alongwith the Sunderbans Development Project under the technical assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

In his written reply, Noman said that in 1977 three sanctuaries were created in the Sunderbans to protect the Royal Bengal tigers.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the inaugural ceremony of a three-day symposium on "Poverty Eradication in South Asia" at the BRAC Centre at Rajendrapur in Gazipur yesterday. Among others, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan are also seen.

## PM: Eradicate poverty

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establishing the SAARC was to alleviate poverty on the basis of regional cooperation, Begum Zia said.

She said during the Seventh SAARC Summit held in Dhaka this year the report of the Independent South Asian Commission for Poverty Alleviation has been approved and in the light of the report a coordinated strategy and action programme for poverty alleviation in South Asia by the year 2000 has been adopted. "This is a significant development in the context of South Asia," she said.

"Now the Dhaka Declaration for poverty eradication is to be implemented in true sense and for this welfare-oriented poor plans are to be adopted and executed," Begum Zia said.

She said, "A new tide of economic prosperity is sweeping through the Asia-Pacific region and South Asia will also have to keep pace with this. There is no room for failure because failure would lead to disaster." Begum Zia said quoting late Sri Lankan president Ranasinghe Premadasa, "Deprivation anywhere in South Asia means insecurity everywhere in South Asia."

Begum Zia said the South Asian nations should keep in mind that the region was now at a cross-roads and the catalyst for regional stability is progress and prosperity. "Together we have to make concerted efforts towards that goal," the SAARC Chairperson said.

Detailing her government's plans for the eradication of poverty the Prime Minister said, "We realise that in order to consolidate democracy we first have to reduce our all-pervading poverty."

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh has identified

## One beaten to death in Pabna

**PABNA, Sept 14:** A young man was beaten to death over a family feud at Shukhchar village in Sadar thana this morning, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rahim Ranu, 25, son of one Montazuddin Pramanik.

Villagers said Ranu was taken into a house and beaten to death, allegedly by Rahim Mandal, and Jhantu Mandal, at about 9 am.

Villagers said Jhantu Mandal had a long-standing enmity with Ranu's father.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the morgue for autopsy. None was arrested in this connection.

## Mitterrand

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Officials said planned summit talks with South Korean President Kim Young-Sam were delayed by 30 minutes to give Mitterrand time to recover.

Mitterrand vomited heavily after signing the visitor's book at the Blue House and was immediately taken to a nearby room where doctors treated him, witnesses and officials said.

His aide de camp, Yan Taingui, was earlier seen supporting him as he walked up the stairs into the Blue House after making a speech during the welcoming ceremony.

Before becoming ill, Mitterrand reviewed an honour guard on the lawn of the Blue House under a blazing sun, saying the post World War II division of the Korean Peninsula was "a thing of the past."

Kim welcomed Mitterrand, who arrived earlier in the day for the three-day state visit, as the first French head of state to visit here since the two countries established ties in 1949.

## Montu-backed BCL leader arrested

Police arrested a student leader of Montu-backed Chhatra League from Kotwali thana area in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The arrested Abu Jamal alias Rajib, 28, an accused in the Badal murder case, was earlier released on bail.

Protesting the arrest, leaders and activists of the Montu-backed Chhatra League brought out a procession on the DU campus demanding immediate release of Rajib.

## Move quickly to implement accord, Clinton tells Arafat

**WASHINGTON, Sept 14:** President Bill Clinton told PLO chairman Yasser Arafat on Monday the Palestinians had to move quickly to implement their new peace agreement with Israel, a White House official said, reports Reuters.

Clinton strongly emphasised to Arafat at an unscheduled meeting after the signing of the peace accord that the United States expected rapid results, said Martin Indyk, chief Middle East adviser on the National Security Council.

"The President made the point with some emphasis that it was absolutely essential to move quickly now to seize the moment and take advantage of the momentum created by this incredible event and to start getting things moving on the ground," Indyk told reporters.

Clinton had "made that point quite strongly" to Arafat, who agreed, the official said.

The Clinton-Arafat meeting lasted five to 10 minutes and took place in the White House map room, which is adjacent to the entrance to the grounds where the signing of the peace agreement took place.

After talking with Arafat, Clinton held a 15-minute meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in the Oval office, then lunch with Rabin alone, Indyk said.

While the president's meeting with the Israelis had been scheduled, the White House had said on Sunday that

## Israel, Jordan sign accord

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Rabin arrived aboard an Israeli air force plane on his way home from Washington.

His visit was expected to last six hours. Rabin was to meet Hassan at the airport's VIP lounge, Israeli radio reported.

Israeli Minister for Economic Affairs Shimon Shetret, asked in Jerusalem by Israeli radio whether Israel and Morocco would announce normalisation of relations, said, "It is nearly certain that this will happen."

Rabin, asked on board his plane if formal ties would be announced, said, "This visit is not intended for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Morocco. But the fact that from Washington we are coming to Rabat and are meeting with the king, perhaps is another step forward in everything that is linked to establishing relations."

An Israeli source said if Rabat and Jerusalem establish ties Tuesday, Rabin hopes to fly within the day to Tunisia which had said it wouldn't be the first North African state to recognize Israel, but would follow Morocco's lead.

But Hassan II could have problems normalising relations at this point as he is head of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee of the Islamic Conference Organization.

The status of Jerusalem was not resolved in the interim agreement with the PLO, and remains a sensitive issue that could slow down the normalisation of relations with Muslim countries.

Rabin said he stopped in Morocco to pay respects to Hassan's contributions to the Middle East peace process.

"I believe that this visit was one of the many great things done by King Hassan II to advance peace between the Arab nations and peoples of Israel," Rabin said.

Rabin, accompanied by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, was met by Moroccan Prime Minister Karim Lamrani, Foreign Minister Abdel Latif Filali and other Cabinet officials with a full military welcome.

"Security was extremely tight, with the airport sealed off from all road traffic. Israeli officials said relations

## The Midnight File

### Arafat hopeful of solving Jerusalem problem

**WASHINGTON, Sept 14:** Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat declared Tuesday that he and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin can resolve differences over the status of Jerusalem through good will and negotiations. "We know there is a problem and we are not going to put our heads inside the sand," he said. In an appearance at the National Press Club, Arafat conceded that he and Rabin have fundamentally different positions on the biblical city, reports AP.

### Croatia, Bosnia agree to halt fighting

**GENEVA, Sept 14:** The presidents of Croatia and Bosnia agreed Tuesday to halt fighting immediately and allow free passage for aid convoys in Bosnia. They also promised to resolve territorial disputes, clearing the way for renewed peace talks. "We have signed a joint declaration whereby all hostilities will cease immediately" as a prelude to a full truce, said Croat President Franjo Tudjman, speaking through an interpreter. After four hours of talks with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, Tudjman told a joint news conference that both Muslims and Croats would also disband all detainee camps, reports AP.

### All 70 survive plane crash

**BONN, Sept 14:** All 70 passengers and crew were evacuated alive from a Lufthansa Airliner that crashed on landing today at Warsaw Airport, an spokesman for the German airline said. "Our information is that all persons were evacuated alive from the airplane," the spokesman told Reuters by telephone from the airline's headquarters in Frankfurt.

### Mostafiz

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committee meeting criticised the appointment and promotion of some 'unacceptable people' in Bangladesh missions abroad.

Clarifying his ministry's position, the Foreign Minister said: "The composition and inter-seniority among officers of the cadre evolved out of historic circumstances as well as duly formulated rules and regulations laid down by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Establishment Division."

He said the gradation list is prepared by the PSC and that promotions are not made by the Foreign Office but by a considered process involving in sequence the Senior Services Board of Secretaries, the Council Committee of Ministers and finally, the head of government.

Mostafiz further said that posting of officers is governed by due consideration of seniority, merit and duration in a post.

He said the present government has formally laid down that 70 per cent of ambassadorial postings will be from the professional cadre and no previous government had formulated such a rule.

Discarding the allegations raised by opposition MPs in the JS standing committee meeting, the Foreign Minister denied the Foreign Office was a dumping place for unacceptable people or that rules were flouted.

"The practice of every government around the world is to reserve some ambassadorial posts for political persons, senior civil servants, defence personnel or eminent personalities," he said.

### AL call to make Sept 18 programme a success

**Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday called upon the people to make the September 18 countrywide rally and demonstration programme a success to strengthen the demand for scrapping the Indemnity Ordinance, reports UNB.**

The countrywide demonstration programme was called by the Awami League also demanding removal of 'corrupt' ministers, trial of Jamaat leader Golam Azam as 'war criminal', cancellation of the Anti-Terrorism Act and implementation of four-point agreement between the Opposition and the government.

In a statement, the Awami League leader alleged that the defeated anti-liberation forces under the protection of the present government were out to jeopardise country's liberation and sovereignty.

### JS probe body discusses terms of references

The special parliamentary probe committee at a meeting yesterday held detailed discussions to finalise its terms of reference for investigating the charges of corruption against Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Majid-ul-Haq, reports UNB.

Chairman of the 15-member committee Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali presided over the meeting held at the Sangsad Bhavan.

The next meeting of the committee will be held in the Sangsad Bhavan tomorrow at 10:30 am.

### Cholera-type

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Physicians say that besides preventive measures, like use of safe drinking water immediate treatment, initially with oral saline followed by intravenous cholera saline, is essential to save the patient. Tetracycline has also been found effective for the treatment of patients attacked by the new bacteria.

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

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