



## 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 WP 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.

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## Akbar takes new seat

By Staff Correspondent

The newly-inducted Minister for Environment and Forests Col (retd) 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.

Lt Gen (retd) 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.

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sustained by the jute mills — from this fund mills will be given interest free loans for first 3 years and at 3 per cent interest for 12 years.

4) ban on production of polythene and such other synthetic bags and products.

5) aggressive marketing for regaining markets in African and other countries.

6) screening out excess manpower and raising efficiency.

Earlier, Begum Matia Chowdhury (AL) said jute and jute goods were being smuggled to India across the border. She criticised the Finance Minister for "sacrificing country's interest" through winding up jute mills. She blamed successive governments for their failure to take steps for the protection of vitally important jute sector.

**Biman's flight regularity on int'l routes only 46.4 pc**

By Staff Correspondent

Biman Bangladesh Airlines failed to maintain its international flight schedule more than fifty per cent of the time during fiscal 1992-93.

Disclosing this in reply to a written question in Parliament yesterday, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan, while answering a separate question, also revealed that three private companies have so far submitted proposals to operate air services on domestic routes. However, the minister was unable to provide details about the individuals making the offers.

Replies to a question from Md Shahiduzzaman, an Opposition member from Naogaon, Mannan said Biman could only maintain 46.4 per cent of its flight schedule on the international routes during the last financial year.

Replies to a question from Awami League member Mirza Azam, the minister informed the House that the government is planning to allow private sector participation in domestic air transport and hoped the service can be started this year.

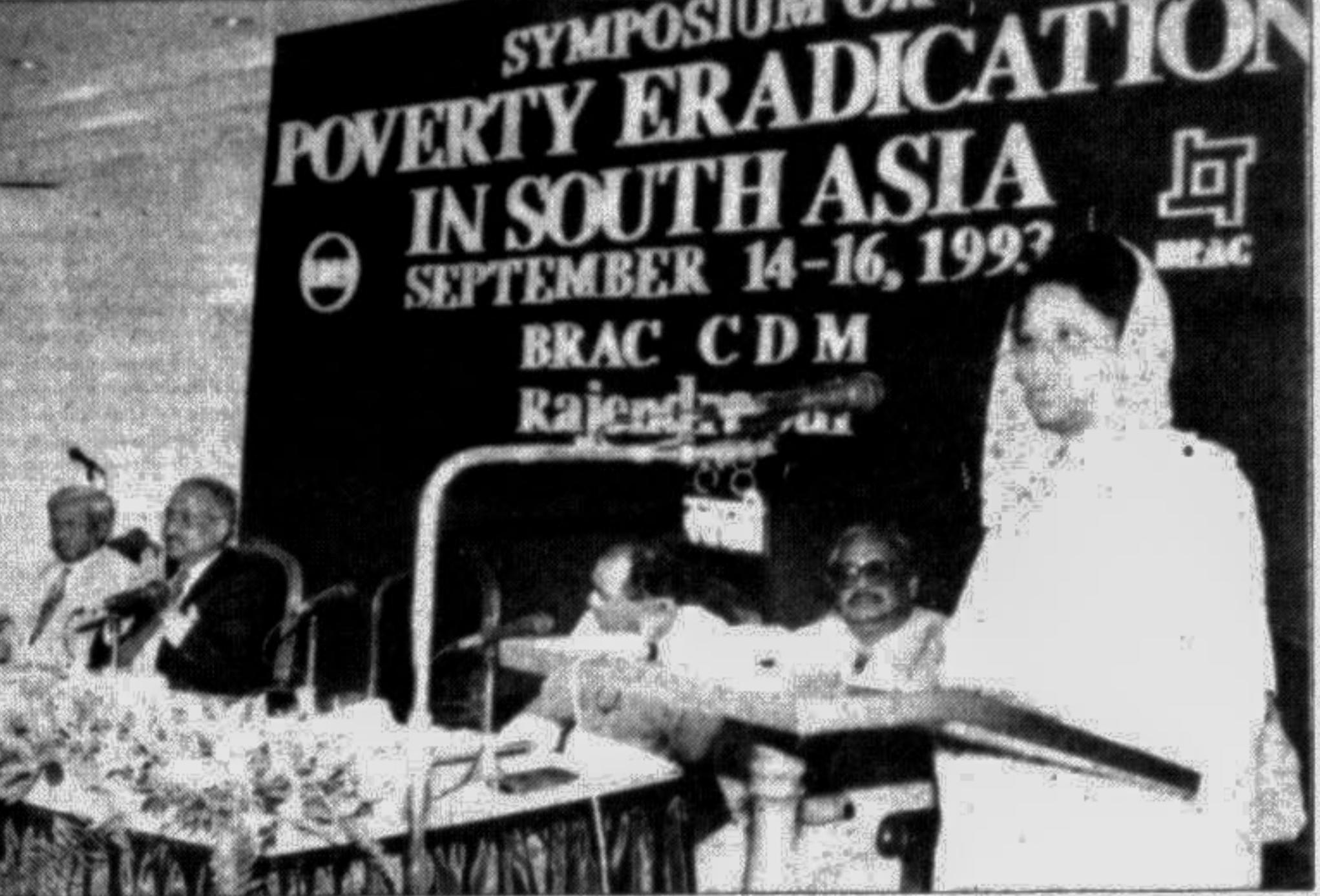
Answering another question, the minister disclosed that three private sector companies — Orient Aviation Services, Borak Travels Ltd and Natavia Air Services Ltd. — have submitted "complete" proposals to start short take-off and landing (STOL) air services on domestic routes.

**JS body examines draft bill on CPC**

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Law at its ninth meeting yesterday examined a draft bill seeking amendment to the Criminal Procedures Code of 1898 for separation of the Judiciary from the executive, reports UNB.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Haifz presided over the meeting held at the Sangbad Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was adjourned till 3-45 pm Wednesday to further discuss and examine different aspects of the draft bill.



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.

— PID photo

## 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.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan, Executive Director of the BRAC F H Abed and adviser of the BRAC Faruq A Choudhury.

The session was presided over by Dr P Wignaraja from Sri Lanka. Fifteen delegates from other SAARC countries are taking part in the three-day international symposium.

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## Montu-backed BCL leader arrested

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

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.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh has identified

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 lunched with Rabin alone, Indyk said.

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

Clinton would not be meeting separately with Arafat, noting that Israel was a longstanding ally but Washington was just beginning a dialogue with the PLO.

But Clinton just went up to Arafat after the peace accord was signed and "took him aside," Indyk said.

Clinton on Monday called the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO a "very big deal" and said the United States must go all out to make it work.

"I am convinced that the United States must bear a very heavy role of responsibility to make this work and implement the agreement," Clinton told a group of prominent Jewish and Arab-Americans who earlier in the day saw the accord signed.

## 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 Reuter.

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 Mideast adviser on the National Security Council.

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Clinton had 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 and Israel," Indyk said.

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

Security was extremely tight, with the airport sealed off from all road traffic.

Israeli officials said relations

with Tunisia would come soon if Israel and Morocco established ties. Rabin might stop in Tunisia after leaving Morocco on his way back to Israel, Israeli radio reports said.

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 and Israel," Indyk said.

An Israeli source said if Rabin 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

the meeting with the PLO and Israel signed a peace accord in Washington on Monday.

Israeli officials said relations

## Israel, Jordan sign accord

From Page 1 Col 4

Rabin arrived aboard 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."

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