

JS session from Aug 30

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Two main opposition groups in Parliament—on the issue of a caretaker government and joined the JS boycott, have resumed sitting on the various parliamentary standing committees. Earlier, upon an AL lead, all Opposition members had stayed away from such meetings.

Political observers attached much importance to the recent report by a top US administration official before a congressional hearing that Washington would like Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina to shun the path of boycotts in favour of dialogue to resolve the country's problems.

Ruling party sources, in private, have expressed optimism that the JS impasse may be resolved during the coming session.

However, a three-member team of the ruling party assigned to initiate 'official negotiations' with the boycotting opposition parties, is yet to do so, a BNP stalwart said.

Chief Whip of the Opposition and Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim told

The Daily Star last night. There has been no qualitative change in the political arena as yet to lead his party to revise its decision of boycotting Parliament sessions.

Jamaat leader Sheikh Anser Ali, MP, also echoed the Opposition Chief Whip's comments. But he added that his party's policy-makers would meet soon to decide whether the Jamaat legislators would return to the House.

Both the leaders, however, accused the ruling party leadership of making no serious move to resolve the present crisis.

Jatiya Party leaders were not available for comment till the writing of the report late last night.

The BNP standing committee at an emergency meeting on July 18 authorised a three member team comprising Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain and party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder to open a dialogue with the Opposition.

The ruling party negotiators met on August 4 to decide a strategy to begin the negotiation, but there has been no further progress.

The Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has, meantime, announced a one-point agitation campaign to unseat the BNP government and called for a 'Dhaka siege' on September 10.

Meanwhile, the hearing of a writ petition claiming that boycott of Parliament sessions is ultra vires of the Constitution begins today in the High Court.

The High Court served rule nisi on Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed and Jamaat leader Matur Rahman Nizami on June 28 following a petition by Advocate Anwar Hossain.

Schoolgirl commits suicide

By DMCH Correspondent

A schoolgirl, Shahinur Begum, 16, reportedly committed suicide following a row with her parents at Khilkhet Madhyapara in the city yesterday.

Shahinur, daughter of one Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, took insecticide yesterday morning after her parents had reportedly rebuked her for neglecting studies.

Shahinur was a student of Class Ten of the Khilkhet Girls High School.

Shahinur was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared her dead at nine in the morning.

Mourning Day observed

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Leader of the nation's independence movement Sheikh Mujib, along with the members of his family, was assassinated in a military putsch on this day 19 years ago.

The programmes of the day included hoisting of the national and the party flags at half mast and black flags, wearing of black badges, Quran Khwani, milad mahfil, distribution of food among the poor, placing wreaths at Bangabandhu's portrait, visiting the graves of those killed in the army coup on August 15, mourning processions and discussion meetings.

Arches with black cloth banners demanding repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance and trial of Mujib's killers were erected in different parts of the capital. Recording of Mujib's historic speech on March 7, 1971, was also played over loudspeaker.

In the capital, the residence at Dhanmondi Road No 32, where Bangabandhu was killed, became the centre of all programmes during the day. The AL chief and eldest daughter of Mujib, Sheikh Hasina, opened the day's programme by placing a wreath at the foot of a fresco of Bangabandhu at 15 minutes after the hartal which ended at noon. She was accompanied by central leaders of her party.

Hasina was followed by the leaders of her party's front organisations including the Chhatra League, Jubo League, Krishak League, Mahila Awami League, Awami Shilpee Goshthee, Awami Ainjibi Parishad. Other organisations which placed wreaths included the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, Surya Sen Hall, Shamsunnahar Hall and the Jagannath Hall students unions of the Dhaka University.

Later, Hasina inaugurated a blood donation programme and attended a milad mahfil at the residence which was converted into a museum on Sunday. Destitutes were fed there.

The Chhatra League workers of the DU's Art Institute organised an exhibition of photographs and posters on Mujib and his family members on the road adjacent to the Bangabandhu's residence, which was visited by thousands of people from morning till evening. However, they went back disappointed for despite an earlier announcement the museum was not opened to the public yesterday.

The inconvenience caused to the visitors was regretted through repeated announcements over a loudspeaker, with the announcer explaining the change of plans by saying that it was due to power failure. However, the museum will remain open from 10 am to 5 pm everyday from tomorrow, it

was announced yesterday. Visitors were allowed to enter the house only to place wreaths.

Sheikh Hasina, her only sister Sheikh Rehana, along with party colleagues also visited the Banani Graveyard in the afternoon and offered fataha there.

The Bangabandhu Parishad, an organisation of pro-AL intellectuals and professionals, brought out a mourning procession from the east gate of the Suhrawardy Uddayan in the afternoon. Thousands of mourners carrying placards, festoons and wearing black badges participated in the procession that terminated at the Bangabandhu residence.

Parishad leaders including Dr. SA Malek, Razia Matin Choudhury and AL city unit general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Choudhury Maya led the procession. Earlier, a gathering was held at the Suhrawardy Uddyan's east gate.

Meanwhile, the Publicity Secretary of the AL Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, accompanied by other party leaders Mirza Sultan Raja, Fazul Rahman, Fayeuddin Mia, MA Salam and Motaleb Hossain Manju visited Mujib's, Gulbagh, Shantibagh, Gopibagh, Maniknagar, Khilgaon, Goran, Bashabo, Madartek and other city areas to oversee the party's food distribution among the poor.

To mark Mujib's 19th death anniversary, the Bangladesh Islamic Revolutionary Movement held a milad and doa mahfil in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon. Speaking on the occasion, secretary general of the organisation Hafez Maulana Ziaul Hasan called upon the government to try the killers of Bangabandhu.

Our Gopalganj Correspondent adds: The 19th anniversary of the death of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed here in a befitting manner. A peaceful half-day hartal was observed till 12 pm. All shops and establishments remained closed.

The programmes included flying the national flag at half mast, hoisting the party flag, laying of wreaths at the mazar of Bangabandhu, Quran Khwani, milad mahfil, feeding the poor and discussion meetings.

'Awami League Presidium member Qamruzzaman laid wreaths at Bangabandhu's mazar on behalf of the central Awami League.

A discussion meeting with the Tungipara thana AL president Laik Ali Biswas in the chair was organised. It was addressed by Gopalganj Dist AL president Muhammad Ali and General Secretary Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah.

The Bangabandhu Memorial Committee also organised a discussion meeting at the local government BT School. It was addressed by Kader Siddiqui.

Maijdee AL office ransacked: 6 hurt

From Our Correspondent

MAIJDÉE, Aug 15: Six people were injured here today in clashes between two rival student groups during the half-day hartal called by the opposition Awami League.

The local Awami League office was ransacked and a milad mahfil was disrupted during the clash.

Two of the injured were the supporters of the pro-BNP Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) while the rest belonged to the Awami League's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

Witnesses said the clash took place at about 11 am near the Maijdee Bazar when the JCD activists resisted picketing by the BCL workers.

Tipu and Jilan, two JCD activists, were injured in the clash. As a sequel to the morning clash, JCD activists attacked the local Awami League office in the afternoon, disrupting the milad and leaving four people injured.

Hossain, an AL worker, was hospitalised with serious wounds.

Hartal

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Metropolitan Police, no untoward incident took place anywhere in the city during the hartal hours.

Reports received from Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi and elsewhere in the country also said the hartal was observed peacefully.

In Dhaka, shops and market places, educational institutions, private banks and other offices remained closed during the hartal hours.

Different ward units of the AL and its front organisations opened gruel kitchens to feed the destitutes to mark the 'Mourning Day'.

Quran khwani was held and special prayers were offered seeking salvation of the departed souls of Sheikh Mujib and those killed with him.

Small processions were brought out in different areas of the capital during the hartal hours demanding trial of those responsible for Mujib's killing.

Our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong adds: Delivery of goods to and from Chittagong port was suspended as trucks did not ply during the hartal period.

Mills and factories in the industrial belts of Nasirabad, Kalurghat, Patenga and Sitakunda also could not operate because of the hartal.

Our correspondents report a peaceful half-day hartal was also observed in Rajshahi, Sylhet and Sherpur town yesterday.

Hasina's gratitude

Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her gratitude to the people for observing a half-day hartal demanding the trial of those involved in the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

In a statement, she said people from all walks of life observed the hartal spontaneously.

Today's spontaneous hartal has proved that there is no room for the killers of the Father of the Nation in the soil of Bangladesh.

Hasina said "Love, good-wishes and cooperation of the countrymen is the source of my all power."



Palestinian chief negotiator Nabil Shaath (R) and Israeli General Damir Ratschil for another round of talks at the Erez crossing in Israel yesterday. During the night, following attacks on Israelis in Gaza Strip August 14, the Palestinian police arrested more than 40 Hamas activists who are opposed to the peace agreement with Israel. The arrest orders were signed by Abu Meddeir who is in charge of justice in the Palestinian self-rule administration. — AFP photo

N'ganj AL factions clash

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The clash followed a series of explosions at the function held at Baburail, Deobhog union, Narayanjan town AL president Prof Nazma Rahman and general secretary A K M Shameem Osman were distributing food among the poor at the time after the half-day hartal. The programme was organised by the Baburail Mourning Day Observance Committee.

Witnesses said, immediately after the explosions the clash broke out with the rival groups exploding crackers and firing shots for about half an hour. The clash spread to the nearby DIT market and Ukilpara areas.

The rival factions exploded over 50 crackers and fired at least 30 gunshots, witnesses said.

Police rushed to the spot, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

One Shamsul Alam, 36, owner of a medicine shop at the DIT market, died on the spot in a powerful explosion. His face was partially blown away, police and hospital sources said.

Narayanjan Jubo League claimed Alam as one of its activists, but Alam's family denied his involvement in politics.

Of the injured, five were stated to be in serious condition. They are Jahangir Alam (Narayanjan) town unit president of the Jubo League, two other Jubo League leaders Kamal Uddin Mahmood and M A Hannan, an elderly local AL leader Ashratuddin Ahmed and a five-year-old girl Pamela. All five suffered serious splinter injuries. The other 20 people received minor injuries. The injured were being treated at different hospitals and medical clinics.

After the violence, the town committee Jubo League president Jahangir Alam, in a statement delivered to the Narayanjan Press Club, blamed Shameem Osman, general secretary of Narayanjan town AL, and his followers for the violence.

However, office secretary of Narayanjan town AL, Advocate Khokon Shaha, issued a press release blaming Jahangir Alam, Narayanjan district AL leader Anwar Hossain and town AL leader Kamal Mirzha and others for the incidents.

The internecine feuding reached a climax and became public Sunday when the district and town units of the AL split, after the Nazma-Osman group opened a new office at Bangabandhu Road.

Meanwhile, Selim Mia, elder brother of slain Shamsul Alam, lodged a case with the Narayanjan police last night.

JCD challenges RU VC panel polls results

RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: A case was filed with the district court today seeking postponement of the VC panel election results of Rajshahi University held in its 15th Senate meeting, reports UNB.

The case was filed by Nuruzzaman, a leader of the RU unit of the Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), accusing VC Anisur Rahman and Registrar Omar Faruk of holding the Senate meeting and preparing the VC panel in violation of law.

Jamaat backed candidates won the election of VC panel defeating the BNP and Awami League supported panels on August 12.

In his petition, the JCD leader said 15 college representatives + five principals and 10 teachers — cast votes in the election although they were not voters.

They lost their voting rights in the VC panel election after promulgation of the National University Ordinance in 1992, the petition said.

The JCD leader further said that five student representatives were dropped from the voters' list as the Senate session was held before the RBSCU election.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) at a meeting demanded cancellation of all ad-hoc appointments in different posts of the university by the VC and postponement of new appointments till the next VC is elected.

RUTA President Prof Anisur Rahman chaired the meeting at Zuberi Bhaban on the campus on Sunday.

The teachers met the VC today and apprised him of their demands.

97 tribal refugees return fleeing camps in India

KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 15: Ninety-seven Bangladeshi tribal refugees of 18 families returned home fleeing the camps in the Indian state of Tripura in the last 24 hours, officials here said today, reports UNB.

They were staying in the camps of Shilachhari, Pakumbari, Lebachhara, Kathalchhari and Karbak of Southern Tripura.

Thana Nirbahi Officer of Dighinala Shaquiddoula told newsmen that the tribal refugees were so eager to return to their homeland that they fled the camps without waiting for the next batch of refugees to be repatriated.

Flood situation improves in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 15: The flood situation in Sylhet has marked slight improvement today with the recession of rain waters and fall in the onrush of hilly waters from across the borders. However, standing crops on several thousand acres of land in Jointapur, Gowainghat, Kanaighat and Companyganj thanas had been inundated.

All the rivers were still flowing above danger-levels. The Surma was flowing 85 cm above the red mark at Kanaighat, the Kushiara at Sheola Ghat 30 cm and 73 cm above at Amolshid while the Surma in Sylhet was flowing below the danger-level today.

Trade fair

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All exportable domestic products will be put on display at the fair while foreign firms will exhibit industrial equipment and capital machinery.

Invitations have already been extended to foreign companies through the Bangladesh missions abroad to attend the fair and the government is getting good response in this regard, said an official.

The purpose of the fair is to boost export through the display of all the products manufactured in the country.

The lay-out plan incorporating detailed design of the 138-acre fair venue near the Planning Commission building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar has been approved by the authorities.

Twelve sub-committees under a steering committee headed by Commerce Secretary Mofazzal Karim have been formed to look after different aspects of the preparations while the Export Promotion Bureau will act as full-time secretariat for the purpose.

As regards budget for the trade fair, a Commerce Ministry source said the government has sanctioned Taka 5.1 crore. Of this at least 25 per cent will be recovered through the collection of rents for the stalls.

"Foreign participants will, however, be provided with some facilities free of cost, except the telecommunication services," the source said.

The Midnight File

Hundreds of Cubans board Maltese tanker to flee to US

MEXICO CITY, Aug 15: Hundreds of Cubans have boarded a Maltese-registered oil tanker at the Cuban port of Mariel in an attempt to flee to the United States, the Mexican news agency said Monday. In a report from Havana, Notimex said the incident happened Sunday and the ship was being kept in port by Cuban authorities. Mariel is 25 miles west of Havana, Cuba's capital, reports AP.

2 Chinese killed in Algeria

ALGIERS, Aug 15: Two Chinese were shot to death in an Algiers suburb Monday, bringing to 59 the number of people killed in a deadly campaign aimed at foreigners in this troubled north African country. Qian Youyang, 35, a dam technician, and his interpreter Liu Kaifa, 63, were shot in the suburb of El Harrach by unidentified assailants, government sources said, reports AP.

8 million man days

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Unemployment in Europe has increased steadily during the second half of the 1980s, the report pointed out, although investments increased by 15 per cent annually since the 70s.

Over the last 24 years, 80 per cent more wealth has been created but total employment has risen only by nine per cent (in Europe).

In a general manner this indicates that growth in itself is not a solution to unemployment and that productivity is the key for opening the door to sustainable development, it observed.

Out of 60 developing countries, the nations which achieved better growth did so through improving the total productivity factor and not through growth of capital.

The MCCI report called for addressing the issue of productivity immediately, taking into account its political causes.

The sooner the predicament of the manufacturing sector to maintain competitive advantage in such a situation is understood, it will be helpful to the national economy," the report concluded.

Globalisation of the economy, it added, involves two very significant challenges: Withstanding international competition; and creation of millions of jobs that are needed by the society, particularly those in the developing world. However, economic deregulation, higher investment and expanded trade have so far not solved the problems of unemployment around the world.

Political strikes and political factors, it added, continue to cause serious setbacks to any productivity improvement efforts, particularly in export-oriented industries.

The present tendency to achieve globalisation by focusing exclusively on bilateral trade and balance of payments and to attempt improvement of labour efficiency through universal standards have serious shortcomings in the absence of any requisite policy package to improve local labour productivity, the report said.

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Another airlines gets STOL licence

By Staff Correspondent

The Civil Aviation Authorities of Bangladesh (CAAB) yesterday issued another licence to operate private airlines under Short Takeoff and Landing (STOL), CAAB sources said.

The Victory Aviation Ltd got the provisional air transport operation licence (PATOL) raising the number of airlines to seven.

The PATOL-holders, however, could not still start operation to six prescribed STOL ports, although they were given permission early this year.

Fish Fortnight '94 begins today

The Fish Fortnight '94 — a nationwide campaign to boost pisciculture through expansion of modern technology begins today.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will launch the campaign from Khulna where she will also open a seminar on the 'Shrimp Culture Development' at the local Zia Hall at 10:30 am today.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in separate messages have said the government has laid special emphasis on the innovation of appropriate technology for pisciculture through modern methods and expansion of those to the field level.

Kashmir violence

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Police blamed an insurgent group for the blast.

PTI said stepped up violence in the state had claimed 28 lives since Sunday night.

Army soldiers in full battle-gear "patrolled" this Kashmir summer capital where normal life was disrupted following a call by political and militant groups to observe a "civil curfew" on Monday.

In the winter capital Jammu, police accused Pakistani troops of firing five rockets at dawn from across the border into Kashmir earlier Monday.

AP adds: Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao warned Pakistan on Monday that India is prepared to take steps to thwart "Islamabad's support of terrorism in Kashmir".

In an hour-long speech in Delhi before 100,000 people at the 18th-century Red Fort on the 47th anniversary of India's independence from the British rule, Rao did not specify what India may do to its arch-enemy. But he said that Indian defence forces will be modernised to protect the nation's territorial integrity.

Rao said India will continue to ignore efforts by the West to halt the development of its missile programme.

"With you, without you, in spite of you, Kashmir will remain an integral part of India," Rao said of Pakistani leaders, drawing a loud applause from the crowd.

Taslima

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with a letter to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, August 2, and the next day she emerged from a two-month hiding to appear in court and face charges of offending the religious sensibilities of Muslims, according to the report.

The judge set her free on bail and said she was allowed to leave the country if she informed the court.

Swedish PEN's chairman, Gabi Gleichmann, confirmed Sunday that Nasreen had written a personal letter to Bildt. Gleichmann said he did not know if she had sent similar appeals to any other governments.

"We invited her to Sweden in March ... and asked the foreign minister to help us in June. The ministry has been very helpful," Gleichmann said.

Nasreen, 32, has not appeared publicly since her arrival and it was not known how long she planned to stay in Sweden. Gleichmann said she was resting and intended to meet the press in a few days.

Muslim extremists have offered a 5,000 US dollars reward for killing her, and followers have poured into the streets of Dhaka by the thousands calling for her head.

The death threats came after an Indian newspaper report quoted her as urging a revision of the Quran, the Islamic holy book. Nasreen said she was misquoted and had called for changes in Islamic law.