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Outgoing Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali — Star photo

'Combined efforts needed to fulfil people's hopes'

Outgoing Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday expressed the hope that the new Jatiya Sangsad would be able to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people through the combined efforts and cooperation of the Treasury and the Opposition Bench members, reports BSS.

In his farewell speech in the Sangsad after the election of the new Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, Razzak Ali said it was the expectation of all of us that the new Sangsad would play a pioneering role in paving the way for the solution of numerous national problems in the light of global experiences.

Stating that the Sangsad committees would be the main forums of all activities, Ali hoped that the activities of the MPs would find expression not only in their professions but also in their practices.

Seating arrangement changes with change in leadership

By M Anwarul Haq

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday saw changes in the seating arrangements with changes in the leadership.

Many new members had joined the august House while several had disappeared as they had not been able to win confidence of the electorate.

The leading ladies, as they reversed their roles also swapped their seats. Sheikh Hasina, as the Leader of the House, was sitting in the chair of the Prime Minister while her arch rival Begum Khaleda Zia was pushed to the seat of the Leader of the Opposition.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, a senior AL presidential member occupied the seat beside the Prime Minister while the new Deputy Leader of the House Zillur Rahman sat in the third seat. This was a similar to BNP's period as a ruling party when the Mirza Golam Hafez sat beside Begum Khaleda Zia while Deputy Leader Badruddoza Chowdhury occupied the third seat in the Treasury Bench.

In the Opposition front bench commanded by BNP stalwarts several of the leading faces were not visible. Mirza Golam Hafez was absent. Many leading BNP front benchers like Majidul Huq, Salam Talukder, Mostafizur Rahman

Khaleda: Stop repression

From Page 1

portunity to head the committees in proportionate to its representation in the House.

She said the Opposition must be given opportunity to speak in the Parliament to make it effective.

Begum Zia pointed out that 70 per cent of her discussion time in the 5th Parliament was given to the Opposition.

Begum Zia described the Seventh Jatiya Sangsad as the outcome of the Sixth Jatiya Sangsad and referred to the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution which was passed in the Sixth Jatiya Sangsad and said "accept the reality."

"Why the state run Bangladesh Television has been used for the party and personal service? Why Bangladesh television yesterday described the Seventh Jatiya Sangsad as the Sixth? She posed the questions and called upon the government to stop politicisation of the media and administration.

She said that BNP government did not politicise the administration.

She called for maintaining neutrality in holding the bye-elections to 16 seats of the Jatiya Sangsad and said otherwise "the people would take measures against it."

Referring to the suspension order against a Jatiya Sangsad official by the ruling party for not upholding an administrative order, she reminded the Speaker that BNP government

We were forced to stage walkout, says B Chy

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP staged a walkout protesting the Speaker's refusal to entertain three adjournment motions and one privilege motion proposed by the party before the Jatiya Sangsad started the business of the day. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Badruddoza Chowdhury told newsmen.

The BNP legislators, however, joined the session after the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

Briefing newsmen immediately after the walk out, Badruddoza Chowdhury said, "we were forced to stage the walk out in protest as the sovereign and independent status of the Jatiya Sangsad was violated and the privileges of the MPs curbed."

Referring to Rule 64 of the Rules of Procedure, the BNP sought disposal of the adjournment motions and the privilege motion before the business of the day was taken up. Chowdhury added:

Some BNP stalwarts including its secretary general Mannan Bhuiyan were present during the briefing at the conference room of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said permission was sought to move adjournment motions on alleged rigging in the June 12 elections, widespread terrorism across the country and victimisation of BNP workers since the new government took over and closure of educational institutions including four medical colleges.

Chowdhury said the privilege motion was sought to discuss whether hanging of the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the House through an executive order violated the constitutionally mandated sanctity of the House since the Speaker did not know about it.

The walk out was staged while the outgoing Speaker, Shaikh Razzak Ali, was in the chair. Razzak Ali had refused to entertain the motions saying he had no other business other than conducting the elections of the new Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

Flood

From Page 1

points of rivers. The Brahmaputra flood control embankment has breached at several points.

Many houses in Gaibandha pourashava areas have gone under knee-deep water.

UNB added: The flood situation in five thanas of the district took an alarming turn undating 117 villages yesterday.

Some 5,000 people in char areas of Kazipur, Chauhali and Shaidpur thanas were marooned as water level in Jamuna rose by 30 cm in last 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday, damaging crops and property.

According to flood information centre bulletin the water level in the river may cross its danger mark by 6 am today.

Two other worst-hit thanas are Sadar and Belkuchi.

The situation in three thanas of Bogra district worsened yesterday as the rivers Jamuna and Bangali started to swell further due to onrush of hill waters and heavy downpour.

The flood affected thanas are Shariakandi, Shonolata and Dhunot.

Witnesses said a vast tract of land in the western part of the district might go under water at any time as a portion of the flood control embankment at Nijchandanbohisha eroded away by the surging Jamuna.

The flood control embankment in Taltoia-Nimgachhi area has been threatened as crack developed at several points of the embankment.

Meanwhile, some 50,000 people have been marooned in char areas while thousands of people rendered homeless by river erosion.

In Lalmonirhat, the situation took an alarming turn as flood water washed away many thatched houses and damaged property worth several crore taka after the flood-bypass of Teesta barrage was cut open Saturday night.

Local people and officials said the flood onslaught seriously affected some three lakh people and submerged about one lakh houses.

Official sources said at least 30 unions of 42 in five thanas of the district, including Dahgram-Angorpota enclaves, were inundated by swirling water from the overflowing Teesta and Dharla rivers and onrush of hill water.

Paramilitary BDR force has been called out and four rescue boats of army have been sent to evacuate about 40 thousand marooned people.

The flood-bypass was cut and gates of the Teesta barrage country's largest irrigation project, were opened Saturday night to save it from collapse.

Fire in oil tanker in Ctg: One dies

CHITTAGONG, July 14: One of the five crew members of an oil tanker, who were injured in a fire on Thursday, died in Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) today, reports UNB.

The fire reportedly broke out in the oil tanker MT Moktadir at a jetty of Chittagong port on Thursday night.

Movement, the Liberation War and democratic movements and also those who has shed blood for restoring peoples' franchise.

Hasina thanked the Leader of the Opposition in the House, Begum Khaleda Zia for leading her party MPs back to the House after a walk out at the beginning of the session and sought all cooperation from her party in running the affairs of the state smoothly.

In this context, she said "yesterday you were in the Treasury Bench where we are sitting today and you may again be here tomorrow from the Opposition now. So, no matter who are in power and who are not. Let us work unitedly to bring about a qualitative change in the life of the toiling masses."

The Prime Minister reiterated her pledge to run the country on the basis of a national consensus, taking the opposition parties into confidence, and build a 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

Terming the Speaker as 'custodian of the House' Hasina assured him all cooperation and urged the members to keep his office above all controversies.

Alleging plunder of people's wealth and emptying of food and relief godowns in the past, she said it posed a great challenge before her government to run the country. She questioned 'allocation of Tk 25 lakh to each minister and MP during the BNP rule and fall in power generation by 600 MW during that period.'

Referring to irregularities in fertilizer distribution and killing peasants, the Prime Minister said her government inherited food deficit, poor reserve in the national exchequer and over 5,000 closed mills and factories. "But, my efforts will be to draw more



Former President and JP chief H M Ershad talking to the Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday — Star photo

Ershad

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"I would have been released from jail under the law of the land and not through the back door if I had not been victimised," he told a questioner and also complained of excesses by the government during his prison life.

"I have come out from jail never to go back once again," Ershad remarked, adding that he had the strength to visit the whole country.

Replying to a question on his feelings about his release on parole he said, "The feelings about me cannot be explained in words... I laughed my heart out. I have finally come out after a period of five years seven months and two days."

Besides, Ershad sounded very confident regarding this bail in all the cases filed against him.

Sources in the Home Ministry said that Ershad was released on parole to attend the parliament session but the period of his parole had not been mentioned in the order.

While on parole, Ershad would be kept in a house at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, near the Sangsad Bhaban which has already been declared a sub-jail, sources concerned said.

Guards and other jail staff have already been there for the security and assistance of Ershad and some restrictions have been imposed on his movements and meeting people, the sources said.

Asked about JP leader Moudud Ahmed's joining BNP, Ershad said "let him go to hell."

Envoy tells PM ROK to set up 130 units in 'industrial park'

South Korea has requested the government to allocate 2,000 acres of land on the east bank of Karnaphuli river in Chittagong for setting up an 'industrial park', reports UNB.

The request was made by South Korean Ambassador in Dhaka Kyong Byoung when he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday morning.

The ambassador informed the Prime Minister that the Korean firms are ready to go for a primary investment of several million of dollars.

Entrepreneurs of the South East Asian economic giant will set up 130 large and medium-scale industrial units in the proposed industrial park. The products of the units are to be exported to the USA, Europe and the South East Asian countries.

The Prime Minister assured the South Korean envoy that her government would actively consider the proposal and a decision in this regard would be taken very soon.

In the proposed industrial park, accommodation facilities of 30,000 people will be available. Besides, hospitals, educational facilities, training institute and a 40 per cent green belt will be there.

Jong said the industries to be set up in the park would be labour-intensive and simultaneously high-tech.

The ambassador said Korean investment in Bangladesh was increasing. At the same time, manpower export was rising from Bangladesh to Korea, he said, adding that 5,000 trainee workers had been taken and 2,000 more would be taken in 1996.

Jong termed the existing bilateral relation between Korea and Bangladesh as excellent and hoped that it would be strengthened further in the days ahead.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh is very happy with the growth of Korean investment here. She requested the Korean ambassador to import more goods from Bangladesh to narrow down the present trade gap.

Referring to her government's policy, Hasina said the government was trying to build up a national consensus on important national issues and hoped that all parties would cooperate.

The Korean ambassador felicitated Sheikh Hasina on her assumption of the office of the Prime Minister.

Let's usher in new era

From Page 1

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The Midnight File

Cong-1 threatens to withdraw support from Gowda govt

NEW DELHI, July 14: The coalition government of Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda hurtled towards a crisis today when the Congress-I Party, whose backing is crucial for its survival, threatened to withdraw support. "The ruling United Front should not take our support for granted," said V N Gadgil, spokesman of the Congress (I) party, reports AFP.

Walkout by BNP

From Page 1

Opposition walkout only 20 minutes after it began at 3:05 pm. The BNP staged the walk-out protesting alleged violation of the Rules of Procedure by the outgoing Speaker, Sheikh Razzak Ali.

Razzak Ali refused to allow BNP to move four motions, one adjournment motion and three privilege motions, before the election of new Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

My sole responsibility today is to conduct the election of the new Speaker and Deputy Speaker of this Parliament," Razzak Ali told the House.

Begum Zia led the walkout by her party MPs protesting denial of their privileges and violation of a certain rule by the AL. Sheikh Hasina, however, defended Razzak Ali.

Humayun Rashid Chowdhury and Abdul Hamid of the AL were elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively, with the BNP legislators remaining outside the House.

Immediately after the elections, Razzak Ali adjourned the session for an hour to facilitate the newly elected Speaker and the Deputy Speaker to take oath, administered by the President.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury took his seat in the House at 5:20 in the afternoon. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker were felicitated by Sheikh Hasina, Deputy Leader of the House Zillur Rahman, Begum Zia, Deputy Leader of the Opposition A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, ministers including Tofael Ahmed and Mohammad Nasim of the ruling party, Anwar Hossain Monju of Jatiya Party, A S M Abdur Rob of Jatiya Party, Ahsanul Karim, Chief Whip of the Opposition Khandaker Dewar Hossain and some other MPs of both the Treasury and the Opposition benches felicitated the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

While making congratulatory speeches, the members of the Treasury and the Opposition benches were engaged in debates on various issues including the ruling party's concept of the 'government of national consensus,' status of the JP and JSD in Parliament, law and order in the country and so on. A controversial gesture by Shipping Minister and JSD leader A S M Abdur Rob angered the BNP legislators who demanded that Rob apologise for his gesture.

The Speaker assured the BNP members that he would give his ruling after investigation.

Begum Zia, while congratulating the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, assured them of effective Opposition cooperation. "We shall never insult the Speaker by showing shoes, we shall never disrupt the proceedings of the House by throwing files and never say that we shall not allow the government to rule peacefully."

In her 30 minute speech, former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also mentioned some of her government's programmes including food for education, free education for girls and so on. She urged the government of Sheikh Hasina to continue the programmes for the benefit of the people.

Begum Zia also criticised the ruling party's concept of 'government of national consensus' asking, "Does not the ruling party want any opposition in parliament?"

In reply, Hasina said that the BNP, which did not once understand the concept of the caretaker government, eventually implemented the idea 'One day the party would well understand the definition, as well as importance of the concept of the government of national consensus,' she said.

The Prime Minister also accused the previous ruling party of politicising the administration, misappropriation of public money and undemocratic attitude towards the Opposition.

The Speaker told the Housing and freedom of speech were pre-requisite for the growth of sound parliamentary democracy.

The Speaker then announced a five member panel of chairmen to preside over the session in absence of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. The members of the panel are Abdul Mannan, Sajeda Chowdhury and Colonel (Retd.) Shawkat Ali of the ruling Awami League, Saifur Rahman of the BNP and Dr Fazle Rabbi of the Jatiya Party.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas entered the House at 9:40 pm. In his 40 minute speech, the President outlined various programmes of the government should undertake.

The Speaker adjourned the session at 10:30 pm till 4:00 Thursday.

15 ordinances

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The ordinances are: The Insurance (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, the Insurance Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, the Representation of the People (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority Ordinance 1996, the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council Ordinance 1996, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, the Jute Research Institute (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, the Fisheries Research Institute (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, the Livestock Research Institute (Amendment) Ordinance 1996, and Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute Ordinance 1996.

Humayun Rashid

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The newly elected Speaker said he would discharge his responsibilities best owed upon him according to the Constitution and the parliamentary Rules of Procedure.

"It's a great honour for me. I'm delighted being entrusted with presiding over the House," Chowdhury told UNB just after being sworn-in yesterday.

He termed the present Sangsad as a 'unique parliament' since it has been constituted through a free and fair election under a caretaker government following a 'long movement' for establishing democracy in the country.

The Speaker hoped that parliament would be the focal point of all national activities and sought cooperation from all quarters in conducting the proceedings of the House properly.

Chowdhury wore Mujib-coat, a traditional dress of Awami League, when he took oath office as the Speaker. But he replaced his black Mujib-coat with a white servant before entering the House to adorn the chair.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, who administered the oath to Chowdhury, congratulated him on his being elected unopposed the Speaker of the 7th parliament.

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