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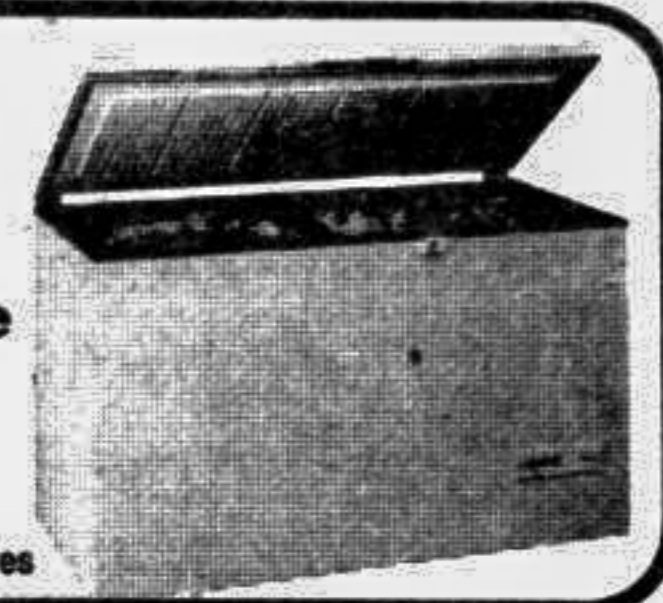
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GSS: Govt order stayed for 10 weeks

By SC Correspondent The High Court yesterday stayed for 10 weeks a government order to dissolve the governing body of Ganosahajya Sangstha (GSS) temporarily and form a caretaker body.

The Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Md Fazlul Karim and Justice Md Ali Asgar Khan also asked the Director General, Department of Social Welfare, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare and the Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau to explain why the order should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority and is of no legal effect.

The court passed the order upon a writ petition filed by Justice K M Sobhan and F R Mahmud Hasan, Chairman and DG of GSS respectively.

The DG, Department of Social Welfare by an order dated June 15, 1999 temporarily dissolved the governing body on as many as six grounds and formed a caretaker body comprising Md Fojjullah, former secretary, as its convener and Abu Abdullah, DG of BIDS and SM Zafarullah, Director of NGO Affairs Bureau as members.

Barrister Syed Istiaque Ahmed with Barrister Rokomuddin Mahmud assisted by Advocate A R Khan and Md Asaduzzaman moved the writ petition while DAG Obaidur Rahman Mustafa represented the government.

Rindan Samity chief arrested

By Staff Correspondent The founder of Federal Samabaya Sanchayee and Rindan Samity was arrested in the city on Sunday on charge of misappropriating Tk 40 crore.

Police said that they arrested Badaruddin Chowdhury in the evening after Sabiha, a field officer of the Samity, lodged a case with Mohammadpur Thana.

Meanwhile, about 100 women, who claimed themselves as members of the Samity, staged a demonstration on the CMM's Court premises at about 6 pm yesterday when Badaruddin was produced before the court, our court correspondent reports.

Transport strike in N-dists from July 1

From Our Correspondent NATORE, June 21: The North Bengal Road Transport Samity (NBRTS) has called an indefinite transport strike from July 1 protesting toll collection at Shingra Bridge in Natore.

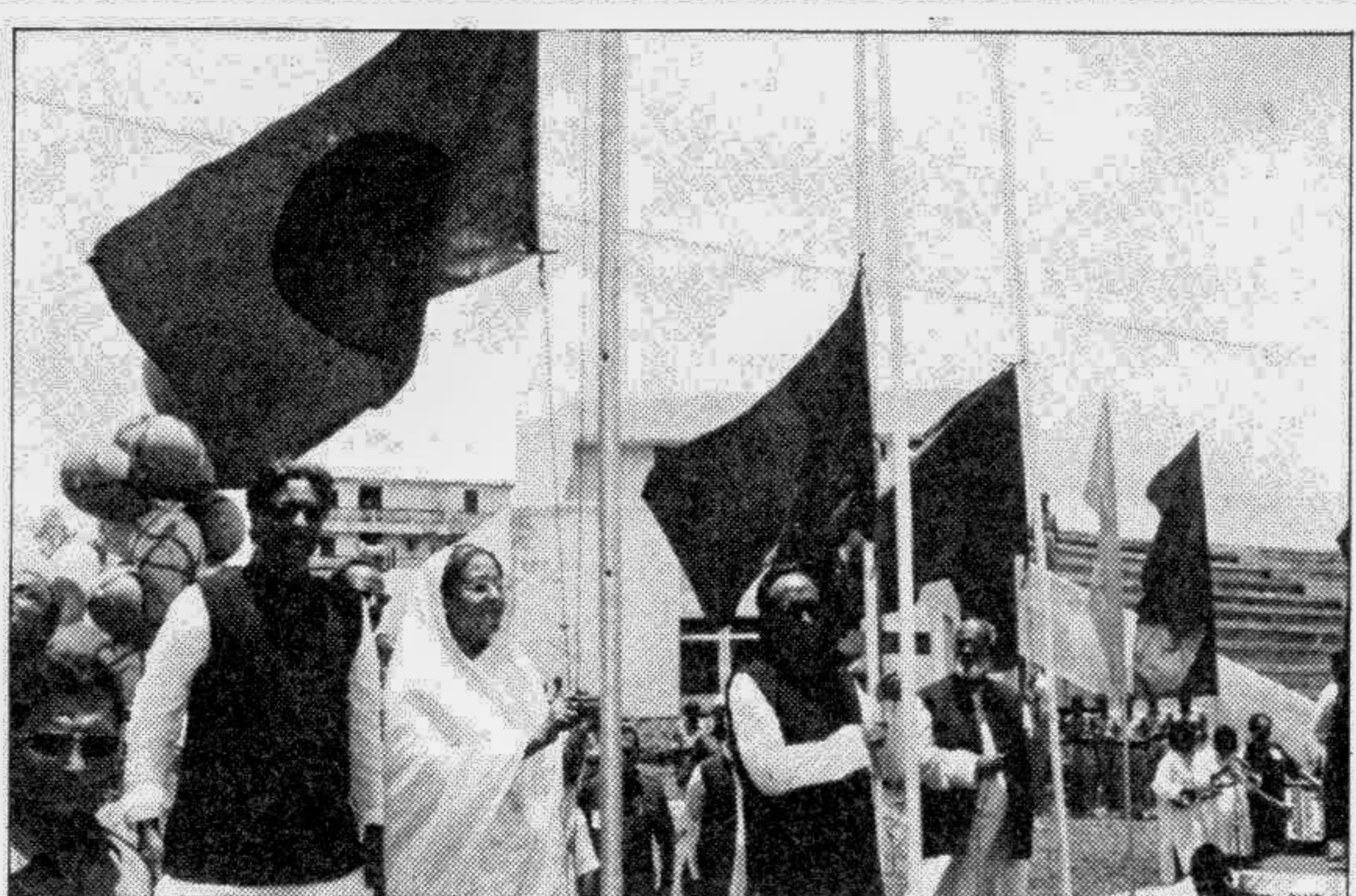
The NBRTS leaders, announcing this at a press conference held the Natore Bus-Minibus Owners' Association office in the town on Saturday, said the call for strike would remain unchanged until the toll collection at Shingra Bridge point was stopped.

Advice

From Page 1 "What a white-skin sahib of the WB has said about our GDP, or what another sahib has written in the Asia Week are immaterial," the state minister said.

Debidwar

From Page 1 Later, at about 8:45 pm, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the demonstrators that Begum Zia was busy with schedules fixed earlier and would not be able to meet them.



Prime Minister and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina inaugurating her party's Golden Jubilee celebrations by hoisting the National Flag at Sylhet Stadium yesterday. -PID photo

Hasina tells partymen in Sylhet Remain united to face any odds in future

SYLHET, June 21: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today asked her partymen to remain united and work for the people to keep up their confidence to face any odds ahead, reports UNB.

"We'll be able to maintain tempo of progress if the party workers and leaders at grassroots level remain united and able to maintain confidence of the people earned over the years," she told a grand rally at the stadium here.

The assembly was the fifth such at divisional level since the ruling Awami League's Golden Jubilee celebrations kicked off from the divisional city of Chittagong.

Three other grand rallies were held in Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal marking the founding of Awami League on June 23, 1949 at the Rose Garden in Dhaka.

Making a fervent appeal for strengthening the party at grassroots level, Sheikh Hasina said: "For a political leader people's affection is a valuable asset while a political party needs people's trust."

The divisional headquarters put on a festive look with colourful flags, banners, posters hoisted on both sides of the roads and a good number of ceremonial arches erected on main thoroughfares.

Thousands of people from all walks of life lined up near the meeting venue on the occasion.

The day's programme began with Prime Minister Hasina hoisting the national flag and Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman the party flag.

Listing her government's steps taken for the country's development, Sheikh Hasina said they were working hard for fulfilling the commitments given to the people.

JS tidbits

By Nazmul Ashraf Jatiya Party has proved itself essential to both Awami League and BNP in their power game. But the two find JP an autocratic party as soon as their game is over.

On local issues, the Prime Minister told the gathering that a new Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education would start functioning here from next academic session and SSC and HSC examinations would be held under it.

She said her government took massive programmes for infrastructural development of this division that remained neglected during previous governments. The runway of Sylhet Airport would be expanded to 9,000 feet soon facilitating the landing of more wide-bodied aircraft, she said.

The Prime Minister also said that a factory namely Lafar Cement Factory and another, Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory, are going to be established here soon.

A full-fledged Army brigade would also be stationed in the geographically important divisional town, she added.

2-day strike at BIT RAJSHAHI, June 21: The first day of the two-day long strike called by Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal was observed peacefully today at Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) Rajshahi.

JCD earlier called the strike demanding release of Shahedur Rahman Suman, vice president of BIT, Rajshahi unit of JCD. Suman was arrested on April 14 after a clash between JCD and the ruling party backed Bangladesh Chhatra League.

Changes in US visa issuing procedures The US embassy in Dhaka yesterday changed its non-immigrant visa handling procedures, reports BSS.

According to the new system, every applicant, who appears at the US Embassy, will either be interviewed on that day or be given a specific interview date.

Unlike other BNP lawmakers, Mosharrar Hossain did not blame finance minister SAMS Kibria for the controversial 5.2 per cent GDP growth rate in 1998-99.

"I don't blame the finance minister for claiming a fictitious growth rate. He finds growth among the AL men all around him and that must have influenced the minister. So much has been AL's growth that the 74-year-old foreign minister whom we call Samad Chacha has married once again and gone to Germany for honeymoon," Hossain remarked.

BNP MP Alamgir Haidar Khan suggested that mirror be See page 11 col 7

Changes in US visa issuing procedures The US embassy in Dhaka yesterday changed its non-immigrant visa handling procedures, reports BSS.

According to the new system, every applicant, who appears at the US Embassy, will either be interviewed on that day or be given a specific interview date.

"Passports, application forms and fee receipts will be collected and a token will be issued indicating the interview date," a USIS press release said.

The press release cautioned that the travellers should not wait until the last minute to obtain visas. "All applications should allow at least four weeks for their visa interview and plan their travel accordingly."

It said in the event of an emergency, visa applicants are advised to send a short fax to 88-73-44 including the name, date of birth, profession, and passport number of all travellers, the nature of emergency, the reason for and the schedule of your travel, and provide a contact fax or phone number.

"The Consulate will not accept phone calls asking for expedited service or inquiring about the status of your fax. Applicants not contacted should pursue their visa in the normal way," the release added.

Microbiological quality control can double frozen food export

Microbiological quality control of processed food and fish products can increase the country's export potential to a new height. This view was expressed by discussants at a workshop in the city yesterday.

The workshop on "Interaction Between Microbiologists and Food-Fish Processing Industries" was jointly organised by the Bangladesh Society of Microbiologists (BSM) and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

The day-long workshop, held at the auditorium of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), was participated by microbiologists, experts, government officials and representatives from industries.

Microorganisms can contaminate food, fish and pharmaceutical products and so there has been a new concern worldwide about microbiological quality control. Bangladesh is lagging behind in this regard, they said.

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Workshop in city told

Though the workshop was meant for interaction, participation from food processing industries was very poor. Many of the invitees did not turn up, showing how microbiological aspects were being neglected in the country.

A representative from an icecream factory who spoke at the workshop admitted the negligence.

Science and Technology Secretary Fazlur Rahman spoke at the inaugural session as chief guest while The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam addressed the concluding session as guest of honour.

With BSM President Dr Naiyum Chowdhury in the chair, the workshop was addressed by, among others, Abdul Matin, DG, Fisheries Department, Dr M Moshuuzaman, Chairman, BCSIR, Dr Syed Fazel Rabbi, a former director of BCSIR, Dr Sirajul Islam Khan, Dean, Faculty of Biological Science, Dhaka University and GK Joardar, a

renowned microbiologist. Dr M Mozammel Hoq of Dhaka University presented a key-note paper.

The workshop adopted some recommendations. These include participatory research involving academicians, research organizations and fish processing industries to assess quality control requirement, reduction of communication gap between microbiologists and processing units, identification of reference laboratories for quality control.

The experts also called for an arrangement for attachment of microbiology students in universities with industries. In this regard, they also suggested initiating meaningful dialogue with fish processing industries, marine food exporters association, frozen food exporters association, and other similar organizations.

The participants also decided to form a grand alliance of scientists and civil society leaders to fight lead poisoning, a major environmental threat in the country now. They hoped that this would influence the policy planners to take immediate steps to prevent environmental pollution.

Earlier, Khairul Anam of BNP alleged that those concerned had made money by purchasing two F-20 fighter planes from Indonesia, two frigates from South Korea, Trucks from India and eight MIG-29 from Russia. He also demanded formation of a parliamentary committee to probe the allegations.

A total of 22 MPs from the Treasury and the Opposition benches took part in the debate. Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid and Rahamat Ali, ruling party MP and a member of the panel of chairmen, chaired yesterday's sitting.

Rahmat Ali adjourned the session at 2:15 pm for resumption at 9:30 this morning.

Controversial economic growth rate dominates JS debate

A debate on the controversial economic growth rate in the current fiscal year dominated the general discussion on the proposed national budget for 1999-2000 in Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Besides, the Opposition came up with certain allegations of financial corruption of the government. The Treasury Bench, however, denied the allegations.

Most of the opposition MPs who took part in the general discussion on the proposed budget yesterday, questioned the government claim that the rate of the economic growth in fiscal 1998-1999 is 5.2 per cent. While rejecting this growth figure, the opposition lawmakers referred to the observations by various regional and international organisations including the World Bank and Asia Week.

The Treasury Bench members, on the other hand, not only tried to defend the government, they rather went to the extent of claiming that GDP growth would stand at more than 5.2 per cent when final estimates are made in July. Besides, the ruling party legislators found the opposition members, who referred to the observations by foreigners, to be 'victims of inferiority complex' and advised them to 'rely on domestic data'.

Akhter Hamid Siddiky of BNP said the government's economic survey showed clearly that GDP growth had come down in all but one sector. Besides, he recalled, the finance minister had told the Paris Consortium Meeting only a few weeks before placing of the budget on June 10 that the rate of growth was 4.4 per cent. "What has happened that the GDP has gone up to 5.2 per cent in a few weeks time?" he asked.

Another BNP legislator, Mosharrar Hossain, told the House that the Asian Week in its June 18 issue said that the rate of GDP growth in Bangladesh in the current fiscal year is 4.4 per cent.

Salahuddin Ahmed - a young BNP lawmaker from Cox's Bazar - also rejected the government figure. In this regard, he quoted the WB Resident Chief who reportedly found the government claim of 5.2 per cent GDP growth miraculous. "Such a baseless claim of the government of Sheikh Hasina would bring the nation an image of liars. It reminds us that the government of her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had brought us the image of a nation of beggars."

State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir who reportedly had a vital role in 'getting' the revised figure of 5.2 per cent strongly defended it. Claiming that the government had applied 'standard scientific method' in calculating the GDP, he said, "We were rather conservative in calculating GDP in the construction sector, while we just ignored a couple of power plants which will go into operation by the end of June. A final calculation in July would definitely reveal that the figure is higher than 5.2 per cent."

Replying to the opposition members who referred to the observations made by foreigners, the state minister said: "What a white-skin sahib has said about our GDP or what another sahib has written in the Asia Week are immaterial." He advised the Opposition to rely on the domestic data.

"I have successfully prepared a five-year plan, without seeking any advice from a single white-skin sahib. It is an inferiority complex that leads some to prefer the opinions of the whites."

Khan also defended the controversial role he had played by addressing anti-government political rallies when he was a public servant in early 1996. "I hope, the government officials would again take part in such political activities, in case any criminal makes attempt to cling to state power without having people's mandate in future."

Walkout

From Page 1 wanted to speak. Even the chair did not find it necessary to ask Hasnat on which rule he wanted to speak, the opposition chief whip said, and referred to an agreement at the Business Advisory Committee that rule 274 would not be applicable during the budget discussion.

But the chair has violated that agreement, he noted with regret. "This is only to make the Parliament ineffective, this way parliament cannot be effective," said the Opposition Chief Whip. He cautioned that if the chair runs the House in such a manner, it would be difficult for them to attend the session.

He also requested the chair to allow the BNP members to speak under Rule 274. The Deputy Speaker said that it was not possible to give floor to others as he had already given the floor to Delwar, but assured them that he would examine any unparliamentary words in Hasnat's statement.

Earlier, Hasnat in his statement said he was compelled to take the floor only to reply to the "slandorous" comment made against him by BNP member Mujibur Rahman Sarwar.

While defending himself, the Chief Whip narrated how the BNP member had created a reign of terror in Barisal killing and maiming people through armed terrorism from 1973 and embezzled funds of different organisations.

He said: "Sarwar was so cruel that he did not even feel any compunction to kill his own uncle in 1973, which was the beginning of his terrorism."

The Chief Whip recalled that Rakhi Bahini once saved Sarwar from mass beating in Barisal in 1974. Although a good number of criminal cases were filed against him, Sarwar has been continuing his terrorism till today, he alleged.

Hasnat claimed that he himself helped Sarwar with the help of SP Mahbub in 1974. In support of his allegation, Hasnat produced copies of cases, paper cuttings and photographs, and demanded a parliamentary inquiry by BNP leaders Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and Saifur Rahman into these allegations.

He also requested the Home Minister to revive the cases against Sarwar, which were withdrawn during the BNP's rule.

Advertisement for a shop named 'ইক্টার প্লাজা' (Ektar Plaza) with a map showing its location in Dhaka. The ad includes contact information and a list of services offered.

Advertisement for the Editor, Mahfuz Anam, published by City Publishing House Ltd. It lists contact details for Dhaka, Chittagong, and other locations.

Mandatory PSI

From Page 1 The businessmen opposed the proposal that PSI companies would be engaged by the government. It should be left with the importers, they said.

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) President M H Rahman said the PSI charge should be fixed through an understanding between the importer and the PSI company, not by the government.

Large advertisement for 'Stop n Shop' departmental store. It lists various product categories like Groceries, Fresh Food, Fast Food, Cosmetics, Toiletries, Stationary, Garments, Cards & Magazines, Gifts & Crafts, Video Games, Photo Processing, Hardware, and CD Corner. It also features the slogan 'Opening Today' and 'Ever First Grand Departmental Store'.