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9-day JS session begins today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into its 19th session today with opposition lawmakers still unwilling to end their long boycott of the JS proceedings.

The session is due to start at 9.30 am with Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury in the chair.

Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is now in New York to attend the UN Millennium Summit.

As decided by the JS Business Advisory Committee earlier, the session will continue till September 14 with only seven working days.

The last session -- the budget session -- was prorogued on July 9. Boycotting the proceedings since July last year, MPs belonging to the main opposition BNP and its allies registered their brief attendance during the last session to protect their membership.

Though brief, the current session is expected to deal with some issues of political significance. The fate of a crucial bill seeking retention of the 30 reserved seats for women in Parliament is likely to be decided during the session.

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Akhteruzzaman to join JS session

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP lawmaker Akhteruzzaman, better known for his overt actions, has again stepped into the limelight thanks to his latest move to join the parliament session beginning today.

The Major-turned-lawmaker said he is obligated to his electorate to speak about their problems and that is why he is going to attend the session.

But he is undecided about the timing for attending the session, which is due to continue until September 14.

"I'm trying to bring my party back to the House and thus make the parliament effective. In case I fail, I will attend the session alone in accordance with my recent commitment to the people of my constituency," Akhter told the Daily Star last night.

Elected from the Kishoreganj-2 constituency in the 1996 election, the outspoken BNP legislator faced punitive actions including temporary expulsion from the party on several occasions for making public statements blaming the party's role on crucial political issues.

Akhter was also vocal against BNP decision to boycott parliament proceedings and the party's alliance with HM Ershad's Jatiya Party and the anti-liberation Jamaat-e-Islami. He was manhandled at a

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Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 6	6-11 pm
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Prayer Timings

September 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Airbus purchase case Khaleda, Saifur, Mannan and seven others chargesheeted

By Court Correspondent

The Bureau of Anti-corruption yesterday submitted a charge sheet accusing BNP chief and former prime minister Khaleda Zia, former finance minister M Saifur Rahman and eight others for embezzlement of about Tk 175 crore in purchase of two Airbus during her tenure.

The eight others are: former state minister for civil aviation and tourism MA Mannan, former cabinet secretary Ayubur Rahman, former MD of Biman Abhab Ahmed, its former director finance Abbas Uddin, former general manager (cost and budget) Anwar Hossain, former director store and purchase Siddique Rahman, Deputy GM Zamir Ahmed, and Marketing and Planning Director Mahmudur Rahman.

Inspector Haroon-ur-Rashid submitted the 12-page charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan magistrate's court.

Haroon told newsmen that he had filed the case with Motiheel thana on August 30, 1998 against the persons for allegedly misappropriating Tk 174,88,62,500 by abusing power when Khaleda Zia was prime minister.

The two Airbus A 310-300 were purchased from France in 1994.

The charge sheet has a list of 37 witnesses, Haroon said.

Haroon, who is also the IO of the case, said permission was taken from the Prime Minister's Secretariat for submitting the charge sheet, which is a legal requirement in such cases. He said the charge sheet was submitted after two years' investigation in the country as

well as in the US and France. The former PM has also been accused in another corruption case involving Tk 63 lakh for decorating her cantonment residence during her rule.

The case has been stayed on the basis of a high court order.



Khaleda Zia

Charge framing is in process. UNB Adds: BNP has planned to move the High Court against implicating Khaleda in a 'fabricated' corruption case regarding purchase of Airbus during her rule.

The case was discussed at the party standing committee meeting last night. BNP legal expert Barrister Maudud Ahmed was entrusted the deal with the case. The meeting decided that Khaleda will appear before the lower court where the case was filed by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption.

BNP suspends prv membership of Akhteruzzaman

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP yesterday suspended primary membership of Major (ret'd.) Akhteruzzaman MP for an indefinite period on charges of violating the party discipline and acting against its interests.

The decision to suspend the outspoken legislator was made at an emergency meeting of the National Standing Committee, the highest policy-making body of BNP, held last night on 29 Minto Road with party chairperson Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The action against the BNP MP followed his letter to the party chief, which was subsequently published in different national dailies. Akhter in his letter advocated for BNP's joining in the parliament and bitterly criticised alliance with Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami. He also criticised Khaleda's visit to the residence of deposed President HM Ershad.

Akhter had also threatened to join alone in the parliament

session beginning today even if the party does not change its mind.

The BNP had served show-cause notice upon Akhter and suspended him for several times, including on November 11, 1994, in January 1998 and on June 26 in 1999. However, the suspension orders were withdrawn after Akhter sought apology both verbally and in written, he added.

Briefing newsmen while the meeting was still in progress at 9.45 p.m., Chief Whip of the Opposition Khandaker Delwar Hossain said Akhter has not only violated the party discipline, but also worked against the interest of the party. He said the Standing Committee discussed Akhter's letter as well as the present and previous activities of the MP.

The opposition chief whip said the membership of Akhteruzzaman was suspended as per the article 5 (G) and 8 (Kha) 2 of the party constitution.

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Lofty goal for global peace & prosperity UN Millennium Summit opens in NY today

PM addresses today

By Diplomatic Correspondent

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 5: Kings, generals, presidents and prime ministers are assembling in New York with the lofty goal of turning the 21st century into an epoch free of war, poverty, ignorance and disease.

But they are also using the UN Millennium Summit - the largest gathering of world leaders in history - as a soapbox for issues in their homelands, reports AP.

Tight security around the United Nations inconvenienced New Yorkers and netted several arrests over the weekend. At least 91 demonstrations are planned during the gathering of more than 150 heads of state and government, which runs from tomorrow through Friday.

At the summit's conclusion, world leaders are expected to adopt the so-called Millennium Declaration, which commits them to meeting tough targets in eradicating poverty, promoting education and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Noting that more than 5 million people have lost their lives in wars during the last decade, the document says, "we will spare no

effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war."

A nine-page draft circulated yesterday also vows to promote democracy and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, "including the right to development" - a key demand by Third World countries.

While the overall declaration was being drafted, individual leaders were stating their own goals.

Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf plans to highlight a simmering dispute with India over the Kashmir region. South Korean President Kim Dae-jung will discuss thawing relations with North Korea. Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong might use the summit to invite US President Bill Clinton to visit. Cuba's Fidel Castro, one of 18 dignitaries deemed 'high risk' and given extra police security, was expected to build on his career of battling US influence.

All the world's problems are going to be thrown on the table for discussion.

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HC order on Ershad's writ today

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court will pass an order today on former president HM Ershad's writ petition challenging cancellation of his parliament membership by the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat following his conviction in a corruption case.

After hearing the petitioner and the state yesterday, a Vacation Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hamidul Huq and Justice SK Sinha asked the Attorney General to produce before the court the file regarding the JS Secretariat order vacating Ershad's seat.

Ershad filed the writ on Sunday.

Appearing for the petitioner, Barrister Rafiqul Huq, argued that as per the Constitution and JS Rules of Procedure, the Additional Secretary of JS Secretariat had no authority to pass an order vacating a parliament seat.

Huq also said that the Janata Tower case in which Ershad was convicted had not

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Hottest chilli Assam

GAUHATI, Sept 5: Indian military scientists say they have proven that the hottest chilli on earth grows in the northeastern hills of Assam, rather than the farms of Mexico, reports AP.

Tests by a team of experts here have confirmed that Naga Jolokia, a specialty from the northeast, is now the world's hottest chilli," said S.C. Das, deputy director of the Defence Research Laboratory in the garrison town of Tezpur.

He said today that the Naga Jolokia (capsicum frutescens) surpasses the tongue-burning ability of the Red Savina Habanero, a Mexican chilli that has been known until now as the world's hottest.

Das said that the researchers at the lab 175 kilometers north of Assam's capital, Gauhati, had measured the pungency of the two chillis in Scoville units - the international gauge for food spiciness.

Das said the Naga Jolokia measured 855 Scoville units, compared to 577 for the Habanero in the tests, completed last week.



No buses could leave the Mohakhali terminal for several hours yesterday after a section of transport workers put up a barricade in front of the terminal. The workers were protesting arrest of one of their leaders. Picture shows the buses at the terminal after they started plying again around noon.

— Star photo

Opposition now programmes

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance, which had earlier planned to intensify the anti-government movement from the middle of this month, is now thinking about announcing warm up programmes beforehand.

Sources said the policy makers of the parties have suggested mass contact programmes, including holding of grand rallies and mass processions in major cities and district towns by the chiefs of the parties to mobilise public support.

To take up fresh programmes, the Central Liaison Committee held a meeting yesterday and discussed the next course of action.

The CLC will meet again this morning at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, to draw up programmes to be announced from a "grand" rally of the alliance at Khulna Circuit House Ground Friday afternoon.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jatiya Party Chairperson HM Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Amier Golam Azam and Islami Oikya Jote Chairperson Azizul

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HSC result scam steps against 4

CHITTAGONG, Sept 5: Chittagong Education Board recommended punitive action against the four persons, including two board officials and a college teacher, for placing two students on the merit list of 1998 HSC examinations through fraudulent means, reports UNB.

The board authorities earlier cancelled the Chittagong Cantonment Public School and College centre for two years following the gross irregularities.

Ashiqul Kabir Mahmud and Rihul Haq of Chittagong Cantonment Public School and College who failed to pass in one subject each stood first and 18th respectively at the exams adopting corruption and forgery.

After recommending to the authorities taking punitive measure, Chittagong Education Board Chairman Prof Ahmad Hossain told UNB yesterday "none involved in this crime will go unpunished."

Deputy Director of the Directorate of Primary and Mass Education Mujibur Rahman, who was then Deputy Controller of Examinations of the Board, AS-

stant Examination Controller Abul Kalam Siddiqui and lower assistant Zahid Hossain and Prof Saidul Hasan Khan of Cantonment Public School and College allegedly did the mischief.

The board chairman urged the managing committee of Cantonment Public School and College for taking action against Prof Saidul Hasan Khan.

He also requested the CMP authority to take the legal actions against Khan from whose possession police recovered answer scripts, questions and documents of the board a few days back.

Earlier, results of the two students were scrapped on Saturday as per recommendations of a probe committee.

The three-member probe committee headed by the then

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Hasina-Vajpayee meeting on Sept 8 or 9

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Sept 5: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will have talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina in New York on the sidelines of the UN Millennium Summit, official sources said here today.

The Vajpayee-Hasina meeting is likely on September 8 or 9 and this is one of the two bilateral meetings arranged for the Indian Prime Minister so far. Vajpayee is also to meet Prime Minister of Nepal Girija Prasad Koirala in New York, the sources said.

Vajpayee's itinerary during his 10 day visit to the United States commencing on September 7 has been rescheduled keeping in view the persisting pain in his knee which had forced him to cut short his participation in the crucial meeting of BJP National Council in Nagpur last week.

Vajpayee's interaction with other world leaders during his stay in New York has been kept to the minimum, the sources said. But programmes connected with the Millennium Summit and the bilateral part of the visit in Washington remain unchanged.

The Indian Premier will call on September 14. Vajpayee will address the US Congress followed by meetings with Senate foreign relations committee, the House International Relations Committee and the India Caucus.

Ershad meets Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Deposed President HM Ershad met BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia at her 29 Minto Road official residence at 10.30 pm yesterday.

JP secretary general Nazim Rahman Manju and Presidium member Kazi Firoz Rashid accompanied Ershad.

The BNP Chairperson along with her party and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders visited the residence of Ershad on August 24 after the High Court awarded Ershad five years jail and fined Tk five and a half crore in Janata Tower Case.

BNP leaders Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, M Shamsul Islam MP and Anwar Zia were also present at the meeting.

Khaleda and Ershad discussed next course of action programmes and current political situation, sources said.

Bid to kidnap lawyer from CMM's Court area, one held

By Court Correspondent

One person was arrested from in front of the CMM's Court, Dhaka yesterday as he along with his two accomplices allegedly tried to kidnap a lawyer.

The arrested was identified as Lutfar Rahman of Pallabi in the city.

Mohammad Asadullah, lawyer for a complainant in a case filed with Pallabi thana, appeared before the CMM's court yesterday to oppose the bail petition of the accused in the case.

After the hearing, Lutfar and his two accomplices assaulted lawyer Asadullah in front of the CMM's Court and tried to abduct him.

Police intervened and arrested Lutfar while two others - Rubel and Anwar - fled the scene.

Lutfar was sent to Dhaka Central Jail. Asadullah filed a case with Kotwali thana accusing the three.

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Leadership conflict deepens in JP

Allies refuse to back Ershad

By Rezaul Karim

The leaders and activists loyal to the Jatiya Party of former President HM Ershad have plunged into sheer frustration following the recent High Court verdict that sentenced the party chairman to five years imprisonment in a corruption case.

Sources in the JP said the partymen are now worried about the fate of Ershad as well as the party since there is every possibility that Ershad might be put behind the bars again.

A senior JP leader said Ershad himself is very much concerned about his own fate and is now mentally upset due to the fact as no-one has come in aid of him as yet.

Moreover, some top-ranking JP leaders are now pressing Ershad hard to pick a person who will lead the party as acting chairman if the worst happens. Already three senior leaders, including Roushan Ershad have started hectic lobbying to become the acting chairman in his absence.

Sources said Ershad hoped that the people of Rangpur, his hometown, might build up a

massive movement after the High Court verdict. But the local people have apparently refused to stand by his side. Even the local chapter of the party failed to enforce a complete hartal in Rangpur following the HC verdict.

Ershad had also expected that the partners in the opposition alliance would come to his aid, but the BNP and other component parties in the four-party alliance have so far refused to stand by his side.

Alliance leaders said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jamaat-e-Islami Amier Golam Azam, Islami Oikya Jote's second man Fazlul Haq Amin and other top ranking leaders of the combine had rushed to Ershad's residence after the High Court verdict on the night of August 24 not to show sympathise with him but to secure his signature on another joint declaration.

They said the alliance leaders' signature on the declaration fearing that the JP chief may quit the alliance and join hand with the ruling Awami League, again.

BNP sources said the JP, especially Ershad, had urged the alliance leaders for a united stand on the issue of his jail sentence and announce tougher action programmes, but the BNP advised the JP to defend its position on its own.

BNP also suggested that the JP launch a massive campaign across the country highlighting their position that Ershad has been harassed by the government.

Senior leaders of Jamaat and IOJ have also chimed in with the BNP, saying that the alliance do not deem it fit to back Ershad in this particular corruption case.

To make matters worse, leadership conflict has once again surfaced within the JP owing to the race for the position, sources said. Though Roushan Ershad is the senior vice-chairman of the party, most party leaders have expressed their no-confidence in her. Party insiders said the party will definitely be split into pieces if Roushan Ershad is given the charge.

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Intra-party rivalry in Khulna AL 'Boral murder may lead to more secret killings'

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, Sept 5: The activities of Awami League's Chitalmari thana chapter have been suspended for a month with effect from September 2.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting held the day before in view of the humiliation suffered by Sheikh Helal MP, elected from Bagerhat-1 constituency, at a condolence meeting on Friday following the killing of Kalidas Boral at Chitalmari.

Different government agencies are reported to have launched investigation into Friday's incident that took place in presence of Home Minister Mohammad Nasim. The incident had forced Sheikh Helal, who is also a cousin of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, to leave Chitalmari incurring a political setback and division in the Bagerhat district Awami League.

Awami League leaders sympathetic to late Kalidas Boral justified the showdown against Helal, while others wanted disciplinary action against those in the party for inciting the pandemonium. The troublemakers must be brought to book irrespective of party affiliation, said a top leader of Bagerhat district Awami League, requesting anonymity.

Bagerhat city and district Awami League is embroiled in severe intra-party rivalry over Boral's killing that may ultimately result in more casualties in the form of secret killings, said sources in the district committee.

Supporters of Helal brought out a procession at Chitalmari Sunday afternoon demanding exemplary punishment of those responsible for the chaos at Friday's condolence meeting. The district unit of Mukti-joddha Command Council also brought out a procession raising the same demand.

On the other hand, another faction of Awami League insisted on uncompromising movement on the issue of the murder without caring for the

decision to suspended party activities for one month at Chitalmari.

Neither Chitalmari nor Awami League is the personal property of any particular family, said another MP of Bagerhat district, said another MP of Bagerhat district on condition that he not be named.

Bagerhat Ainjibi Parishad, Puja Uddjan Parishad, Hindu-Buddha-Christianity Oikya Parishad, Chhatra Oikya Parishad and all socio-cultural organisations have vowed not to bow down to any threat from Boral's opponents until and unless the killers and godfathers are nabbed and put in the dock.

Sources said, security lapse at Friday's meeting at Chitalmari is also being enquired into by an intelligence agency of the government.

Meanwhile, there has been no further headway in the investigation of Kalidas Boral murder case recorded with

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