

Grassroots BNP

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where the demand for Badruddoza's resignation was also discussed.

He was told that many people believe he would be the next prime minister candidate and even could take over the party's leadership before the next election.

He told the BBC, "Leadership cannot be taken over by force. When followers accept someone as a leader, it is only possible for him to be a leader. The future will prove who will be the leader."

Asked if his appointment indicates induction of young people in the leadership, he said the organisation operates through an ongoing process and changes take place naturally. "This has happened to the BNP."

He also said he believes his party follows democratic norms.

Tarique passed a busy day yesterday. He met party leaders and workers and exchanged greetings with them, offered feteiha at the gravesite of his father late President Ziaur Rahman in the city and addressed a gathering there in front of the party central office.

Tarique Rahman was given the party post on Saturday night.

Yesterday, he first went to the Hawa Bhaban, BNP chairperson's office, at around 12:00 noon. A large number of party leaders and workers waiting there with bouquets greeted him. He stayed there till 5:30pm.

At about 6:00pm, Tarique drove to the Zia Uddin at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city. He was accompanied by the prime minister's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury and Rakibul Islam Bakul, central leader of Jatayatbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of the BNP.

He placed wreaths at the grave of Ziaur Rahman and offered feteiha.

Thousands of slogan-chanting workers and supporters of BNP and its front organisations were waiting there to greet him.

Most of the cabinet members and senior BNP leaders were also present there. They included

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, BNP leader KM Obaidur Rahman, Textile Minister Abdul Motin Chowdhury, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, PM's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Mayor of DCC Sadek Hossain Khoka, Amanullah Aman.

Mahi B Chowdhury MP, son of immediate past president Badruddoza Chowdhury was also present there.

After placing wreaths and offering feteiha, Tarique along with the ministers and leaders drove to the BNP central office at Naya Paltan.

Mannan Bhuiyan along with some other party leaders welcomed Tarique at the party office by offering a bouquet.

Leaders of different units of BNP and its front organisations carrying banners and flowers had crowded the party office to greet him.

At a press briefing at the party

office, Tarique expressed his gratitude to the leaders and workers for making him joint secretary general of BNP.

He sought cooperation of all leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations in discharging his responsibility.

Asked how he felt after formally joining BNP, he said, "I am very happy seeing the response of party men and people."

He said his first task would be to make the party stronger by plugging the weak points through discussions with party leaders.

"I am also planning a countrywide organisational tour to gear up party activities taking the leaders and workers into confidence."

Earlier, introducing Tarique Rahman to journalists, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said he (Tarique) has been given the post for his outstanding contribution to the party for more than a decade.

"In fact, he played a very important role in BNP on different occasions including the last three national elections. He also played a pivotal role in organising and strengthening the party in the past," Bhuiyan said.

"We all hope Tarique Zia will be able to reinvigorate the party."

Among others, Information Minister Tariqul Islam, Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, prime minister's political secretary Haris Chowdhury were present at the press briefing.

The Jatayatbadi Chhatra Dal brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday welcoming Tarique Rahman in politics.

Babar

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criminals create such a situation whenever we take initiative to solve these problems. This is nothing unique for the home ministry; it may happen to other ministers, government officials and any member of the public," the state minister said.

He said due to his wealth and muscle power, and the fact that he owns a newspaper, Nurul Islam Babul can do such nasty things. "And that is why I took recourse to law. There is no reason to think it as a weakness of the government of Khaleda Zia," he warned.

He stated in his deliberation that Babul also threatened on telephone to destroy his political career by exposing him (Babar) to the public by publishing fabricated stories.

Babar further alleged that Babul warned him that careers of a number of political personalities have earlier been destroyed through false reports in newspapers, and in some cases, the politicians were murdered.

Babul allegedly also threatened the state minister that he would meet a similar fate.

Jamuna Group owner defends himself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of Jamuna Group Nurul Islam Babul in a statement yesterday expressed surprise about a news item published in a section of press yesterday regarding filing of a general diary (GD) against him by Lutfuzzaman Babar, the state minister for home affairs.

"I have a good relation with Babar," Babul said in the statement identifying himself as a Commercially Important Person (CIP). "In fact, my relation with many of the ministers, state ministers and MPs as well as the government as a whole is good," the statement reads.

Babar in his GD filed on June 8 said Babul issued him a death threat over telephone on June 5 for 'opposing the government decision to allow the Jamuna Distillery to produce liquor.'

It is not clear why Babar filed the GD, said Babul, adding it might be a conspiracy by a certain quarter.

"I hope this statement will end all sorts of misunderstandings," he said.

AL ends boycott

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during its budget session, Hasina told a party rally in the city yesterday that her party wanted to protect people's interest at a time when the poor took the brunt of 'extra tax-burdens.'

Following the October 1, 2002 parliamentary polls, the new parliament went into its maiden session on October 28 but since day one the main opposition AL refrained from participating in the House proceedings on the grounds of 'non-congenial environment' and government-sponsored 'political persecution' and 'repression' against AL leaders and workers.

Senior AL leaders told reporters on June 20 that they had decided to change their stance and go to the parliament to protect 'people's interest' and to voice their protest against the 'anti-people budget' as well as the breakdown of law and order in the country.

In today's ALPP meeting, party sources said, AL lawmakers would hold detailed discussions on how to play their role in the Jatuya Sangsad as an effective opposition.

It would appoint party lawmakers to play specific roles and counter the arguments of the treasury bench on various issues.

Water vessels

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contain noise pollution. If they fail to comply with, they will face charges in the Marine Court," said an official of the department.

According to experts, an owner will have to spend an additional amount of about Tk 20,000 to fit silencers to both the engines, which will not only contain noise pollution but also increase longevity of the engines.

Dockyard workers at Kaliganj along the Buriganga river said most of the launch engines do not have silencers because the owners buy 'rejected engines' from ship breakers at Chittagong at a cost of Tk 24 per kilogram.

"These rejected engines are brought to Zinzira and Kaliganj where mechanics do the painstaking job of fixing and fitting those to vessels", said Motaleb, owner of Zinzira Workshop at Zinzira.

Dr Mohammad Reaz Hasan, Head of the Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering at BUET said the government should try to help the thousands of people involved in shipbuilding and other related work.

"Most of these mechanics do not have any formal training but they are nonetheless doing vital jobs for the water transport sector", he said.

"With a little help from the authorities, this workforce can do a much better job", he said.

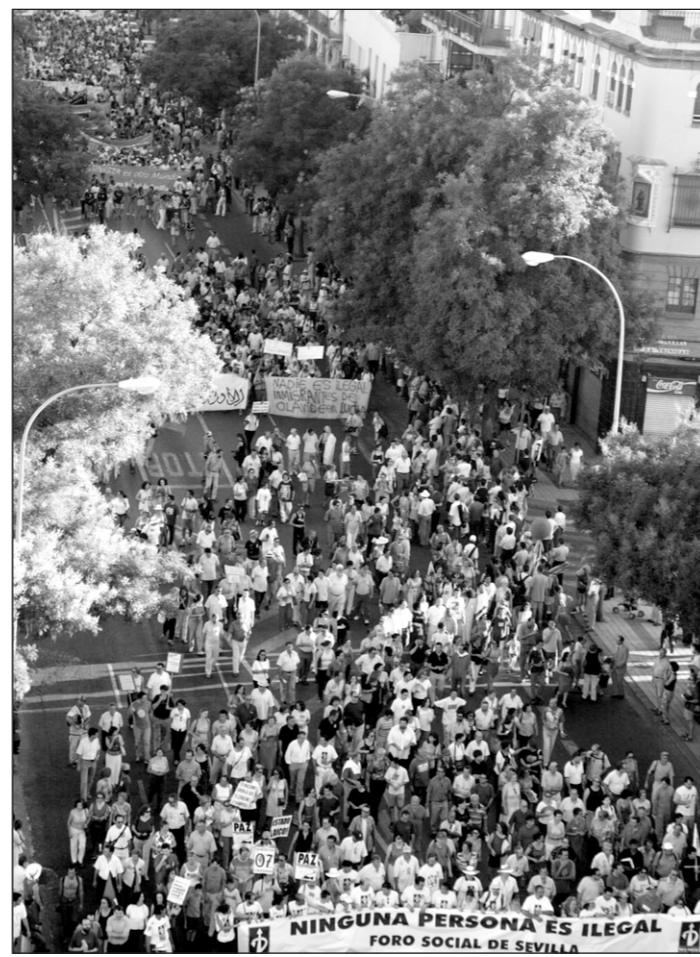
Saifur

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strategy for economic development and poverty reduction where issues of governance, law and order and setting up of different independent institutions came up.

Quoting from the document of poverty reduction strategy and economic development, Saifur Rahman said improvement of law and order and good governance is the precondition for investment.

On his failure to carry out reform as reported in the press, the minister said, "What I meant is that I could not accelerate the reform as I had expected. Reform is always difficult any where in the world. And it faces resistance from outside and from within the government. Everybody wants reform but differs on the pace. Even, my predecessor faced resistance," Saifur Rahman said.

He also said it should not take too long to establish the office of the ombudsman and national human rights commission provided there are people acceptable to everybody. "In fact, the biggest problem for those independent institutions is finding the right persons acceptable to everybody,"



Anti-globalisation demonstrators march in center Sevilla yesterday at the end of the European Council summit, and against the background of three car-bomb attacks in the region, allegedly committed by ETA, the Basque separatist movement.

Surprise in store in semis!

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continued to play eye-catching football and are in the last four on merit.

Germany are the most consistent team in World Cup history and have again proved themselves the ultimate tournament competitors despite the current group of players being written off as the worst to represent the country in years.

It seems ridiculous to describe Brazil's appearance as a surprise but, following an appalling qualifying campaign, they too arrived outside the select group of favourites.

But with each game they have eased back to the top of the pile and now once again find themselves in the familiar role as the bookmakers' choice to win the title for the fifth time.

The surprise semifinal line-up follows the trend of recent World Cups, which saw Croatia make the last four on their debut in 1998 and both Sweden and Bulgaria four years earlier.

In 1994 seven of the eight quarterfinalists were from Europe, in 1998 it was six and this time only four.

In the last two tournaments the underdogs finally fell at the penultimate hurdle and the odds again point to Brazil and Germany emerging to do battle in the final in Yokohama on June 30.

Incredibly, despite both featuring in the latter stages of virtually every World Cup, the two countries have never met at any of the previous tournaments.

But after the stunning shocks that have littered this one, nobody in either camp is yet thinking about anything but their semifinal opponents.

South Korea came into the tournament expecting to collect a win, hoping to make the second round but barely dreaming of anything more.

Now they face Germany in their capital Seoul on Tuesday with any last shreds of fear or inferiority long since blown away by their superb performances and the extraordinary support they get both in the stadiums and on the streets of every Korean city.

In 18 months Dutch coach Guus Hiddink has somehow turned the co-hosts into a team capable of beating anyone -- including Germany -- and will ensure they go

into the match fully expecting to win and not settling for what they have already achieved.

During the same period Rudi Voeller has performed similar surgery to rejuvenate Germany, who were arguably among the worst teams at the 2000 European championships and now, after making optimum use of their aerial power, find themselves within one game of the World Cup final for a remarkable 10th time.

Even Franz Beckenbauer, who led them to the title as a player and coach, had earlier dismissed their chances but will recognise in the squad the sort of mental steel that always characterises German teams and makes them so consistent at major tournaments.

Turkey will not fear playing Brazil in Saitama on Wednesday and have revenge in mind after their controversial 2-1 defeat in their first round match when they got the better of the South Americans for long periods but ended with two men sent off.

Turkey's return to the world stage was in danger of being short-lived when they gave away a late equaliser to Costa Rica, but they kept faith with their attractive passing and possession game to beat China 3-0 -- enough goals to make the second round.

They then came through very different but equally difficult tests against Japan and Senegal, showing tenacity as well as terrific poise on the ball, and are certainly making up for lost time after a 48-year absence from the tournament.

So to Brazil. Until last year the four-times winners had only ever lost one World Cup qualifier, but then somehow managed to suffer defeat six times in one campaign to limp into the finals just three points ahead of nearest rivals Colombia.

Unheard of defeats to the likes of Australia, Honduras and South Korea in friendlies, and coach Luiz Felipe Scolari's apparent confusion over his first-choice team, left them trailing Argentina, France, Italy and even Spain with most bookmakers.

But they are in the semifinals again and, though they have not yet scaled the heights of some previous teams in the gold and green, they have shown admirable fighting spirit, particularly with 10 men in the quarter-final comeback win over

Behave

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7:00pm, in time.

Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui adjourned the House at 9:00 last night to resume this evening, skipping the morning sitting.

The morning sitting was introduced last week to conclude the general discussion on the proposed budget to be passed by June 30. The exception is due to the weekly cabinet meeting scheduled for 11:30 this morning, sources said.

The Awami League is scheduled to hold a meeting of its parliamentary party at 6:00pm today where probable strategies in the House are likely to be discussed.

Flood

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depression.

He said the current flooding of some areas submerging crops, roads and highways under Rangpur, Jessore, Barisal and Khulna districts is due to stagnation of rainwater.

The situation would improve within a very short time after rainwater recedes, he observed.

The experts, however, ruled out further flash floods in the eastern hill basin covering Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Hobiganj districts.

The area has already witnessed two flashfloods this year during the April-May period.

EU leaders launch crackdown on illegal immigration

REUTERS, Seville, Spain

European Union leaders have launched a crackdown on illegal immigration to reassure voters anxious at an influx of Third World migrants.

But at a two-day summit in the Spanish city of Seville, overshadowed by a wave of five Basque separatist bombs elsewhere in Spain, the 15 leaders postponed key decisions on reforming their bloc and paying for its eastward enlargement.

Shocked into action by gains for anti-immigration populists in recent elections, the leaders approved action plans to boost border controls, work towards a common asylum policy and press third countries to cooperate in controlling migrant flows.

"We have reached a very balanced solution to limit and manage immigration while taking human lives into account," German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said.

He and British Prime Minister Tony Blair voiced some frustration that position spearheaded by France had prevented the EU from threatening sanctions against states that did not fight people smugglers or take back rejected immigrants. But French President Jacques Chirac

said brandishing the sword of sanctions would not solve the problem but would make the EU look uncaring by punishing the poorest.

Schroeder said the EU's long-term aim to stem and annual influx of an estimated half a million illegal immigrants was a common border guard corps, "but this remains a long way off."

However, the first joint border operations will start by the end of this year and the leaders agreed to cooperate much more closely on training, equipping and setting common standards for their national border guards.

The EU first pledged in 1999 to adopt a common immigration and asylum policy but progress has been painfully slow, partly because of national sovereignty concerns but also because the bloc applies its slowest working method to the issue.

Several thousand anti-globalisation demonstrators marched through central Seville after the summit ended on Saturday, banging drums and blowing whistles, but there was no repetition of the violence that marred similar demonstrations after a March EU summit in Barcelona.

Visa advice vice

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The gang also controls the illegal hundi business between Dhaka and Riyadh.

At least 20 big manpower agents in Dhaka who buy visa advice from this gang send the entire amount through hundi.

The doctor and his men have a monopoly hold on the jobs offered by the large Saudi companies engaged in city cleaning operations, the source said.

The companies are Mawarid Group and Al Khodari Group in Dammam, Al Amudi Group in Riyadh and Dalla Group of Holding Company and Motafail Company in Jeddah.

Very recently, this gang bought 1,900 visa orders for Motafail Company at a rate of more than 5,000 riyal a piece, according to sources close to him.

The Saudi intelligence police also interrogated the doctor several times for his involvement in unofficial money transaction. He was also arrested and sent to jail for his involvement in unfair business.

According to sources, the doctor is now using the bank account of his Saudi sponsor -- Taas Group International -- in the Saudi British

Bank at Olawa Street Branch in Riyadh.

According to sources, the doctor went to Saudi Arabia as a physician around 20 years back. But then he set up his own recruiting business.

It has been alleged that to suppress his illegal activities the doctor obtained a recruiting licence (Number 606) in the name of Shuvas Bejoy Associates during the previous government without approval from BAIRA.

The BAIRA president also demanded steps to stop manpower business by Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia who stay there with residence permit or worker's visa.

Earlier, Saudi employers used to send visa advice and air ticket free of cost to collect workers from Bangladesh.

Around 1.50 lakh Bangladeshis go to the kingdom a year for job, mainly in construction and cleaning companies.

Around 12 lakh Bangladeshis are now working in Saudi Arabia and almost half the total remittance of the country comes from the kingdom.

Sony's killing

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Sources in the DB police said the main suspects Muki and Tagar already crossed the border. But other sources said Muki went into hiding in Chittagong.

The sources added that the police arrested some relatives of the main suspects recently to extract information.

Officers of the Mohammadpur Police Station in Magura arrested two brothers of Tagar -- Mesbah Uddin Kayes and Hasib Uddin in Panighata Village in the district.

Kayes, a listed criminal, was involved with an outlawed party of the southwestern region, said police.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested Moinul Hayat Khan, brother of Muki, Friday night at their residence in Panchlaish Upazila in the district. He is also a JCD cadre in Chittagong and accused in at least 15 cases.

Contacted, DB Assistant Commissioner Akteruzzaman, the investigation officer (IO) of the Sony killing case, told The Daily Star yesterday that he was waiting for the autopsy report on Sony, to be sent by

the Ramna Police Station that earlier started an investigation into the case.

The IO said that despite repeated requests through the Ramna police investigation officer he did not get the autopsy report. The manhunt is on, but some suspects crossed the border, the officer said.

The Ramna police, when contacted yesterday, said the officer concerned was not available at the station.

As reported earlier, some suspects have taken shelter under some influential leaders belonging to the ruling BNP.

The sources said an influential leader in Raozan and an MP in the capital sheltered Muki. And Tagar has links with an influential commissioner of the Dhaka City Corporation and with Tokai Sagar, one of the 23 most wanted criminals.

Meantime, the committee formed by the education ministry to investigate the death of Sony submitted its report to the prime minister on Saturday.

The prime minister again assured that the killers must be booked.

Systems loss

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According to him, the power sector on one hand is unable to collect electricity bills, and on the other hand has to tackle a guarantee made by the last government to clear payments of IPPs if the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) fails to pay. The last government agreed to purchase power from the IPPs without solving problems in the distribution sector, he said.

He also said pressure is mounting on the national exchequer as the IPPs are being paid in foreign currency. "We are paying the IPPs in dollars but we are billing in taka. How are we going to solve this discrepancy?" he questioned.

The minister also opposed a number of duty exemption facilities that the IPPs are enjoying.

The minister identified the distribution of power as the 'main problem' for the country's power sector. He said heavy investments would not improve this situation unless the distribution of power is improved.

Talking about pre-paid metering, Mahmood said the prime minister has already approved the proposal of giving a two per cent discount to

users of pre-paid meters.

When business leaders urged the minister to reduce the price of power, he said, "The tariff structure is already far below the actual cost. We are now trying to gradually rationalise the power price."

The cost, systems loss and unpaid bills have been causing huge problems to the BPDB and DESA. Worst affected by these three factors is the BPDB.

Among others FBCCI president Yussuf Abdullah Harun spoke on the occasion.

BUET

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action against them.

They always faced difficulties whenever they tried to solve a problem created for 'political purpose' or to take disciplinary action against extortionists, tender manipulators and musclemen, usually backed by the ruling party, the BUET authorities said. "The university discussed the problems arising out of student politics, but the solution was not in our hands."

Hasina tells rally

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morning (Monday) to protect the interest of the people who have been penalised by the government through 'repression' and 'extra tax-load'.

At this stage, thousands of people those gathered at the rally venue from early afternoon raised their hands in full support to the new AL stance on joining the parliament.

However, Hasina demanded of the government to withdraw all 'extra tax' levied on the poor people in the proposed national budget for the next fiscal.

"All additional taxes have to be withdrawn, prices of essentials lowered, ban on import of reconditioned cars lifted and the value added tax (VAT) imposed on shops has to be withdrawn too," demanded Hasina.

"The cost of a jumbo cabinet has to be borne by the poor tax payers. In the process, the poor are becoming poorer and richer richer."

Hasina alleged that small traders have become victims of extra tax load and illegal toll collection and hooliganism.

Hasina was critical of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for

giving licence to produce liquor after 'assuming power in the name of Islam.' "I came to know that the Jazz Distilleries has started producing beer. You can check it up."

Noting that the country's state minister for home had to file a general diary with the police seeking protection of his life, the opposition leader said the common people even do not dare to file cases in fear of reprisal from the perpetrators of crime.

She also pointed out that at least 200 journalists were either attacked or intimidated for writing news on terrorists activities across the country.

Hasina apart, the rally was also addressed by senior AL leaders including presidium members Abdus Samad Azad, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sen Gupta, Abdul Jalil, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak and Sajeda Chowdhury, and Md Nasim.

Referring to the fact that the prime minister's son Tareque Rahman got an important party post just a day after the exit of the country's president, some AL leaders feared that the country would now be run by 'the mother and her son'.

B. Chy tells The Daily Star

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Chowdhury said he believes that neither his absence from Zia's gravesite on the occasion of his death anniversary nor his silence on the issue that Zia proclaimed the War of Independence irked the BNP lawmakers to demand his resignation. The reasons lies elsewhere.

During the hour-long interview, the former president said that a BNP leader had requested him to resign before the BNPPP written resolution reached him on Friday. But he declined and asked the leader to send the resolution to him before he resigns. He did not name that BNP leader.

Chowdhury said he viewed the whole thing politically. In his resignation letter, he said that he stepped down following a request by the BNPPP.

Asked whether his resignation following such a request was justified or not, he said, since the MPs demanded his impeachment he had made up his mind to step down once he gets the BNPPP resolution. "I did not resign voluntarily."

He thought that the impeachment proposal followed by the resolution was a "threat" to the presidency and it would be unwise on many counts to stay in office.

"A new crisis could emerge if I stayed in office. I resigned not to hurt the people and create a new crisis." A new crisis would halt development activities, aggravate the law and order situation, and hamper passage of the national budget, he said.

"Being accountable to the people, I made up my mind to step down. Since my politics is for the people, why should I hurt those commoners by clinging to that position?"

The immediate past president said, "My resignation is not a big issue. The nation has many bigger problems like law and order situation, hunger and poverty to solve."

Criticising the BNP move (for his ouster) in its parliamentary party meeting, he said, the issue should have been simple. There was no need for a two-day hefty discussion in a formal meeting.

"Only a phone call asking me to resign could be enough. Someone could phone me if any of my activities irked him or her."

"There was no ground for my removal from the office. But if I did not resign, an impeachment motion could be moved in the House."

Also, it could happen that the motion is not accepted unanimously by the House. In that case the members moving the motion could use

filthy language in the House that could create another confusion among the people.

"I have mentioned Zia as the proud son of the history of the Liberation War in my May 30 (2002) message on the occasion of the late president's death anniversary. This acknowledges his contribution," Chowdhury said.