

AL walks out

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The AL lawmaker, Abdur Razzak, took the floor next and started speaking on hartal in defence. But the deputy speaker who was chairing yesterday's sitting intervened saying that no debate is allowed after any speech under Section 300 of the Rules of Procedure, and he switched off the AL leader's microphone.

Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain described Razzak's speech as beyond the Rules of Procedure and asked the deputy speaker to expunge his speech.

The AL at a post-walkout press briefing blasted the role of the deputy speaker. "The deputy speaker is silencing the opposition voice and protecting the ruling party, which is beyond the constitution," AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta said.

The House also witnessed a heated debate on the chief whip's June 17 circular that restricted the use of cell phones inside parliament.

LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Khandaker Delwar Hossain from one camp and Suranjit and Razzak from the other took part in the debate.

The AL said the chief whip's issuance of the circular went beyond parliamentary norms as

only the speaker can dictate it.

"I am not talking about the content of the letter but about the chief whip's authority to write it," said Suranjit. "Only the speaker can do that." He accused the chief whip of an extra-constitutional act.

"We are not bound to go by the circular," he said before the speaker switched his microphone off.

In defence of Delwar, Moudud said what he did is not a directive but good advice. Delwar chimed in saying he has every right to give such suggestion on the use of cell phones in the House.

By the time Suranjit sought the floor again, the Chair proceeded to the day's next business -- general discussion on budget -- only to see the AL deputies walk out.

The AL lawmakers returned to the House within five minutes when Mannan Bhuiyan was speaking. He described the AL walkout as planned and said the opposition party called hartal only to show the foreign dignitaries that Bangladesh lacks' democratic norms.

The AL lawmakers wanted to counter Mannan Bhuiyan's arguments but the Chair did not allow them, leading them to leave the House for a second time.

The AL will decide today whether or not to join the next sitting, AL Presidium Member Abdus Samad Azad told reporters.

Rajya Sabha member KM Khan meets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Rajya Sabha member KM Khan called on Awami League president and Opposition Leader in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Sadaq residence yesterday.

Khan, also chairman of GLOBE South Central Asia and Asian Coordination Committee of NGO Affairs on the Palestine, discussed with the opposition leader matters of mutual interests relating to India-Bangladesh ties.

He paid rich tribute to "father of the nation" Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman and recalled Indo-Bangla cooperation in various fields.

This was Khan's second visit to Dhaka. He first came here when Hasina was in power.

During the meeting, the Rajya Sava member lauded the leadership of Sheikh Hasina and hoped that cooperation between the two countries would be further strengthened.

AL advisory council member Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury, AL presidium member Kazi Jafrullah MP, Hasina's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Syed Abul Hossain MP and press adviser Jawadul Karim were present at the meeting.

Imported rice delivered on fake documents: 16 sued

UNB, Benapole

Violators of party discipline.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury and City unit General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya also addressed the council chaired by Mohammad Hanif.

Water crisis grips SBMCH as tubewell goes out of order

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Water supply to the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) has remained severely disrupted for almost a week now as one of the two deep tubewells has stopped functioning since June 13.

The old tubewell cannot lift water for the 500-bed hospital due to rapidly falling water level while the other one, also very old and worn-out, could go out of order any time, said Public Works Department (PWD) officials responsible for maintenance of the tubewells.

She also criticised the bills for raising perks for the prime minister and ministers, the government interference in the judiciary and nomination of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury as Bangladesh candidate for secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC).

Alleging that the government has made parliament inactive, Hasina said, "Opposition lawmakers are not allowed to speak in the House and it has turned out to be a place for making untrue statements."

She said the government lacked confidence as it had come to power "under a blueprint and not with people's mandate".

She told the council that the next leaders of the AL's city unit will be a blend of the youth and the old. She warned of punitive actions against

SQ Chy's

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concern over the suit and called upon government to uphold press freedom.

Calling SQ Chowdhury a controversial person, they said the suing was a serious threat to the country's democracy and freedom of speech.

Signatories to the statement include RU teachers Dean of social science faculty Prof AHM Jehadul Karim, Rajshahi University Teachers' Association president Prof Sayen Uddin, Prof. Entazul Haque, Prof. Khairul Alam Khan, Prof. Hasibul Alam Prothom, Prof Md Mizan Uddin, Prof. Ananda Kumar Sha, Prof. Nurullah, Prof. Shah Azam Shantonu and Prof. SA Haider.

CU correspondent reports: Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Chittagong University (CU) yesterday expressed resentment over the filing of lawsuit.

The BCL, in a statement, also condemned the government's decision to nominate Chowdhury as secretary general candidate to OIC.

The signatories were BCL general secretary Kazi Mazharul Islam, joint secretary Minhaz Uddin, publicity secretary Najmul Alam, information and research secretary Zainul Abedin and library secretary Md. Sanwar Hossain.

Staff Correspondent adds: Bangladesh Railway Sromik League held a rally in the capital yesterday protesting filing of the case.

Terming the case 'false', leaders of the party urged the government to compel Chowdhury to withdraw it.

The rally, chaired by Siddiqur Rahman, was addressed by advocate Humayun Kabir, Idris Ali, Abdus Salam Sarker and Abul Hossain.

3 BRTC buses

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ment of his activists in the series of destructive activities.

Baffled BRTC officials met at an emergency meeting yesterday afternoon where they feared the loss from the series of attacks would be around Tk 1 crore.

The BRTC, which filed cases with police stations, sought everybody's cooperation to save the state-owned vehicles.

2 killed, 5 hurt in Jhenidah road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Two persons were killed and five others injured in a road accident near Mobarakganj Sugar Mills yesterday.

The dead were identified as Atiar Rahman, 45, and Shahriar, 18, of village Kaliganj in the district.

The injured were admitted to Kaliganj Health Complex.

The bodies were sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Abed Khan

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freelance journalist and professional column writer in recognised dailies.

He published three books *Abhajoner Nibidon Iti, Talk of the Town and Gaurananda Kobi Bhone Shune Punyaban*.

In turns, he was elected president, joint secretary and member of East Pakistan Journalists' Union and Dhaka Journalists' Union.

Forex reserves

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number of harsh measures including capping of illegal money transfers through hundi and opening of exchange houses abroad to bring remittance to official channel.

Monetary policy was also tightened to restrict imports by imposing higher margins on imports.

Finance ministry sources said the reserves may stand at \$2.5 billion this month with the availability of loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Duty rebate

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ment but the proposal for its inclusion drew strong opposition from India.

Representatives of the member countries debated for over three hours on the issue in the last meeting but failed to reach a consensus. The main reason behind India's opposition was Pakistan's refusal to recognise India as a most favoured nation, the official said.

"I want a disciplined and well-organised party from the grassroots level with the blend of experience of the elderly and the dynamism of the young," she said.



PHOTO: PID

Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri places wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar yesterday.

Dhaka, Jakarta firm

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Nazirul Rahman Manzur, Abdul Qader Siddiqui and Rashed Khan Menon, editors and senior journalists, academicians, business leaders, and senior civil and military officials attended the dinner.

Khaleda Zia in her address stressed the need for strengthening political and economic ties between the two developing Asian countries.

Welcoming the Indonesian president and her delegation, she recalled the visit of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to Indonesia in July 1978.

The prime minister particularly mentioned the illustrious role and the leadership of President Soekarno in attaining independence of the Republic of Indonesia.

In this regard, she also referred to the timely leadership of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Khaleda Zia drew similarities between the Indonesian Democratic Party, the ruling party of Indonesia, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party that leads the ruling alliance government in Bangladesh.

She said both parties won massive victory in their respective last general elections and have a similar national agenda.

"This means keeping economic development at the top to ensure a better quality of life for the common people," she said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her government has targeted poverty alleviation as the primary goal and devoted maximum resources to

achieve it within the shortest possible time.

"As a business-friendly government, we are providing incentives to create a strong and healthy private sector," she added.

Khaleda Zia deeply appreciated the inspiring role of Megawati in the restoration of multi-party democracy in Indonesia.

Referring to the recent terrorist attack in Bali, Khaleda lauded the courageous leadership of Megawati in handling the situation and for the singular measures to steer the development effort on its track.

In her address, the Indonesian leader expressed similar conviction about enhancing and expanding mutual cooperation among the two biggest Muslim populations by maximum utilisation of the available potentials.

She also expressed her firm belief that there are more areas to be explored to achieve a more meaningful and substantive bilateral relation.

Megawati termed her current visit as extremely instrumental in "our efforts to enhance and expand mutually beneficial cooperation."

She mentioned that as members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Bangladesh and Indonesia always support each other.

"At the bilateral level and in dealing with common issues in other international forums, we also continue to work together and consolidate our stance," the visiting president said.

Referring to the bilateral trade

volume that reached only US\$ 220 million in 2001, she regretted that it was clearly far below the actual capacity and potentials.

President Megawati said Indonesia is always open to any innovative suggestions and inputs that would help boost the trade exchanges.

"We also consider the importance of enhancing and expanding cooperation in social, cultural and education fields," she added.

The Indonesian president called for exerting more efforts to proceed with broad contacts at government level, among institutions or organisations, as well as at parliamentary level and among companies and entrepreneurs to interpersonal relationship.

She hoped the Joint Commission would explore a wider scope and spectrum of relations as well as a more intensified bilateral cooperation.

President Megawati invited Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to make a return visit to Indonesia.

Bangladesh comes first in her 10-day trip across Asia, which will take her also to Mongolia, Japan and Vietnam. Megawati will fly to her next destination Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia, tomorrow morning.

It is the second visit to Bangladesh by Megawati and also by any Indonesian head of government since the then president Suharto's in 1979.

She came to Bangladesh earlier in 2001 as vice-president and a few months later, she was elected the president.

Govt has made Parliament ineffective: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

thana, 90 ward and 17 union units under the capital city attended the council held after a gap of six years. The last conference was held in April 1997.

Mohammed Hanif chaired the function while AL general secretary Abdul Jalil and organising secretary (Dhaka division) and political secretary to AL president Saber Hossain Chowdhury addressed, among others.

"Democracy is struggling and rule of law is absent... judiciary is there but people have no right to seek justice. There is parliament where people's voice is gagged," she said addressing the triennial conference of Dhaka City Awami League at the Engineers Institution auditorium.

Hasina

formally inaugurated the council releasing pigeons and balloons. She hoisted the national flag while City AL president Mohammad Hanif and general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya hoisted the organisational flag.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance government has created a suffocating environment across the country unleashing a reign of terror and people are now fed up with government's misrule, repression and torture.

Terming the government "corrupt and terrorist", Hasina also alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance has turned the country into a "safe haven" for the killers.

She criticised the government for imposing additional taxes on essentials and reducing duty on luxury items.

"Why the people will give you (the government) an additional 5000 crore taka for your luxury?" she asked.

Delegates and councilors from 22

UP member

Murdered

in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

A Union Parishad member was killed allegedly by her stepson at Rajoir village in Swarankhola upazila yesterday.

Taslima Begum, 35, member of Khontakata Union Parishad, died on the spot as her stepson Rezaul and his three accomplices attacked her with sharp weapons at about 10am, neighbours said.

Her husband Abdul Hye Akhand and his second wife Helena Begum were arrested in the evening in connection with the murder.

48 more Rohingyas repatriated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Forty-eight more Rohingya refugees of eight families went back to Myanmar from Nayapara and Kutupalong refugee camps here yesterday, officials said.

Officials of Bangladesh government and UNHCR saw them off on the bank of Naaf river at Teknaf.

Myanmar immigration officials received them at Kaningchong reception centre.

With this, a total of 2,34,297 Rohingya refugees of 46,826 families have so far returned to their homeland.

Gender ratio gap</h2