

## Dispute over History



**O**PPPOSITION party Awami League walked out of the Jatiya Sangsad twice in protest on Sunday, July 11th. The first walk out was a result of the latest additions of the Muktiyuddher Dolilpatro. The addition claims former President Ziaur Rahman to be responsible for the proclamation of Bangladesh's independence. AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim accused BNP of attempting to distort the history of the Liberation War and stated that former prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's declaration of independence was incorporated in the constitution of Bangladesh. In response to this, State Minister for Youth and Sports, Fazlur Rahman, accused the opposition party of trying to distort the country's history. He then went on to quote the proclamation, which reads, "Ziaur Rahman, in the name of our great leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced the independence."

The second walk out of the day was fueled by the last minute cancellation of a general discussion, which had been decided upon by the house earlier. The discussion, being conducted by Textiles Minister Shajahan Siraj came to a halt when Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser, asked Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar to give the floor to the opposition bench first. This

was followed by protests by AL, who encouraged Shajahan to continue with his discussion. LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Health Minister Mosharraf Hossain requested the speaker to hold a general debate. This was, however, overruled by apparent gestures being made to the speaker by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, supposedly for the discontinuation of the discussion. Members of both parties engaged in heated arguments before the speaker called for order in the house.

## RAB Arrest and the Death of a Witness to the Ahsanullah Murder

**A** key witness to the killing of AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master died in hospital in Tongi early July 16 apparently during interrogation in the custody of the Rapid Action Batalion (RAB). The death of 30-year-old Sumon Ahmed Majumder, vice-president of Jubo League's ward no. 10 unit, came 10 hours after arrest putting the death toll in the wake of RAB interrogation to four. RAB officials made the arrest two hours after they raided the victim's house. "They (RAB members) tortured my son severely in custody that led to his death," the mother of the victim said while talking to the journalists. The police went to Sumon's Amtali house with a local BNP leader to search for firearms, and after they made the arrest he was taken to the Tongi thana. Sumon was arrested along with two others in connection with their alleged involvement in extortion, a Prothom Alo report said. But according to Sumon's brother he was taking a shower when a team of 15 member RAB team came and they asked him to go with them for interrogation regarding Ahsanullah murder case. As one inmate claimed to have heard



Relatives try to console a wailing sister of Sumon

Sumon crying, his relatives confirmed that they offered money to stop the torture. But a RAB official had a straight answer, he said, "Sumon scuffled with RAB officials during his arrest and was injured."