

Islamic Edn. Bill passed

By A. Staff Correspondent

The Institute of Islamic Education and Research Bill, 1980 was passed in the Jatiya Sangsad on Saturday with four amendments from the Opposition.

The amendments, two moved by Mr. Sudhangshu Shekhar Haldar (AL-Malek) and one each by Mr. Profulla Kumar Sheel (AL-Malek) and Mr. Abdus Sattar Khan (ML), were accepted by the Leader of the House Shah Azizur Rahman who placed the bill as the Minister in charge of the Ministry of Education.

An amendment moved by Khondokar Abdul Hamid (BNP) and Mr. A.S.M. Solaiman (Gano Front) to replace the Bangla word "Upacharya" by English word "Vice-Chancellor" was accepted by the Leader of the House but later was kept in abeyance on the request of the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan.

However, all other amendments on the bill moved by the Opposition and independent members were rejected by voice vote.

The bill aims at making provision for the establishment of an Institute of Islamic Education.

(Continued on page 16 Col. 4)

Islamic Edn.

(Continued from page 1)

tion and Research for the purpose of promoting Islamic education and undertaking studies and research on all branches of modern knowledge from Islamic point of view.

Requesting the House to pass the bill the Leader of the House Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman said that the institute would be a joint collaboration between Bangladesh and King Abdul Aziz University of Jedda. Replying to the Opposition criticism he said that though the Saudi Government would contribute fund to set up the institute Bangladesh would not remain under any obligation to that government. We would hire the knowledge of scholars from the Jedda University, he said. Saudi Arabia, he added, was our friend where our Prophet Hazrat Mohammod (SM) was born and from there we should learn about the Holy Quran and Islam.

Ruling out the Opposition allegation the Prime Minister assured that the passage of the bill would not hamper the freedom of the members of other religions in the country. There should not be any apprehension in the minds of minority community here, he said. In this regard he referred to the annual spending of Taka 31 lakhs for the education, preaching of religion and maintenance of the holy places of minority communities in the country.

Differing with the Opposition the Prime Minister said that Bangladesh was no longer a secular state. The state principle of secularism was changed with the mandate of the people he observed. When the Opposition members said that it was done under Martial Law the Prime Minister threw a challenge to them that the government was ready to hold mandate on such issues any time now.

Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman said that the conflict on opinion on "Bangladeshi nationalism" and Bangalee nationalism would continue till it was resolved by the people.

He recalled the contribution of Muslim scholars to science, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, horticulture and other spheres of knowledge. He said that Islam was not a mere religion it is a complete code of life. Islam, he said, was a world ideology and we should bring scholars from that country where Islam originated to research on the Quran and the Hadith.

Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman said that with the passage of the bill during holy Ramadhan, the month when the Holy Quran was revealed, he was fulfilling his obligation to the Almighty Allah.

Taking part in the debate on the bill Leader of the Opposition Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan said that if the objective of the bill was to do research on the Holy Quran and Islam, not any political purpose, the Opposition had no objection to the passage of the bill. But, he said, certain clauses of the bill were objectionable and those would lead to confusion and doubt about the purpose of the Institute of Islamic Education and Research.

The Leader of the Opposition said that in 1975 the Islamic Foundation was set up for research on Islam. He said that Islamic Foundation was enough for this purpose and there was no need for introducing another bill for a Research Institute.

Opposition view

Opposing the inclusion of two representatives of King Abdul Aziz University of Jedda in the Board of Governors of the Institute of Islamic Education and Research who will be nominated by the President the Leader of the Opposition expressed his apprehension that the two members would be most powerful in the Board as Saudi Arabia would give the fund for the institute. He said that no foreigner should be included in the board. He said that not only Jedda University scholars but also from other Muslim countries should be hired by the institute as experts.

Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan opposed the clause of the bill which said that the institute would formulate educational policy based on fundamental principles of Islam. Only the Parliament and the government, he said, could formulate the educational policy of the country. He said that any attempt to impose religious education by the institute would cause dissension among the members of other religions in the country. Bangladesh, he said, was not inhabited by Muslims alone like in Saudi Arabia. Members of other religions are, also the

citizen of Bangladesh, he added.

Mr. Sudhangshu Shekhar Haldar (AL-Malek) whose two amendments on the bill were accepted by the Leader of the House said that Islam as the religion of peace preached tolerance and the secular concepts prevailing in modern branches of education, such as, humanities, science and sociology should not be replaced by this institute.

Mr. Haldar said that there was no clear provision to decide which of the opinion of the Islamic Foundation and the proposed Institute of Islamic Education and research would prevail in the time of conflict between the two. He said that members of Academic Councils of different universities where research on the Holy Quran and Islam were being done could be included in the Research Council of the institute, not in its Board of Governors.

Mr. A.B.M. Taleb Ali, Mr. Salahuddin Yusuf, Mr. Md. Asaduzzaman, Mr. Sirajul Islam, Col (Retd) Anwarullah, Mr. Profulla Kr Sheel Principal Nazrul Islam Mr. Md. Mohsin and Mr. Imazuddin Pramanik of Awami League (Malek) Mr. Rashed Khan Menon (Ganotantrik Andolan), Mr. A.S.M. Solaiman and Mr. Rafiqullah Chowdhury of Gano Front Mr. Abdus Sattar Khan and Mr. Ismail Hossain Talukdar of Muslim League (Sabur) and Mr. Golam Mostafa of JSD participated in the discussion on the bill.

At one point during the debate on the bill there was uproar in the House on the amendment moved by Mr. A.S.M. Solaiman to replace the word "Upacharya" by English word "Vice-Chancellor".

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmed, Mr. Shahjahan Siraj (JSD), Mr. A.B.M. Taleb Ali and other Opposition members opposed the amendment saying that it would be against the Constitution of the country.

Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan (Jatiya League) said that the word "Upacharya" was not a Bangla word and so it could be replaced.

Leader of the House Shah Azizur Rahman accepted the amendment. At that point Leader of the Opposition Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan said that if the Bangla word "Upacharya" which had been in use in different universities of the country was replaced by English word "Vice-Chancellor" there would be movement by students, teachers and others in the country's universities. He requested the Leader of the House not to replace the word. Leader of the House then agreed to keep the question of replacing the word in abeyance now and said that in future there would be a debate in the House which words could be replaced.