

Hearing on charge framing against Ershad Aug 17

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed August 17 for hearing on charge framing against former president HM Ershad and five others in two graft cases.

After the hearing from the prosecution and the defence on the discharge petitions filed earlier, Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Special Court for Dhaka Division will decide whether the charges would be framed against Ershad and others.

CASE AGAINST ERSHAD, MANJU
In the first case, Ershad and former energy and mineral resources minister Anwar Hossain Manju are accused of causing a loss of \$79,000 to public exchequer.

The case, filed with Tejgaon Police Station, alleged that the then president HM Ershad and his minister Manju awarded a contract to the Scimitar Oils SA for drilling

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127 killed as clashes flare up in Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Fierce fighting between government troops and Tiger rebels in north and eastern Sri Lanka yesterday left at least 127 people dead and another 280 wounded, the military said.

Up to 500 rebels from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked across a de facto front line in the northern Jaffna peninsula and a nearby islet, military spokesman Athula Jayawardena said.

"We estimate at least 100 to 150 Tigers were killed and 200 to 250 were wounded," Jayawardena told reporters here.

"We had our share of casualties too with three officers and 22 other rankers and two sailors killed. Eight

officers and 72 other rankers were wounded. They have all been evacuated for treatment."

The fighting lasted nearly 10 hours as the guerrillas fired heavy artillery towards military bunkers as well as the main airfield of Palaly on the northern edge of the peninsula, he said.

An airforce Bell 212 helicopter as well as other equipment were damaged, he said, but rejected a report on the pro-rebel tamilnet.com website that the guerrillas used an aircraft to attack a government airbase.

"We didn't see even a kite of the Tigers," he said. The military repulsed the guerrilla offensive and carried out aerial attacks late Saturday against Tiger gun posi-

tions also in the north, he said.

However the Tiger rebels claimed the military initiated the fighting on Friday in Jaffna and in eastern Batticaloa and continued attacking on Saturday.

"The Government of Sri Lanka launched a two-front offensive in Jaffna district and Batticaloa district (in the island's east) on Friday, causing hundreds of civilians to displace," the LTTE said in a statement.

The navy said the Tigers had also fired artillery at the main naval and air forces bases in the north-eastern district of Trincomalee, but troops retaliated.

"They carried out the attack in

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Doctors permit family to take ailing Shamsur Rahman abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nine-member medical team monitoring poet Shamsur Rahman's health gave consent to taking the poet abroad for further treatment if his family wishes but they said the travel might be risky for the poet who is too weak to move.

The poet is still not out of danger, said the doctors attending on the poet who can occasionally move his legs and hands.

The family of Shamsur Rahman is waiting for the government's assistance for sending the poet abroad. The government earlier gave assurance for all kind of cooperation.

"As soon as we get government assistance, we can take the poet

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Israel triples troops in Lebanon after UN resolution

AFP, Tyre, Lebanon

Israel poured thousands of extra troops deeper into Lebanon yesterday after launching a broad "open-ended" offensive despite a unanimous UN Security Council call for an end to the month-old war.

At least eight Lebanese civilians were killed in air attacks that also destroyed a power station in the war-ravaged south, and hit roads leading to Syria in the north.

Israel said it had tripled its troop numbers in Lebanon and warned the expanded ground operation could last for weeks as it struggled to deliver a knock-out blow to Hezbollah guerrillas.

But international envoys in the region called for a ceasefire to take hold rapidly after the Lebanese and Israeli governments give their approval to the UN resolution ham-

pered out after days of diplomatic wrangling.

"The cessation of hostilities should take place as soon as possible. Too many lives have been lost," said Geir Pedersen, the representative of UN chief Kofi Annan in Lebanon.

But Israel pressed ahead with a broader assault aimed at wiping out Hezbollah from border areas and halting rocket attacks, hours after the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1701 calling for a cessation of hostilities and deployment of a 15,000-strong international force.

"We have multiplied by three the number of our troops operating in Lebanon," Israel's army chief Dan Halutz said.

He gave no figures, but an estimated 10,000 troops were already believed to be operating inside

Lebanon.

A top military official had said that four divisions - between 24,000 and 40,000 - would take part in the expanded offensive.

The military said the new ground operation could extend up to the strategically important Litani River, which runs up to 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the border.

"This is a phased plan and the first stage allowing us to control the ground could take a few days," said General Alon Friedman, a senior commander in northern Israel. "Cleaning up operations will follow, in a stage that could last a few days or a few weeks."

Troops in tanks and armoured vehicles rolled towards hilltops

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ELECTORAL REFORMS
Bhuiyan to sit with Jalil if proposal comes

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has said he will sit with his opposition counterpart Abdul Jalil over the electoral reform proposals if he gets any formal offer.

"Talks can be held if the proposal comes formally," Bhuiyan said while briefing journalists on the prime minister's meeting with her party's grassroots leaders from Dinajpur at the prime minister's Hare road office yesterday.

Bhuiyan said the government is willing to sit across the table with the opposition over the political deadlock, but they put some conditions.

While exchanging opinion with the grassroots leaders, Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia urged the countrymen to remain alert against all conspiracies to foil the next parliamentary polls.

She also asked the field level leaders to work unitedly to ensure the victory of party candidates in the next elections.

Shariakandi UNO sues 17 BNP, AL leaders, activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Shariakandi Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) SM Ferdous Alam filed three certificate cases with a Certificate Court against 17 local BNP and Awami League leaders and activists for their alleged involvement in misappropriation of 617 metric ton of rice from three land development projects in the upazila.

Upazila Nirbahi Office sources said the UNO filed the cases against Karnibar Union Awami League President Anisur Rahman Khoka, BNP leader and activists Abu Bakker Siddique, Abdul Jalil, Atiur Rahman, Altaf Bapari, Shahana Begum, Afsar Mondal, Tofael Ahmed, Abul Kalam Azad, Osman Akand, Zainal Sheikh, Ajahar Sheikh, Amena Bayewa, Nural Amin, Abdul Karim, Mujibur Rahman and Golam Rahman for misappropriation of rice worth

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Prayer Timing		
August 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-41	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Rubble and construction materials left on the side of a street in Motijheel in the capital clogging the drainage system and creating puddles. This disrupts movement of pedestrians and vehicles and creates a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Shibir clashes with JCD, other student bodies
15 wounded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At least 15 students and a sub-inspector of police were injured in a clash between All-Party Student Unity (Apsu) and Islami Chhatra Shibir activists at Kulaura Degree College yesterday.

The fight first broke out between workers of ruling BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Shibir at a reception ceremony arranged for the freshers at around 3:00pm.

Later, all other student organisations including Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student front of the main opposition Awami League, joined JCD in fighting the cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami student wing.

The clash left some 15 students and SI Abdul Latif injured. They were taken to Kulaura Hospital.

The Shibir activists launched fresh attacks when the all-party student group brought out a procession at the Kulaura upazila headquarters in the afternoon.

Windowpanes and doors of an Islami Bank branch were damaged during the clash.

Police have not held anyone in this connection as of filing this report late last night.

Salehi back to campus with cop protection
252 more return from Lebanon

RU buses used for bringing outsiders, Jamaat-Shibir men to join rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Amid protests by students, Rajshahi University Islami Chhatra Shibir leader Mahbul Alam Salehi, a key suspect in Professor S Taher Ahmed murder case, returned to the campus and attended a Shibir programme yesterday.

Salehi chaired the programme organised to observe Islamic Education Day with heavy police protection. Apart from pro-Jamaat teachers, officials and employees, a large number of outsiders including school and madrasa students joined the rally.

Jamaat and Shibir leaders addressing the rally blamed journalists and the police for "fabricating

stories" on Salehi's involvement in Prof Taher murder.

Protesting Salehi's reappearance on the campus with the help of the police and RU administration, Progressive Students' Alliance (PSA) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) staged demonstrations behind the RU Central Library.

Police intercepted a PSA procession as the activists chanted slogans demanding arrest of Taher's killer. The armed cadres of Shibir and police barred BCL activists from bringing out a procession in front of the library. BCL later held a rally behind the library.

All 30 university buses and light vehicles were used allegedly for

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi expatriates in Lebanon are now passing their days in mounting panic and uncertainty as air strikes, bomb blasts, destruction of buildings and roads and killing of civilians continue unabated in the war-ravaged country, returnees from Lebanon say.

All their hopes are now shattered as many of their employers have been killed or have left the country for safety, forcing them to live on the streets and return home with very small amounts from their earnings or empty handed.

The returnees are happy that they are back home but worried over their future as they had to leave major part of their earnings with their employers.

Many of them said they also heard of the deaths of some Bangladeshis in the war-torn Lebanon but the authorities in

Dhaka said no killing of Bangladeshis was reported.

They shared their experiences on their return to Zia International Airport (ZIA) at 4:45am yesterday from Lebanon.

A special chartered flight of Middle Eastern Airlines (MEA) flew 252 Bangladeshis from Damascus to ZIA where Qatar Charity gave them Tk 2,000 each and the expatriates' welfare ministry Tk 500 each.

The government, with financial assistance from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), brought them home from the Syrian capital where they had gathered following registration for returning home. The total number of returnees rose to 534 so far.

"Wherever you go, horror runs after you. Bombs, fires and smokes are daily incidents in Lebanon. Nobody in that country is safe, let

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A 1962 Morris Minor runs majestically on a street in Agrabad, Chittagong yesterday. The British made car is one of the three vintage vehicles of its owner's collection.

