

## Ershad let off the hook in dirty political game: 14-party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine in its reaction to the verdict in the graft case against HM Ershad yesterday said the 'corrupt' BNP-Jamaat coalition government has failed to prove corruption charges against the deposed president because of its 'dirty political game'.

AL General Secretary and

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## Slogans in courtroom defying ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of Jatiya Party (JP) yesterday expressed their joy by chanting slogans on the court premises and even in the courtroom defying a High Court (HC) ban on such activities, after JP Chairman HM Ershad was acquitted of a graft charge.

A suo moto order of the HC on May 23 last year banned any kind of gathering, congregation, picketing

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## Ershad sees 'beginning' of justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman and deposed president HM Ershad termed yesterday's court verdict, which acquitted him of a graft charge, as the beginning of justice.

"I am getting justice as the government is not interfering with the trials of the cases. Justice will prevail and I will be acquitted in all the cases if the trials are conducted neutrally," Ershad told journalists brushing aside allegations of being

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# Ershad acquitted of income tax graft

SHAKHAWAT LITON and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Jatiya Party (JP) chief HM Ershad was acquitted yesterday in a graft case filed against him 14 years ago. The verdict came at a time when the ruling BNP is negotiating to have the dictator on their side in the upcoming elections in return for gradually withdrawing the cases pending against him.

The Special Court for Dhaka Division acquitted Ershad of illegal withdrawal of Tk 2,76,324 of income tax money without submitting any document in favour of his action.

The court had twice deferred the dates for delivering the verdict that was prepared about three years ago.

"That accused HM Ershad having found not guilty of the charge levelled against him under sections 409/109 of the Penal Code

and section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act be acquitted from the case. The accused person be discharged from his bail bond," Malik Abdullah-Al-Amin, special judge of the Special Court, read out the judgment in a crowded courtroom amid tight security.

The prosecution failed to prove the charges against Ershad, the judge said.

Special Public Prosecutor Fazlur Rahman Khan expressed dissatisfaction at this. "I believe I have been able to prove the charges against Ershad by producing written evidence and giving their statements," he told The Daily Star. He, however, said, "It is the judge's jurisdiction to deliver the verdict acquitting or convicting any person."

Asked if he will file an appeal against the verdict, he said he will decide about it after going through the verdict.

The same court also held the hearing on two other graft cases and fixed August 24 for delivering its decision whether charges will be framed or not against the deposed president.

On September 29, 2003, defence lawyer Sheikh Mohammad Serajul Islam said his client Ershad will not get justice from the court and sought adjournment of the delivery of the verdict.

The defence lawyers, however, did not express any such anticipation prior to delivering the verdict yesterday. "I am satisfied with the verdict," Ershad's counsel told reporters.

After the pronouncement of the verdict, the JP leaders and activists burst out in joy and started chanting slogans in the courtroom.

"I was acquitted of the charge as per provisions of the laws," Ershad, who heads the second largest

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PHOTO COURTESY: NASIR ALI MANJUM

## Shamsur Rahman no more

RAFIQ HASAN

"I'll soon be gone, quite alone/And quietly, taking none of you along/On this aimless journey. Useless/To insist, I must leave you all behind. No, I'll take nothing at all/On this solitary journey..." wrote Shamsur Rahman in his poem "Before the Journey".

Shamsur Rahman has gone leaving the whole nation in a deep shock.

The eminent poet breathed his last at 6:30pm at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) yesterday.

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## A tribute to the poet

SYED MANZOORUL ISLAM

When a friend told me that Shamsur Rahman had been admitted to the ICU of BSMMUH hospital with multiple disabilities of his vital organs, my first instinct was to go and see him, if only to reassure myself that he was there, and would make a quick come back. I remember, some years ago, after an extremist outfit had made an attempt on his life, I went to see him in his Shyamoli residence. And sure enough, there was the poet, sitting in his study, poring over a book; his white, tousled hair dancing in the afternoon breeze. He welcomed me with a broad smile, whose sweetness still remains in my memory, and asked me to sit

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TRIPER

## MILITANCY 14-party demands patrons inside govt be brought to justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine yesterday said until the militant outfit JMB's patrons in the cabinet of the BNP-Jamaat government under the shelter of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia are brought to justice, militancy would not be curbed in the country.

The opposition combine demanded immediate tracking down and prosecution of the patrons to bring an end to the militancy in the country.

It also blasted the alliance government for not executing the verdict of cases against many of the militants accused in the country-wide serial bomb blast on August

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# 11 'outlaws' killed in gunbattle with cops

STAFF REPORT

At least 11 outlaws were killed and another captured wounded in a firefight between police and cadres of the Janajuddho faction of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) at remote Sharirvita village of Sujanagar upazila in Pabna yesterday.

During the gun battle that lasted around two and a half hours, around 200 rounds of bullets were traded, police said, adding that they recovered 10 rifles and 113 bullets from the area.

At around 5:30am, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police blockaded the area, some 45 km off the district town, following informa-

tion that 50 PBCP cadres were holding a secret meeting at the house of Hamid Kazi at Sharirvita, police and Rab sources said.

The criminals opened fire on the law enforcers, who retaliated, leading to the death of a few outlaws, police said.

As other criminals started fleeing, the law enforcers and hundreds of locals chased them. At one stage the criminals boarded two boats and tried to flee through a beel (wetland) but got encircled by police and villagers.

The outlaws opened fire and another firefight with the law enforcers ensued. Six bullet-hit outlaws died on the spot.

The dead are Gulzar Hossain,

Kalam, Kana Bachchu, Abdus Sabur, Abu Kazi and his brother Yousuf Kazi, Anisur Rahman, Tarique Mollah and his brother Bachchu Mollah, Sagar and Siraj. Three of them -- Abdus Sabur of Shyam Sundarpur, Kalam of Govindapur and Abu Kazi of Sarivita villages -- are regional commanders of the outlawed outfit.

Out of anger at the outlaws who had committed murder, abduction, robbery, extortion and rape in the area, angry villagers disgraced the criminals' bodies by hacking, police and locals said.

Locals said the outlaws were under the shelter of infamous 'Al

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## 27th BCS results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Service Commission (PSC) yesterday announced the results of the written test of the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination held this year.

The PSC has selected 16,418 candidates provisionally for viva or spoken interview in different cadres and the viva will begin from September 9, said a PSC press release.

Full results on pages 13, 23

The PSC reserves the right to cancel the application of any provisionally selected candidate if a candidate lacks the eligibility in line with the advertisement of the examination

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# 98 Tamil Tigers killed in Jaffna battle

### Truce monitors flee shelling

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan troops yesterday beat back a fresh attempt by Tamil Tigers to overrun the main defences of the northern peninsula of Jaffna and killed at least 98 guerrillas, media minister Anura Yapa said.

More than 100 rebels were wounded in the close-quarter fighting in the early hours of the morning, the minister told report-

ers here.

The attack on the northern peninsula, where hundreds have died in a week of fierce fighting, came a day after President Mahinda Rajapakse said the door was still open for peace talks with rebels fighting for autonomy for the nation's Tamil minority.

Fighting also erupted in the eastern coastal town of Trincomalee, with foreign ceasefire monitors saying they were forced

to retreat from heavy overnight shelling.

In Jaffna, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched a seaborne attack on army bunkers at Kilali on the peninsula's southwestern edge but troops hit back with rockets and rocket-propelled grenades, officials said.

"The fight lasted until morning and Sri Lankan forces have been able to inflict heavy casualties on

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## AUG 17 BLASTS Militant network destroyed, claims BNP

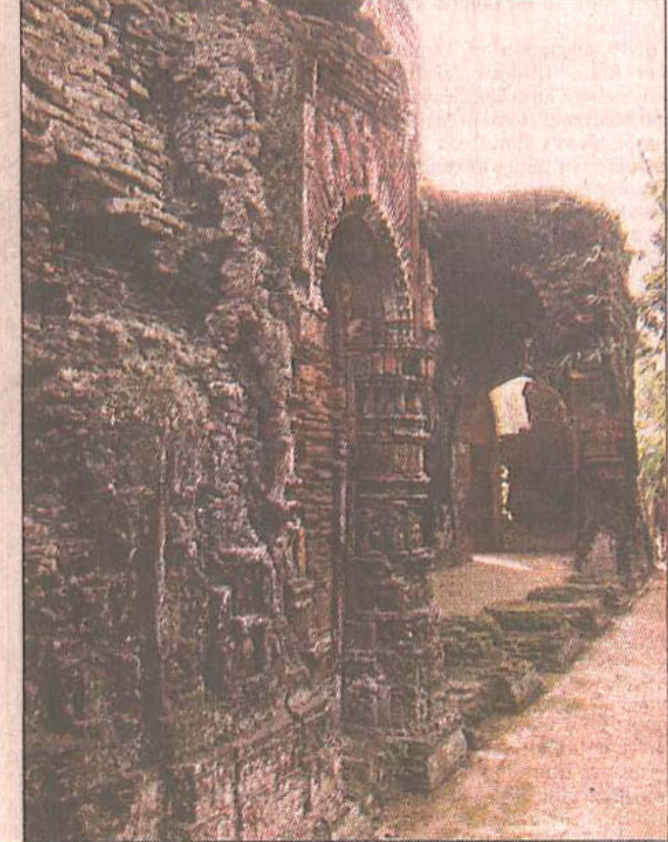
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday said Bangladesh has now proved to be an effective democratic state that firmly opposes militancy and has destroyed the militant network across it.

Bangladesh is the only country where militant leaders have been captured and brought to trial, they said at a party rally in the capital.

BNP city unit organised the rally protesting the near-simultaneous bomb blasts across the country on August 17 last year by militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

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## A temple in neglect

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, back from Sirajganj

Nabaratna Temple in Hatikumul area in the northern district of Sirajganj, which was declared as an important archeological site, has been stripped of its beauty due to lack of maintenance and preservation.

Referring to archeological documents, Regional Archeology Department officials said the temple was built about three hundred years ago.

A senior official of the department said the temple was built with bricks emulating the design of Kantoji's Temple in Dinajpur, another protected historic site.

The archeology office sources said the temple was declared protected by the department in 1990. Since then it was renovated only once and during the last two hundred years that was the only renovation it saw, said the officials.

Md Abdul Kahaleque, regional director (RD) of the archeology department, said the government has taken an initiative to renovate Nabaratna Temple and restore its original architecture although the top part of it had collapsed in a devastating earthquake in 1897.

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# Business leaders decry arrest warrants against eminent citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the country's business community yesterday expressed deep shock and concern over the arrest warrants issued against eminent citizens and business personalities following a case filed by the Board of Investment (BoI) chief.

In a joint statement, leaders of 10 leading business chambers and associations expressed fear that this kind of situation will damage the country's image and investment climate.

The warrants were issued against business personalities Syed Manzur Elahi and Laila Rahman Kabir, and eminent citizens Professor Rehman Sobhan, M Syeduzzaman and Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya after BoI Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman filed a defamation case against them.

The case was preceded by controversies generated following Mahmudur's allegations that

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), an independent research organisation, provided distorted information about the country's economy.

Mahabur Rahman, president of International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh, Latifur Rahman, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Samson H Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Association of Publicly Listed Companies, MA Momen, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry, AK Azad, president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, Kamran T Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Jute Mills Association, M Shamsul Alam, chairman of Bangladesh Insurance Association, Wahidul Huq, chairman of Bangladesh Tea Association, and OR Khan, vice president of Bangladesh Employers' Federation, are signatories to the statement.

In the petition Mahmudur

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## SA Games start today

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

The Sri Lankans will put aside heavy fighting against the LTTE in the northeast and recent terrorist bomb attacks in the capital for a while and officially launch the 10th South Asian (SA) Games here today. President Mahinda Rajapakse will declare the eight-nation

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## The Daily Star

### Eid Fashion Album 2006

Attention

#### Designers, Boutiques & Fashion Houses

#### Welcome to The Daily Star Fashion Album 2006

As Eid approaches, *The Daily Star* prepares itself for the big occasion. This year as usual *The Daily Star* Fashion Catalogue 2006 will feature dresses and sarees of Eid collection plus write-ups describing the creative thinking behind the fashion wears & their creators. The Album represents itself as a source book for both buyers and sellers. Designers, boutiques and fashion houses are invited to participate in this fashion extravaganza.

For information regarding participation and placing advertisement please contact: Sasha Mansoor Chowdhury, Saptahik-2000, 96/97, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka-1000. Phone: 9350951-3, 01713015147 or Sher Ali, Advertisement Manager, *The Daily Star*, Phone: 9144332.

**Rules and regulations**

- The dresses and sarees should express the mood of the festival. The materials used for the sarees and dresses should be locally produced. The design should be original and the fabrics should suit our weather and environment.
- The dresses and sarees sent for the Album are returnable.
- The dresses and sarees should be handed over to Saptahik-2000 from 21 to 23 August, 2006.
- Per Entry Fee Tk 100.00 (Minimum three Entry).