

## Ershad's trial

## No provision in JP manifesto to raise special fund: Defence

Two defence witnesses in the corruption case against former President H M Ershad Wednesday said that there was no provision in the Jatiya Party's manifesto to form a special fund for raising money, reports BSS.

The witnesses said since it was a special fund, not the usual party fund, the money raised was handed over to the party Chairman H M Ershad.

With the cross examinations of M A Barok and Mujibur Rahman Sentu, both MPs of 1986 and 1988 parliaments and former Chairman of Jatiya Parishad, the number of defence witnesses in the case against Ershad for amassing wealth beyond his known source of income rose to seven. Of them, three are members of the current parliament.

The hearing has been adjourned till November 23.

At one stage, the former President tried to assist the defence witness but it was objected to by the Attorney General Aminul Haq, told the accused, "Why do you talk?"

Ershad was again snubbed during the cross-examination of Mujibur Rahman Sentu for a similar attempt. The Attorney General told Ershad, "as President you have spoken a lot. Now please keep quiet and allow me to talk." Ershad was visibly embarrassed at the remark of the Attorney General.

After the cross examination over and no other witness was available, the defence submitted a prayer suggesting five more names to the list of ten defence witnesses given earlier. The important persons named earlier as defence witnesses, but yet to appear include Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, MP, and Shah Moazzem Hossain, MP, Acting Chairman and Secretary General respectively of the Jatiya Party.

## Task Force report handed over to Hasina

The leaders of the Economic Task Force, headed by former Adviser Prof Rehman Sobhan, presented its report to the Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina at her Sangsad office Wednesday according to a press release, reports BSS.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad and Awami League General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury among others were present.

## APSU

ousting of identified terrorists and ensuring the holding of classes and examinations.

It also demanded of the government to withdraw expulsion order against five students, show-cause notices on 63 students, cases against their student leaders and dissolution of central students union of the university.

Hamidur Rahman Azad, President of the university unit raised the demands at a press conference at the press club here. Other Shibir leaders were also present on the occasion.

Azad said, the present Vice-Chancellor who was appointed during the past regime had resorted to nepotism and corruption in administration which had created chaos and unstable situation on the campus.

Azad further said that implementation of the inquiry commission report would solve the present problems of the university.

He said, the All Party Students Unity was trying to divert the real situation through false statements and calling for strikes off and on. He said, the Shibir launched a new programme to realise its demands which include protest rally at university today and submission of memorandum to the authorities of the university on November 23.

## Khaleda

speaking on the occasion, the specialists from different professions said the report was not just an academic exercise but can be of great practical use in finding solution to the national problems through extensive debates.

The Task Force reports, published by the University Press Limited (UPL), will be available in the market for the public and concerned organisations.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing members of Task Force when they presented the report to her on Wednesday. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Zahir Uddin Khan, Minister for Planning were also present. —PID photo



Former Adviser Rehman Sobhan handing over the Task Force report to the Leader of the Opposition and AL chief Sheikh Hasina Wednesday. —Star photo

## Govt won't change retirement rules

Government has decided against making any changes in the rules of retirement from government service in the wake of persistent reports on possible extension of superannuations. UNB reliably learnt Wednesday.

It has been widely circulated in the government circles that extension of retirement age from the present 57 or at least dispensing with the provision of one year's leave before actual retirement were under consideration.

The move to include one year's LPR period into active service was also reported to have got the support of some donor agencies which have been pressing for reduction in the revenue expenditure, an official source said.

After careful consideration

of the proposals, top policy makers have reportedly decided to allow four senior bureaucrats to go on LPR in the next two and half months on the dates they will attain the age of 57.

Widening the scope of vertical mobility and infusing new blood in the high career jobs have also prompted the government in taking the decision, the source said.

However, in a bid to bring down the revenue expenditure the BNP government is actively considering closing down some government directorates and merging those which have overlapping functions.

There is also move for disinvesting large government sectors to cut down the establishment cost.

## Foreign consultants

under-construction storm sewer being built, burst open on November 13.

A group of about 20 workers was working at the site at the time of the accident.

The investigation report also pointed out that no protective measures were taken along the southern side of the drainage channel being dug up similar to the iron-sheet piling placed on the northern side to protect the road, the WASA official said.

The report further said that local protective methods of bamboo-piling and sand-bags could have been used as the construction company said that iron-sheet piling could not be placed on the other side because of building foundations nearby.

The slope dug up on the southern side of the channel exposed the existing sewerage line and did not even have adequate protection underneath it, the investigation report noted.

Furthermore, the report pointed out, the building owners also complained to WASA officials when the iron-sheet piling was done on the opposite side as most of the buildings vibrated heavily during the piling.

Building owners along the southern side told this correspondent that all buildings vibrated "as during an earthquake" during the piling work.

The owner of the six-storey building located at 69-B Panthapath filed separate lawsuits against WASA and the foreign consultant company, the WASA official said.

The investigation report also pointed out that work at the site should have been stopped when a leakage in the sewerage line was detected. Besides, the existing sewerage line should have been diverted earlier as a protection measure.

The report also found that the site engineers of the project implementing company did not provide adequate supervision during the earth-work at the site.

The investigation report recommended issuance of a warning to all project implementing companies to ensure full safety measures for life and

property at construction sites and that they would be liable for any consequences, the WASA official added.

Meanwhile, arrangements are being made by WASA to provide adequate compensation to the family of the victim by the foreign company. The body of the victim was earlier sent to his village home in Pirojpur at the expense of the company, the official said.

Meanwhile, all shops along the southern side of the channel have remained closed since the accident and residents of the six-storey building have not yet returned since being evacuated by the fire department.

Construction work at the site continues as the damaged sewerage line has been repaired and the water drained off of the channel.

The 800 metre long channel from the Begunbari Jheel to the corner of Green Road is part of a Taka 68.45 crore project which also includes setting up of a pump station, re-excavating part of a canal in Kallyanpur and building a culvert at Mirpur road.

Local input in the project is about Taka 18 crore while the other Taka 50 crore is being provided under Japanese government grant assistance, the WASA official said.

The total project is being implemented on a turn-key basis by the Obayashi Corporation, a Japanese general contractor. It has also engaged the services of Pacific Consultants International, a local sub-contractor involved in the earth-work at the site.

## Judgement

From Page 1 Col. 5 rounds of argument said, open balloting was an infringement on the rights of the MP's elected by secret ballot. The open voting system can not be free and fair.

He further said that open ballot as provided in the act destroyed the very concept of the election, and democracy could not be established without secret voting system.

Amir-ul Islam and Zakir Ahmed appeared on behalf of the petitioner. The Attorney General, Aminul Haq, the Deputy Attorney General, Hasan Arif, and the Assistant Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mostafa, appeared for the state.

## Mujahideen, Soviet accord a basis for solution, says Rabbani

ISLAMABAD, Nov 20: Afghan Mujahideen leader Burhanuddin Rabbani said today an accord agreed between the Mujahideen and the Soviet government could form the basis for a political settlement of the Afghan conflict, reports Reuters.

"The results and consequences of the negotiations indicate very well and very clearly that the content of the agreement will be the base for moving forward" Rabbani told reporters.

In Moscow last week, a

Mujahideen delegation led by Rabbani promised to release some of the 60 to 80 Soviet prisoners they still hold nearly three years after Soviet troops pulled out.

In return the Soviet Union acknowledged its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan was wrong, pledged to withdraw its last advisers and accepted the idea of an "Islamic" interim government.

Rabbani told a news conference the talks were very positive and a joint commission the two sides agreed to form

to continue negotiations would probably meet in Pakistan within a month.

But the Jamiat-i-Islami leader, who arrived back in Pakistan from Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, said the Mujahideen would carry on fighting while any remnant of the former communist government remained in Kabul.

Rabbani said his delegation told Soviet officials they would not talk to Afghan President Najibullah or those close to him.

But a Mujahideen source at the talks said later that they believed that apart from "Najibullah and a handful of criminals" they could talk to other people in Kabul.

"The Russians agreed and told us that an Islamic government based on the will of the Afghan people is a reality which no one can deny now," Rabbani said.

"The Soviets have realised the changing realities of the world and Afghanistan and we hope they will remain firm to what they have committed."

## Garments

From Page 1 Col. 4

of garment factories and seeking better wages. They had also planned to submit a memorandum to the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina.

The agitating demonstrators started pelting stones when police blocked their way towards the Beximco office.

Police lobbed tear gas shells to control the stone-throwing workers during the clash which continued for about an hour, witnesses added.

Earlier, the processionists attacked and clashed with the workers of a garment factory at Kataban who refused to join them, they also clashed with the members of the public near Bata crossing while moving towards Dhanmondi.

Later, the garment workers staged a huge rally, as more workers joined them, at the Science Laboratory Intersection blocking traffic for two hours.

The rally, presided over by Alam Raza gave a December 1 deadline to the owners and the government to meet their five-point demands.

Meanwhile, Garments Sramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad held a rally near the Secretariat gate with its President Khurshid Alam in the chair to press home their demands of pay hike and reopening of closed factories.

After the rally, Otkya Parishad members handed over a memorandum to the Labour Minister, demanding solution to the problems faced by garment industry workers.

The Combined Garments Workers Front also held a separate rally near the Secretariat in protest against the "anarchy" created by certain quarters in country's garment sector.

Presided over by Front Secretary Harunur Rashid the rally demanded punishment for those creating "anarchy" in this sector.

## FM's visit

From Page 1 Col. 5

including economic cooperation.

He said Dhaka's ties with Rangoon were age-old and the two nations were bound by many a common heritage and good neighbourliness.

He said "certain number" of Muslim refugees from Myanmar had crossed into Bangladesh in recent times and he had told the last session of parliament that he would undertake a visit to Rangoon so that the issue could be resolved through discussions.

Rahman recalled that he had visited Burma in the capacity of Home Minister in 1978 when a similar problem had cropped up and the matter was resolved in a spirit of friendship.

The number of refugees was small initially but it appears that it was building up warranting a negotiation between the two countries on the issue, he said.

## Nuclear power

From Page 1 Col. 4

Development of peat resources may cause disturbance of land use patterns (lowering of depth due to peat extraction), possibility of flow of saline water in peat extraction zone and air pollution due to burning of peat and disposal of ash.

Oil development may cause change in land use around the exploration sites, water and air pollution due to discharge of liquid effluents, water pollution due to leakage of oil during transport. Discharge of waste water from oil tankers are different environmental factors. Besides lead based gasoline, and release of sulfur oxides may also cause environmental hazards.

Though natural gas has not that much impact on environment, discharge of liquid effluents from the exploration sites may cause some problems, along with impacts from condensate recovery and dehydration plants.

Hydro electric plant has the greatest impact on environment including drastic changes in land use pattern and local ecosystem. Physical displacement of local population and permanent loss of their livelihood are the major impacts of hydro electric projects. Moreover improper management of watershed

causes rapid siltation of reservoir, which affects the designed life of the project.

Thermal plants also cause air pollution due to release of combustion gases and discharge of warm cooling water of power plants besides their waste (e.g. ash). Most of the thermal power stations use natural gas as the major fuel. Though discharge of polluting gas and ash is not important, but these factors are to be considered for coal based power generation.

The wood fuel as source of energy is causing a great harm. Extraction of tree resources beyond sustainable limit is causing deforestation which in turn is adversely affecting sustainable agricultural system and soil quality. This phenomenon is not only a matter of concern in Bangladesh but to the whole world.

Use of agricultural residue as source of fuel instead of recycling them back to land, is affecting soil quality (reduction of organic matter content) and thereby affecting sustainable agricultural production. Use of animal dung as fuel deprives the soil from good quality organic manure.

Manzur Morshed said that adequate safety measures could make the nuclear power as one of the most harmless sustainable sources of energy.

## Shop owners

From Page 1 Col. 4 pressed their resentment at the government announcement of the anti-smuggling drive which they said, tagged them as smugglers.

Helaluddin Helal, convener of a platform of some 20,000 shop owners in the city, said the 'large-scale labelling had tarnished their image as honest businessmen and tax payers.

He said "We are against smuggling which has crippled the country's economy... but such a drive also entails harassment to many innocent traders and causes considerable damage to their properties."

"You know how the contraband commodities enter the country and under whose auspices", he commented.

A leader of the shop owners association said that they did not own any seaport or airport in the country, through which smuggled goods came in.

He pointed out that the government monitoring banned items should be intensified at the country's entry points because those goods have a very high demands among the consumers.

He said that the government should have formulated a well-defined policy earlier after talks with the business community.

A saree trader at Mouchak Market said police and customs officials also seize legal and country-made goods during their searches and ask them (traders) to get those released from the court.

"It is an unnecessary botheration to release the items produced in the country," he said.

Sufia Akhter came to a city market to do a bit of shopping to avail the reduction.

"But most of the new Indian cotton sarees have disappeared from the markets and have been replaced by older ones," she said.

A saree trader, however, confessed that the reduction offer was a hoax. "Because these items were in ware-

## The Midnight File

## Jameel discusses SAARC summit with Rao

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The Maldives Foreign Minister Fataullah Jameel today called on the Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, and the External Affairs Minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, and discussed new dates for holding the postponed SAARC summit in Colombo, reports PTI.

## Iran to be link between rich, poor

TEHRAN, Nov 20: Iran hopes to become a link between the Third World and industrialised states, a senior diplomat told a conference on developing nations here today. "We can be a bridge between rich and poor, to serve as an example for the latter, as we have overcome economic difficulties despite eight years of war," the Secretary General of the group of 77 ministerial meeting, Cyrus Nasseri said, reports AFP.

## Train derails in Mexico: 60 killed

MEXICO, Nov 20: A freight train derailed while speeding around a curve Tuesday and plowed across a busy highway here, killing at least 60 people and injuring 40, a Red Cross official said. The death toll was expected to rise as rescue workers continued to comb through the wreckage, said Alma Martinez, spokeswoman for the local Red Cross, reports AFP.

## Five killed in Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD, Nov 20: At least five people were killed and 13 injured when police fired on demonstrators in a Kashmiri town today, official sources said. The injured were admitted to hospital and four of them had seriously bullet wounds, the sources said, reports AFP.

## Shake-up in Soviet diplomatic corps

MOSCOW, Nov 20: President Mikhail Gorbachev has replaced the Soviet ambassadors to the European Community, France, Britain and five other countries, Tass news agency said on Tuesday. The shake-up in the Kremlin's diplomatic corps had long been expected. Soviet newspapers had accused several prominent ambassadors of having supported the abortive right-wing coup against Gorbachev in August, reports Reuters.

## Armed Forces Day

From Page 1 Col. 8 latest Middle-East crisis.

The President also pointed out that the role of the Armed Forces during the country's anti-autocracy movement and the holding of the free and fair elections and to establish a democratic government had also been highly acclaimed by the people.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said the country's Armed Forces, formed in the War of Independence, stood as the symbol of nation's sovereignty and solidarity. She said the members of Armed Forces had earned the confidence and love of the people because of their patriotism, sacrifices and service.

The contribution of the Armed Forces to the present democratic constitutional and development process was undeniable, she said.

Begum Zia said imbued with the supreme sacrifice, the country's Armed Forces had also played a glorious role in keeping peace and stability in the international arena. She said the country's image abroad had been brightened, especially its existing brotherhood with the Islamic Ummah had been strengthened, because of the participation of the members of Armed Forces in the UN peace keeping missions, protecting the holy land of Saudi Arabia during the Gulf crisis and rehabilitation work of war-ravaged Kuwait.

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and Bangladesh Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a message said the Armed Forces was a unique symbol of our national pride and they played responsible role during cyclone, tidal surges and national calamities. She also prayed for continued prosperity of national Armed Forces and wished that it be built as a disciplined modern force.

A reception to the next of kin of Shaheed, Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir, Bir Shrestho and Shaheed Sepoy Md. Mostafa Kamal, Bir Shrestho and Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Bir Shrestho, will be held at the Army Headquarters.

A similar reception to the next of kin of Shaheed Md. Ruhul Amin, ERA-1, Bir Shrestho, will be held at the Naval Headquarters while simi-

lar reception will be given to the next of kin of Shaheed Lieutenant M. Mattur Rahman, at the Air Headquarters.

A grand display of military hardware will highlight the day's programme. Begum Zia will inaugurate the grand exhibition at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. The exhibition will remain open for the members of the public from 1 pm to 5 pm today from 8 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5 pm tomorrow (Friday) and from 8 am to 5 pm on Saturday.

A number of naval ships will also be kept open for visitors in Chittagong, Khulna, Sadarghat in Dhaka, Pargalhat at Narayanpur and Barisal.

A reception will be held in the evening at the Sena Kunja at the Dhaka Cantonment. Begum Zia, ministers, diplomats and other high civil and military dignitaries will attend the reception. Receptions will also be held at Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore, Bogra and Rangpur cantonments.

A special programme illustrating the significance of the day, has been arranged in the Bangladesh Television to be telecast at 9 pm today.

## Lawyers

From Page 1 Col. 8 lawyers Coordination Council.

The leaders of Lawyers Concern will also observe 'Resistance Day' all over the country in protest against "corruption in the courts" today (Thursday).

They submit memorandum to the President of Dhaka Lawyers Association and the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at 11 am and 12 noon respectively.

They will also hold protest rallies and distribute handouts to make their programme successful.

## Shevardnadze to help resolve internal disputes

MOSCOW, Nov 20: Eduard Shevardnadze said today that his first priority in a second stint as Soviet Foreign Minister would be to help resolve internal disputes and preserve the stability of the Soviet Union, the unofficial news agency Interfax reported, says AFP.

## Second President

See Page 12 Col. 7

Chea Sim, who heads the ruling People's Party of Cambodia.

The Foreign Minister told reporters that the decision was made without consulting two of the country's four factions in the Khmer Rouge, which earlier announced its electoral support for Sihanouk, and the non-Communist Khmer People's National Liberation Front, KPRLF leader Son Sann is due to arrive in Phnom Penh on Thursday.

The announcement was another clear step in cementing the union between Sihanouk, who as council chairman is supposed to remain neutral, and the Phnom Penh government.

The two have forged a de facto alliance and have denounced the Khmer Rouge and the KPRLF.

"The absolute legal and legitimate position as head of state of Prince Norodom Sihanouk will remain valid from now on until the holding in 1993 of free, fair and equitable presidential elec-

tions in Cambodia," a government statement said.

Foreign Minister Nor Nam Hong, who made the announcement, left open the possibility that Sihanouk could again become king, a position he abdicated in 1955.

"It depends on the Prince himself," he said. "For the time being we have not elaborated in detail his exact power and status."

The statement said the Phnom Penh government and the People's Party of Cambodia were determined to create favorable conditions for Sihanouk "to accomplish his royal mission of national reconciliation and national reconstruction."

It called on everyone to vote for Sihanouk in the 1993 elections "so that he can provide a long-lasting protection for his children."

Sihanouk, 69, served as president until his overthrow by rightists in a US backed 1970 coup. Nor Nam Hong on Wednesday denounced the coup as illegal.