

Moudud, Swapan and Litu co-accused

Ershad directed Rajuk to allot plot for Rajanigandha

A special court yesterday charged former President HM Ershad and three others of misusing official position and working in collusion with each other to lease out 3.82 acres of DIT (currently Rajuk) commercial plot at Shahbagh area causing the statutory body an income loss of nearly Taka 13.5 crore, reports BSS.

Senior Special and Sessions Judge Nasruddin Ahmed further charged that by their acts, the accused persons had deprived DIT an earning of Taka 13,40,43,637.97 and enabled International Hotel Holdings Limited to have illegal benefits thereby committed offence under Section 5 (2) of the Prevention of the Corruption Act of 1947.

The other accused persons are former Vice President Moudud Ahmed, former Works Minister Shaiful Ghani Swapan and Managing Director of International Hotel Holdings Limited Abul Khair Litu. International Hotel Holdings Limited is the owner of Rajanigandha Holiday Inn.

While the first three accused persons (Ershad, Moudud and Swapan) were charged of disregarding and violating government and DIT rules in leasing out the plot, Abul Khair Litu was charged of receiving illegal financial bene-

fit because of his collusion with the deal.

Special Judge Nasruddin Ahmed while reading out the charges said Moudud Ahmed while in charge of the Ministry of Industries by misusing his official position recommended for allotment of Rajuk (former DIT) commercial land violating the standing rule of disposal of such land through public auction.

The Judge charged the former President Ershad, knowing fully that the whole matter was illegal and beyond his official capacity, directed DIT to allot the particular land on the same date that Moudud Ahmed had made the recommendations.

It was further charged that the then Works Minister Shaiful Ghani Swapan knowing fully that the matter was against the existing rules, directed the Rajuk (former DIT) authorities to make the allotment with a mention that he had discussions with the President (Ershad) on the matter.

The charge said though DIT determined the price of that land at Taka 1.5 crore per bigha back in 1985, the then Chairman of DIT knowing fully that it would fetch higher prices if public auction was held; gave his consent to allo-

cate the land at the rate of Taka one crore per bigha in 1987 without the approval of the Board of Trustee (DIT).

Of the Taka 13,40,43,637.97 that DIT lost in the deal Taka 5,77,70,429 was on account of land price and Taka 7,62,66,207.97 as interest (for paying the land price in 12 equal installments without interest).

Earlier as the court went into session at about half past ten in the morning, senior Special Judge Nasruddin Ahmed said it seemed to him that the charges could be framed against the accused persons.

After reading out the three-page charge, the Judge asked the accused persons of their opinion in the charge. The accused persons one after another stated that they are innocent. However, Moudud Ahmed, who is the second accused before claiming himself innocent, commented that the allegations against him were not factually correct.

The Judge fixed four days in late April as the dates for testimony of 20 prosecution witnesses. He mentioned that deposition of four PWs would start on April 18. Prosecution sources said most of the PWs are employees of Rajuk.



A child presenting a bouquet to the Prime Minister on her arrival at the Heathrow Airport in London Monday. — PID photo

GCO activist

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Later, at around 2pm another clash ensued between rival GCO and Shibir activists when a large group of Shibir men attacked three residential halls in the campus.

At least 70 rooms in the three halls, belonging to GCO activists were ransacked and set on fire during the Shibir attack, witnesses added.

UNB adds: Shibir activists stormed and occupied Ameer Ali, Shah Makhdom and Latif halls and entrenched in battle positions while the rest of the campus reportedly remained under GCO control.

Witnesses said the trouble started in the court area in the city at around 11.50 am with GCO activists fighting pitched battles with police.

Forming a "human chain", the GCO activists went to the court to demonstrate against hearing of a Shibir leader's murder case in which 60 students have been accused.

The last hearing of the Shaiful murder case, scheduled for today, was postponed in view of the tension. A lawyer in the case said the hearing was kept in abeyance following an instruction from the Home Ministry.

After holding a protest rally against the police action in the court area, the demonstrators returned to the campus, where a clash ensued again between them and police on duty in the Senate Bhaban area at about 1 pm.

Shibir supporters, who were already in procession in the campus, retreated as police and GCO activists started chasing each other, sources

said.
Police fired guns and tear gas shells to quell the flareup. Pitu and seven others got bullets at that time.

GCO leaders, however, claimed Pitu was shot at by the retreating Shibir men.
More than 50 shots and tear gas shells were said to have been fired by police.

Angry protesters reportedly burnt a police tent near the VC's residence and also set ablaze a motor-cycle there.

Earlier, while returning from the court, the demonstrators allegedly set fire to two jeeps of aid agencies in Kazhaha and court areas.
They also reportedly stoned the Jiban Bima Bhaban at Kazhaha.

GCO strike

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Club at about 11 am.

Addressing the rally GCO leaders Noor Ahmed Bakul, Shafi Ahmed, Razekuzzaman Ratan, Abdus Sattar Khan, Udaya Pal and Mohsin Sarker said that the alleged killers of Raju were still staying in the residential halls of the DU and moving in front of the police. But the police were silent, the GCO leaders added.

The leaders alleged that the motive behind Raju's killing was to foil the planned public trial of Golam Azam.

But the GCO leaders said that the movement against all who opposed our independence in 1971, has been geared up through the sacrifice of Raju.

PM too busy to receive Ph D in person

Star Report

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has regretted to receive in person an honorary doctorate degree conferred on her by the University of Boston, USA for her outstanding political achievement.

The university decision was communicated to the authorities in Dhaka earlier this month so that the ceremony could be included in Khaleda Zia's itinerary. The Prime Minister, Foreign Office sources say, could not agree to the proposal because of her busy schedule in the USA.

Begum Zia is now in Washington on a five-day state visit to the United States of America.

BDR-BSF meet in Khulna today

KHULNA, Mar 17: A two-day border coordination meeting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Forces (BSF) of India begins here tomorrow, BDR sources told BSS today, reports BSS.

Deputy Director General of BDR Brig Iftikharul Bashar will lead the 10-member Bangladesh team and the 10-member Indian side will be led by Additional Director General of BSF (West Bengal and Tripura region) Brig Sanker Sen. BSS added.

The Midnight File

Hussein, Arafat agree on confederation

WASHINGTON, Mar 17: In a dramatic bid to boost the chances of success of the West Asia Peace Talks, King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Liberation Organization Chairman, have agreed on a confederation of Jordan and Palestine subject to the approval of the PLO Central Council, reports here said. But a member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, Sach Erakat, called the proposal "premature" at a press conference yesterday in East Jerusalem, reports PTI.

Hardliners barred from meeting in Moscow

MOSCOW, Mar 17: Communist die-hards wanting to revive the Soviet Union called a session of the defunct Soviet parliament today but were forced to move the meeting out of Moscow. The organisers of the so-called sixth extraordinary congress of people's deputies — until last year the Soviet Union's supreme legislative body — shifted their meeting to Podolsk, 40 km (25 miles) south of the capital. Several hundred demonstrators chanting "Soviet Union" and carrying banners denouncing Russian President Boris Yeltsin, reports Reuter.

JRC meet

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Farakka.
Bangladesh, sources say, has definitive proofs to believe that India is diverting water from the Ganges upstream affecting the flow at Farakka. Though the Indian side agrees to such proposals verbally it fails to reciprocate when it comes to brass tacks, sources said.

Diplomatic sources say India is trying to shift the date of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's visit to India until the lean period is either over or nearing an end. This would, sources say, allow India to buy more time and give a false hope assuring Bangladesh of a normal flow during the lean period of 1993.

Observers say, keeping in view the Indian attitude Bangladesh should prepare for internationalising the issue. They argue, there are many international agencies especially the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that are negotiating bilateral water problems.

UNEP, they say, has already taken up the issue of water sharing of Chad Lake and the Nile river and these problems are similar to that existing between Bangladesh and India.

DUTA

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mittee are Dr S M A Faiz, Prof Saidur Rahman, Prof Md Masihuzzaman, Prof K A M Saduddin and Prof Mansur Musa.
The DUTA meeting also urged the University authorities to apply the laws of the University strictly on armed hooligans, terrorists and law-breakers on campus.

The meeting called upon the authorities to prepare an occupancy list for the residential halls of the University.
The DUTA leaders demanded expulsion of all terrorists from the campus.

It was the main duty of the government to curb terrorism, the DUTA meeting felt, and observed that the leading political parties including the opposition had failed to play their necessary roles in eradicating terrorism.

The DUTA expressed its deep condolence at Moin Hossain Raju's death.
Raju was killed on the Dhaka University campus Friday.

The DUTA meeting was participated by Prof Khodaadad Khan, Dr Enamul Huq, Dr T II Khan, Dr Mustafa Chowdhury, Dr Azad Chowdhury and Dr Saiful Islam.

World Cup

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New Zealand's unbated side are desperate to win a match they'd be better off losing when they play Pakistan at Lancaster park, Christchurch.
New Zealand, co-hosts of the fifth World Cup with Australia, have a perfect record with seven wins in the tournament so far and can not be overhauled at the top of the table.

If Pakistan wins, they can take the fourth semifinal spot, as long as Australia beat the West Indies in Melbourne later Wednesday.
The West Indies will make the semifinals as long as they win, while Australia need a Pakistan loss and a convincing victory to advance.

To sneak into fourth, Australia would need to beat the West Indies by at least 33 runs of batting first or with more than seven overs to spare if batting second.
If successful, the Australians would force New Zealand away from their homeland for a semifinal at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday. If Pakistan or the West Indies are the fourth team, New Zealand get to play their semifinal in Auckland on Saturday.

The match with no bearing on the finals pits England against winless Zimbabwe at the Lavinton Sports Club in Albury, Australia.

The forum called upon all concerned to be respectful to rule of law in the interest of giving democracy and institutional shape.
The press release was signed by Justice T H Khan and Abdul Wadud Khondker, Convener and Member Secretary of the forum respectively.

Fierce fighting in Lanka : 126 killed

COLOMBO, Mar 17: A government news agency reported 100 Tamil rebels and 26 soldiers were killed Tuesday in a military offensive in the jungles of northern Sri Lanka, reports AP.

The Lankapuvath news agency report could not be independently confirmed and there was no word from the Tamil Tiger rebels on the fighting in the inaccessible Welioya jungles.

Both sides have in the past exaggerated casualty figures in the ethnic war being waged by Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

More than 17,000 people have been killed since 1983 when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam started fighting the Sinhalese government to set up an independent Tamil

nation in the north and the east.

Lankapuvath said at least 80 soldiers and 200 rebels were injured in the fighting. The area is 250 kilometers (155 miles) northeast of Colombo.

A military official said earlier Tuesday that about 3,000 soldiers backed by bomber aircraft, tanks and artillery advanced into the jungles in Mullaivittu district.

The guerrillas fired mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and automatic rifles, said the official who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

Authorities imposed an indefinite curfew in Mullaivittu and three other northern districts to prevent the militants from sending reinforcements to Welioya.

Autocracy yet to go

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anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Central leaders of AL also addressed the meeting.

The inefficiency of the government has led the country towards a total uncertainty, Sheikh Hasina said adding that AL was always ready to cooperate with the government in ruling the country. But the government has failed to accept due to its autocratic attitude, she added.

Opposing the comments often passed by some quarters that the fall of BNP government would be followed by the fall of democracy, the AL leader said it cannot be accepted that the existence of democracy was dependent on the existence of a particular party in power.

"Such comments hints of a conspiracy", she said adding that the Awami League will not be responsible if the BNP government again invites the armed forces to take over the power to cover its failure like former President Sattar.

The AL leader blamed the government for rehabilitating the killers of 'Bangabandhu' and the anti-liberation elements both socially and politically and said the nation would not get the taste of emancipation as long as the killers moved freely on this land.

"We have fulfilled our commitment to the people by establishing the parliamentary democracy," she said adding that the AL was now working out for introducing a new economic policy of the party in accordance with the changed socio-political scenario of the world.

Referring to the continued deterioration of the law and order situation in the country the Opposition leader said that the killing and hijacking had now become a regular feature.

She also accused the ruling party of patronising the mis-

creants involved in aggravating the situation.

Awami League will not remain silent in this situation, she said adding that the 'self-confessed' killers of Bangabandhu and war criminals must be punished for the sake of democracy and rule of law.

The indirect killers of 'Bangabandhu' were yet to be identified, Sheikh Hasina noted and called upon all to pledge for prosecuting both the war criminals and killers of Bangabandhu to ensure rule of law and for an exploitation-free society.

AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad MP, Abdul Mannan MP, Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Abdur Razzak MP, Tofael Ahmed MP, Matia Chowdhury MP, Mohammad Nasim MP, Amir Hossain Anu MP and Abdul Jalil MP addressed the discussion meeting among others.

BSS adds: Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon all concerned to uphold the correct history of the Bengali nation to the people.

Sheikh Hasina alleged that national history was being distorted in a planned way and the history of Liberation War was being presented to the children and the youths in an incorrect manner.

She was speaking as the chief guest at a children's rally and discussion on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman held in observance of his 72nd birth anniversary in front of Bangabandhu Bhaban here, organised by Bangabandhu Parishad.

Presided over by poet Begum Sufia Kamal the rally was also addressed by the Chairman of Bangabandhu Parishad Dr. MA Malek, Prof Abu Sayeed and Mrs Ferdousi Majumder. Deputy leader of the opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Abdus Samad Azad and Justice K M Sobhan were present.

Tk 1.38 lakh robbed

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons were robbed of Tk 1,38,000 in two separate incidents within two hours in the morning of Tuesday at Mohammadpur Satmasjid Road in the city.

A group of snatchers took Feroze Hossain, a kerosin oil dealer, to a microbus parked near the Satmasjid Road branch of Sonali Bank at about 9 am and snatched away Tk 1,38,000 from him. Feroze was on his way to the bank to deposit the money.

In a separate incident, another group of snatchers robbed Tk 8,000 from Hajj Solaiman at about 11 am on the same spot.

Jute workers

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sufficient evidence that the accused has not committed the offence.

The PSKSP in a bid to organise the jute workers, will hold 'gate meetings' in all the 69 jute mills of the country next Tuesday.

Eight out of a total of 77 jute mills of the country, however, are presently facing closure for different reasons.

The convention of the jute sector leaders yesterday was critical for the government for its capitulation to the World Bank and IMF suggestions for disinvestment in the jute sector. Shah Alam, a Joint Convener of the PSKSP and leader of the Jatiya Sramik Federation, while talking to The Daily Star yesterday maintained that gross disinvestment in the jute sector was not the 'real solution' to the present sickness of the jute industries.

The jute mills already transferred to the private sector are not running profitably, he argued.

Replying to a question, Shah Alam said that the Government must give adequate subsidy to keep this foreign exchange earning sector in operation.

In this regard Shah Alam, citing the Indian example, said, The Indian Government gives subsidy to the jute sector at the rate of 15 per cent of the cost of production to ensure that one of the country's most important foreign exchange earning sector runs smoothly.

Shah Alam, however, admitted that the jute sector was overburdened with workers which was a major obstacle in running the industries profitably.

In this regard, he said different governments in the past deliberately pushed a section of jute sector workers to sabotage the 'genuine' movement of the 'real' workers. The jute sector should be relieved of this burden", he said, adding, The jute industries should also get rid of the surplus officers proportionately with the workers.

Bangabandhu

From Page 1 Col 4

Bangabandhu Parishad held a children's art exhibition at Bangabandhu Bhaban and a children's rally at Manik Miah Avenue.

Bangabandhu Shilpi Gosthi also garlanded the portrait of Mujib and held a discussion meeting.

Joy Bangla Sangkritik Oikyo Jote also observed the day with similar programmes.



Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, acting chief of the Jatiya Party, speaking at the party's extended meeting at Gulshan yesterday. — Star photo

Disunity in Jatiya Party

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example.

They charged the party leaders with forming local committees from Dhaka according to their personal choice.

"This practice does not reflect the proper situation of the party there", a delegate from Patuakhali said.

Another district leader said that some of the party leaders were still roaming around the Bangabhaban for an opportune moment. They should be cut off from the party, he demanded.

They also said that the communication gap between the central and district leaders was creating many problems in the party.

The district leaders emphasised the need for unity among the central leaders as well as the district-level leaders. Otherwise the party may have to face dire consequences, they added.

Former Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Former Vice-President Moudud Ahmed, former Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, and a number of former ministers including Anwar Hossain Manju, Maj. Gen (ret'd) Shamsul Huq, Alhaj Reazuddin Ahmed Bhola Mian, Syeda Razia Foyez, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Anisul Islam Mahmud, Sunil Gupta, and Dr. Azizur Rahman were present at the meeting.

Nearly 400 former MPs, upazila chairman, district com-

mittee presidents and secretaries, representatives from 75 wards, Jubo Sanghati, Jatiya Sramik Party, Mahila Party, Sangrami Chattrra Samaj and Krishak Party were also present at the meeting.

Acting JP Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said that the JP was now passing through a critical situation.

"We have to be more united than ever to face any sort of repression by the government and its agents," he said adding "The repression started from Sunday night with the arrest of city unit president Maj Gen (Ret'd) Mahmudul Hassan and one of our vice-presidents Momota Wahab.

Referring to the present law and order situation, he said that anarchy was prevailing in the country.

He also said that this government had totally failed in tackling the Rohingya crisis.

Shah Moazzem Hossain said that after its political victory in Sayadabad when its rally was failed following a clash on February 29, the JP had called the extended meeting to make its April 30 programme a success.

On that day (April 30), he said, thousands of JP workers would court arrest to free their leader HM Ershad.

He cautioned the district leaders not to say anything that may help some newspaper's making 'box items' about the party and its leadership.

Shah Moazzem said that the

JP is a family and that Ershad is its leader.

There may be some differences of opinion within a family but it will be narrowed down through discussions", he said adding that any kind of disunity would strengthen the hands of the enemies. The meeting was adjourned until 10 am today (Wednesday).

JP evicted from office in Pabna

PABNA, Mar 17: Police today evicted the district unit of Jatiya Party from its premises in the town following a government order, reports UNB.

The office was formally handed over to Abul Ahsan Gora, a local BNP leader.

Party sources alleged that they were evicted from the office, of which they were tenants for almost eight years, without being served any notice. They said the action was "undemocratic and illegal" and demanded immediate withdrawal of the order.

They also demanded Tk 10 lakh as compensation.

The Deputy Commissioner, however, denied the charge and said that a notice was served accordingly.
Jatiya Party warned that they will resort to greater movement if the issue was not resolved soon.