

Janata Tower case

'Ershad asked Rajuk to allot lands among the affected'

Defence lawyer of former President H M Ershad in a suggestion admitted that his client had directed allotment of Rajuk lands of Kawran Bazar among Sukkur Pradhan and others, all accused with the former General in the Janata Tower Case, reports BSS.

The former President ordered Rajuk authorities to allot them (Sukkur Pradhan and others) lands as affected persons (caused due to land acquisition), lawyer Khandakar Mahbub Hossain suggested to the prosecution witness Abdur Rahman Bhuiyan (P. W.) during cross examination in the Janata Tower Case held here yesterday at the Special Judge's court.

Former President Ershad, his wife Raushan Ershad and 18 others are accused in this case. Raushan Ershad, however, was not present in the court yesterday. Additional Session Judge and Special Judge Anwaruddin Sikder was the presiding judge.

When the defence lawyer asked the witness whether he was present when Ershad went to Kawran Bazar to enquire about the development of Ambar Shah Mosque and also met local people including persons affected due to land acquisition, he replied in the negative.

He also rejected a sugges-

tion that he was present when the Chairman of Rajuk told the former President that the area (Kawran Bazar) could not be developed because of litigations.

Prosecution witness denied the allegation that the second auction for the land in which the asking price was Taka 3 crore per bigha was fixed whimsically and with mala fide intention. PW said he was not aware of a defence suggestion that President Ershad after hearing the stories of Sukkur Pradhan and others assured them to consider their cases on humanitarian ground. The defence however did not mention when Ershad made the particular visit.

PW 10, Bhuiyan, who is Director Estate, Rajuk, during cross examination said Sukkur Pradhan and others were not given the land in question (Plot No 49 and 49A) although they were highest bidders because the price was not 'satisfactory' to the authorities. He denied cancelling the bid as officials including himself "were not satisfied by the parties". "I do not know how the bid was cancelled," he told the defence lawyer.

The witness agreed to a suggestion that after cancelling the 1985 auction bid, Rajuk (former DIT) decided to build a multi-storied commercial building on Plot 49 and 49A of

Kawran Bazar. He expressed his ignorance why fresh auction was called withholding the construction of the multi-storied building.

When the defence lawyer by showing a paper asked the witness to confirm whether he had allotted land to one Mir Hossain Akhtar and others on 16.4.89, Bhuiyan said he cannot comment without verifying the original for it was a photostat copy. He denied to have lied to the court.

The witness on several occasions replied that he was not in a position to answer defence queries without seeing records. In reply to a question, whether Sukkur Pradhan and others were certified as affected persons by L A (Land Acquisition) office, the witness said they were not the original affected persons. They succeeded in revising the award list and get themselves enlisted as affected persons by way of procuring papers from the original owners.

The court witnessed some hot exchange of words between the Attorney General and Khandakar Mahbub Hossain. However, the situation was brought to normal through the intervention of the judge. The cross examination remained incomplete when the court adjourned for the day to meet again today (Sunday).



A woman carrying her ailing husband on her way to Mirpur from Sadarghat during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

Hartal observed

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and two pressmen were also hurt during the baton-charge at about 11-40 am near the Awami League central office at the Bangabandhu Avenue, witnesses said.

Witnesses said that riot police swung into action as processionists pelted stones at them near the Nur Hossain Square near GPO at Gulistan.

Mohammad Nasim, MP, was caught amid the milling crowd during the police chase. He was beaten up by police in the narrow passage downstairs the AL central office.

Nasim was rescued in torn punjabi and sweater, witnesses said.

Among the injured, Nurul Islam and Shah Alam were sent to hospital with serious head injuries, they said.

But for the police action near the AL central office, the six-hour city wide shut down was observed more or less peacefully.

Awami League has planned another day-long hartal Wednesday across the country to protest the "conspiracy to manipulate the polls results" and to press for re-election at 18 polling centres in the Mirpur by-polls.

The Election Commission Thursday had announced the ruling BNP candidate Syed Mohammad Mohsin elected in the by-election against AL nominee Kamal Ahmed Majumder.

The Saturday's hartal was heralded with several cracker explosions and gunshots at 6 am in Motijheel, Malibagh, Farmgate and Mirpur areas in the city.

Heavy police contingents and para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) were deployed at important city intersections and government offices.

Except for the kitchen markets, educational institutions, shops, banks, and business houses in the city re-

Student bodies condemn killings at RU

By DU Correspondent

Different student organisations yesterday condemned the killing and terrorist activities on the Rajshahi University campus.

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) in a statement said that the anti-liberation forces again had launched an armed attack on the Rajshahi University campus.

The GCO demanded ban on Jamaat-Shibir politics in the country.

It also demanded immediate arrest and trial of the killers and urged all to stand against the communal forces.

The JSD (Inu) backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in another statement yesterday condemned the killing and terrorist activities of the Shibir at the Rajshahi University.

The BCL (B-K) president Ruhul Quddus Babu and general secretary Abdullahi Quiyum in a joint statement demanded arrest of the killers and urged the government to take necessary steps for proper treatment of the students injured seriously in the violence.

Meanwhile, the Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) president Belal Chowdhury and general secretary Razequz-aman Ratan in a joint statement yesterday also condemned the 'killing and armed attack of the Jamaat-Shibir' at the Rajshahi University.

The SCF leaders alleged that the government did not take any step against the terrorists on the Rajshahi University campus despite repeated demands from various quarters for a long time.

Zardari

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release earlier in the day by setting dhrs 20,000 bail. He has been cleared of nine of the original 12 counts, but still faces trial on charges of kidnapping, extortion and illegal possession of weapons.

Zardari did not attend the hearing, which lasted less than five minutes, because he has been hospitalized for back problems. Six hours later, he walked out of the hospital and returned to Landi jail in central Karachi to collect his belongings and say good-bye to prisoners.

"It's been hell on earth," Zardari told reporters outside the hospital. "You learn a lot about yourself in solitary confinement."

Hasina

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ample," Hasina said.

The opposition leader said if the present "neo-autocratic" government thought that they would be able to rule the nation by ignoring the popular verdict, it is living in fool's paradise.

Yesterday spontaneous hartal demonstrated that democracy loving people are determined to frustrate any conspiracy or design of the neo-autocracy, she said.

Hasina thanked the people for observing about hartal in the capital against the declaration of the ruling party candidate elected in Mirpur seat through media coup.

She condemned the police attack on leaders and workers of her party including Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya at the entrance of the Awami League central office during hartal hours yesterday.

The Awami League chief also censured the government for arresting her party workers without warrants from different parts of the city late Friday night and demanded their unconditional release.

RU clash

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students creating panic around the administrative building. It was a pre-planned attack after last week's tension on the campus generated from the Rajshahi Government College, some 8 kms away from here, where ICS and All-Party Students Unity fought pitched battles last month, rival groups alleged.

Gathering support from other components of the alliance, the JCD activists chased off the Shibir activists, who fled from the area and attacked Shah Mokhdum Hall, a stronghold of JSD (Inu)-backed BCL (B-K) and Sher-e-Bangla and Madaraboksh Halls, strongholds of JCD.

The Shibir activists ransacked scores of rooms in the

Shiv Sena party leader held

NEW DELHI, Feb 6: Police on Saturday arrested a Hindu lawmaker whose party is believed to have instigated religious riots that killed at least 600 people, most of them Muslims, in Bombay last month, a news agency reported, says AP.

Madhukar Sarpotdar, a leader of the Shiv Sena party, was arrested from his home in Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, United News of India reported. Sarpotdar is the first senior member of the party to be arrested since the rioting.

The Shiv Sena, a fundamentalist Hindu party, has large influence in Bombay, the capital of Maharashtra state. Sarpotdar is a member of the state legislature where the Shiv Sena is in opposition.

United News did not give details of his arrest.

Bid to steal case records of Ershad: 1 held

Gulam Mostafa Babul, arrested on charge of attempt to steal or destroy a special tribunal case record of deposed President H M Ershad, has been placed under detention under the Special Powers Act, reports UNB.

Accused Babul of 51/1 Mellartek in Uttara thana allegedly entered the room of the Attorney General without permission on February 3 and tried to steal a special case record no 11/92.

Assistant Sub-inspector of Police of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption Amirul Islam filed the case against Babul. Islam was in charge of the record room situated near the central jail where the trial of Ershad is in progress.

Aftara Begum, the wife of Babul, is the co-accused of the special tribunal case in which Ershad is the principal accused. Babul was produced before the CMM court yesterday after a one-day police remand.

The court rejected his bail prayer and sent him to the central jail.

Free election

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ballotting," he said adding, "now it has been proven that free elections under the present government have also become impossible."

Nasim, also Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament, charged the ruling party activists and policemen of harassing the AL leaders and workers during yesterday's half-day hartal, called to protest alleged 'manipulation' of Wednesday's by-election results and to demonstrate people's 'no confidence' against the Khaleda government.

An angry Nasim, who was manhandled by police during the hartal hours, said torturing the AL workers by the "anti-democratic" rulers was nothing new in the country's history of pro-democracy movement. "The democracy-loving masses would deliver a death-blow to the tyrants of the ruling party," he declared.

The AL leader strongly condemned the repression on the party men, especially those living in Mirpur, since the by-poll of Wednesday.

Other AL leaders including Amir Hossain Amu and Mozaffar Hossain Paltu also addressed the rally organised in front of the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

Amir Hossain Amu said the AL, in the interest of democracy, extended its maximum cooperation to the ruling BNP. But, he regretted, the party in power was tyrannizing the opposition deeming the cooperation as weakness.

A presidium member of AL, Amu called upon the countrymen to observe the February 10 nationwide hartal and carry forward the struggle for establishing their democratic rights.

Mohammad Hanif, chief of the party's city branch, hailed the city dwellers for observing the half-day hartal. He alleged that police and the BNP men launched attacks on the pickets and the party central office during the peaceful hartal.

The city people by making the hartal successful expressed their 'no-confidence' on the Khaleda government," he claimed.

Kabul under heavy shelling: 12 killed

ISLAMABAD, Feb 6: At least 12 people were killed and 48 injured today as the Afghan capital came under heavy rocket attacks by rebel forces, the state-run radio Kabul reported, says AFP.

The broadcast monitored here said that more than 100 rockets came from the south and southeast of the city fired by Hezb-i-Islami faction of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The radio also said Afghan government forces had returned heavy fire on Hezb positions in the south and southeast of the Kabul causing casualties, but gave no figures or further details.

Meanwhile, Reuter adds: The Kabul government has made Afghanistan's most powerful warlord the Deputy Minister of Defence, Deputy Foreign Minister Najibullah Lafrai said today.

Lafrai told a news conference that General Abdul Rashid Dostum, a former Communist Militia chief and Commander of the northern forces in the northwestern city of Mazar-i-Sharif had been made Deputy Defence Minister.

"The proposal for his appointment had been under consideration for some time and the appointment was made recently," said Lafrai, in southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta for a ministerial session of the Economic Cooperation organisation, a regional grouping of 10 central Asian states.

Dostum had been demanding a role in the government as a condition for joining the army in the defence of Kabul against the renegade Mujahideen party fighting to unseat President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Tank lorry gutted

By Staff Correspondent

A tank lorry loaded with fuel caught fire yesterday at a city gas station. The lorry was completely gutted.

Fire Brigade sources said the lorry, Dhaka-Metro Da-09-0015 caught fire at Hasan Servicing Station at Talata of Agargon at 5:30 pm.

At that time, the Director, operations and maintenance and Deputy Director of Fire Service were passing through the spot with some fire units from Mirpur training centre. They immediately swung into action. Three more units from Mohammadpur, Mirpur and Tejgaon stations also rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control.

Textiles fair closed today

Textiles fair will remain closed from 3:00 pm today to 3:00 pm tomorrow on the occasion of holy Shab-e-Barat, an official handout said last night, reports UNB.

Convict dies in jail

By Staff Correspondent

A prisoner died Saturday in the Dhaka Central Jail. Shahadat, a convict serving rigorous imprisonment, died at 7 am Saturday.

Police said he was suffering from high fever. The body was sent to DMCH for autopsy.

An unnatural death (UD) case has been filed with the Lalbagh thana.

PM: SAARC

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cooperation of the two countries in making the SAARC an effective organisation for realising its objectives would be continued.

The Prime Minister thanked the outgoing High Commissioner for his contribution in strengthening the bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Begum Zia requested the high commissioner to convey her best wishes to the Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa and Hema Premadasa and hoped that she would be able to meet the Sri Lankan leader in the Seventh SAARC Summit expected to be held in Dhaka soon.

The Prime Minister also mentioned different programmes taken up by her government in involving women with the country's mainstream development.

The high commissioner described his five year stay in Bangladesh as memorable and said he had seen some good changes of Bangladesh's democratic transition.

Aid Club

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agencies which usually speak for Western donors — government's sincere efforts to carry forward reform measures so that the forthcoming Paris moot takes a favourable stance for Bangladesh.

Aid utilisation, which yet seems to be in a chronic depression, and progress in economic reforms will figure high in the discussion between Saurif Rahman and World Bank executives.

According to sources, the Finance Minister is likely to raise to the Bank executives the issue of rigid conditionality that has been hampering disbursement of aid, commodity aid in particular.

He may also reiterate his plea for World Bank's favour in lifting aid suspension from the country's power sector and in firming up the funding for Jamuna multipurpose bridge.

Saurif Rahman's Washington trip will help authorities here have an idea of the amount of pledges the country can expect in the coming Paris meeting.

The Midnight File

**Anti-racism march in Paris**

PARIS, Feb 6: Tens of thousands of people, some carrying anti-Nazi placards, marched through Paris on Saturday in a protest against racism and discrimination. Organizers of the three-hour march issue a declaration calling for France to respect the right to asylum, extend voting rights to immigrants, and stiffen penalties for racially motivated crimes, reports AP.

**Turkey accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism**

QUETTA (Pakistan), Feb 6: Turkey Foreign Minister Hikmet Citen on Saturday accused Iran of training suicide bomb squads to terrorise his country's secular government. Citen, who was attending a two-day summit of foreign ministers from the nine Islamic countries that make up the Economic Cooperation Organization, said Turkey's secret service had evidence to link Iran to a spate of killings by Islamic fundamentalists, reports AP.

Bosnian crisis

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discussion going on all parts of a big effort," he told reporters. "It's very important to let lots of people get their say."

Aspin also said that the support of Russia as well as NATO allies was essential to end the fighting.

"Without getting into any of the particulars, we need the Russians big time in this thing... whatever we work out here has to be worked out with the allies. And in this case, the allies include the Russians," he said.

Muslims in Bosnia have balked at accepting a current peace plan worked out by mediators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance which would divide Bosnia and Herzegovina into semi-autonomous provinces — three mostly Serb, two mostly Croat, three mostly Muslim and two mixed.

AFP adds from Washington: The United States is considering seeking a partial lift of the arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia in the face of a mounting illegal flow of weapons to Bosnian Muslims.

The State Department has presented the measure, urged by the Sarajevo government, as one of the options under consideration by President Bill Clinton, who is seeking an alternative to the peace plan jointly proposed by the United Nations and the European Community, a department official said.

The Clinton administration has indicated the UNEC solution to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina unfairly favours the Serbs.

A partial lifting of the embargo would require a resolution by the UN Security Council. Although the United States recently stepped up contacts on the issue with its allies, particularly Britain and France, it has not been able to convince them to back such a resolution, a State Department official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

**Defamation suit against 29 JP MPs, publishers of 3 dailies**

Joint Organising Secretary of Jatiya Party Sajjad Hossain yesterday filed a defamation suit against the authorities of three Bengali dailies and 29 MPs of JP in connection with a press statement, reports UNB.

Among the accused are Anwar Hossain, printer and publisher of the Daily Ittefaq, Matur Rahman Chowdhury, Editor, printer and publisher of the Bangla Bazar Patrika, and M A Sattar, printer and publisher of Dainik Janata.

It was stated in the case that the newspapers in their February 4, 1993 issues ran a report, headlined "Government Agent Sajjad", out of a joint statement issued by 29 Jatiya Party MPs. The statement said Sajjad Hossain had filed a case against former ruling party leaders H M Ershad, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Moudud Ahmed for the benefit of the government.

The MPs demanded ouster of Sajjad from JP.

It has "seriously defamed me politically, socially, personally," the complainant said.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate sent the case records to Metropolitan Magistrate Rawshan Ara for judicial probe.

**Ekushey '93**

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pieces and other items rather than buying books," some booksellers said.

As part of Ekushey programme, discussion on two more Bangla Academy-published books was held in the academy compound yesterday afternoon. The books were 'Jagot Jibon Darshan' written by Aminul Islam and Paramanu Chullick: 'Tatyay O Projukti' by Abdul Anad and Kamal Ahmed.

Dr Anisuzzaman and Ramendranath Ghosh took part in the discussion on the first book while Prof Ajay Ray, Prof Muhammad Ibrahim and Prof Ali Asgar, on the other book.

The discussion was followed by a musical soiree in which Subir Nandi, Rafiqul Alam, Abida Sultana, Ferdous Ara and Saiful Alam rendered songs.

Bogra Theatre staged a drama titled 'Ganotantrik Galpo' at the Central Shaheed Minar as part of the Ekushey programmes organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation.

Today's programme of Bangla Academy: Discussion on two books titled 'Rabindranather Nobel Purashkerprapto Getaanjali', edited by Abdur Rashid and 'Bangla Sahitya Samalochona' by Afzalul Bashir.

Prof Hayat Mamud, Dr Khalikuzzaman Elias and Prof Azfar Hossain will take part in the discussion on the first book while Prof Jahangir Tarek and Prof Golam Mostafa, on the other book.

**Clinton's second choice as AG falls flat**

WASHINGTON, Feb 6: Two weeks after President Bill Clinton's nominee for America's first woman Attorney General withdrew because she had hired illegal aliens, a New York federal judge who was his second choice removed her name from the running on Friday for a similar reason, reports Reuter.

Kimba Wood released a statement saying a babysitter she employed was technically an illegal alien for seven years, including one year in her employ.

**MOU: Rohingya**

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tions of forced repatriation of the refugees.

In mid January, the UNHCR withdrew from the process of repatriation claiming that its field officials at Cox's Bazar found that many of the would-be returnees did not volunteer to return home at Arakan. Myanmar's western province from where the refugees streamed into Bangladesh.

Bangladesh denied the allegations and said all of more than 19,000 refugees so far repatriated went back home voluntarily.

After the "misunderstanding" between Dhaka and the UNHCR was over late last month the UNHCR returned to the process of repatriation interviewing the would-be returnees to determine if they are heading home voluntarily.

Meanwhile, Mrs Sadako Ogata, chief of the UNHCR, is expected to visit Bangladesh to see the condition of the refugees who live in 20 flimsy makeshift camps along Cox's Bazar-Teknaf region. No date for Mrs Ogata's visit has been set.

**Shab-e-Barat**

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Government has declared public holiday on February 8 so that the devotees could take rest after night-long prayers.

Special Akheri Munajat will be held at all mosques throughout the country for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

In the capital mlad mahfil will be held at Dhaka University Mosque after Asr prayers.

Bangladesh Sirat Mission will hold Quran khwani, mlad mahfil and special munajat at Patuatal Jame Mosque.

Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh has drawn up a night-long programme in observance of the Lailatul Bara.

The programmes include mlad mahfil, discussion on Fazilat of Lailatul Bara and our duty, Tablig and Ikamat-e-Din, Fazilat of Jikr and Fazilat of Tahajjud Namaz.

The Akheri Munajat will be held after morning prayer at Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

Eminent religious personalities will participate in the discussions.