

Nat'l Film Award ceremony today

The National Film Awards for the years 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 determining the outstanding performance of the cine stars and others both on and off the screen will be given away today at a formal ceremony, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will give away the prizes to the deserving ones in the imposing Osmany Memorial Auditorium to the cheers and applause of the screen idols, celebrities from the film industry and leading cultural personalities.

According to an official press release issued yesterday Anya Jibon was adjudged the best feature film for 1995 with Asad and Champa being the best actor and actress respectively. For 1996, Poka-makher Ghar Basati clinched the award for being the best feature film while Sohel Rana and Shabnaz got the best actor and actress awards for their roles in Ajantay and Nirman respectively.

Dukhal was the best feature film for 1997 with Asad as the best actor for the same while Sucharita scored the title of best actress for her remarkable performance in Hangor-nadi-Grenade. In 1998, the best film award went to Hathat Bristy adorned the most sought-after teen-age craze Ferdous with the title of best actor for the same picture. Akhter Hussain got the award as best cameraman for the film Hathat Bristy in 1998 with no other award in any discipline that year, the handout said.

The best film director awards went to Sheikh Niamat Ali for Anya Jibon in 1995.

Akhteruzzaman for Poka-makher Ghar Basati in 1996 and Chashi Nazrul Islam for Hangor-nadi-Grenade in 1997. The best producer awards were bagged by Sheikh Niamat Ali for Anya Jibon in 1995, Babita for Poka-makher Ghar Basati in 1996 and Morshedul Islam for Dukhal in 1997.

The best side actors and actresses were Abul Khair and Shahta Islam for Anya Jibon in 1995, Bulbul Ahmed for Dipu Number Two with no best actress award in 1996 and Abul Khair and Rokeya Prachi for Dukhal in 1997. The best music director awards went to none in 1995, Late Satya Saha for Dipu Number Two in 1996 and Late Khan Ataur Rahman for Akhono Oneck Raat in 1997.

Tanveer Mokammel for Nadir Naam Madhumati, Selina Hussain for Poka-makher Ghar Basati and Selina Hussain again for Hangor-nadi Grenade were adjudged the best story writer for 1995, 1996 and 1997. The best male and female playback singers were Saidur Rahman Bayati for Nadir Naam Madhumati and Kanak Champa for love story in 1995. Andrew Kishore for Ajantay and Kiron Chandra Roy for Dukhal got the best male playback singer awards for 1996 and 1997 with no best female playback singer in both the years.

The best awards also went to other celebrities for their outstanding performance in the technical disciplines of different films released in 1995, 1996 and 1997, the handout said.



Disabled freedom fighters staged a demonstration in front of the National Press Club yesterday protesting the printing of a parody of the national anthem in the daily Inqilab. --Star photo

Fresh wave of bloodletting

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more wounded along with three Palestinian police and a woman secretary when an explosion ripped through an Israeli-Palestinian liaison post near a Jewish settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, Palestinian security sources said.

The army subsequently ordered the Palestinians to evacuate all liaison offices in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, cutting another link between the two sides.

Another two Israeli soldiers were seriously wounded in an explosion near the Erez crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel, a military source said.

An Israeli rocket destroyed a car in the northern West Bank town of Nablus on Thursday in an apparent assassination attempt against a militant with the fundamentalist Hamas movement, an AFP correspondent and Hamas officials said.

The Israeli army, however, denied any involvement.

The man was identified by Hamas officials as Ibrahim Beni Ouda, 34, a member of the military wing, Ezzedin al-Qassam, who was released from a Palestinian jail on Wednesday where he had been held on charges of making bombs.

Overnight, Albright condemned the violence on both sides and outlined a new US strategy calling on both sides to act to restore calm by implementing the Sharm el-Sheikh truce.

And the UN Security Council met Wednesday to discuss the crisis following calls by the Palestinian observer to the United Nations for a draft resolution for a force of 2,000 unarmed UN observers to be deployed in the occupied territories.

Barak had blamed Arafat's Palestinian Authority for the "barbaric" bombing in Hadera through its release last month of dozens of militants from fundamentalist anti-Israeli groups Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

Arafat on Thursday con-

demned the attack, telling reporters in Cairo: "No doubt I am against what had happened yesterday in Israel because we are against all terrorist activities."

Security officials told the cabinet they suspected Islamic Jihad was behind the Hadera blast. A previously unknown group calling itself the Islamic Revolution to Liberate Palestine - Group of National Islamic Resistance said it carried out the attack.

The bombing followed the killing of four Palestinians in an Israeli army ambush against militants of Arafat's Fatah faction in the Gaza Strip in an incident the Palestinians branded as an unprovoked execution.

Fatah has decided to begin a war of attrition, if Gaza is near the Israeli shells, Tel Aviv will not be far from Palestinian killers," said a statement from Fatah's Bethlehem branch.

"All settlers and all soldiers are targets, especially after the assassination of Fatah leaders," it added.

Listed criminals

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Demra police stations for unknown reasons.

Passers-by Abdul Hannan, Kader Khan and Delwar were arrested from Kotwali area. They were freed after paying the police.

Top police officials admitted that innocent people might have been arrested during the raids but were released as soon their identity was confirmed.

"We are instantly setting them free if anybody is found innocent," a senior officer said yesterday.

After making the list of the most wanted criminals by consulting sources, police along with the armed battalion and the Railway police went into the mission to capture the accused and recover illegal arms. The whole country was divided into 11

sectors for the drive.

The BDR are also involved in the operation as they have been instructed by the home ministry to arrest arms traffickers and seize firearms within five kilometres of the Bangladesh border.

A circulation from the home ministry also directed the law enforcing agencies to arrest culprits regardless of their political affiliation. It also pointed out that stern action would be taken against policemen who will violate the order.

But failure to arrest the most dangerous felons has raised questions regarding the sincerity and conviction of the police.

When asked about this failure, a police official said that their drive is still on and they are trying their level's best to catch the criminals.

Eco-park at tribals

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Le Mang Pale, a Khasi resident of about the same age from a neighbouring punji, said, "We love peace and tranquillity. That is the reason why we settle in the hills, to slay away from crowded habitation. But the project I hear about will terminate our existence and devastate the forest."

Jendro Lamin, one of the punji leaders in Mahdab hills, has documents that prove their status as taxpayers.

"Since 1974, we have paid land tax worth Tk 20 lakh but despite that our permanence is uncertain. This is the home of our forefathers. Why should we even feel unsafe?" asked Lamin.

"Eco-park" is a master plan to throw us out of our ancestral land," said Mahila Rumal, a housewife.

The government claims that the project is part of their scheme for economic development as well as preserving the environment by protecting precious forest habitation that includes rare wildlife.

The Tk 11 crore project of the Ministry of Environment and

Forest is expected to be complete by the end of 2004. The cabinet approved the bio-diversity conservation project last July after the Prime Minister had given her consent on March 6.

The project would see 1500 acres of forest and hilly area, which includes Khasi homes, being levelled to build roads and other establishments.

Forest department officials in the city however maintain that the project has been planned in a way so that not a single tribal family is dislocated.

"What the press has learnt about is the earlier proposal for acquisition of private land in the forest for development of the project. The cabinet later rejected the Tk 82 lakh acquisition proposal which would have threatened existence of the tribal families in the forest," said a senior official of the department.

"We are against eviction. Our aim is to preserve nature as it is. So it is quite absurd that the project would threaten tribal existence," he added.

A dull JS session

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Court on the night of November 14 sparked off two rounds of protests on the floor of the House. Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina, Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, PM's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Suranjit Sengupta and Jatiya Party Whip Fazle Rabbi came down heavily on the court.

Following the unscheduled deliberations, the House decided for a general discussion on the same issue as sentiment of the lawmakers was in favour of the motion. But, the parliament later retreated apparently considering the implications of going further on the delicate issue. Finally, the House had a general discussion on November 22 about publication of a parody of national anthem by the Inqilab.

The discussion on the changed topic at times touched upon the role of the court about the case against the editor-cum-publisher of the Inqilab who is facing sedition charges. Several discussants even expressed their frustration at the change in the topic.

The crisis of quorum turned acute in the last session, the 20th of the seventh parliament. Excepting for two days when the

House was adjourned only after condoling deaths of two sitting MPs, the House saw absence of quorum for almost every day and ran without the required number of lawmakers even after BNP's expelled lawmaker Major (ret) Akhteruzzaman raised the issue.

Large-scale absence of ministers due to scheduled businesses often irritated the Chair and angered the MPs concerned. The absentee ministers were also advised to give priority to the parliamentary business over others. The ministers' absence resulted in the deferral of scheduled business on several occasions.

The return in the House of the crucial bill on women's reserved seats in parliament was another significant event in the last session that sat for nine days. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law Ministry brought back the bill seeking a 10-year extension of the constitutional provision for the reserved seats.

The committee took more than five months against the stipulated time of one month to come up with a scrutiny report on the bill, introduced in the House on June 17.

However, uncertainty clouded the fate of the bill as the House

did not take it up for consideration. Holding on to it at least until the next session has in fact given the opposition a fresh opportunity to do their bits in its passage.

Support of two-thirds members in the House is required for its passage, but the ruling party and its allies do not have that strength.

Dull and monotonous discussions took place in the House on the recently-announced National Health Policy and the recent floods in the country's southwest region. Placing of audit reports on 18 government bodies, passage of seven bills, introduction of six other and submission of scrutiny reports on another eight bills featured in the just-concluded session with continuous absence of the mainstream opposition parties.

The short-lived session expired with fresh calls by the Chair, the Treasury Bench, the pro-government faction of Jatiya Party and even the BNP's expelled MP upon the main opposition party to attend the next session at least for the sake of passing the long-pending bill on the women's reserved seats.

JS session prorogued

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The House yesterday passed by voice vote the Admiralty Court Bill, 2000 to establish an admiralty court suiting the needs of the time. Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister moved the bill.

In his winding up speech, the Speaker said there is no alternative to practising democratic norms to face the challenges of the 21st century. "Democratic system and development are correlated," he added.

Speaking on behalf of the Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina in her absence, Zillur Rahman said the opposition members should return to the parliament to discharge their constitutional responsibilities.

"People gave you mandate to speak in favor of their interest. If you have minimum dignity, do not take benefits while boycotting the parliament session," he said.

The LGRD minister also accused the opposition parties of hatching conspiracy against democracy and the government.

Referring to the general discussion on dishonoring the National Anthem, JP (M-M) lawmaker Fazle Rabbi said the discussion would have been lively had the opposition members been present in the House. The nation wondered at the absence of the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and her colleagues from the House during discussion on such an important issue, he said.

"Was not it necessary to take part in the discussion on the issue involving the independence

and sovereignty of our country? Don't you believe in the independence of Bangladesh?"

Akhteruzzaman said the opposition has "logical causes" for not attending parliament session. "BNP will return to the House if a congenial atmosphere is created". He urged the government to ensure a congenial atmosphere in parliament.

Akhteruzzaman was expelled from BNP for attending parliament session defying a party decision.

Trader shot

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10,000 and a mobile phone set from him.

Local people rescued Delu from the spot and sent him to his residence. Later, relatives took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died at 1:30 am.

Local people said Delu and Zakir had a conflict over payment of toll money few days ago. Zakir and his accomplices came to Delu and demanded the money, but he refused to give.

On Wednesday, the gang appeared again and called him out of his father's stationery shop.

Local MP Haji Selim visited Delu at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Wednesday night.

Faruq, elder brother of the trader, filed a case with Lalbagh police station in this regard. None was arrested till writing of this report last night.

Women representation in journalism very low

By Staff Correspondent

Only seven per cent of total employees in the print media are women, of which four per cent are journalists, according to a survey conducted by Mass Line Media Centre (MLMC).

The findings of the survey was presented at a seminar on "Condition and Status of Women Journalists in Newspapers" held at the PIB auditorium in the city yesterday.

Presenting the key-note paper, Jannatul Ferdous Snigda said there are no women editors or women news editors in any national daily. It indicates the absence of women journalists in policy-making. Women reporters are usually assigned in less important events, she added.

"Male journalists enjoy more privilege than their female colleagues. They accompany the Prime Minister during her foreign trip and they cover parliament proceedings, political events as well as crime incidents."

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Zinnatunnessa Talukder was present at the seminar as chief guest while Member and former president of UN CEDAW Committee Salma Khan attended it as special guest. The meeting was presided over by Professor of History Department of Dhaka University Ahmed Kamal.

The survey was conducted among 69 women journalists of 20 dailies, three magazines and five news agencies. It reveals that 26.63 per cent women journalists complained of discrimination.

The survey revealed that 36.67 per cent women journalists do not get salary as per wage board,

Allegation against Biman Cargo officials

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables and Allied Products Exporters Association yesterday alleged that a section of Biman Cargo officials off-loaded five tonnes of fresh vegetables from the BG-007 flight after taking bribe.

Acting general secretary of the association S M Jahangir in a statement last night said "dry goods" were loaded after off-loading the vegetables although space was booked earlier for the vegetables.

When contacted, an official at the Export Section of Biman Cargo denied the allegation of taking bribe. The vegetables were off-loaded as the Reservation Section sent some items marked "must go".

He admitted that the vegetable exporters had booked space earlier but they had nothing to do. Jahangir said the vegetable exporters will suffer loss and the country will be deprived of foreign currency due to the off-loading.

Rejoinder

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park is not going to be built outside the park, then where is the land for 51 shops coming from? Is it from the road, public footpath or from where? Did you know that the grill fence that demarcates the park has already been dismantled and sold off?

The Children's Park mentioned in your rejoinder is a separate plot of land and our yesterday's story does not deal with it. However, for your information it is long gone into the hands of the illegal occupiers. In 1998 after reports were published in the press, the prime minister directed the authorities to immediately restore the Children's Park by evicting the illegal occupiers. Two years have passed by but the DCC has done nothing to comply with the prime minister's directive.

Honourable Mayor, before terminating a newspaper report motivated, untrue and baseless and issuing a rejoinder sitting in the office, please come and look for yourself what is going on. Can you identify on the spot the Children's Park which you claim remains intact.

The Mayor must take the citizens for fools when he suggests that the shops were allotted purely on a temporary basis. This is nothing but a ploy to circumvent official procedure. Many city prime lands have been lost to vested groups by this method. It starts as temporary but remains permanent.

Finally, we demand an immediate official investigation into the whole matter.

Regrettably, in the heading of the news item, it was inadvertently mentioned that 150 shops, instead of 51, were allocated. We stand corrected.

AL plans to win polls

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the next polls," Khaleda Zia said.

She bitterly criticised the ruling AL during her 25-minute speech. AL had paralysed the armed forces after the independence. Now, in the name of modernisation, the ruling party leaders are looting money through purchase of expensive equipment, aircraft and hardware, she alleged.

The main motive behind the purchase of MIG-29 aircraft was to earn money illegally, she alleged. Seven out of eight MIGs brought so far are out of order now because those are old, she claimed.

"These MIGs were abandoned in Russia and sold to Bangladesh after repair and painting away."

Persons involved in the defense purchase will be tried for selling out national interest and looting public money, she said.

Referring to HM Ershad's jail term, she said though the government is trying to influence the court, BNP has confidence on the judiciary. Ershad will be released through the laws of the country, she hoped.

In this context she said the government is conspiring to break the unity of the opposition alliance and is harassing opposition leaders and activists by filing false cases and arresting them.

"Today, you are harassing us by filing false cases. But the day is not far when all of you will be put on trial on genuine charges," the former prime minister said.

About the 20th BCS examination, Khaleda Zia said appointment of party men in cadre services on the basis of "manipulated" results clearly showed "naked politicisation" of the administration.

"Politicisation this time is much worse than in the case of BCS examination in 1973. It is unprecedented. The country can not be run with these incompetent and worthless party men."

She demanded immediate cancellation of the 20th BCS examination results and appointments. "If voted to power, BNP will definitely cancel the appointments," she said.

The Leader of the Opposition charged the government with destroying democratic institutions, the judiciary, the media as well as the education system in the country. She claimed that AL government was threatening judges.

Khaleda Zia urged judges to discharge their duties without any fear or favour. "There is nothing but sticks in their hands. People of the country are with us. No AL man will be found if people take sticks in their hands," she added.

The BNP Chairperson also urged the civil and police administrations to discharge duties neutrally and not to cooperate with the ruling party in its illegal acts.

She announced a countrywide demonstration programme on December 5 to protest price hike

of essentials and deterioration in law and order. Tough programmes will be announced immediately after the Ramadan to dislodge the government, she said and called upon the people to prepare for that.

Addressing the meeting, Roushan Ershad called upon leaders of the 4-party alliance to take "appropriate steps" for Ershad's release from jail.

The government made a number of offers to Ershad, but the JP Chairman did not surrender, she claimed.

Golam Azam suggested laying a siege to the capital and non-stop hartal to dislodge the government.

Azizul Haq called upon opposition activists to be prepared "to foil vote rigging in the next election".

BNP leader M Saifur Rahman said the AL government failed to run the country because it does not understand the difference between the party and the government.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said wrists will be cut off if any one tries to rig vote and capture polling centre in the next election.

BNP leaders Abdus Salam and Sadek Hossain Khoka, JP leaders Nazim Rahman Manjur and Saifur Rahman, Jamaat leaders Matur Rahman Nizami and ATM Azharul Islam and IOJ leaders Fazlul Haq Amin and Abdur Rab Yusufi also addressed the rally.

Stolen baby

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Earlier, Ramna police arrested a special female attendant, Sajeda for her alleged involvement in the child lifting.

Meanwhile, Sifma Huda and Masuda Ghauce of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) in a joint statement demanded arrest of and exemplary punishment to culprits involved in the DMCH incident.

They said Dhaka Medical College Hospital has become a den of organised criminals. People come here to recover from ailments, but what they get is maltreatment. They said a section of the staff of the hospital draws their salaries and benefits from taxpayers' money but they do not discharge their duties.

They urged to authorities concerned to find out the culprits responsible for stealing babies from the DMCH. They also demanded compensation for parents who have lost their babies in the DMCH.

Bush takes recount

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Sunday to submit amended results that include manual vote recounts. If the state elections office does not open on Sunday, the deadline is extended to 9:00 am (1400 GMT) Monday.

After the ruling, Bush accused the state high court of overstepping its bounds by forcing Florida's government -- headed by Bush's brother Jeb -- to reverse an earlier decision to enforce a November 14 statutory deadline for final vote results.

"We believe the justices have used the bench to change Florida's election laws and usurp the authority of Florida's election officials," Bush said in Austin, Texas.

However, the day also held bad news for Gore.

Miami-Dade officials called off hand counts of some 650,000 ballots -- including more than 10,000 votes not registered by machine -- arguing that they could not complete the process by the Sunday deadline.

Gore had been hoping to scrape up additional votes in the heavily Democratic county to help him overtake Bush.

A Gore campaign request for a court order to force Miami-Dade to resume the recount was turned down late Wednesday by the 3rd District Court of Appeals, according to CNN.

Gore's lawyers have decided to appeal the ruling with Florida's Supreme Court, a Florida election official told CNN.

The news was better for Gore in Palm Beach, where a circuit court judge gave vote counters some

latitude in considering whether to accept "dimpled" ballots -- those with an indentation but no punch hole -- in tallying votes.

Palm Beach County was expected to reconvene Friday morning to resume its recount of some 460,000 ballots. It also has to decide on how it will handle some 10,000 dimpled ballots.

The recount in Broward County was completed Wednesday, but the county still has to deal with some 2,000 questionable ballots. Election officials there were expected to reconvene Thursday morning.

According to unofficial results from Palm Beach and Broward counties, the recounts there have given Gore a net gain of 139 votes thus far.

Gore leads Bush in the popular vote nation-wide by some 260,000 votes and has a 262-246 edge in the split of decisive electoral votes awarded on a state-by-state basis. So Florida's 25 electors hold the key to the presidency.

Cheney, meanwhile, was expected to be released in one or two days from hospital. The doctors said he was doing fine after inserting a tiny implant in a coronary artery.

Cheney, who suffered heart attacks in 1978, 1984 and 1999, and underwent quadruple heart bypass surgery in 1988, told CNN's Larry King Live show from his hospital bed late Wednesday that there was "no doubt about my serving" as vice president should Bush be elected to the White House.

Shibir cadre

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of police with his high-powered wireless set at 2:30 am.

A listed criminal of the island, Enamul was allegedly involved in many robberies in the sea, including Chittagong port areas and also an accused in 17 cases.

Police said Enamul has been working as one of the closest associates of international mafia chain in this island for long and has link with notorious Shibir leader Nasir.

Police recovered some documents, including papers about the arms depots of Shibir and Harkat.

Crisis in Malika College deepens

By Staff Correspondent

The crisis in Dr Malika College seems to have further deepened as the accountant of the college and her husband were alleged to have occupied a college room that Dr Malika, the founder of the college, used as her office.

College Principal Prof. Mohammad Ishaq while talking to The Daily Star last night said that the accountant and her husband broke into the room at the dead of night on Wednesday and are now using it as their bed room.

The principal said that he filed a GD with Dhanmondi police yesterday accusing the two of illegally occupying a room of the college.

Dhanmondi thana when contacted around 8:15 p.m. last night however said that no such GD was filed. Dhanmondi police said following repeated requests from the principal of the college over telephone yesterday morning, they had sent a police force to the college campus.

Founder of the college Dr Malika, known as the first woman of the country to have received a doctorate, died at a city hospital on November 17 due to age old complications.

Her adopted daughters and the college authorities have been fighting over the ownership of the college since she fell sick on November 15.

The adopted daughters alleged that the college authorities were trying to occupy the institution by ousting them from the college premises while college authorities alleged that the adopted daughters and their relatives were misappropriating college funds.

BIWTC

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Salam, president of Workers' Union Sultan Ahmed Khan and directors of BIWTC were among others present at the meeting.

The meeting reached a consensus on Tk 400-425 salary scale and 30 days leave for sailors.

Ershad's plea rejected

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Attorney General Mahmudul Islam told newsmen yesterday, "With this judgement, the rule of law has prevailed. This has also proved that no one is above law whatever position one may hold."

Ershad's lawyers said the judgement meant that he could come out of jail by paying the fine.

Looking dejected, the lawyers - Barrister Rafiqul Huq, Barrister Maudud Ahmed and Advocate Khandaker Mahbub Hossain - came out of the court following the judgement at 11-40 am. Jatiya Party leaders Najur Rahman Manju and others were with them with gloomy faces.

JP supporters who were thronging the court premises for the past three days appeared stunned. Some of them burst into tears.

A small group of supporters left the court premises raising slogans and marched up to the Jatiya Press Club.

Police kept a close watch on the group but did not intervene even when one of them hurled a stone at a vehicle.

Najur Rahman, frequently using a handkerchief on his eyes, announced launching of a 'free Ershad fund raising campaign' to get the JP chief out of jail, paying the fine.

Barrister Maudud Ahmed said that Ershad was in jail for three years and eight months since he was convicted in the Janata Tower case. He now has only one year and four months out of the five-year jail term.

He said the government side has withdrawn a petition for leave to appeal against the High Court verdict that reduced Ershad's jail term.

But it retained seven petitions against others.

The Appellate Division has accepted the government side leave petitions.

The full text of the Supreme Court judgement was not immediately available.

Meanwhile, supporters of Ershad staged demonstrations after the four-party alliance rally at Faltan Maidan in the city yesterday.

BSS adds: A total of 19 people including Raushan Ershad,

Ershad's plea rejected

former minister M A Sattar, and former RAJUK chairman Rahmatullah were originally indicted in the case and sentenced to jail at different terms but they remained outside prison under bail.

The High Court judgement, however, waived the jail terms but fined Taka 10,000 each of the 19 accused. Sixteen of them including Raushan Ershad and Sattar submitted leave to appeal petitions before the Appellate Division.

The Appellate Division accepted all the petitions for hearing excepting the prayers of one Shaheenul Islam and Altabara Begum.

Forestry students

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-estry departments of Khulna University, Chittagong University and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology started the fast-until-death programme at the Central Shaheed Minar on Monday.

Meanwhile, Prof. M Abdur Rahman, Head of the Department of Forestry Department of Khulna University, came to the Central Shaheed Minar to see the condition of striking students.

Prof. Rahman called upon the students to continue the strike until their demands are met.

"We have received any response regarding our demands neither from the government nor from the PSC," a leader of the striking students told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, prominent cultural activists went to the Central Shaheed Minar and expressed solidarity with the striking students.

Noted poet Shamsur Rahman yesterday expressed solidarity with the striking forestry students. Columnist Abed Khan and cultural activists Hassan Imam, Lalla Hassan, Asaduzzaman Nor, Ramendru Majumdar and Salahuddin Badal, among others, expressed solidarity with the striking students.

The cultural activists termed the students' demands as logical and urged the government to meet them immediately.