

Ershad exempted from personal appearance in court in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday granted the petition, seeking exemption from personal appearance of former President HM Ershad, in connection with a graft case.

Judge M A Shahidur Rahman passed the order following a petition, submitted by the defence lawyers, on behalf of the accused.

Ershad along with his lawyer Sheikh Serajul Islam appeared in the court and submitted a petition for exempting him from personal appearance in the court.

The prosecution side opposed the petition.

Hearing both the sides, the court granted the petition.

In the case filed with Tejgaon thana, it has been alleged that a decision was passed to accept the donation from Finland for setting up "Microwave Telephone Lines" in 89 upazilas of the country in 1989. But due to delay in sending donation, Ershad directed the authorities concerned to accept the donation from France. But the

Saifur goes to Singapore today

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman leaves Dhaka today for Singapore on a three-day official visit to attend a regional conference on the development of Asia.

He will join the "Forum on Reducing Disparities: Rethinking Key Issues in Asian Development - Changing Policies, Institutions and Mindsets," organised by Asian Development Bank on August 19-21.

The government policymakers of Asian countries and think-tanks of the region will take part in the conference in Singapore.

work of setting up "Microwave Telephone Lines" was not implemented. As a result, the government has to pay the interest of Tk 28 crore to France from the date of receipt of the money.

Upendra Chandra Das, an officer of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) filed the case against Ershad and two others on September 5, 1992.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet to the CMM's Court, Dhaka against Ershad and six others on July 31, 1995.

Meanwhile, the same court fixed September 21 for next hearing of the case.

Ershad and three others, now on bail, were present in the court yesterday.

Dohar incident on Aug 15 was AL internal conflict: Huda

BSS, Dhaka

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda has said that the incident on August 15 in his home constituency Dohar in Dhaka resulted from internal conflict of the Awami League.

In a statement issued in Dhaka yesterday Huda protested a statement of AL chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina on the incidents of Dohar and called upon her not to make "confusing statements".

He accused the AL of trying to deteriorate the country's law and order situation. "It has been involved in deep-rooted conspiracy since its defeat in the last general election due to killing, criminal activities, grabbing, extortion and anarchy in its five-year rule," he added.



Members of a cultural organisation rendering Tagore songs at a function in the city yesterday to welcome monsoon.

PHOTO: STAR

Minister seeks pvt initiative to expand IT sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday called upon the entrepreneurs to help develop the information technology (IT) sector to face the challenges of globalisation.

"We could only sustain in the competitive era of globalisation by achieving excellence in IT," the minister said while addressing the launching ceremony of Zip, a wire-free broadband service, at Sheraton Hotel.

He said private initiative is a must for expansion of IT facilities in the country as it is not possible

by the government alone to implement the gigantic task.

The government has identified IT as a thrust sector and taken steps to provide Internet connections at district and upazila levels, the minister said.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Post and Telecommunications Aminul Hoque said the government has decided to bring all 64 districts of the country under the digital phone network and Internet service by the end of this year.

Internet facilities were avail-

able in only eight districts when BNP assumed office in October last year, but now 40 districts have the Internet facilities, he added.

The minister called upon the private entrepreneurs to supplement the government efforts to bring all upazilas under Internet service.

Minister for Women and Children Affairs Khurshid Zahan Haque emphasised the need for expanding IT education in the country and said there is no alternatives to IT education to face the challenges of globalisation.

She also stressed the need for involving the women in the IT sector to ensure balanced development.

The minister also urged the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block the vulgar and porn sites to protect the future generation from erosion of values.

Tasim Akhtar Haque, Director of Sirius Broadband Limited, said introduction of wireless broadband would revolutionise IT sector as the tele-density in the country is low.

He said Sirius would not only provide Internet but also make available wireless broadband, television with stereo sound, and digital picture.

ADB proposes reconstitution of Sundarbans Stewardship Commission

UNB, Dhaka

A two-member delegation of Asian Development Bank called on Forest and Environment Minister Shajahan Siraj at his office yesterday.

Led by ADB's visiting Task Manager Marzia Mongiorgi, the team discussed on preservation of the bio-diversity of the Sundarbans and proper management of its resources.

The ADB delegation requested the minister to reconstitute the Sundarbans Stewardship Commission and widen its activities.

They suggested opening of a separate wing headed by a deputy-chief forest conservator for proper management of the forest resources and bio-diversity of the Sundarbans. Besides, they proposed to bring the entire Sundarbans area under telecommunication network.

The minister said the proposal would be considered with due importance.

Mohammad Ali new envoy to Nepal

BSS, Dhaka

The government has appointed Syed Shah Mohammad Ali, currently the Consul General of Bangladesh in Los Angeles, USA, as the next ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal.

According to an official handout yesterday, Ali, who joined Bangladesh Civil Service in 1974, served in various capacities in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was the DG of the ministry in 1999-01 and minister in the Bangladesh Embassy in Ankara in 1998-99.

He was the counsellor of Bangladesh embassies in Brussels, Belgrade and Kolkata. He was second secretary in the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN, New York.

He was appointed Consul General of Bangladesh in Los Angeles in 2001, the handout said.

Ali was born on February 1, 1947 and blessed with two daughters.

Seminar on drug abuse held

The East West University held a seminar on drug/substance abuse yesterday to raise public awareness, says a press release.

Dr Salim Uz Zaman, a physician working in the field of drug abuse and currently associated with the 'Mukti Madokashokti Niramoy Kendro', presented the keynote paper. He explained the medical complications of drug abuse.

Sayedul Karim, a faculty of the university, also presented a paper on social problems arising from drug abuse.

Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, President, Board of Directors and Founder Vice-Chancellor of the university, was also present at the seminar.

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