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Charges pressed against Ershad in theft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday pressed charges against former president and Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad, his wife Rowshan Ershad and JP presidium member Abu Hossain Babla in a theft case filed by Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in January last year.

The police also pressed charges against CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan, acting general secretary Shah Alam and 14 others in connection with an attempted murder case filed by the JP the same year.

Meantime, the Anti-Corruption

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Musharraf set to end Pakistan emergency

AP, Islamabad

President Pervez Musharraf will lift Pakistan's state of emergency on Saturday only after changing the constitution to ensure that he cannot be hauled before a court, a senior official said yesterday.

Musharraf purged the judiciary, jailed thousands of opponents and silenced television news channels after he suspended the constitution and declared emergency rule on Nov. 3.

The US-backed leader said he acted to prevent political chaos

and give authorities a free hand against Islamic militants, though critics accuse him of a last-ditch power grab before the previous Supreme Court could declare his continued rule illegal.

On Thursday, Attorney General Malik Mohammed Qayyum told The Associated Press that the president, who has acknowledged that he breached the constitution, will amend the charter to protect his decisions from legal challenges.

Qayyum said government legal experts were finalising the changes and that they would be announced

before Musharraf lifts the emergency on Saturday, but provided no details.

"The president will lift the emergency to restore the constitution and the fundamental rights," he said.

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists accused the government Wednesday of "an attempt to

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

High Court grants bail to Sigma

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted bail to Sigma Huda, wife of former communications minister Nazmul Huda, also jailed, in a graft case that earned her three years' imprisonment.

The court also granted bail to another convict, Barrister Mir Helaluddin, jailed for three years on July 4 for aiding and abetting his father, former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Nasiruddin, in amassing property illegally.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

EU to give 33.6m euro for food security

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union will provide a grant of 33.6 million euro (Tk 336 crore) for expanding food security in Bangladesh under an agreement signed here yesterday.

Judge Shamsunnahar of the Fourth Special Court set up at the MP Hostel on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises delivered the verdict against Zia's wife Nasima Huq and their son Mashfiqul Huq.

Both the convicts are currently on the run. The mother has been found guilty of evading Tk 44.86 lakh in taxes while the son has been convicted of Tk 90.43 lakh tax evasion.

The court also fined Nasima Tk 2 crore, in default of which she would have to stay in jail for an additional nine months. Similarly, the court

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

line with the overall objectives of the European Commission's 2007-2013 Country Strategy Paper for Bangladesh, which focuses on reducing poverty and assisting Bangladesh's integration into the world economy.

E

conomic Relations Division

(ERD) Secretary Aminul Islam

Bhuiyan and head of EC delegation

to Bangladesh Ambassador Stefan

Frowein signed the agreement at

the ERD office for the funds, which

will be spent under the Food and

Security Programme 2006 in

Bangladesh over the next five years.

The overall objective of the Food

Security Programme is the reduction

of extreme poverty and malnutrition

in Bangladesh "by improving

socio-economic condition of the

very poor and by managing and

improving food security in an

effective way".

The programme is developed in

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Source: Islamic Foundation

STAR REPORT

The government looks to produce an additional 7.5 lakh metric tons of rice by growing high-yield varieties over 10 lakh hectares of land to cover an estimated 14 lakh tons of shortfall caused by back-to-back natural disasters this year.

Agriculture and Environment Adviser CS Karim spoke of the plan at a view-exchange meeting at The Daily Star office yesterday. He also said the government would work in unison with the NGOs to provide the affected farmers with agricultural implements, seeds and fertiliser.

Karim observed that the country needs to invest in agricultural research to meet the challenge of



securing increased crop yields in the coming years and also to adapt to climate change.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

plans to make good the shortage in rice production - 8 lakh tons due to floods and 6 lakh tons for cyclone Sidr - he said the government has decided to plant high-yield hybrid Boro over 10 lakh hectares instead of 2.5 lakh hectares.

Asked about demand for the government to give tillage equipment to the farmers in Sidr-hit areas, the adviser said this was done after the 1991 cyclone too, but most of the tools ended up being in the hands of corrupt officials.

This time the government would work with the NGOs so that there is little room for corruption in distribution of tools, seeds and fertiliser and disbursement of agricultural loans.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Explaining the government

Tales of the

Biranganas

DU CORRESPONDENT

"I was so frightened seeing the eyes of a Pakistani army personnel that were staring at me. He snatched my son from my lap and threw him away... My mother begged for mercy grabbing his legs, but he did not care," said Birangana Hasna Banu of Sirajganj.

"At the beginning of the war, we hid ourselves in our village but the heinous Razakars took the army to our village and let them violate us," she said while telling her experience of the Liberation War.

She said she was violated by the Pakistan army and their native collaborators.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote

yesterday launched a four-day

victory

festival to mark the Victory

Day, December 16, at the Central

Shaheed

Minar. Hasna Banu and

seven other Biranganas (valiant

women freedom fighters) from

different parts of Sirajganj

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Eight Biranganas place a floral wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to pay tribute to the martyrs of the

Liberation War in 1971.

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