

# 'MISUSE OF POWER' IN RADAR PURCHASE

## Investigator finds proofs against Ershad

COURT CORRESPONDENT

An investigation officer told a Dhaka court yesterday that he had found proofs of the allegations against ex-president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and three others of irregularities and misuse of power in purchasing radars in the 1980s.

Monzur Ahmed, deputy director of the Anti-Corruption Commission and first investigation officer of the case, said this while giving his deposition before Judge Mohammad Nurul Islam of the Special Court for Dhaka Division.

The trial court recorded the statement of the witness and fixed August 14 for his cross-examination by the lawyers of Ershad and the other accused, including two former air force chiefs—Sultan Mahmud and Mamtazuddin Ahmed—who are now on bail.

The investigator has found proofs that Ershad in league with the accused purchased radars from the US instead of France for the air force while he was in power from 1982 to 1990, causing a Tk 64.04 crore loss to the state exchequer. "Ershad did the work illegally to gain his own interests," said Monzur.

In his deposition, Monzur said he took the charge of the case's investigation on July 17, 1992, and interrogated several people and recorded their statements as witnesses.

He also interrogated Ershad and the other

accused but could not contact AKM Musa, another accused and a director of United Traders Ltd, the organisation through which the purchase was made, as he has been absconding since the case was filed on May 4, 1992.

Manzur was transferred to another district before he could file the charge sheet. Later, the second and last IO Abdus Sattar Sarkar, an official of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, pressed the charges against Ershad and four others on October 27, 1994, showing 38 people as prosecution witnesses.

But the government withdrew the charges against Shahzad Ali, another director of United Traders Ltd. The court then indicted Ershad and the three others on August 12, 1995.

Meantime, the proceedings of the case had been stayed for a long time following an order of the High Court. Later the HC cleared the way for the trial on August 8, 2006.

The two former air force chiefs attended the court yesterday but Ershad did not.

Earlier, the court recorded the statements of 10 prosecution witnesses including the complainant Ali Haider, a then official of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption.

Ershad is facing two more cases, one of them involving the 1981 killing of Maj Gen MA Manzoor.

Ershad was earlier discharged and acquitted from different graft charges.



News portal www.aparajitanews.com and Janatar Shakti form a human chain before Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday protesting Hefajat-e Islam Ameer Shah Ahmed Shafi's misogynist speech in Hathazari, Chittagong. PHOTO: STAR

## BNP urges EC not to register Huda's party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday requested the Election Commission (EC) not to register Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF) as a political party, claiming that the new political organisation had used the photograph of BNP founder and late president Ziaur Rahman.

Led by BNP standing committee member MK Anwar, a four-member delegation made the request to Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed at his office.

Emerging from the EC office, MK Anwar told reporters that the new party had used a logo looking like BNP's and used "sheaf of wheat" as its electoral symbol which was almost similar to BNP's symbol--"sheaf of paddy."

He said people might get confused if the EC enrolled such a political party which also used Zia's 19-point declaration as its motto. Floating of such a political party is part of a certain quarter's conspiracy to break up the BNP, said Anwar. "Such an initiative was also taken during the past caretaker government to split the BNP," he added.

Former BNP vice-chairman Nazmul Huda, who was sacked from the party, launched the BNF early this year. Among the leaders, who joined Huda, are former BNP cabinet minister Prof Jahanara Begum, former Chittagong mayor Aref Moinuddin, and several mid-ranking leaders.

But on March 10, the BNF relieved Huda of the party's convener post for his "anti-party activities" and made Jahanara its acting convener.

## Legal notices served on govt, EC for DCC polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Supreme Court lawyers yesterday served two legal notices on the government and Election Commission asking them to do the needful for holding elections to the two Dhaka city corporations and to declare the election schedules in 48 hours.

Barrister Golam Nabi and advocate Alamgir Hossain sent the notices stating that the elections to the city corporations should have been held within 180 days from the date of their establishment on December 1, 2011, as per the Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009 (amended in 2011).

Golam Nabi asked for holding the election to Dhaka South City Corporation while Alamgir for Dhaka North City Corporation poll.

They sent the copies of the notices to LGRD secretary, chief election commissioner and secretary to the EC, saying that if they fail to take steps as per the instructions of the notices, a writ petition will be filed with the High Court against them.

## Join hands to curb maternal, child mortality

### Urges health minister on World Population Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Everyone has to work together to reduce maternal and child mortality, Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque told a programme to observe World Population Day yesterday.

The apparent lack of coordination between the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) and the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) of the ministry might be slowing down implementation of family planning programmes, he added.

DGFP's activities were apparently invisible in the past but the scenario has improved recently, he told the programme organised by DGFP in the capital's Osmani Memorial Hall.

This year's World Population Day was observed focusing on the country's situation of adolescent pregnancy which is a burden for development, said speakers at the event.

"Usually parents in our society tend to marry off their daughters as early as possible. It is one of the main reasons behind adolescent pregnancy. We have to work together to break this spell," said Ruhul.

Adolescent pregnancy results in complica-

tions such as birth of underweight children, who later suffer from malnutrition, he said.

Every year 8,000 mothers die while giving birth and adolescent pregnancy is one key reason behind this, said the speakers.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary MM Neazuddin said at present the maternal mortality rate was 194 per one lakh and the government aims to reduce this figure to 143 within 2015.

Prime minister's Health Adviser Prof Syed Modasser Ali said a combined effort of all can turn the population from being a burden into an efficient workforce.

Seven journalists from print and electronic media were conferred "Family Planning Media Award 2013" by the ministry at the programme for their investigative reporting on population and family planning.

The ministry also recognised contributions of seven field level family planning workers and organisations.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Capt (ret'd) Mujibur Rahman Fakir and United Nations Population Fund, Bangladesh Officer-in-Charge Yuki Suehiro, among others, spoke at the event.

## 35 hurt as JnU bus collides with truck in N'ganj

### Over 100 vehicles vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least thirty-five people, including students of Jagannath University (JnU), sustained injuries when a university bus collided head-on with a truck at Rugganj upazila in Narayanganj yesterday.

Following the incident, agitated students and locals blocked Dhaka-Sylhet highway for about half an hour and vandalised over a hundred vehicles.

Quoting witnesses, Sub-Inspector of Rugganj Police Station Anisur Rahman said the university bus on its way to Narsingdi hit a sugar-laden truck coming from the opposite direction in Tarabo Khadun area at around 4:15pm.

Traffic movement came to a halt as the wreckage of the two vehicles remained stranded on the road following the incident creating a severe traffic jam. Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The injured were rushed to different hospitals including Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Students claimed that after the incident, helpers and drivers of different buses, assisted by law enforcers, attacked the students. However, police refuted the allegation.

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