

# Ershad rants again rationalising his martial law

## Claims Jatiya Party's birth was to restore democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Contradicting the fact that he had staged a military coup to overthrow elected president Justice Sattar and grabbed state power on March 24, 1982, former military dictator HM Ershad yesterday claimed that state power was "bestowed" upon him by the president who was "reluctant" to take it up.

"Had there been any other person in the post of army chief...he or she would have taken up the same responsibility," he told Jatiya Party's (JP) 8th National Council in the capital's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

He also claimed that JP was founded on January 1, 1986 "to restore democracy in the country" and would not have come into being had the major political parties joined, instead of boycotting, a national election he announced to hold in 1984 and "had the democratic journey been smooth and not stigmatised". "My plan was to return to the barracks after handing over power to elected representatives," said Ershad.

Following President Ziaur Rahman's assassination on May 30, 1981, the then army chief General Ershad staged the military coup before imposing martial law.

His autocratic rule came to an end though a mass uprising of political parties, including the Awami League and BNP, student organisations and professional bodies on December 6, 1990, now observed as "Democracy Restoration Day".

Yesterday he bemoaned the election system, saying it has been jeopardised due to utter failures of the Election Commission and that 84 people have so far been killed in the violence-prone union parishad elections and "none accepted the elections". He also demanded reforming the parliamentary election system, introducing an option to elect parties instead of candidates, claiming it would reduce related violence significantly. "...the parties will nominate their candidates as per the percentage of votes they get. Every party will get three MPs for one percent of votes," he said.

Ershad said JP was still in politics and in good shape overcoming many obstacles and adversities. "Jatiya Party was in power and now is the main opposition party. We will again return to power in the days to come. We all take a vow from here to work hard and strengthen the party to this end," he said.

JP Senior Co-Chairman and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Raushan Ershad also called upon leaders who left to join other parties to return. "...we will gladly accept you and honour you," she said.

JP Co-Chairman GM Quader urged leaders to unite setting aside misunderstandings and conflicts to make the party stronger and vibrant.

# 4th convocation of AUW held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Sixty-three students of Asian University for Women (AUW) were conferred graduate degrees yesterday at the university's 4th commencement held on its campus in the port city.

The 63 fresh graduates are from eight countries including Afghanistan, India, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

While talking to The Daily Star, the graduates reiterated their determination to work for women empowerment, gender equality and elimination of violence against women.

Dr Martin Rama, World Bank's (WB's) chief economist for the South Asia region, was present at the programme as the keynote speaker on behalf of WB President Dr Jim Kim, while Dr Dipu Moni, chair of the AUW Board of Trustees and former foreign minister, attended it as the chief guest.

Congratulating the graduates, Rama urged them to build themselves as change-makers and to work for ensuring gender equality throughout the world.

Dipu Moni urged them to advocate establishing the "values of tolerance." Among others, John Schroeder, dean of faculty of AUW, spoke.



Sylhet Press Club forms a human chain in front of Central Shaheed Minar at Chowhatta in the city yesterday, protesting the barbaric attack on five journalists by a squad of Yaba traders in Teknaf on Friday, and demanding exemplary punishment for them. The attackers swooped on the journalists and snatched their cameras and mobile phones when they went there to collect information on Yaba trade in the area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

# PROF REZAUL KILLING

## Probe at final stage

### Claims home boss without elaboration

RU CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday claimed without elaborating that investigations over Prof AFM Rezaul Karim Siddique's April 23 murder in Rajshahi city's Shalbagan area were in the final stage and would end soon.

Addressed a rally Rajshahi University Teachers' Association organised at the Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium protesting the murder, he also claimed that the killers were not being brought to the fore for the sake of investigations.

He assured ensuring justice and deploying additional police in Rajshahi, especially on the campus.

Urging teachers and students to keep faith on police Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said they were working internally and not making anything public for the sake of investigations.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid expressed solidarity with a seven-point demand, including a fair investigation and exemplary punishment, and urged law enforcing agencies to take preventive measures to stop recurrence.

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# EXPLORATION OF THREE OFFSHORE GAS BLOCKS Petrobangla in talks with three int'l oil companies

UNB, Dhaka

Petrobangla commenced negotiations yesterday with three international oil companies (IOCs) for three offshore gas blocks, targeting a conclusion by the end of the month.

The three deep sea blocks -- DS12, 16 and 21 -- are located at depths ranging from 20 to 200 metres, with area 3200 to 3600 square kilometers in the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh.

Petrobangla received formal proposals for the blocks in the form of request for proposals (RFP) from Singapore-based Kris Energy, South Korea's Daewoo International Corporation, and Norway's Statoil on May 7. An RFP is treated as the final offer.

Prior to submitting the RFPs, Kris Energy and Daewoo initially submitted expressions of interest (EOIs) for the deep-sea blocks in the last week in February in the form of unsolicited offers, responding to a

call from Petrobangla.

Statoil had long been embroiled in negotiations with the government over the blocks without any breakthrough. The Norwegian company submitted its own RFP on the same date to stay in the race.

"We'll start the negotiations with Daewoo on Sunday. Then separate negotiations will take place with the other two," Petrobangla director (PSC) Md Quamruzzaman told the news agency.

Petrobangla Chairman Ishtiaq Ahmed said the target was to conclude negotiations with the three IOCs within the current month.

"Our final target is to complete the awarding process by September to allow the companies to utilise the coming dry season for exploration purposes," he said.

Ishtiaq said through these talks the government would be trying to set a standard for future negotiations over the gas price and other issues in its deep-sea blocks.

# Allowing religion based

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establish a non-communal and democratic country and requested the council leaders to raise their voice for their seven-point demand.

He said, "The party in power, whichever party it is, remains in the forefront of grabbing land and properties of minorities."

Santu Larma alleged that the Awami League-led government was not sincere

about ensuring the rights of minorities and implementing the CHT peace treaty.

Rights activist Sultana Kamal said minority repression was rooted in "religion-based politics by the political parties".

"We have high expectations from those claiming to be pro-liberation. You have the responsibility to bring back secularism," she added.

# Fear now permeates lives

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have prevented them this time..." she said nervously.

"The situation is now under control. We have spoken to the both parties," said Abu Saleh Md Rayhan, deputy commis-

sioner (north) of Barisal Metropolitan Police, adding, "A case is pending, so no one can violate the court's order. If needed, police protection will be provided."

"We are strictly maintaining the law and order situation," he added.

# One issue shouldn't

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scholarships and sporting contacts. "Our shared history and religious affinity provides a foundation to build this relationship constructively and positively," he added.

Aizaz termed Nizami's execution "politically motivated" and said the war crime trials "flawed".

"As far as the recent trials (war crime trials) are concerned, we've made our views known. We believe these are politically motivated trials, we believe these are flawed trials targeting opposition leaders," he said.

However, India has supported the war crimes trial and said it was Bangladesh's internal issue.

"India has also been supportive of a judicial process to address pending issues of retributive justice for war crimes committed during the movement for the independence of Bangladesh in 1971," said External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Vikas Swarup after Nizami's execution.

Referring to the 1974 Tripartite Agreement, the Pakistan foreign secretary said the government of Bangladesh had "decided not to proceed with the trials as an act of clemency".

However, there was no mention in the agreement that the war criminals will continue to enjoy impunity and accordingly Bangladesh government tried the war criminals.

Aizaz said it was time for the two countries to pursue a forward-looking approach in the spirit of "forget and forgive".

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This is to notify all concerned that on 09-05-2016, I, FARZANA ARMAN, daughter of Late Abdul Hamid Mazumder and Late Ambia Khatoun, Date of Birth: 5th May, 1969, holding National Identity No. 2691649110044 and Passport No. AB3371913, have changed my name from FARZANA ARMAN to FARZANA MUNNY, by swearing an affidavit before the Notary Public at Dhaka, Bangladesh and 1st Class Magistrate Dhaka.

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### PREQUALIFICATION INVITATION NOTICE

InterContinental Dhaka invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible organizations only for supply of world class furniture, for Balaka Bar & Restaurant situated at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka.

All companies that wish to participate in the process are required to complete vendor pre-qualification that can be accessed from Material Manager's Office, InterContinental Dhaka up to 5:00pm Tuesday 04 June 2016. The firm is required to submit all the information electronically in PDF format to the email address of [bid@ruposhibanglahotel.com](mailto:bid@ruposhibanglahotel.com) your email must reach to us on or before 4:00pm (Bangladesh Standard Time) Sunday, June 05, 2016.

Only qualified organization will be invited to participate in the tender. Due to high number of applicant, if you do not hear from us within 3 weeks of the closing date, please consider yourself as unsuccessful.

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