

## Ershad advocates eight provinces

Written by Administrator

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Dhaka, Mar 13 (bdnews24.com)—Jatiya Party chairman and former president HM Ershad has said he still strongly favours the establishment of provincial government in Bangladesh, and has proposed dividing the country into eight parts.

"There is no other alternative to a provincial system for ensuring development and good governance in Bangladesh," Ershad told a seminar in the capital on Saturday.

The former president and martial law administrator, presenting a detailed plan, chalked out eight provinces: a Northern province, Barendra, Jahangirnagar, Jalalbad, Chattala, Mainamati, Jahanabad and Chandradwip.

According to the proposal, the provinces would each have a council of 600 members and a separate cabinet with a chief minister at the head. The central government would be a federal one.

The federal government would oversee the administration of the provinces by appointing provincial governors.

Under the proposal, the president would be the chief of the federal government and the prime minister would head the parliamentary government.

"I am raising the proposal as a party chief, but it is not presented from the party's point of view," Ershad told the seminar on 'Planning a provincial government system in Bangladesh'.

He said a provincial government system would ensure balanced development in the country. "It will reduce unemployment ... and the state of law and order will be greatly improved," he said.

Each province would have a High Court, which would function under the Supreme Court located in the federal capital Dhaka, said Ershad, who had previously attempted to decentralise the judiciary during his 1982-90 administration.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal founder Sirajul Alam Khan was first to propose a decentralised government through the introduction of a provincial system, during Ershad's rule.

Ershad referred to a number of steps taken during his administration. He promoted

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mahakumas to districts and thanas to upazilas or sub-districts.

Among others present at the seminar were JSD president ASM Abdur Rab, Krishak Sramik Janata League president Kader Siddiqui, Kalyan Party chairman Muhammad Ibrahim and former chief election commissioner justice Abdur Rouf.

Ershad asked all to work together to see the new system established.

### PROPOSED PROVINCES, CAPITALS

According to the proposal, the Northern province would be constituted of the existing districts of Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh. Its capital would be Rangpur, which is Ershad's own hometown.

Barendra would comprise Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Jaipurhat, Nawabganj, Pabna, Bogra and Sirajganj with capital Rajshahi.

The Jahangirnagar province would include Dhaka, Narayanganj, Narsinghdi, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Gazipur, Tangail, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Jamalpur and Sherpur; provincial capital at Mymensingh.

Jalalbad province would be formed of Sylhet, Moulavibazar, Sunamganj and Habiganj and capital at Sylhet.

Chattala will comprise Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachharhi, Rangmati and Bandarban; its capital would be Chittagong.

Mainamati province would have Feni, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Comilla, Chandpur and Brahmanbaria and the capital would be Comilla.

Jahanabad would constitute Khulna, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Magura, Rajbari, Faridpur, Jessore, Narail, Satkhira and Bagerhat; with the provincial capital at Khulna.

Chandradwip would include Barisal, Pirojpur, Jhalkati, Patuakhali, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Bhola and Barguna, with the capital at Barisal.

### 6 REGIONS, GOING ON 7

Bangladesh, with a population of around 150 million inhabiting an area of just under 1.5 million sq km, is currently divided into 64 districts and six administrative regions - Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal.

The government recently announced that Rangpur would become the country's seventh region.

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