

Dr Kamal says ordinance should've been put in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Kamal Hossain, an architect of the country's constitution, has said the government should have placed before the Jatiya Sangsad the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance, 2003 for debate and its enactment within the purview of the constitution.

He was giving his reaction to The Daily Star immediately after approval of the ordinance by the cabinet yesterday.

Dr Kamal mentioned that the Constitution says everybody is equal in the eye of law and has the right to seek justice. Referring to Article 46

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Joint forces put above the law

President pens Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday indemnified all persons for all their acts during the countrywide joint drive against crime.

A special cabinet meeting approved an ordinance styled Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003 yesterday afternoon, giving legal cover to the acts done during the drive by the joint forces and civil administration between October 16 and January 9.

President Iajuddin Ahmed signed the ordinance last night.

"It is necessary and pertinent in the interest of the people to indemnify all the persons, including the members of the armed forces and law

enforcers, for all the acts done during the joint drive from October 16, 2002 till the working day of January 9, 2003," says the ordinance.

The ordinance precludes any move to seek justice in the court of law for custodial deaths and human rights violations during the countrywide clampdown on crime.

In the next parliamentary session, the ordinance would be placed in the form of a bill, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told a press briefing at his ministry last night.

"The ordinance was issued after working hours," he added.

When asked whether the indemnity contradicts the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution, he said, "There is a provision in the

constitution to provide indemnity."

This is the second indemnity in the country's history after the infamous ordinance of 1975 that indemnified the persons involved in the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his family members and others on August 15, 1975.

The Khondker Mushtak Ahmed government, which came to power following the bloody coup, issued the 1975 ordinance. Later, the ordinance was ratified in the parliament in 1979 with the fifth amendment of the constitution that gave legitimacy to the military rule of Ziaur Rahman.

In 1996, however, the parliament repealed the infamous indemnity

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Army pullout from tomorrow

REZAUL KARIM

The government will start pulling out the army tomorrow afternoon although the current anti-crime 'Operation Clean Heart' by the joint forces will go ahead, highly placed sources said.

A special cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair yesterday made the decision. It also approved the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003, making army action during the anti-crime crackdown immune to legal challenge. Initially, the troops will be stationed in the divisional

headquarters and cantonments. Some camps will be set up in places like Barisal where there is no cantonment.

"Troops will remain ready to swing into operation at the call of the civil administration. The current drive will carry on as long as deemed fit," said a senior army official on condition of anonymity. An influential cabinet minister confirmed it.

Around 24,023 army men and 339 Navy personnel along with paramilitary BDR, police and Ansar joined in the 'Operation Clean Heart' drive from

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Ordinance to curb people's rights: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) has sharply reacted to the cabinet's approval of an ordinance indemnifying army actions during the on-going anti-crime operation.

Termining the 'Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance, 2003' anti-constitution and anti-fundamental rights, the AL noted that the ordinance would curb peoples' rights to legal recourse.

Giving an instant reaction on the approval of the ordinance, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told a press conference in the city yesterday that "promulgation of the ordinance goes just before the parliament goes into session bears ominous signs."

Jalil said the AL wanted to discuss

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COLD-FOOT WAIT...



Braving the bone-chilling wind, children line up before the Government Laboratory School in the city for admission test yesterday. Similar was the sight at all eight government schools, bracketed into category A. The cold front is highly likely to continue for a few more days and the applicants for category B and C schools may have to go through similar ordeal on January 11 and 13.

PHOTO: STAR

Mercury dips to 6°C as sun hides in fog

Eight more die in Pabna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Temperature hit a low, as the mercury dipped to six degrees Celsius, said a weathercast yesterday.

The so-far-lowest temperature this winter has been recorded at six degrees Celsius in Syedpur and at 10.7 in the capital.

Earlier, Srimangal recorded temperature as low as 2.8 on February 4, 1968 and the capital 4.5 on February 18, 1953.

Meanwhile, eight people died from cold in Pabna in the last 48 hours until 6.00pm yesterday.

Reports said many deaths from cold, especially in river basins, were not reported. Thick fog and chilling weather made travelling to the places difficult.

The capital recorded temperature low at 6.4 on January 4, 1978, 6.5 on January 3, 1995, 6.8 on January 13, 1989 and 7.2 on January 22, 1993.

The meteorological office forecast a further fall of one to two degrees Celsius in temperature in 24 hours from 6.00pm yesterday, particularly in northern and north-western regions.

The met office also predicted thick fog in many places of Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and some regions of Tangail during the period. Cold wave is likely to sweep across the same regions and some parts of Mymensingh for the next three days, the weathercast added.

Our correspondent, Nishith Ranjan Saha in Pabna, reported that eight people, including two children, died from cold in 48 hours until 6.00pm yesterday, raising the death toll to 32 in the district.

Eight-month-old Rafel died Wednesday night in Kyodanga village under Bhangura Upazila and

one-year-old Zahid died the same day in Mathurapur village under Chalmahar Upazila.

Fazlul, 55, died Wednesday in Manikdia village under Sujannagar Upazila, and Mintu, 65, died yesterday in Shalgaria under Pabna Sadar.

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COLD CHRONICLE

Year	Date	Temperature in Celsius	Place
1990	January 2	5.3	Ishwardi
1991	January 16	5.2	Rajshahi
1992	January 3	6.5	Dinajpur
1993	January 27	4.4	Ishwardi
1994	January 20	7.0	Srimangal
1995	January 4	4.0	Srimangal
1996	January 31	5.8	Ishwardi
1997	January 25	5.0	Srimangal
1998	January 11	5	4
Chuanganga			
1999	January 3	6.5	Ishwardi
2000	January 8	5.5	Ishwardi
2001	January 21	5.2	Srimangal
2002	January 9	6.0	Syedpur

'Domestic event cooked up in New Delhi'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka yesterday said a reported move by New Delhi to deport 20 million 'illegal Bangladeshis' from India is a 'domestic event made up in Delhi'.

"They made their own assessment (of the so-called Bangladeshis staying illegally in India). Any country has the right to do its own assessment," Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury told the weekly press briefing at the foreign ministry.

He said Bangladesh is monitoring

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Bengal wants no part as Delhi cops buckle up

Indian media ditch alien deportation plan

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

While the Delhi police buckle up to detect and deport 'illegal Bangladeshis and Pakistanis', leading Indian newspapers have dismissed the BJP-led central government's move as unsubstantiated and unwarranted.

Meanwhile, the Left Front government of the West Bengal has

made it clear that it would not attempt to 'throw out' any Bangla-speaking people irrespective of their residence status.

At a rally in Kolkata on Wednesday, Biman Bose, a CPI (M) politburo member said the centre should now concentrate on improving the economy instead of finding out illegal immigrants.

Bengal would help locate illegal

Pakistanis but not work on the Bangla-speaking people, he said.

The centre's move would lead to a major upheaval for the state, he said.

Meanwhile, Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Vijay Kapoor told reporters Wednesday evening that those involved in rag-picking and removing scrap materials would be

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Bangabandhu's homecoming day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The homecoming day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be observed across the country today in a befitting manner.

On this day in 1972, the Father of the Nation returned home from Pakistan after nine months of imprisonment during the country's Liberation War.

Bangabandhu was arrested from his Dhanmondi residence in the city on the night of March 25, 1971, taken to the then West Pakistan and kept in

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Project secular spirit in films, literature: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged litterateurs and other intellectuals to take the right steps to enrich and project the nation's cultural heritage in its true secular spirit.

She hoped that the resilience, magnanimity, ability and, above all, the spirit of secularism of the people of Bangladesh are reflected in literature, films and other mass media.

"Only negative and frustrating issues cannot be the subjects of writings and films. Great ideologies, sound thinking and matters evoking good spirit should be the objective of our literature and films," she said.

She observed that a positive image of the nation could only be established in the world community through proper reflection of such culture in arts, films and writings.

The prime minister was addressing the inaugural function of national observance of rural poet Jasimuddin's birth centenary at the Osmani Memorial Hall.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed,

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