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Govt asked to place CrPC ordinance to SC by tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday asked the government to place the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 by tomorrow to complete the legal process of separation of the judiciary from the executive.

The order came after Attorney General Fida M Kamal sought time for submitting the gazette book on the amended CrPC.

Earlier, the apex court on February 1 ordered the government to come up with an amended CrPC within February 12.

The attorney general told the court that the president has promulgated the ordinance and that it was already in the press for printing. He said the gazette would be placed before the SC as soon as the printing is done.

He then produced a document in favour of the president's signature on the ordinance. "The Supreme Court will have to issue a notification for implementation of the ordinance," added the chief law officer of the state.

President Iajuddin Ahmed signed the CrPC (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 on Sunday night.

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AL scraps fatwa deal with bigots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday cancelled the controversial five-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) over issuance of fatwas with Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM).

AL also cancelled all deals, agreements and seat sharing with different political parties in the grand alliance including 14-party coalition, which had been made prior to the cancellation of January 22 parliamentary polls.

"We had made some deals and agreements with some parties as part of our election strategy centring the January 22 poll. Since the election was cancelled, those deals and agreements have automatically been cancelled," AL Acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star yesterday.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil signed the MoU going to the Azimpur residence of BKM Chairman Azizul Haque on December 23 last year, which stipulated that certified alevs (Islamic clerics) would have the authority to issue fatwas in the

country if the grand electoral alliance could come to power.

The other points of the MoU included promises to impose a bar on enacting any law that would go against Quranic values, initiation of steps for proper implementation of the government initiative to recognise the degrees awarded by Quami Madrasas, and a ban on criticisms of Prophet Muhammad.

With AL signing the deal to bring BKM into the fold of the grand alliance, it faced severe criticisms from different national and international quarters and even from inside the party.

The deal also gave rise to grievances and frustrations inside AL and other components of the grand alliance, and disappointed many other political parties, socio-cultural organisations and people of all walks of life.

At the time the AL general secretary repeatedly criticised the media saying that they misinterpreted the deal and claiming that the deal was not against the concept of secularism.

Quader, who spoke as an AL spokesman yesterday, however

said the political unity among the components of the grand alliance will continue.

"But all the written deals or agreements and seat sharing with all the parties have been cancelled," said the AL leader adding that they will think afresh about signing deals or reaching agreements with the grand alliance partners in a new situation when a fresh schedule for the upcoming parliamentary polls will be announced.

Asked whether they will sign the MoU again with BKM, the AL leader brushed aside the possibility and said they have not thought of it yet. As the election was cancelled, their strategies will change in the new situation, he said.

Asked when the decision of cancelling the MoU was taken, Quader declined to comment.

But sources said AL President Sheikh Hasina instructed Quader yesterday morning to issue a media statement about the cancellation of the MoU.

Asked whether AL informed BKM about the cancellation of the MoU, Quader declined to comment.

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Execution of militant Saifullah stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed execution of condemned militant Khaled Saifullah until February 19.

Chamber judge of the appellate division of the SC Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury delivered the order following a review petition of Khaled Saifullah for reconsidering the death sentence against him.

The court also directed for hearing the matter at the full bench of the SC.

On November 28 last year, the full bench of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain rejected the petitions of six of the seven sentenced to death Islamist militants including Saifullah seeking permission to appeal against a High Court (HC) judgement upholding the sentences.

The seven had been convicted

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Detained political leaders shifted to different prisons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The jail authorities last night shifted the detained political leaders to different jails from Dhaka Central Jail, whom the joint forces had arrested since the declaration of state of emergency on charges of corruption and for patronising criminals.

The high profile detainees were taken out of Dhaka Central Jail after 8:15pm and the 10 minibuses

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

FLOATING PARTY Yunus getting people's views on his plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus is getting people's responses after writing an open letter on Sunday seeking views on his plan to float a political party.

Staffs of Centre for Development Communications (CDC) at Moghbazar in Dhaka received people's opinions

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Falu shown arrested in govt property misuse case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained former BNP lawmaker and businessman Mosaddak Ali Falu was shown arrested yesterday in a case filed against him for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

DEC 2006 BANKING RESULT

Loan default soars 15 pc in a year

Oriental bad loan leads to PCB losses

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The volume of defaulted loans in the banking system rose by 14.78 percent to stand at Tk 20,098 crore in December 2006 from Tk 17,509 crore in December 2005.

The total increase in defaulted loans is Tk 2,589 crore. The amount of defaulted loans in national commercial banks (NCBs) increased 15 percent or Tk 1,479 crore while private commercial banks (PCBs) saw an increase of 23 percent or Tk

822 crore, recent statistics of the Bangladesh Bank show.

Defaulted loans in development financial institutions (DFIs) rose by Tk 308 crore or 8 percent. Only foreign commercial banks (FCBs) managed to reduce loan default, bringing it down by 19 percent or Tk 20 crore.

Out of the four NCBs -- Sonali, Janata and Rupali -- saw rise in loan defaults, while Agrani Bank managed to curb it.

Sonali Bank sources said the

bank was forced to lend money to prioritised sectors marked by the government and those loans could not be recovered on time.

Janata Bank sources said the bank could not recover a number of new loans that had been sanctioned due to political interference in the bank's affairs.

The government plans to sell its stake in Rupali Bank the loan portfolio of which had been marked as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Ex-BNP MP Salahuddin surrenders to court

Azad Siddiqui held in Tangail; cases filed against former Kushtia MP Shahidul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP lawmaker from Demra Salahuddin Ahmed surrendered before a Dhaka court while joint forces detained Krishak Sramik Janata League President Abdul Kader Siddiqui's brother Azad Siddiqui, a top criminal on police list, in Tangail yesterday.

Meanwhile, seven cases were filed against former BNP lawmaker from Kushtia-2 constituency Shahidul Islam and his brother Bheramara municipality Chairman Towhidul Islam in Bheramara and Mirpur police



Salahuddin Ahmed

stations in Kushtia yesterday.

The joint forces also arrested Sylhet district AL General Secretary (GS) Iftekhar Hossain Shamim, Dupchanchia upazila BNP GS and municipality chairman Mohammad Jahangir Alam.

Meantime, the home ministry yesterday said members of the armed forces, police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 1,596 people across the country in 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

Of them, 67, including 41 criminals, were arrested in army operations and were handed over to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

US team says polls critical for future

UNB, Dhaka

A US delegation yesterday observed that elections are critical for the future of Bangladesh and expressed their interest in providing support in this regard.

"Obviously, the elections are critical for the future of this country and we look forward to supporting whatever and wherever we can," head of the two-member team Daudus McCullough told reporters after their meeting with the newly appointed Chief election commissioner (CEC).

They met CEC ATM Shamsul Huda at his office and discussed the reconstituted Election Commission's expectations and challenges ahead.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha demolishes an illegally built market at Azampur in Uttara in the capital yesterday.

TITAS GAS LEAKAGE Experts for quick step to avert blow-out

SHARIER KHAN

A group of eight experts recommended immediate remedial action to stop uncontrolled gas leakage from the country's biggest gas field Titas to avert a blow-out or similar disaster, a competent source said.

In their primary study into the gas leakage spreading over an area of about 1,000 acres of land in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila, the experts expressed their belief that the gas leakage originated from the main Titas gas field reservoir near location number three, an area in the Sadar upazila.

The study submitted on Sunday to Petrobangla noted that it

seemed the leaked gas was flowing through a well path and then at some point in the underground it was spreading horizontally and gushing out from various points of the ground.

The experts who include three senior geologists and five engineers from Petrobangla and outside suggested immediate appointment of a world-class consultant to deal with this kind of situation.

They also suggested immediate mobilisation of a drilling rig owned by Bapex to the troubled site.

They also recommended hiring a world-class contractor for logging the troubled well there. Well

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Yunus for Dhaka-Delhi-Islamabad highway link

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from Kolkata

Prof Muhammad Yunus has suggested building a highway network connecting India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and introducing "Saarc passports" for people of the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

The Nobel laureate, now in Kolkata to receive Shera Bangali (Best Bengali) award, made the suggestion addressing a press conference yesterday. He also called for introduction of "Saarc scholarships" at the universities of

the region.

Replying to a question, Prof Yunus said the deadlock in Indo-Pak relations is holding back strengthening of the spirit of Saarc.

"The future of Saarc hinges on improved relations between India and Pakistan. As there is no amicable resolution to the disputes between these two countries, our work as Saarc members is not complete," Yunus, also the founder of Grameen Bank, told the press conference.

On India's repeated charges that fundamentalist and terrorist groups operate against India from

SEE PAE 15 COL 6

Double blow for a father in penury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Sharif, a day labourer, probably had no idea that poverty would force him to do the unthinkable, until he had to hand over his 10-year old daughter's body to a charity organisa-

tion for burial declaring it 'unclaimed'.

He did not have the money to take his daughter's body to their village home in Bhola for a burial.

The curse of poverty felt even

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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