

JSD, Ganotantri Party to ask EC to ban Jamaat from polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) and Ganotantri Party will ask the Election Commission (EC) to disqualify Jamaat-e-Islami and other religion based parties from contesting the polls.

The leaders of JSD and Ganotantri Party at a meeting yesterday also decided that they would ask the EC not to register these parties, which had opposed the country's Liberation War.

The other proposals of the parties include taking stern steps against loan defaulters, war criminals and terrorists so that they cannot participate in the next general elections.

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HC declares Mintoo's detention under SPA illegal

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday declared illegal the detention of ex-FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo under the Special Powers Act (SPA).

A two-member bench, headed by Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, passed the order upon a petition.

The court also ordered the government to release Mintoo forthwith, if he is not wanted in any other criminal cases.

Earlier on August 7, the High Court, upon a habeas corpus petition filed by his son, had declared illegal the detention of Mintoo under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) and granted him bail. It had also stayed the operation of pre-emptive detention order under the SPA.

Receive Iftaar & Sehri timings everyday this Ramadan

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Sehri, Iftar timing				
Ramadan	Sep	Sehri	Iftar	
7	20		6-00	
8	21	4-27	5-59	
9	22	4-28	5-58	

Prayer Timing		
September 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-27	4-37
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-00	6-15
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Top defaulters slow to repay NCB loans

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Recovery of defaulted loans of nationalised commercial Banks (NCBs) from the top 20 defaulters slightly rose to 15 percent of the target in the first six months of the current year while that from others stood at 51 percent.

Besides, loan disbursement of the NCBs declined by 0.42 percent during the period.

The central bank on Monday shared the NCBs' six-month financial review with their top officials. It suggested boosting loan disbursement to private sector especially agriculture sector.

Sources in the NCBs said recovery defaulted loans from top 20 defaulters has not increased much as most of them filed writ petitions with court delaying the process.

Recovery of defaulted loans from others increased significantly due to the government's anti-corruption drive.

Although the NCBs' loan disbursement declined during the first six months of this year, it is now increasing due to government initiatives for restoring businessmen's confidence, the sources mentioned.

According to central bank data, the four NCBs realised only Tk

39.29 crore from top 20 defaulters during January to June against the target of Tk 255.2 crore this year. And Tk 481.98 crore was realised from other defaulters during the same period with this year's target being Tk 946 crore.

Sonali Bank, the largest NCB, managed to recover Tk 3.29 crore from top 20 defaulters in the first six months, which is only 1.77 percent of the year's target of Tk 169.4 crore.

Agrani Bank could recover Tk 1.16 crore against the target of Tk 19.8 crore and Rupali Bank Tk 1.94 crore against the target of Tk 38.5 crore.

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Rifles personnel sell essentials at fair prices in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday.

Commonwealth asks Musharraf to quit army

Pak govt warns of "extreme decisions" if opposition quits parliament

AFP, Rawalpindi

Commonwealth chief Don McKinnon yesterday urged President Pervez Musharraf to keep his promise to quit as army chief, as the opposition stepped up efforts to thwart the Pakistani ruler's re-election.

Musharraf said through his lawyer on Tuesday that he would step down as head of the army, but only if he wins a new five-year term

as president in a parliamentary ballot due in the coming weeks.

McKinnon, in Pakistan on a three-day visit, held talks with Musharraf on political developments including the presidential poll and general elections expected by early 2008, a Commonwealth statement said.

"The secretary general reiterated the Commonwealth's position with respect to the president's

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Nepal's Maoists launch move to oust monarch

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoists yesterday kicked off their controversial campaign to oust the monarch, one day after the ex-rebels stormed out of government in a blow to the Himalayan country's peace process.

The ultra-leftists said they had started a "door-to-door campaign" to lobby against King Gyanendra and his two-century-old dynasty, to be followed up by strikes and street protests that could dramatically raise tensions here.

"All our sister organisations will be mobilised from Wednesday to ensure the constituent assembly elections are unsuccessful," Ananta, a deputy commander in the Maoist army, told AFP.

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5 cops held for robbing a man of Tk 2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five police detectives and a police informant were arrested yesterday on charge of robbing a person of Tk 1.90 lakh and some foreign currencies.

The arrestees are Sub Inspector (SI) Billal Hossain, four constables Ferdous Zaman, Humayun Kabir, Rashidul Haque and Rabiul Alam of Detective Branch of police, and the informant Nasir Uddin.

Police is also conducting operations to arrest another accused police informant Shahin.

Sources said a team of six to seven policemen led by SI Billal held one Ibrahim in front of Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association office at Purana Paltan

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AL leaders move to forge greater unity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior Awami League (AL) leaders, concerned over the unity of the party, set the wheels in motion to arrange informal talks for a more united AL.

The recent chain of events that created misunderstandings among the leaders have prompted the senior leaders to arrange an iftar party soon to bridge the gap between each other, a number AL leaders told The Daily Star.

The senior AL leaders have also requested Zillur Rahman, party's acting president, to hold a presidium meeting to discuss various issues including holding dialogues with the Election

Commission (EC) and finalising a strategy for the unity of the party.

The leaders said they would hold informal talks within a couple of days with a number of presidium members of the party including Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed and Motia Chowdhury. In the meantime, they have asked those presidium members not to make any comment or carry out any political activity that might create division in the party.

Unity in AL came under question again on September 12 when four senior AL leaders -- Acting General Secretary Mukul Bose, Organising Secretary Abdul Mannan, AKM Jahangir Hossain

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Major parties to get their traditional poll symbols

Says EC Sohul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major political parties would receive their usual election symbols that they had been using in elections for a long time, Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain said yesterday.

During the symbol allocation, each major political party would receive the priority in getting the symbol it had been using in elections for a while, the election commissioner said while speaking with reporters in his office.

Sohul also said, "Election symbols will be assigned to political

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Govt ups prices of fertiliser

FARDAUS MOBAROK

On the eve of Irri-Boro season, the government has raised prices of triple super phosphate (TSP) and potash around Tk 3 per kilogram, which many said would add to the farmers' sufferings.

Sources at the agriculture ministry said the prices of TSP and potash have been raised following a request from Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation.

Fertiliser pricing and monitoring committee of the agriculture ministry set the new prices on Thursday. Ministry sources said the committee was forced to raise the prices following price hike on the international

market.

Meanwhile, three months into the fiscal year 2007-08, the government is yet to decide on subsidy on fertiliser which will cause immense sufferings to the farmers during the upcoming rabi cultivation season.

The price of TSP has been raised to Tk 20.20 per kilogram from Tk 17.50 while the price of potash has been raised to Tk 18.11 from Tk 15.50. According to Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA), the price of a sack of 50kg TSP has been set at Tk 1,009.09 and the price of potash of the same amount has been set at Tk 905.65 from Tk 774.55.

There is a demand for 4.76 lakh

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Tigers take on Pakistan today

Four teams eye semis spots

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh take on high-flying Pakistan today in their last Super Eights match of the ICC World Twenty20 Championship at the Newlands Stadium in Cape Town.

The match, inconsequential for both sides, will be telecast live on ESPN from 6pm.

But it is a big day for the tournament, as two virtual quarterfinals -- India v South Africa and Sri Lanka v Australia -- will take place at 2pm and 10pm respectively.

Both Australia and Sri Lanka have won one Super Eights match

each but were well beaten by Pakistan. As a result, the winners of this match, to be played in Cape Town, will go through as the second team from Group F.

In the other group, South Africa have one foot in the semifinals with two wins out of two games. But if India win at Kingsmead, then the two top net run-rates between the hosts, India and New Zealand will go through as in that case, all teams would finish with four points each. England, like Bangladesh, are already out of contention.

In yesterday's first match in

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