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SC stays law ministry move

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed the operation of a law ministry circular requesting the district judges not to ask for courtrooms, manpower, ejlash of judicial magistrates, transport and other logistic supports following separation of the judiciary.

Apparently taking the ministry's posture as a non-cooperation ahead of separating the judiciary from the executive control with effect from November, the apex court delivered the stay order on the operation of the circular dated October 24.

The Supreme Court, which reopened yesterday after a three-week Eid vacation, issued a suo moto show-cause notice, asking the law ministry to explain why the impugned circular "should not be declared inoperative".

The ministry has been directed to respond to the show-cause notice by October 30.

CABINET OKAYS MOBILE COURT ORDINANCE

Executive magistrates cannot be sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Executive magistrates to be empowered with the right to convene impromptu mobile courts and to mete out instant punishments for certain offences, are also to be exempt from being prosecuted for any inadvertent harm done to the accused by their decisions while acting in good faith.

The council of advisers yesterday approved a new law termed, Mobile Court Ordinance 2007, barring people from suing the executive magistrates and giving the magistrates some judicial powers for meting out impromptu justice.

After approving the draft of the ordinance in principle on Saturday, the cabinet yesterday approved additions to some sections,

empowering the executive magistrates to confiscate illegal goods and to take decisions regarding confiscated perishable goods.

A change was brought to the final draft of the law fixing the district and sessions judge's court, instead of the chief judicial magistrate's court, as the court of appeal against any order of the executive magistrates, according to sources.

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed presided over the meeting in his office, where apart from the advisers, the cabinet secretary, the secretary to the CA's office, and other secretaries concerned were present.

The sources said the ordinance might be promulgated today following an approval from the president.

The ordinance gives executive

magistrates a limited amount of power to take into cognisance any crime as soon as it commences, to convene on-the-spot impromptu trials, and to mete out instant punishments to maintain law and order and to run anti-crime drives effectively. They may carry out such activities anywhere in the country.

While maintaining law and order and carrying out anti-crime activities, any executive magistrate or nominated public servant may take into cognisance any crime occurring in front of them. They may also take into cognisance any suspicion that a crime is about to take place, and may take actions on the basis of that cognisance.

The executive magistrates may later frame charges under section

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Hasina files writ petition against graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of bringing a Tk3 crore graft case filed against her and six prominent personalities under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case on September 2.

A HC division bench in a day or two is likely to hear the petition in which Hasina prayed for staying the proceedings of the case.

ACC Deputy Director MM Sabbir Hasan lodged the case with Tejgaon Police Station alleging that Hasina and six others on mutual understanding and through their influence helped a foreign company and its local partners win a deal for setting up a barge-mount 100MW power plant in Khulna for Tk3 crore kickback.

The ACC filed the graft case

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Potato farmers stare at loss for fertiliser crisis

ZAHANGIR ALAM BISWAS, Manikganj

Potato farmers at sadar upazila in Manikganj's Ghior upazila fear they may make a loss of an estimated Tk 20 crore this year because of fertiliser crisis in the planting season.

This correspondent talked to some farmers of the union on Saturday who complained that though the potato-planting season is nearing an end, they have not been able to start the planting for fertiliser shortage.

They said potato is the cash cow for them as the vegetable earns them around Tk 70,000 in profit per bigha, adding that they sold just about 2.5 lakh maund of tuber for Tk 20 crore last year, the amount

they risk losing this year.

Farmers at Mailagi village told this correspondent that sub-assistant officer at Agriculture Extension Department, Rokeya Begum, along with fertiliser dealers and acting union parishad chairman, came to the village on Wednesday to hand out fertiliser, only to go back for lack of sufficient stock with them.

The farmers alleged that the authorities carted in only 200 sacks of fertiliser against a demand of 600 sacks.

When contacted, Rokeya said she was allocated 500 sacks of urea and was handing in slips to the farmers to receive it on November 10.

One farmer said he planned to crop potato on 30 bighas of land

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Polls to be held within EC timeframe

Says Iajuddin

UNB, Dhaka

Inviting international observers to observe the next polls in Bangladesh, President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday reiterated that the upcoming general election would be held within the timeframe set by the Election Commission.

He stated this as outgoing Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See to Bangladesh Monsignor Paul Tschang In-Nam made a farewell call on him at Bangabhaban.

The president appreciated him for his sincere endeavour in strengthening relations between Bangladesh and Vatican City during his five-year tenure in the country.

He stated that the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the Holy See are excellent.

"Bangladesh is maintaining

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Siddons made new cricket coach

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's desperate search for a national coach is set for a happy ending when Australian Jamie Siddons arrives in Dhaka today to sign a two-year deal.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) revealed the much-awaited news last night, two days before their self-imposed October 31 deadline.

"I am thrilled to announce that I have accepted an offer from the BCB to coach Bangladesh," 43-year-old Siddons said in a message to the cricket board. He will be in town for two days.

Described by legendary Steve

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BARAPUKURIA COAL MINE

Govt counting loss as production cost triples

SHARIER KHAN

While the Barapukuria mine's coal production cost nearly tripled from the original estimates, the government is preparing to pay \$8.4 million to China as the seventh instalment of the supplier's credit under which this mine was built.

Competent sources said last month the government also drastically reduced the required bank guarantee to \$3.5 million from at least \$15 million for the Chinese developers to ensure completion of the Barapukuria Coalmine.

This was done under "special consideration", although the project's consultant had observed in a list of unfinished tasks of the mine that the CMC-led Chinese consortium was yet to complete various development tasks worth \$15 million. The CMC had been trying to have this guarantee reduced from last year.

Sources said while reducing the bank guarantee, the authorities have shown that a set of mining equipment worth \$5.5 million that

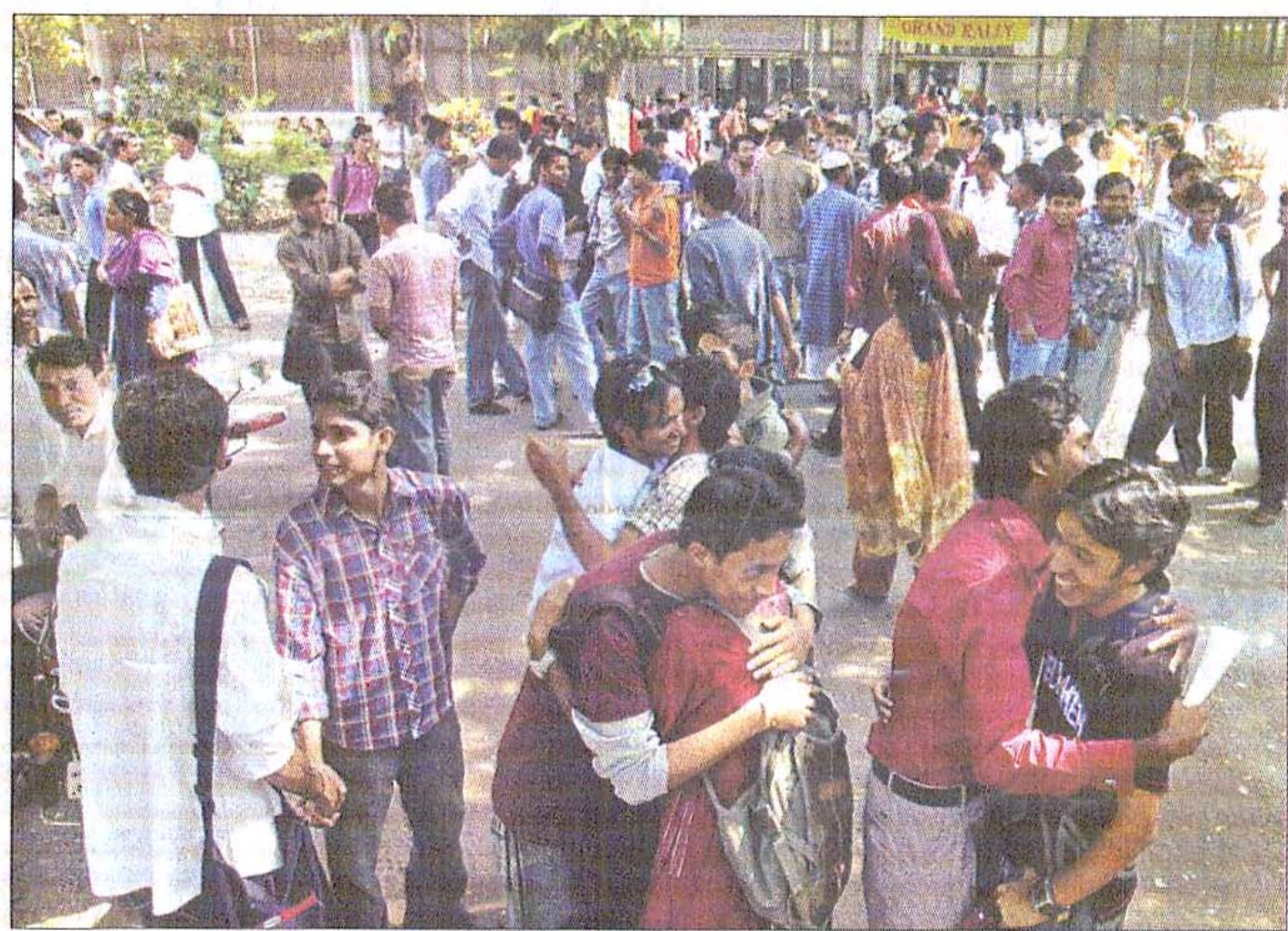
was stuck in mine phase-1110 have been recovered. But in reality, these equipment remain stuck in phase-1110, which was sealed off following emission of poisonous gas.

The consultant's list of incomplete tasks is also incomplete, sources said. "It did not mention that the working and environmental conditions prevailing in the mine are nowhere near any international standard," said a competent source.

Sources said even though the government is very much concerned about the bad financial, technical and environmental shape of the mine, it has not even conveyed its dissatisfaction to the Chinese government about the poor performance of the Chinese consortium.

"The CMC-led consortium is now seriously doing its best to improve the condition of the mine. On October 12, the CMC president visited Dhaka and met Petrobangla expressing his all-out support for making this mine fully functional."

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Dhaka University campus buzzing with students as it reopens yesterday after over two months when it was closed sine die.

DU, RU reopen after 2 months

STAR REPORT

Academic activities at Dhaka University (DU), Rajshahi University (RU) and Jagannath University resumed yesterday after an unscheduled closure of over two months following student unrest on the campuses during August 20-22.

The campuses of DU and Jagannath University witnessed a lively presence of huge number of students on the opening day, while thin attendance was found on RU campus.

The public universities and colleges were closed sine die and dormitories were vacated following a government directive after violent student unrest spread on the campuses late August.

The situation at the public universities is gradually becoming normal with the reopening of the closed campuses. Jahangirnagar University and Chittagong University reopened earlier this week.

DHAKA UNIVERSITY

The DU campus was buzzing with thousands of students yesterday as

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War heroes, organisations blast Jamaat remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-political organisations continued their condemnation of the comments by Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed in which he claimed that his party did not act against the country's independence and denied outright the existence of any war criminals here.

Meantime, a number of decorated war heroes yesterday pledged to go all-out and wage a legal battle against anti-liberation war elements in the country including leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Saying his remarks smack of extreme arrogance and deceit, they demanded trial of Jamaat leaders, proven collaborators of the 1971 genocide, by forming a special tribunal and a ban on politics based on religion and fundamentalism.

The Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) expressed shock at Mojaheed's observation and said such assertions are baseless and imaginary.

The FNB, in a statement, said his is a complete denial of the liberation war, the genocide and the war crimes.

"This is a heinous attempt to divert attention from the ongoing efforts of the country to establish good governance, healthy democratic practices and alleviate poverty," the statement read.

The FNB urged the people to remain alert of such scandalous attempt to distort history.

Samajik Protirodh Committee said the comments of Mojaheed and Shah Abdul Hannan, a well-known Jamaat sympathiser, are false and misleading.

In a statement, they said the

Jamaat-e-Islami and members of its organisations during the liberation war -- al-Badr, al-Shams and Peace Committee -- were involved in mass killings, rape, arson, looting and numerous other atrocities.

The country's intellectuals were killed, with the direct complicity of the Jamaat and its front organisations, on the eve of achieving victory, they said.

They demanded trial of the people and parties involved in war crime and a ban on religion-based politics.

Ain O Shalish Kendra expressed surprise and resentment over Mojaheed's comments and said criminals usually try to prove themselves as innocent and it is usual not to get true confession from a party like the Jamaat-e-Islami, a press release said.

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Judgment in graft case against Harris Nov 4

Court asks for probe report on Tarique by Nov 28

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement of a graft case against Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, will be delivered in his absence on November 4.

A Dhaka court will decide today whether charges against detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda, his brother and four others in connection with a Tk 2 lakh extortion case will be framed or not.

Besides, another Dhaka court yesterday again directed the investigation officer (IO) of a graft case against BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman and two

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AL to go for polls freeing Hasina

Says Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will participate in the next election under the leadership of freed Sheikh Hasina.

"After freeing Sheikh Hasina from jail, we will participate in the election," said AL acting President Zillur Rahman at a press briefing at his Gulshan home in the capital yesterday.

He said this while talking to reporters on the first anniversary of the last day of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government, when the country witnessed violence on the streets that left at least 12 people dead.

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NOTICE

Please turn to page 11 for Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim's eloquent three-point proposal for how to resolve, once and for all, the issue of war crimes and war criminals, that has plagued Bangladesh since independence.



Gen Moeen returns

UNB, Dhaka

Army chief General Moeen U Ahmed returned home yesterday after a two-week visit to the UK, USA and Macau.

General Moeen left Dhaka for London on October 15 en route to USA. He went to USA at the invitation of the Harvard School of Government in Boston where he addressed an assembly of teachers and students.

During his tour of London, New York, Florida and Boston, the army chief met Bangladesh expatriates and the press and responded to questions on current situation in Bangladesh.

Cops to obey court orders in 7 days

Move to cut corruption as investigators often linger cases to make money

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) authorities have directed officers-in-charge (OC) of all police stations in the metropolis to dispose of court orders within seven days of receiving them.

The move has been taken as part of the caretaker government's

efforts to remove corruption from the police department as Sub-Inspectors (SI) assigned to investigate cases following court orders often linger the probes and intimidate both the victims and offenders for bribe. They often submit biased inquiry reports favouring at times the offenders.

People file cases with the courts

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on political matters, land ownership and even assault. The courts then order OCs to investigate the matter and report it back within a certain period of time.

Court sources said in many cases the police delay submission of the investigation reports to the court even for years. Sometimes

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

NAP also for disqualifying war criminals from polls

UNB, Dhaka

National Awami Party (NAP-Mozaffar) at its dialogue with the Election Commission (EC) yesterday pleaded for declaring war criminals and anti-liberation individuals "disqualified" from contesting elections.

The proposal was submitted by a 10-member NAP delegation led by its General Secretary Enamul Haque which sat with the EC to

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Grateful thanks from the family of the late Mr. ASHK Sadique



We wish to thank all who had stood by our family at the time of need and extended their sympathies. The number of people who helped us are too numerous to name individually. We are profoundly grateful for the outpouring of support from friends, family, colleagues and the heartfelt show of respect that was bestowed upon him, and to those who took the time during the month of Ramazan to pray for his departed soul at the Janazaas and the Qulkhani.

Please accept our sincere gratitude and thanks.

Mrs. Ismat Ara Sadique, Tanvir Sadique, Naureen Sadique and Christopher Ettema