

FBCCI elections held

From Page 1 Col 7

Md. Yunus, A. Gafur, Capt. Shamsul Haq and Shafiqul Chowdhury. Khorshed Ali Mollah of the Independent Panel, which fielded only eight candidates, was also in the running, as were MA Kamal and Karim Chowdhury.

The elections were held with unprecedented enthusiasm despite earlier uncertainty over reports that a city court had issued a temporary injunction on Saturday.

All 840 of the eligible voters were earlier provided with identity cards and their signatures were cross-checked when the voters entered the building. The candidates were given special name cards pinned to their chests.

Fourteen ballot boxes were set up in separate booths on the third floor of the Federation Bhawan in Motijheel. A huge colourful canopy was erected on one side of the busy thoroughfare in front of the building for the voters, candidates and their supporters. The presidential candidates also set up separate pavilions on either side of the road for their supporters, which often created traffic jams in the country's main commercial district.

A steady stream of voters started coming since morning. The whole area bore a festive look with posters and banners of the candidates projected and pasted all around. The nearby parking lots were packed above capacity with Pajeros and other latest model expensive sedans as cellular telephone-toting candidates and their supporters were seen making last-minute campaign pitches outside. The country's rich and the mighty were all there.

Voters were encircled by campaigners trying to hand over campaign materials as they entered the multi-storied Federation Bhawan to cast their ballots.

Voter turnout was very high as 817 out of a total 840 voters cast their ballots — 597 out of 614 for the Association group and 219 out of 226 voters for the Chamber group.

Enthusiasm among the voters was also high because for the first time in 21 years they got an opportunity to elect the office-bearers under a direct voting system.

"It is good that the proxy voting system has been abolished, because in the past the candidates didn't even bother to approach the voters to get elected," said Gulnar Zaman, one of the few women voters, of the Bangladesh Dress Makers' Association. "Now that we have our voting rights we can select the right candidates to lead the federation."

Voters from various district chamber bodies also felt that the direct voting system gives them a greater voice and hoped that now the federation's leaders would also work for their interests as well.

Sanitation campaign

From Page 1 Col 3

on health and sanitation.

Most of the people interviewed responded positively to the change in their sanitation habits and suggested that using pit or water-seal latrines were better than using branches of local 'gim' trees that usually hang over the rural canals to allow people defecate in water.

Bill-boards, posters and placards with sanitation messages were seen prominently displayed at the schools, local office buildings, walls of shops, market places and other buildings in the palm-fringed villages of Barisal.

A recent Bureau of Statistics survey said 46 per cent of the total rural families of Barisal Division now use at least one form of sanitary latrines, either pit or water-seal type.

The national average shows that only 30 per cent of the families use hygienic latrines.

Yet, the country is exposed to diarrhoea and other endemic diseases that claim some seven lakh children every year. The deaths of children caused only by diarrhoea stands at 2.5 lakh a year.

"If people can be truly made convinced of their benefits and they are properly mobilised, such good result in so short a time can be easily achieved," said Md. Abdur Rahim Khan, Sub-Assistant Engineer of Gauranadi Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department.

The Public Health Engineering Department is one of the major implementing agencies involved in supplying concrete slabs, pans and other parts of the hygienic latrines.

The department is also supplying tubewells and helping rural people sink those.

One of the main reasons behind the sanitation success in Barisal is that the government officials delivered services to the doorstep of the rural people, observed many who talked with The Daily Star.

The UNICEF-supported Integrated Approach for improved sanitation as the campaign is called, involves almost all the government departments having network at the union level.

Besides, the Non-Governmental Organisations like Green Bank, CARE, CARITAS and NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation helped reach the services at the grass-roots level.

These organisations together are engaged in an intense publicity campaign organising countrywide meetings, rallies and processions, distributing posters, screening video-films and making on the benefits of hand washing, drinking safe water and hygienic latrines.

"Rural people respond quickly when they understand their benefits," commented Keshab Chandra Das, Headmaster of the Uttarkul Secondary School.

The school having 375 students has earned quite a name for its role in the Barisal's effort for improved sanitation.

At the initial stage of the campaign, bands of young boys and girls led by their teachers used to go out to the villages to convince them to remove their canal side open and hanging latrines.

Later, people began accepting the new ideas from their sons and daughters and installed hygienic latrines.

"This campaign can really kick off similar other rural development programmes because once villagers believe you and start following you, there is no end," said Md. Nuruzzaman, PHE Sub-Assistant Engineer at Banaripara.

"In Barisal, the beginning has just begun," he added.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Tributes paid to Malek Ukil

Leaders of the Awami League yesterday warned against any tactics to thwart the agitation for a caretaker government to conduct national elections, reports UNB.

The demand for a caretaker government is no longer the demand of any political party, it has become a national demand," Awami League Presidium member Abdul Mannan said at a memorial meeting. The people will not tolerate any dilly-dallying regarding this demand," he added.

The Awami League organised the meeting at its central office in observance of the seventh death anniversary of former Speaker and Awami League president Abdul Malek Ukil.

Presided over by Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, the meeting was addressed by Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Kamrul Islam, Nurul Majid Humayun, Obaidul Kader and Reazuddin Ahmed.

Taslima Nasreen

From Page 1 Col 8

A case was filed against Taslima Nasreen on June 4 by the Officer-in-Charge of Motijheel Police Station for hurting the religious sentiment of the Muslims through an interview with an Indian English language daily. Taslima left the country on August 9.

Taslima's lawyer Idrishur Rahman argued that the plaintiff did not have proper authorisation from the government and there were some 'irregularities and illegalities' in filing the case.

Referring to Taslima's reported comment on the holy Quran, published in the Calcutta daily The Statesman on May 9, the defence lawyer said the accused, through a rejoinder published in the same newspaper on May 11 denied having made the remark. The denial was also published in some Dhaka newspapers and the writer also sent a letter to the Speaker for removing the controversy and confusion, he added.

The defence lawyers also said that the remarks attributed to Taslima Nasreen by the Indian newspaper were not made deliberately nor did those have any malicious intention.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdur Rezaq argued the remarks hurt the religious sentiment of the Muslims and the writer's rejoinder substantiated her earlier comment published in The Statesman.

Quoting Taslima's remarks in her rejoinder that "the holy Quran, the Vedas and the Bible have become out of place and out of time," Rezaq said that these were "more blasphemous".

The public prosecutor also denied the defendant's complaint of 'irregularities and illegalities' in filing the case against Taslima. The plaintiff had obtained proper permission from the authorities," the PP said.

8964 to face BCS psychological test

Some 8,964 candidates of the 16th BCS (Special) have been selected for psychological test, reports UNB.

But the Public Service Commission (PSC) will cancel the candidacy of those who will be unable to fulfil the conditions as mentioned in the advertisement, said a PSC press release yesterday.

Shantibahiniman

From Page 1 Col 8

bullet injuries in his leg.

A group of Shantibahiniman, equipped with sophisticated weapons, suddenly attacked the patrol which was moving from Durlatoli camp.

After the ambush, the security personnel opened fire killing one of the attackers. Another was rounded up with a pistol. One SMC was recovered from the dead.

The armed attackers fled into deep forest after an exchange of fire for half an hour.

With today's incident, the armed Shantibahiniman ambushed security personnel 67 times so far in violation of the ceasefire now in force in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The incidents left eight security personnel injured.

Student killed

From Page 1 Col 8

murdered out of enmity among the local bullies.

"Himu was wanted in an attempt-to-murder case lodged with the Gulshan police on February 9 this year," said a police officer referring to Himu's alleged involvement in terrorism, in the area.

Police also said Himu was not in his house on that night. He went out around 10 pm Sunday and found dead early in the morning, according to police.

Himu's father Golam Mostafa — a businessman — lodged a murder case with the Gulshan police, but no arrests were made until late last night.



Elite of Dhanmondi and Mohammadpur areas of the city discussed local problems and different national issues with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia when they called on her at the Hare Road office yesterday. Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar is seen on her right. — PID photo

Iraqi parliament meets to recognise Kuwait

BAGHDAD, Oct 17: Iraq's parliament convened today to pass a resolution recognising Kuwait, a key step in getting UN sanctions against Iraq lifted, reports AP.

The Revolutionary Command and Council, the top decision-making body dominated by Saddam Hussein, is thought to have approved the move at a meeting Saturday. Parliament is expected to rubber stamp the decision, diplomats said.

Iraq said today it found 'positive elements' in the UN Security Council resolution barring deployment of its troops in the south near the border with Kuwait.

"It [resolution] contains relatively obvious positive aspects," the government newspaper Al-Jumhouriya said in a front-page editorial signed by Editor-in-Chief Salah al-Mukhear.

Iraq had refused to recognise Kuwait, arguing that it is historically part of Iraq. The government has kept up the rhetoric even after its defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, which ended its seven-month occupation of the emirate.

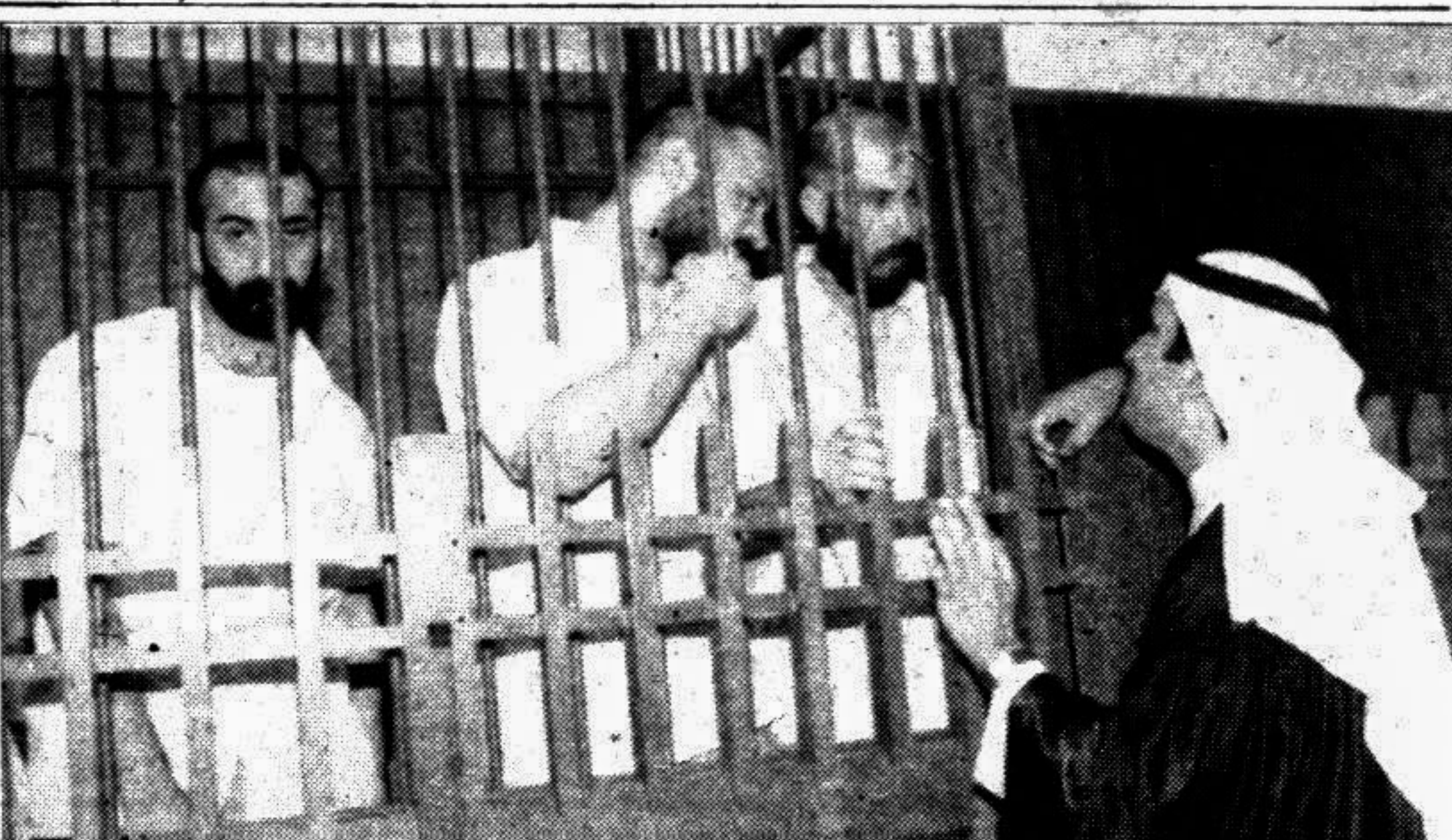
Bombs hurled at Razzak's house

Several home-made bombs were hurled at the residence of Awami League leader Abdur Razzak MP last night but he was unhurt, reports UNB.

Mohammad Nasir, personal assistant of Razzak, suffered mild injury in his leg when the bombs hit the third floor of his Dhanmondi residence at about 9-15 pm.

When contacted by telephone, Razzak confirmed the incident. He said at least five bombs were hurled when he was about to get into his jeep. Razzak feared that the bombs might be aimed at him.

The AL leader said immediately after the incident some unidentified people hurriedly fled away in a motorbike and a microbus. Police visited his residence and recorded the incident.



Three Iraqis accused of trying to kill former US president George Bush talk to their lawyer Najeeb al-Waqian in the appeal court in Kuwait yesterday. — AFP photo

Israel-Jordan accord

From Page 1 Col 4

said before the signing ceremony.

Rabin called the signing 'a historically unique moment' and said the agreement would be a cornerstone for a new Middle East in which this co-operation will serve to replace the hatred, violence and war.

President Clinton said today he was delighted by the announcement. In a statement at Andrews Air Force Base, he said, "This agreement reminds us that moderation and reason are prevailing."

Rabin said he would like Clinton to attend the signing. Clinton hosted the White House ceremony July 25.

Under the draft, Israel agreed to return to Jordan most of the lands it demanded, but will lease certain areas in which there are Israeli settlements or farms, said an Israeli official in Jerusalem, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Other land disputes were settled by swapping territory, he said.

Jordan was demanding the return of 361 square kilometers (152 square miles) of desert and farmland that Israel seized after the 1948-Middle East War.

On water, the two sides agreed to start new projects on the Yarmouk River to increase the amounts flowing to Jordan. Israel and Jordan will

PM: stability

From Page 1 Col 5

problems of their localities, including drainage, housing, development of educational institutions, mosques and roads, and setting up of children's parks.

Begum Zia stressed the importance of rapid industrialisation for overall socio-economic development of the country. The country needs foreign investment to speed up the pace of industrialisation and generate employment opportunities, she added.

Referring to her recent visits to Japan and Malaysia, the Prime Minister said the foreign entrepreneurs are keen to invest in Bangladesh but they want a peaceful and stable atmosphere in the country.

The image of Bangladesh has changed abroad, she said, adding: "We have proved that we are no longer a nation of problems only." She also mentioned the efficient handling of the post-cyclone situation in 1991 in this regard.

Begum Zia listed different development programmes of her government aimed at the people's welfare. "We have started development works from the villages to improve the condition of the rural people and to stop migration towards the bigger cities, already overburdened with problems,"

Turning to the local problems, she assured those who would be solved in phases.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Mohammadpur thana BNP president Ehsanul Haq Shetu and other local leaders also addressed the function.



Three Iraqis accused of trying to kill former US president George Bush talk to their lawyer Najeeb al-Waqian in the appeal court in Kuwait yesterday. — AFP photo

Plot to kill Bush

Case adjourned until Nov 14

KUWAIT, Oct 17: Seven Iraqis and two Kuwaitis appeared in court Monday to challenge their convictions for plotting to kill former President Bush during his 1993 visit to Kuwait, reports AP.

Six were sentenced to death, the others to prison terms of up to 12 years.

A judge appointed lawyers for defendants who had not hired their own and adjourned the case until November 14 to allow them time to prepare their cases.

Iraq had been accused of organising the assassination plot as revenge for Bush's leadership during the 1991 Gulf War, when a US-led coalition drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Baghdad, however, denies involvement.

"I did not come here to harm Kuwait," 36-year-old defendant Wali al-Gazali, an Iraqi, told reporters from behind the black bars of the cage in the courtroom. "It is a matter of revenge..." George Bush has hurt 14 million Iraqis."

A five-judge panel will examine the legality of the convictions and sentences handed down June 4 by a State Security Court. The panel can overturn the verdicts if it finds they were not in accordance with Kuwaiti law.

The Midnight File

6 killed in Karachi violence

KARACHI, Oct 17: Six people, including a police officer, were killed today in separate attacks in Karachi, long plagued by ethnic and political violence, police said. In an ambush by unidentified gunmen, a police officer and his body guard were killed and another officer was injured. Elsewhere, a civilian was shot dead by snipers in a posh area of the city, while three mutilated bodies were found by police from a dry canal on the outskirts of the city, reports AFP.

Angola, UNITA reach accord

LUSAKA, Oct 17: UN mediators said today the Angolan government and UNITA rebels had reached agreement in principle to end nearly 20 years of civil war. Chief UN mediator Aloune Blondin Beye said all points on the agenda had been settled during months of intensive negotiations in the Zambian Capital of Lusaka. He said he expected an accord to be signed in the near future but gave no date, reports Reuter.

19 more bodies recovered

From Page 1 Col 8

seven passengers were still missing.

The Deputy Commissioner has formed a three-member committee led by the ADM, Mohammad Baker, to investigate the boat tragedy. The DC has also sanctioned Taka 50,000, one and a half ton of rice, 103 pieces of lungis, 100 pieces of saree and 200 yards of cloth for the members of the affected families who were still searching for their dear and near ones.

The DC, Enamul Kabir, along with the SP left for the offshore island, 50 km from the beach town early this morning to supervise the rescue operation. Besides, the officials and employees of Kutubdia, Chokoria and Moheshkhali thanas were participating in the rescue operation. The officials also visited the houses of the victims to assure their relatives of all possible government assistance.

The district administration has ordered arrest of the

APSU-ICS clash at Moulvibazar: 20 injured

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Oct 17: A clash between the All Party Students Unity (APSU) and the Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) left 20 students injured at the Moulvibazar Government College today.

Eleven supporters of the APSU and nine of the ICS were injured. Nine of them were admitted to the hospital.

The APSU, comprising the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Chhatra League (S-P), Chhatra League (B-K), Chhatra Union and the Samajtantrik Chhatra Front at a press conference this afternoon blamed the ICS for the attack. It demanded a ban on communal politics immediately.

The injured admitted to the hospital are: Biptab, Saiful, Bablu and Ripan of the APSU and Younus, Mukti, Nazrul and Suleman of the ICS.

Finance Act

From Page 1 Col 5

Industry (MCCI) in a recent representation to the National Board of Revenue.

The MCCI said that provision made in this year's Finance Act in respect of exemption of remittance by a non-resident contradicts the corresponding provision of the Income Tax Ordinance, 1984 and also the relevant instructions issued earlier by the National Board of Revenue in this respect.

"These two provisions, one contradicting the other, cannot be workable and will cause confusions resulting in harassment to the non-residents," the MCCI observed.

Referring to the NBR's instructions, the MCCI quoted paragraph 3.8 where it stated that "A person is not liable to pay any tax in Bangladesh on remittances from abroad out of income earned in Bangladesh," in paragraph 1.1 of the instructions of Taxation of Foreign Income and Remittances of Bangladeshis residing abroad dated 25th October 1978, it had been explained that "Once an amount has been received as income in any country outside Bangladesh, any remittance of the same to Bangladesh does not result in receipt of income in Bangladesh."

The MCCI pointed out that, it could therefore, be concluded that foreign income of non-resident Bangladeshis is not taxable in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, it has been provided in Section 10(5) of the Finance Act, 1994, that only money brought to Bangladesh by a non-resident through official channel during the assessment year 1994-95 will not be liable to be taxed if such amount is invested directly in new industry or in stocks, shares or government bonds or securities.

Pointing to the fact that the remitted amount will be liable to be taxed, if it is not invested in the prescribed manner, the MCCI described the exemption as conditional.

The MCCI asked the NBR to issue a suitable clarification before any assessment is done on the basis of the provision of the Finance Act, 1994.

Ninian

From Page 1 Col 7

Election Commission Bill already moved in Parliament and said that further amendment to the proposed Bill could be made. But whatever is to be done must be within the framework of the Constitution.

On the question of date of the dialogue, he said the government side expressed their readiness to join the dialogue and "it will now depend on Si Ninian to fix a convenient date."

It is learnt that the Deputy Leader of the House conveyed the outcome of the talks to the Prime Minister after the meeting.

Meanwhile, Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasir last night questioned the sincerity of the ruling party about immediate holding of the dialogue and "we cannot wait for an indefinite period."

The Opposition, he said has already proposed the venue, agenda and a date for the dialogue. But the government side has seemingly resorted to dilly-dally tactics.