

Elections to 4368 Union Parishads in Sept

By Staff Correspondent

Elections to 4,368 out of a total of 4,461 Union Parishads of the country will be held from September 1 to 30 this year, an official announcement said yesterday.

The announcement said the government has decided to hold the elections to those Union Parishads in September because it will not be possible to hold the polls in time in view of demarcation of wards, recasting of voters list and SSC examinations. The SSC examinations are scheduled to be held in March and April.

The decision has been taken in exercise of the powers under sub-section (3) of Section 23 of the Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983 (Ordinance II of 1983).

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AL MPs warned 'Mentor of terrorists won't be spared'

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has asked lawmakers belonging to her party to guard against terrorism and remain ever vigilant so that no terrorist could enter AL.

Hasina, also leader of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP), was presiding over a two-and-a-half hour meeting of the ALPP at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasnat Abdullah and 15 other ruling party deputies spoke at the meeting that took stock of the latest socio-economic and political situation in the country and decided to further strengthen the coordination between the party and the government, meeting sources said. Deputy Leader of the House and AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman was also present.

Speaking at the meeting, the AL lawmakers said though law and order in the country has improved to some extent, there remains a lot to be done. They said the strength of police force is not adequate, and they are also not well equipped to contain terrorist activities in the

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Donors ask govt to raise oil, gas, fertiliser prices

By Staff Correspondent

Donors have asked the government to increase foreign exchange reserve, improve revenue collection, bridge fiscal deficit and increase prices of petroleum, gas and fertiliser.

This was disclosed to the press by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria at the end of the two-day mid-term briefing to the Bangladesh Aid Group that concluded in the city yesterday. World Bank resident representative Pierre Landell-Mills and Chief Economist in its Washington headquarters John Williamson also attended the press briefing.

Kibria said discussion on the macro-economic situation was constructive and it was found to be stable.

But the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggested taking steps to increase the foreign exchange reserve. "We also feel that the reserve level should be

raised and are working toward that goal," he said.

Donors have expressed their concern that government-administered prices of some items like petroleum, gas and fertiliser do not reflect the market prices and that this is putting pressure on the revenue collection.

This situation is bringing distortion in the market and their prices should be adjusted upward, they suggested.

The finance minister said the suggestion for increasing petroleum, gas and fertiliser prices would be placed before the cabinet and the Prime Minister for consideration.

They also maintained that the government should reduce its control on fertiliser and market should determine its price.

The donors recommended expansion of tax base, rationalisation of income tax and import duty, and improvement of tax administration to make up the shortfall in revenue collection.

They also recommended that domestic deficit should be bridged within the budgetary allocation.

ADP implementation should be improved and projects should be more carefully scrutinised to leave out low priority projects, they suggested.

Kibria said: "We have pointed out that the conditionalities of donors that lead to delay in ADP implementation."

The Donors also asked the government to make a comprehensive policy statement on privatisation and said the government should consider the profitability of industries rather than book values when selling those.

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Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad receiving Prince Charles of Britain on his arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday. — PID photo

Warm reception accorded

Prince Charles meets President, PM today

Prince Charles of the United Kingdom who arrived here on a three-day visit yesterday wished Bangladesh peace, progress and prosperity, reports UNB.

"I am happy to be here. I look forward to meeting the people and the leaders of Bangladesh," he said talking to newsmen at the Zia International Airport on his arrival last night.

Referring to close ties between Dhaka and London, the Prince of Wales said it would be further strengthened.

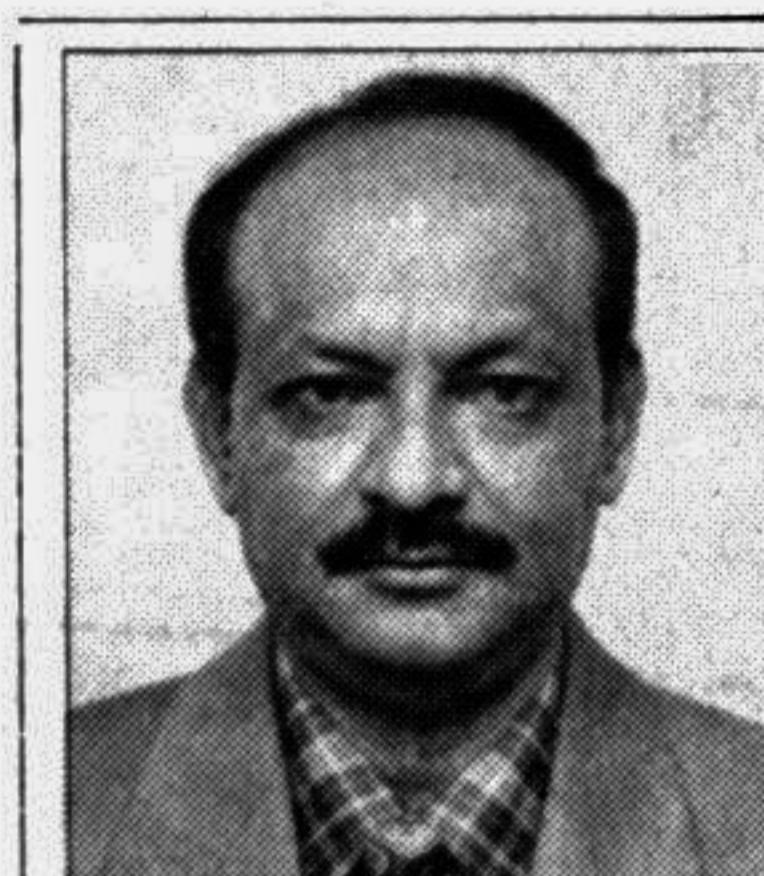
He also mentioned presence of a large number of Bangladeshis in London, particularly from Sylhet district, who are contributing to the economy of his country.

Earlier, Prince Charles was accorded a warm reception at the airport.

A red carpet was rolled out to receive the heir to British throne as he flew into the Zia International Airport at about 8:40 pm.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad greeted the royal guest at the VVIP lounge of the

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Golam Quddus' panel sweeps BGMEA polls

Sammilita Parishad swept the election of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters (BGMEA) Tuesday, reports UNB.

The Parishad, led by Mostafa Golam Quddus, Chairman of Dragon Sweater

and Advocate Rahmatullah, from the treasury bench were not present at that time.

BNP's Prof Shahidul Islam drew attention of the Deputy Speaker that there was no quorum and hence discussion cannot be held.

There were 37 Awami League and seven BNP members present.

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Chakma issue

High-powered team leaves for Tripura today

By Staff Correspondent

A high-powered delegation led by Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasnat Abdullah is leaving for Tripura today on a mission to bring back thousands of tribespeople who fled there when hostilities renewed in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) following collapse of the peace talks in 1986.

The delegation will include members of the National Committee on CHT and officials of Foreign Ministry and the Special Affairs Division.

According to sources, the visit is considered crucial in view of the March 12 talks between the National Committee and the Parbatty Chittagong Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political wing of the Chakma-dominated Shantibhumi insurgents, who holds

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B Chy alleges BCL attack in Feni, Zillur assures probe, action

By Staff Correspondent

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Prof Badruddoza Choudhury alleged in the House yesterday that the car of a BNP lawmaker and some one dozen buses carrying people to the Leader of the Opposition and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia's Public meeting at Feni on the day came under armed attacks.

Responding to the allegation, Deputy Leader of the House and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman assured the House of punishing those responsible for the attacks, after impartial investigation into the matter.

Home Minister Maj. (Retd) Rafiqul Islam was not present in the House at the time.

The MP from Laxmipur sadar, Khairul Anam, and 30 to 35 supporters of BNP were injured in the attacks, learnt to have been made by the activists of Chhara League, the student front of the ruling Awami League. Prof. Choudhury told the House demanding action

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Arsenic poisoning JS discussion postponed for lack of quorum

A scheduled discussion on Arsenic poisoning was postponed in Parliament last night, reports UNB.

This was the first time a discussion in the present Parliament was postponed for lack of quorum.

Abul Latif Mirza of the ruling Awami League had submitted a call notice under 68 of the Rules of Procedure for discussion on Arsenic contamination in different parts of the country.

Speaking on the issue, Mirza called upon the Health Minister to take necessary measures to protect people from the new eruption of health hazard.

Nine MPs were scheduled to discuss the issue, but some of the discussants, including Advocate Rahmatullah, from the treasury bench were not present at that time.

The Parishad, led by Mostafa Golam Quddus, Chairman of Dragon Sweater

and Advocate Rahmatullah, from the treasury bench were not present at that time.

They are having a sub-human life. The environment inside the jail is terrible as excess number of prisoners are to stay there causing health hazards," the official said seeking anonymity.

"But we are undone to cope with the pressure of so many prisoners," he added.

There are 76 foreign nationals from Myanmar and Thailand in the jail now, another

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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Feni Airport yesterday. — Star photo

Withdrawal of Army from CHT to be resisted: Khaleda

BNP launches countrywide agitation from March 3

FENI, Feb 26: Opposition

BNP will stage demonstration across the country on March 3 to mark the launching of its fresh agitation against the government, reports UNB.

Party Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia announced the programme at a huge public meeting at the local airport this afternoon.

"This is the beginning of our programme... We are starting from here, and it will continue to cover the country," Begum Zia told the gathering of thousands of people of her paternal home district.

The BNP Chairperson said the people had already rejected the eight-month-old Awami League government. "People cannot be kept out of movement by unleashing attacks on them."

She said despite its willingness, her party could not cooperate with the government

when it was "selling out" the country's interest and "violating" the constitution.

"Let's save the country, its independence and sovereignty, democracy, constitution, and people's life and property," the Leader of the Opposition said making a clarion call for all.

She said a government which cannot ensure security of its people has no right to stay in power. "The country is now in a deep crisis, and now all patriotic nationalist forces would have to unite to rid the nation of the crisis."

The BNP Chairperson said the people had already rejected the eight-month-old Awami League government. "People cannot be kept out of movement by unleashing attacks on them."

Soundly, a note of warning for her political opponents, she said whenever they launch any attack, it would be resisted. In that case area-wise programme

would be announced, Begum Zia said.

"We have to build resistance against all injustices meted out by the present government."

She said people could not support such a government which wanted to hand over the country to others to cling to power. "They (people) like BNP and want movement against the government."

The Leader of the Opposition said the people had already rejected the eight-month-old Awami League government. "People cannot be kept out of movement by unleashing attacks on them."

In this regard, she mentioned that the body of a boy was found in a dustbin while the prices of essentials were shooting up.

The farmers are not getting fair price of their produce. They do not get fertiliser. Because, the fertilisers imported at the cost of foreign currency are being

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Severe accommodation problem

Prisoners sometimes sleep in shifts in Ctg jail!

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG Feb 25: Prisoners in the Chittagong jail sometimes have to sleep in shifts for lack of accommodation and over 90 per cent of the inmates suffer from skin diseases, sources said.

Over 90 per cent of the prisoners suffer from skin disease and other infectious diseases, sources in the jail's medical unit said. There is only one medical ward having a capacity to treat 40 patients. But 80 to 100 patients come for treatment daily. Many prisoners die due to inadequate medicare facilities, they added.

In the past two weeks, at least five prisoners died at Chittagong jail, they said.

A plan for shifting the jail, built over 120 years ago in the heart of the city, remained shelved for the past 10 years, according to sources in the administration. Shifting of the jail has become uncertain, the sources said.

The plan for shifting the jail was undertaken by the government earlier due to the severe accommodation crisis.

However, officials concerned said that a process was underway to acquire land in Hathazari thana area outside the city for shifting the jail.

Ershad says Govt of consensus not a permanent settlement

By Staff Correspondent

An extended meeting of the Jatiya Party began yesterday in front of the Asiatic Printers in the city's Tejgaon industrial area.

The meeting decided to announce today the date for a public reception for the party chief HM Ershad at Manik Mia Avenue.