

## Polls to 4 city corporations, 9 municipalities Aug 4

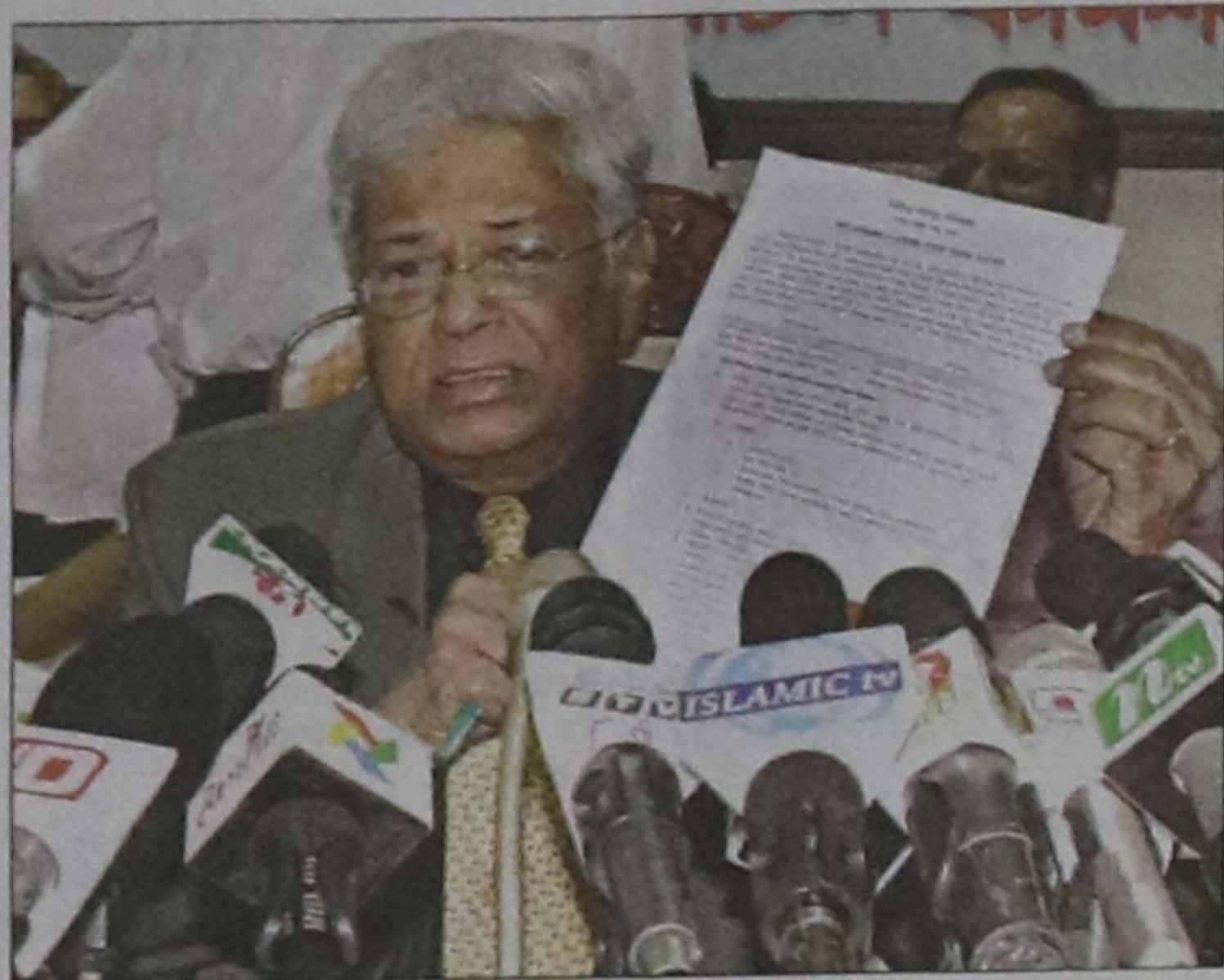


PHOTO: STAR

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda shows official announcement of the election schedule to journalists at the EC Secretariat yesterday.

**EPR relaxed \* 21 days for campaign**  
**\* Nomination filing by July 3**  
**\* Last day for withdrawal July 13**

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday announced that polls to four city corporations and nine municipalities will be held on August 4, while the caretaker government relaxed the Emergency Powers Rules (EPR) in respective areas allowing campaign processions and rallies.

The city corporations of Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, and the municipalities of Manikganj Sadar, Chuadanga Sadar, Shariatpur Sadar, Naohata of Rajshahi, Dupchanchiya of

Bogra, Sripur of Gazipur, Fulbaria of Mymensingh, Golapganj of Sylhet and Sitakunda of Chittagong will have the elections.

According to the poll schedule published in an official gazette, the last date for submitting applications for candidacy is July 3, while July 6 and 7 are scheduled for scrutinising the applications, and the last date for withdrawing candidatures is July 13.

The EC announced the election schedule after the home ministry earlier in the day issued a notification relaxing certain provisions of

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PHOTO: STAR

**WHEN LAW ENFORCERS THEMSELVES ARE LAWBREAKERS:** A traffic police box, left, on the pavement prevents pedestrians from using the sidewalks at Fulbaria bus terminal in the capital. Two traffic policemen on duty are also seen nearby. The photo was taken yesterday.

DIALOGUE IN CTG

**'Local body polls should not be delayed'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the government considers elections to local government bodies a way of democratic advancement.

It is a non-political election that can be held under any government whenever the election is due and it should not be delayed, he observed, adding, "Election to the local government bodies is needed for solving regional problems and for protecting the democratic rights of the people in a region".

Zillur was speaking to reporters after a preparatory meeting held for the government's first regional dialogue with non-political organisations and groups scheduled for June 28 at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong.

The dialogue, to be held in presence of the chief adviser, SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## BNP rejects poll schedule, AL terms it 'farcical'

STAR REPORT

The BNP yesterday rejected the schedule for local-body elections while the Awami League (AL) termed it a 'conspiratorial and farcical move'.

The Jatiya Party (Ershad), however, welcomed the decision to hold city corporation and municipality polls before parliamentary elections and urged the government to declare the schedule for upazila elections too.

The Bikalpadhara Bangladesh said they would contest the elections provided other parties also take part in it.

UNB adds: The AL's acting President Zillur Rahman demanded immediate cancellation of the election schedule.

"The government has not done it right by announcing the schedule

for local-body elections. We think it's a farcical and conspiratorial move. It must be withdrawn," he told reporters after a meeting with a faction of the Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote at his residence in Gulshan neighbourhood.

Zillur also demanded that the government fully lift the state of emergency before the polls, as "partial withdrawal is not enough to create a pre-election democratic environment in the country."

He, however, stopped short of saying whether the AL would boycott the local-body polls should the government remain adamant about going ahead with it.

"We'll take our decision (about contesting the local polls) after studying the future developments. Time will say what would be our next steps," he said.

Zillur said the caretaker govern-

ment cannot declare schedule for the elections because it has no constitutional right to that effect.

"The caretaker government has authority to arrange only national elections. But defying public opinion, it has declared the election schedule (for local bodies). It'll be no good for Bangladesh," he said.

Zillur feared that the long-awaited general elections would be delayed if local elections are held first which would prove catastrophic for the country's democracy.

He expressed the hope that they would be able to reach a consensus on local elections at their upcoming dialogue with the government on July 3.

About the government's decision to partially lift the state of emergency, Zillur said the emergency

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**Unity is must to face national challenges, says Dr Kamal**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Eminent jurist and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called for national unity to build a terrorism-free country and face national challenges.

"Unity is the answer to all questions. If we want democracy, student politics without terrorism, an accountable government, rule of law and equal rights for all, unity among citizens is a must," said Dr Kamal, also convener of Jatiya Oikya Mancha (JOM), while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion at a local restaurant in Rajshahi.

"People of the country have never tolerated anarchy. They sacrificed their lives for a honourable life. Although we drove out colonial rulers long ago, we are yet to be freed from disparity," he said.

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## Khaleda finally agrees to receive treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has finally agreed to receive treatment and might be taken to a city hospital anytime.

She however has yet to say whether she would be hospitalised if advised by doctors.

Her nod to the prison authorities' proposal for treatment outside jail reportedly follows an understanding with the government over release and treatment of her two sons.

For the last few days, the government has been in negotiations with the former prime minister over her release for treatment abroad and participation in the ongoing talks between the military-backed administration and political parties.

But she had been opposed to



Her call for sons' release grew louder after Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina was freed on executive orders on June 12. The AL chief is now in the US for treatment.

"She has told us that she would take treatment either at United Hospital or Ibne Sina Hospital. But she hasn't confirmed if she would be admitted to hospital," Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider told The Daily Star yesterday.

Khaleda, detained on graft charges, has long been suffering pains in her left hand and shoulder, he said.

"Citing the example of Sheikh Hasina, we had time and again requested her to receive treatment at any hospital she would choose. But she had kept saying no," he said.

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**Brawl over bus fare leads to death of passenger**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An assistant cook of Birdem Hospital was crushed under the wheels of a passenger bus at Shahbagh yesterday noon as the conductor allegedly pushed him over following altercation over bus fare.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Mannan, 42, a resident of Motijheel area.

Hearing the news, the employees of the hospital took to the street and damaged some vehicles. Traffic on the busy road came to a halt for about 15 minutes.

Shahbagh police seized the bus and arrested its driver and helper. The conductor managed to flee.

Sathi Begum, who is also an assistant cook and was on the bus

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PHOTO: STAR

Police try to calm down employees of Birdem Hospital at Shahbagh in the capital yesterday as they barricaded Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue and vandalised vehicles protesting the death of a colleague under the wheels of a bus.

**POLITICAL CONSENSUS**  
**Release of evil forces won't be acceptable: SSJ**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) has urged the government to remain alert so that the anti-people evil forces cannot be rehabilitated taking advantage of political consensus.

In a statement last night, it also said the demand for release of the country's war criminals and those who had plundered the state assets and patronised militants couldn't be acceptable.

"We call upon the government to consider the matter with due importance so that the evil forces, in no circumstances, can be re-established taking advantage of political consensus," said SSJ President Nasiruddin Yusuf and General Secretary Golam Kuddus in the jointly issued statement.

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PHOTO: ANA

Doctor Philips Silverston examines the eyes of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at the School of Medicine at Yale University, Connecticut, US.

**Hasina to have fresh medical check-up after eight weeks**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina will again undergo medical check-up at Yale University School of Medicine in Connecticut in the USA after eight weeks.

On June 16, eye specialists, led by doctor Philips Silverston, examined her eyes at Yale University School of Medicine.

The AL chief, who was released by an executive order of the caretaker government on June 11, went to the US on June 12. She reached Virginia from Boston yesterday.

She will stay there along with her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy for three to four days and go to Orlando in Florida for follow up treatment of her ears, according to a report of

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## PRIVATE HOUSING PROJECTS Amended rules soon to stop unplanned urbanisation

HELEMUL ALAM

The government is going to amend rules to stop unplanned urbanisation across the country as the current rules for private housing projects are only applicable for the Rajdhanee Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) areas.

Housing companies across the country would have to get approval from authorities concerned to develop and advertise their projects after the rules are amended.

The Private Housing Project Land Development Rules-2004 now covers only 1,528 square km under Rajuk, said an official of housing and public works ministry requesting anonymity.

Experts say that land develop-

ment activities and housing projects have been going on in an unplanned manner cutting hills and destroying farmlands as there are no housing project rules, except one for the Rajuk area. They say that this has caused unplanned urbanisation.

Project owners often advertise their projects so people are tempted to buy plots. The buyers in many cases are deceived by the adverts, said the housing ministry official.

Housing and public works ministry recently formed a committee for making recommendations on what to amend in the rules and the committee is now working on it, the official said adding that the committee would submit its

report within this month.

"The rules are very essential as land development activities of different housing companies have been going on unabated not only in Rajuk area but also in other areas in the country including Habiganj, Sylhet, Khulna and Tangail causing unplanned urbanisation," the official said.

The government formulated Private Housing Project Development Rules-2004 to regulate the activities of private housing companies within Rajuk areas.

Director (programmes) of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association Syeda Rizwana Hasan said unplanned land development has been going on throughout the country and an

amendment of the rules is essential to regulate private housing companies' activities.

"In Sylhet, land development activities for housing projects have been going on by cutting many hillocks and developers are constructing housing projects on many farmlands in Khulna and Tangail," she said.

"If the government amends the rules to regulate the activities of these housing companies then it is a good thing but if it is being formulated so that government officials can collect toll, then it will be a very bad thing," she said.

After the Private Housing Project Development Rules-2004 was formulated, Rajuk earlier did

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