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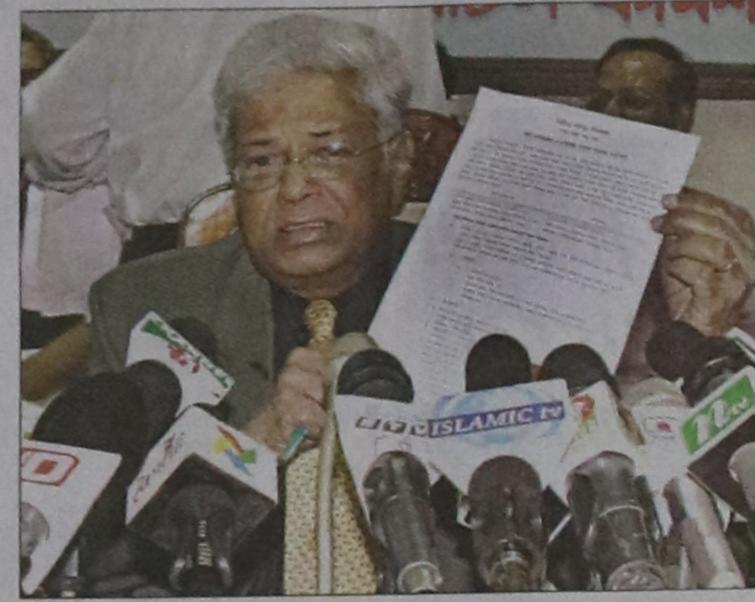
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Polls to 4 city corporations, 9 municipalities Aug 4



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) vesterday 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 SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



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.

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,

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*Local body polls 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 partinit.

UNB adds: The AL's acting President Zillur Rahman contesting the local polls) after 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

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 democ

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

About the government's decision to partially lift the state of emergency, Zillur said the emergency SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Tragic!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University student and contributing reporter of daily Prothom Alo had both his legs cut off as his trousers got stuck in a railway clip when a goods train rushed in near Tejgaon Railway Station vesterday.

Saiful Islam Samin, a fourth year student at mass communication and journalism department and a resident student of SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Militants may regroup as 12 decisions unimplemented SHARIFUL ISLAM

Intelligence agencies fear that militancy might rear its head again as the 12 decisions the government took to step up its campaign

against the menace about a year ago remain unimplemented. the militants still at large might

mount fresh attacks. Their leaders behind bars might pass them instructions to that end, taking advantage of slow trial of the cases against them, observed intelligence officials. Besides, they added, absence of

motivational and reorientation programmes for over 500 detained militants, mostly operatives of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Harkat-ul-Jihad al Islami (Huji), keeps alive the threat of militancy even though

it has been on the wane for some

"Since there are no motivational

programmes for the militants in jails, they might become sucked into militancy again on return to society after serving out terms. Not only that, they might try to brain-There is a strong possibility that wash the other inmates to join them," said a top official of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the elite crime busters who tore through the militant network and nabbed many

> militant leaders and activists. Speaking in return for anonymity, he also said the laxity of the making a comeback.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, Rab Additional Director General Col Gulzar Uddin Ahmed acknowledged the risk.

Explaining the need for programmes to make militants in

prison renounce extremism, he cited the example of JMB Shura (highest policymaking body) member Khaled Saifullah carrying out countrywide bomb attacks on August 17, 2005 just around 10 days into his release from Dinajpur jail.

Saifullah had come out after serving five years in jail in a case filed under the Explosive Substances Act. Three days later, JMB supremo Abdur Rahman called him over phone and asked to prepare for a series of blasts across the country.

The 12 decisions taken at a authorities could result in militants home ministry meeting in September 2007 include, among others, waging massive antimilitancy publicity campaign by the information ministry, focusing on mosques and madrasas in the fight against militancy and ensuring

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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 Jatiay 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. SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



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 under-

standing with the government over

release and treatment of her two 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

But she had been opposed to

between the military-backed

administration and political par-



going broad and was instead pushing for overseas treatment for her detained sons--Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko--now undergoing treatment at prison cells at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University

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,

"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, SEE PAGE 15 COL 6 POLITICAL CONSENSUS

Release of evil forces won't be acceptable: SSJ

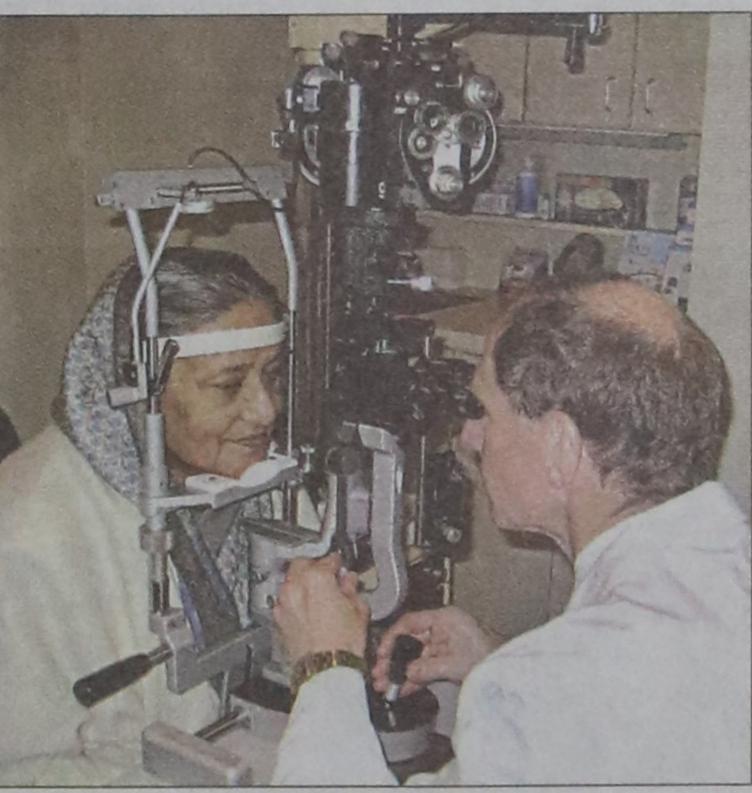
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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 con-

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 reestablished taking advantage of political consensus," said SSJ President Nasiruddin Yusuf and General Secretary Golam Kuddus in the jointly issued statement.

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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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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



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.

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 Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha

(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

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

urbanisation.

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 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 on it, the official said adding that land development has been going the committee would submit its 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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