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TRANS-COM ELECTRONICS

Poll schedule in last week of Oct, says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the general elections would be held in the third week of December and the schedule would be announced in the last week of October.

A new elected government would assume power at the beginning of next year, the CEC told journalists after the hearing on written objections to delimitation of six parliamentary seats at the Khulna deputy commissioner's conference room.

He said delimitation of parliamentary seats would be carried out in greater interest of people.

The CEC also said the task for preparing voter list is nearing completion.

He said the political parties are to decide whether they would take part in the local body polls or not.

"But I am convinced that all political parties would participate in the next parliamentary elections," the CEC added.

Hearing on written objections

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Local poll should be held first to avoid political parties' influence

Advisers told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The government should go ahead with its plan to hold local government elections before the general election so political parties cannot influence local polls, civil society members in Khagrachhari yesterday said.

They stated out their opinions at a view-exchange meeting with Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif and Communications Adviser Gulam Quader, held in the hill district town.

Adviser Hossain Zillur assured the local civil society that local body elections would be held before parliamentary polls.

Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Manindra Lal Tripura said people would welcome the parliamentary polls after elections to all tiers of the local government system are held.

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ASP accused of stealing mobile of foreigner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A foreign national yesterday filed a complaint, accusing an assistant superintendent of police (ASP) of stealing a mobile phone set from her at Zia International Airport.

The accused, Mahiuddin Faruqi, is posted to the Bangladesh desk of Interpol at the police headquarters while the complainant, Piath Sarapok, is a Thai woman married to a Bangladeshi citizen.

Witnesses said the mobile set went missing when the passengers of a Thai Airways flight from Bangkok were waiting to pick up their luggage at around 12:30pm. As Sarapok accused Faruqi of stealing, it led to an altercation.

At one stage, she slapped the ASP in the face. Later,

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Prayer Timing		
June 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-57
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

cellbazaar.com

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The Daily Star Classifieds
On Mobile or Computer

HC ORDER GOES UNHEEDED

350 children continue to languish in jails

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Three hundred and fifty children are languishing in 57 jails in the country, although the High Court (HC) ordered the prison authorities more than five years ago to either release the child prisoners or transfer them to juvenile development centres.

Among the currently imprisoned children, 298 are boys and 52 are girls.

The authorities also have yet to comply with an HC order, issued on June 2 this year, directing the jail authorities to release on bail from Kustia jail a convict who had been sentenced while he had been a juvenile.

According to human rights organisations, the total number of detained children was 380 in April this year, 330 of whom were boys and 50 were girls. The number of girl detainees however went up by

two till May 31.

On April 9, 2003 an HC bench of Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Nizamul Huq directed the government to withdraw all cases against child prisoners under 12 years of age, and to immediately transfer all child prisoners from jails to juvenile development centres.

According to the HC directives, detained children whose cases cannot be withdrawn should be released on bail, and those who cannot be released on bail should be separated from adult prisoners.

Legal experts and human rights activists however said although the HC directives were not followed fully, the situation has improved a bit over the recent years.

"Due to some practical difficulties like a lack of transports and long distances between children development centres and the courts, the government has to

detain the children in jails. The government should try its level best to solve the logistical problem," Dr Shahdeen Malik said.

He also said judges should order the authorities to release the detained children into the custody of their parents or guardians.

A recent study conducted by Save the Children UK, however, shows due to special attention and efforts of the chief judicial magistrate of Dhaka, the number of children in Dhaka Central Jail went down drastically this year from 63 to 14, while the number of residents in three Kishore Unnayan Kendras (juvenile development centre) increased from 270 to 282.

According to the study report, among the 57 jails where children are imprisoned, the number of them increased in 14, went down in 19 while in 11 the number remained steady this year. There

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Top outlaws Akash, Tikka killed in Kushtia shootout



STAR FILE PHOTO

Golam Hossain Akash, younger brother of recently slain Dada Tapan, with wife and son on June 18. Akash was killed in a "shootout" with Rab early yesterday.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two top leaders of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) faction were killed during a "shootout" between their cohorts and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Ganeshpur village under Khoksa upazila of Kushtia district early yesterday.

They are Golam Hossain Akash, 38, younger brother of recently slain Janajuddho chief Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Dada Tapan, and Abdur Rashid Tikka, 37, regional leader of the outfit.

Rab arrested Akash in a hideout of Dada Tapan soon after Tapan along with a woman cadre was killed in a "shootout" with the elite force at Baradi village in Kushtia Sadar upazila on June 18.

They raided Akash's house at Udiabari in Kushtia and recovered one 7.65mm pistol, 895 bullets, one computer, one fax machine, one

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Obama, Hillary take first public step towards unity

AP, Manchester

When Democrats Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton step onstage in their first joint campaign appearance in New Hampshire, it will be the first public display of a rapprochement between former rivals hoping to set aside differences and unify the party while helping each other.

Following a private fundraiser with Hillary Clinton's top donors in Washington on Thursday, the two were to fly together Friday aboard Obama's campaign plane to a rally in Unity, New Hampshire, population 1,700, a carefully chosen venue in a key general election battleground state.

Aside from the symbolism of its name, Unity awarded exactly 107

votes to each candidate in New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary in January. Hillary Clinton narrowly won the state's contest, setting in motion an epic coast-to-coast war of attrition between the two candidates that ended June 3, when Obama clinched the nomination. Clinton suspended her campaign four days later.

The Unity gathering was the latest and most visible event in a series of gestures the two senators have made in the past two days in hopes of settling the hard feelings of the long primary season. Clinton also praised Obama before two major interest groups Thursday, the American Nurses Association, which endorsed her during the primaries, and NALGO, the National Association of Latino

Elected Officials.

Both Democrats badly need one another right now as they move to the next phase of the campaign.

Obama is depending on former first lady to give her voters and donors a clear signal that she doesn't consider it a betrayal for them to shift their loyalty his way. Hillary Clinton won convincingly among several voter groups during the primaries, including working class voters and older women groups that Republican nominee-in-waiting John McCain has actively courted since she left the race.

Hillary Clinton, for her part, needs the Illinois senator's help in paying down her \$10 million campaign debt, plus an assurance that she will be treated respectfully as a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

North Korea destroys reactor tower

Pyongyang welcomes US lifting of sanctions

AP, Yongbyon

North Korea destroyed the most visible symbol of its nuclear weapons programme yesterday in a sign of its commitment to stop making plutonium for atomic bombs.

The demolition of the 60-foot-tall cooling tower at its main reactor complex is a response to US concessions after the North delivered a declaration Thursday of its nuclear programmes under an agreement at international arms talks.

A single blast at the base of the cylindrical structure sent the tower collapsing into a cloud of white and gray smoke as international journalists and diplomats looked on, according to video footage filmed by broadcaster APIN at the site. Those at the event later pored over the shattered pieces of the tower.

"This is a very important step in the disablement process and I think it puts us in a good position to move into the next phase," said Sung Kim, the US State Department's top expert on the

Koreans who attended the demolition. Kim shook hands with North Korean officials following the tower's tumble to the ground.

The symbolic explosion came just 20 months after Pyongyang shocked the world by detonating a nuclear bomb in an underground test to confirm its status as an atomic power. The nuclear blast spurred an about-face in the US hard-line policy against Pyongyang, leading to the North's first steps to scale back its nuclear

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A fisherman at Inani beach in Cox's Bazar untangles jatka (hilsa fry) from the net on Thursday afternoon. Due to poor monitoring catching of jatka continues despite a ban on it. This fisherman however said they do not fish jatka but the fries often come with other catches.

Saarc ministers hold climate change meet in Dhaka July 3

REZAUL KARIM

In view of the growing concern for climate change, environment ministers from eight Saarc countries will meet in Dhaka on July 3 to take a common stance on the climate change issue before the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December next year.

This will be the first such regional meeting as environment has been an important agenda for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

A deal for facilitating exchange of information between the Saarc countries will top the agenda, said officials of both the environment and foreign ministries.

They said Saarc is to devise a regional action plan for adapting to climate change and mobilising funds for the purpose.

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed will inaugurate the Saarc

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Dhaka Zoo brings 27 new animals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Zoo brought 27 animals from South Africa on Thursday night, triggering huge enthusiasm among the animal lovers who flocked to the zoo yesterday to see the new inmates.

The animals belonging to the antelope group were brought from the safari park, South Africa, in a cargo plane of Singapore Airlines.

Kept in separate cages, the animals were immediately taken to the zoo in Mirpur in trucks.

The animals include three oryx, four each kudu and ilan, six giraffes, four wild beasts and three each zebra and impala.

According to the zoo officials, four asses and four horses were brought from India on May 5, while four kangaroos from USA on June 5.

"The new inmates will definitely boost attraction of the zoo," said

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Nasim 'stable', suffers from poor sight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) leader Mohammad Nasim remained "clinically stable", but was suffering from poor sight in his left eye, doctors yesterday said.

Three doctors including neurosurgeon MH Shahriar Sabet examined him at the intensive care unit of the LabAid Specialised Hospital. Nasim was admitted to the hospital after having a stroke in Kashimpur Jail Tuesday.

Members of the medical board formed for his treatment said though there was no further haemorrhage in brain, his condition could still take a turn for the worse.

He was taken to Square Hospital for CT angiography at 6:30pm and returned to LabAid after an hour

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

BRILLIANT STUDENTS FACE SEAT SHORTAGE Thousands to miss admission to colleges of first choice

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Thousands of students who did well in this year's SSC examinations would be denied admission to colleges of their choice as seats in good institutes are disproportionately small for the number of students with GPA 4 and above.

This year a whopping 52,500 students got GPA 5 and over 1.9 lakh students scored in between GPA 4 and 5 while the country's renowned colleges can take in fewer than 30,000 intakes.

Academics and teachers have suggested introducing double shifts at renowned colleges as a quick fix.

"Good students usually try to

gain admission to only 10 to 12 renowned colleges in the capital. It is very difficult for us to single out the best students as a government directive does not allow us to hold any admission tests even though the number of GPA 5 holders has increased excessively," said Father Benjamin De Costa, principal of Notre Dame College.

The education ministry has also decided to keep 10 per cent seats in the capital's government and non-government colleges reserved for rural students, ministry sources said.

Students in the science group will take the brunt of the problem as 1.76 lakh students will have to compete for 98,000 seats in col-

leges across the country, which means some 78 thousands students of the group would be forced to switch to commerce or humanities groups.

This year around 52,500 students in the science group scored GPA 5 while around 10,000 got 'Golden GPA', a term many teachers, guardians and students use to distinguish the students who have got grade point 5 in all subjects including the elective ones.

Among the GPA 5 achievers, only students with 'Golden GPA' would get admission to renowned colleges, said several college teachers.

Prof Basirul Huq, principal of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

AUG 4 LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS 4-party likely to take decision tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance might take a formal decision tomorrow whether to participate in the August 4 polls to four city corporations and nine municipalities.

In initial reaction to the Election Commission's announcement of polls schedules, the alliance leaders have said they would not take part in the local elections.

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Chairperson Andalib Rahman Partha last night told The Daily Star

that senior leaders of the coalition will meet at his Baridhara residence tomorrow.

He however declined to specify the meeting agenda and instead said all important issues will come for discussion.

Meanwhile, some BNP leaders hinted that discussions will be confined to issues like the forthcoming elections and release of Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her two sons.

Earlier on Tuesday, the detained

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Oil prices strike record highs above \$142

AFP, London

Oil prices jumped to record high levels above 142 dollars a barrel yesterday, as the US currency weakened further and stock markets tumbled at the end of a volatile trading week for investors.

New York light sweet crude struck a historic peak of 142.26 dollars a barrel and Brent North Sea crude reached an all-time high of 142.13 dollars in electronic deals.

"Crude oil futures made fresh record highs, with higher oil prices fuelling inflationary fears and thus

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

The Daily Star Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views.

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Star Campus helps link young minds together.

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