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JS election schedule on Nov 1-2

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) will announce on November 1 or 2 the schedule for the ninth parliamentary polls.

The same day it might unveil detailed timetable for the upazila polls slated to be held on December 24 and 28.

Huda talked about the plans with an Awami League (AL) delegation.

Meanwhile, an EC circular has asked the deputy commissioners (DCs) to submit by October 12 lists of probable polling officials for the December 18 parliamentary election.

The DCs, who are usually appointed returning officers (RO), will recruit around 4 lakh polling personnel including presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and polling officers.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Iceland on brink of bankruptcy

Sweden lends \$701m to bail out the country; US, Europe cut interest rates; IMF says crisis to be lengthy; Indian stocks tumble



PHOTO AP

Protesters applaud at a rally yesterday in Reykjavik about the Icelandic government's handling of the financial crisis.

STAR REPORT

As the domino effect of the financial meltdown on Wall Street sends shock waves through Europe with Iceland teetering on the brink of bankruptcy for the first time since the advent of economic globalisation, governments rushed to salvage whatever they could yesterday.

In an extraordinary move that reflects the gravity of the financial turmoil, the world's central banks yesterday announced coordinated interest rate cuts as they try to restore confidence in the economy.

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Govt to decide on oil price cut in a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take a decision on whether or not to decrease the price of petroleum within a month after analysing prices in the global oil market.

Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for Power and Energy Ministry Prof M Tamim said yesterday, "The government will observe the global trend in prices before making any adjustments."

He was talking to reporters after a meeting with the finance adviser on 'automated price formula for petroleum product' at his office.

He said the petroleum price would be adjusted every three months. The adjustment on the price of oil will be subject to a 10 percent fluctuation from the global price.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

AL picks form, says no to scrapping candidature

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In reversal of its earlier stance, the Awami League (AL) yesterday strongly opposed the Election

Commission's (EC) authority to cancel candidatures in parliamentary polls on grounds of violation of electoral laws.

At a meeting with the EC, a high-

level AL delegation categorically said no candidature can be cancelled on any excuse after being accepted through scrutiny. The

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The Election Commission holds talks with the Awami League yesterday.

AL STANCE

Polis must be participated by all parties

'No' to some local poll observer bodies

Restriction on bill defaulters should go

EC should reconsider upazila poll dates

Ex-bureaucrats may chart BNP poll plan

RAKIB HASEN SUMAN

BNP might assign a group of former bureaucrats, most of who are not directly involved with it, to draw up electoral strategies and a manifesto, and carry out a survey on prospective candidates for the upcoming parliamentary polls.

But the plan has already caused resentment among the rank and file, said party insiders, adding that the team is likely to be led by ex-adviser for the energy ministry Mahmudur Rahman.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Mahmudur said, "Right now, I'm not engaged in any such activities. I will however do anything for the party if madam [BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia] asks."

According to BNP leaders, the team will work from the chairperson's new office in Gulshan to monitor the party activities across the country. It will also help the leadership to settle on candidates through a survey.

The ex-bureaucrats will plan

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Fate of 'reformists' in BNP still not clear

Clashes spread across country as top brass remain silent over the issue

RAKIB HASEN SUMAN

Many so-called reformist leaders of BNP are facing the wrath of their party colleagues in respective areas and constituencies across the country, as the activists are still confused about the dissidents' position in the party.

Many former BNP lawmakers known as 'reformists' did not even visit their constituencies during the Eid holidays to avoid untoward incidents, although party Chairperson Khaleda Zia after her release from detention had said every leader may work for the party from his or her respective position.

Following her announcement, leaders of the now dissolved 'reformist' faction including its Acting Secretary General Maj (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed declared that they will work under the leadership of Khaleda.

Some 'reformist' leaders

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Mojahid denied bail, asked to face trial court

UNB, Dhaka

The chamber judge of the Supreme Court yesterday dismissed the bail petition of Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General and former minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid in Barapukuria coalmine graft case.

Emerging from the chamber of Justice M Joydul Abedin, the counsel for Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Khurshid Alam Khan, who opposed the bail petition, told the news agency that

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Emergency not hurting people

CA tells British parliamentary team

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday told a British parliamentary delegation that the state of emergency is part of Bangladesh's constitution, not any extra-constitutional measure, and it is not affecting the common people.

He said the caretaker government basically wants to ensure a free, fair and credible election,

being held against the backdrop of political turmoil that had stalled the polls earlier set for January 22 last year.

A seven-member delegation of British MPs, led by Keith Vaz, made a courtesy call on the CA at his office. Politics, election, reforms being done in the interim period, manpower export and socioeconomic matters came up for discussion.

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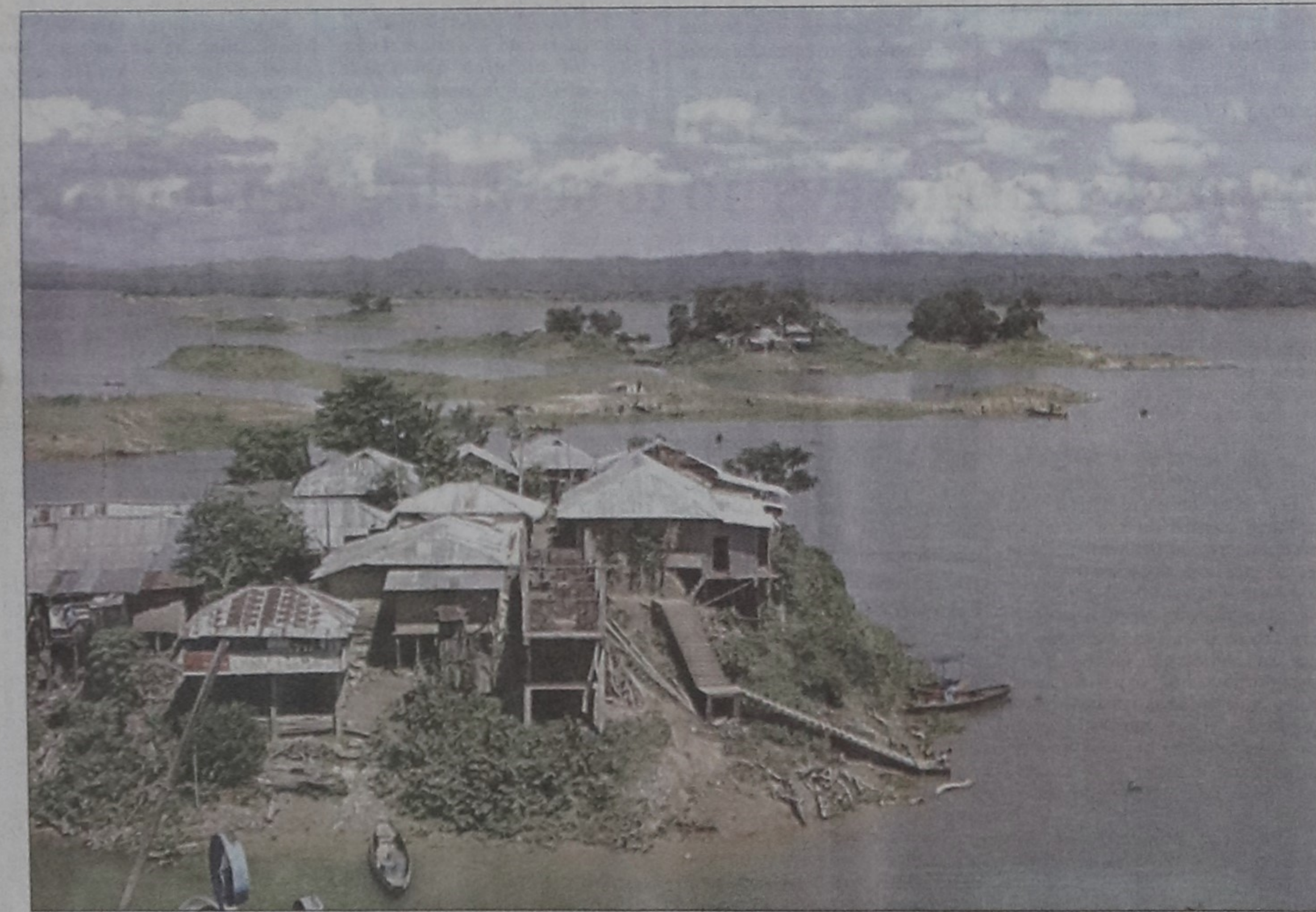


PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Illegal occupation of char land in Kaptai Lake continues unabated in Rangamati as locals build houses there. The photo was taken in Reserve Bazar area.

Ctg mayor freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained ailing Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was released on bail yesterday from the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Earlier, he got bail from the High Court in all 22 cases filed against him.

Upon release, Mohiuddin demanded release of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and other party leaders.

Deputy Inspector General of Prisons (DIG-Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star that the CCC mayor was freed at about 3:30pm as all guards were withdrawn from his cabin.

Mohiuddin's wife Hasina Mohiuddin told The Daily Star over phone that Mohiuddin would stay at BSMMU before being taken to Chittagong this morning. He has been suffering from diseases

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Myanmar agrees to export gas if new reserve found

STAR REPORT

Myanmar will export natural gas to Bangladesh if it finds new gas reserves while it has shown interest in setting up a hydropower project in that country from where electricity could be supplied to Bangladesh.

The decision came out of a meeting yesterday between Myanmar's Energy Minister Brig General Lun Thi and Prof M Tamim, chief adviser's special assistant for power and energy ministry.

The same day the two countries agreed to start soon construction of the proposed 25-kilometre link road expected to ensure better connectivity between them and eventually connect the former to China.

The understanding was reached when visiting Myanmar's Construction Minister Saw Tun

called on Communications and Housing and Public Works Adviser Major General (ret'd) Ghulam Quader at his office.

Talking to The Daily Star in the evening, Prof Tamim said, "In principle, Myanmar has no restriction on exporting gas to us. They are open to discuss with us the gas export issue. That country will explore two new potential fields in December."

The neighbour on the east expressed positive interest in both ideas, as Bangladesh has a huge demand for power as well as for fertilisers including urea which requires gas for its production.

Tamim however said Bangladesh must compete with other gas importers in terms of pricing and other related issues. "The Myanmar minister said he will seriously look into our proposal for setting up a hydropower

plant in that country," he said. UNB reported that according to the proposal, Bangladesh will build the hydropower plant at its own cost and get 70 percent of the electricity from the project, while 30 percent will go to Myanmar as royalty.

The hydropower project proposal was initiated by Bangladesh about two years ago. Both sides also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to implement the project.

As a follow-up, Bangladesh offered to conduct a joint visit to select a project site in the Rakhine state of Myanmar more than six months ago, but there was no response from the other side.

Tamim yesterday said now the Myanmar side agreed to conduct the joint visit by experts to select the projectsite.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Every Sight Counts

Grameenphone Free Eye Care Camps

So far we have arranged 9 eye-care camps, through which 13,000 disadvantaged people received eye-care support and 1,533 eye sights were restored

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