

JS elections on Dec 29, upazila on Jan 22

CEC announces fresh schedules after hectic 3-day parley with AL, BNP; downplays fear of misusing EC's power to cancel candidature

SAKHAWAT LITON

The long-awaited parliamentary election will now be held on December 29 and upazila on January 22, announced the Election Commission (EC) yesterday, meaning most likely an end to the impasse over the polls.

At a jam-packed press conference at the EC Secretariat in the evening, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said hopefully the timings this time will be acceptable to all, and the political parties will begin full-fledged electoral activities today.

The new dates are the upshot of the

POLLS SCHEDULE		
JS Polls		
● Last date for nomination	Nov 30	
● Nomination paper scrutiny	Dec 3-4	
● Last date for withdrawal	Dec 11	
● Voting	Dec 29	
Upazila Polls		
● Last date for nomination	Dec 13	
● Nomination paper scrutiny	Dec 17-19	
● Last date for withdrawal	Dec 31	
● Voting	Jan 22	



last few days' hectic negotiations between the EC, caretaker government and political parties.

This is the third revision to the polls schedules unveiled on November 2. Originally, the parliamentary election was to be held on December 18 and upazila on December 28.

According to the revised timetables, the closing date for filing candidacy applications in the national election is November 30 and in upazila polls December 13.

The applications for the parliamentary election will be scrutinised on

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Emergency may go from Dec 12

Govt responds positively to EC proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state of emergency is going to be lifted finally on December 12 as the caretaker government has agreed to the Election Commission's (EC) proposal to that end.

The EC at a meeting with Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday proposed to lift the emergency from December 12 on expiry of the deadline for withdrawal of candidacy in the national polls, sources say.

The chief adviser consented to the proposal and assured EC that his government is ready to do everything required to ensure holding a free and fair election, the sources add.

"We talked to the government and it assured us of taking measures to lift the state of emergency after the last date for withdrawal of candidacy," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said last evening at a press briefing.

Replying to a query, the poll chief, who held an over-one-hour-long meeting with the CA, said they asked for complete

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Upazila polls finally fall into regime of a political govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The long overdue election to upazila parishads is set to be held under the next political government as the Election Commission (EC) yesterday deferred the polls by over three weeks.

The next elected government to be formed through the December 29 parliamentary polls is supposed to run the country on the day of UP elections.

The caretaker government earlier had committed to hold upazila elections before handing over power to the elected government as the previous AL and BNP governments did not hold the upazila elections

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Khaleda hails fixture Tells nothing about 4-party polls participation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night hailed the announcement of the latest polls schedule but stopped short of accepting it on grounds of state of emergency.

"We welcome the Election Commission's announcement... Now the government should clear its stance on our other demands," she said at her Gulshan office hours after the EC announced the fresh election schedule following hectic parleys with the Awami League and BNP.

The former premier was speaking at a programme where senior lawyer Khandker Mahbub Hossain and former Progressive Democratic Party leader and a mayoral candidate in recently held Barisal City Corporation election Sharfuddin Ahmed Shantu formally joined the BNP.

Khaleda reiterated the four-party alliance's demand for

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Hasina sees plot to foil JS polls

Slates its deferment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a conspiracy is being hatched to foil the general elections but the people must remain alert to thwart such conspiracy.

Criticising the government and the Election Commission for rescheduling the polls again and again, she said the elections have been rescheduled three times as part of a strategy to prolong the state of

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AL grappling with nomination chaos 14-party reacts to polls schedule today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) high-ups think they would have to face serious difficulties in finalising party nominations for the December 29 parliamentary elections.

The party apparently has a positive attitude towards the fresh election schedule but the AL-led electoral alliance will formally give their reaction in this regard today.

The AL high-ups think that BNP is trying desperately to buy AL leaders who were not given party tickets in different constituencies. They also think that AL's internal problems will increase after it finalises nominations with ally Jatiya Party and components of the 14-party combine.

They also believe that no other party or persons would join AL

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Talking polls and beyond CG leaving with bad report card

Says Dr Syed Anwar Husain

SHAMIM ASHRAF and RAKIB AHAMMED

Historian Dr Syed Anwar Husain sees the caretaker government exiting with a bad report card as "most of whatever it has done in many sectors failed to bear fruit".

"It did try to do many good things at the beginning and overstretched itself. The government did not have any political power for doing these extra things because it is an extra-constitutional administration whose only function is to hold a credible election," he said



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Find details of the interview on page 11

BARAPUKURIA GRAFT Khaleda's trial adjourned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday adjourned the trial proceedings of the Barapukuria coal-mine graft case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 15 others till November 30 this year.

Judge Amar Kumar Roy of the Special Court-2 fixed the date as the lawyers of former ministers MK Anwar and M Shamsul Islam, submitted lawyers' certificates and informed the court that the High Court (HC) had stayed the proceedings of the case

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Govt asked not to harass Hasina until January 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday extended its earlier orders that directed the government not to harass or arrest Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in Niko and barge-mounted power plant corruption cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

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RULES VIOLATION Maj Mannan's nomination paper rejected

A CORRESPONDENT

An assistant returning officer of Laxmipur district yesterday turned down Bikalpadhara Bangladesh Secretary General Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan's nomination papers for Laxmipur-4 constituency for violating rules by using a helicopter.

He was, however, able to submit his nomination papers for Noakhali-4 constituency.

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Two firemen ascend a ladder to pump water into the burning Apollo Garments warehouse at Asadganj in Chittagong yesterday as plumes of smoke cover the sky.

End of a family Death toll from acid-laden truck accident now 18

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

The parents of two-month-old Ahnaf Imtiaz, who died on November 16 from his acid burns, succumbed to their burns Saturday night and yesterday afternoon at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Ahnaf along with his father Ashraf Ali and mother Shirin Akhter sustained serious burn injuries when an acid-laden truck collided with a bus on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Comilla on November 6.

The father was not told that his son had passed away and Shirin did not know that her son and husband had died.

The death toll in the accident now stands at 18 and five victims are still struggling for their lives at the burn unit.

"How can we claim that we live in a civilised society when we have to see such tragic deaths of an entire family," said project director of the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of DMCH Samantlal Sen, who treated the family along with seven others.

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RMG stores gutted in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A fire gutted huge quantity of readymade apparel and machinery at the warehouses of two garment factories in the port city yesterday.

Sources said the fire broke out at a warehouse of Apollo Swing and Garments Ltd on the first floor of a six-storey building at Asadganj at around 12:30pm.

The blaze spread rapidly to other floors of the building engulfing three warehouses of Apollo on the first, second and fifth floors and also the warehouses and the factory of Angelic Apparels on the third and fourth floors.

Huge quantities of finished products and raw materials

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John McCain coming in early Dec

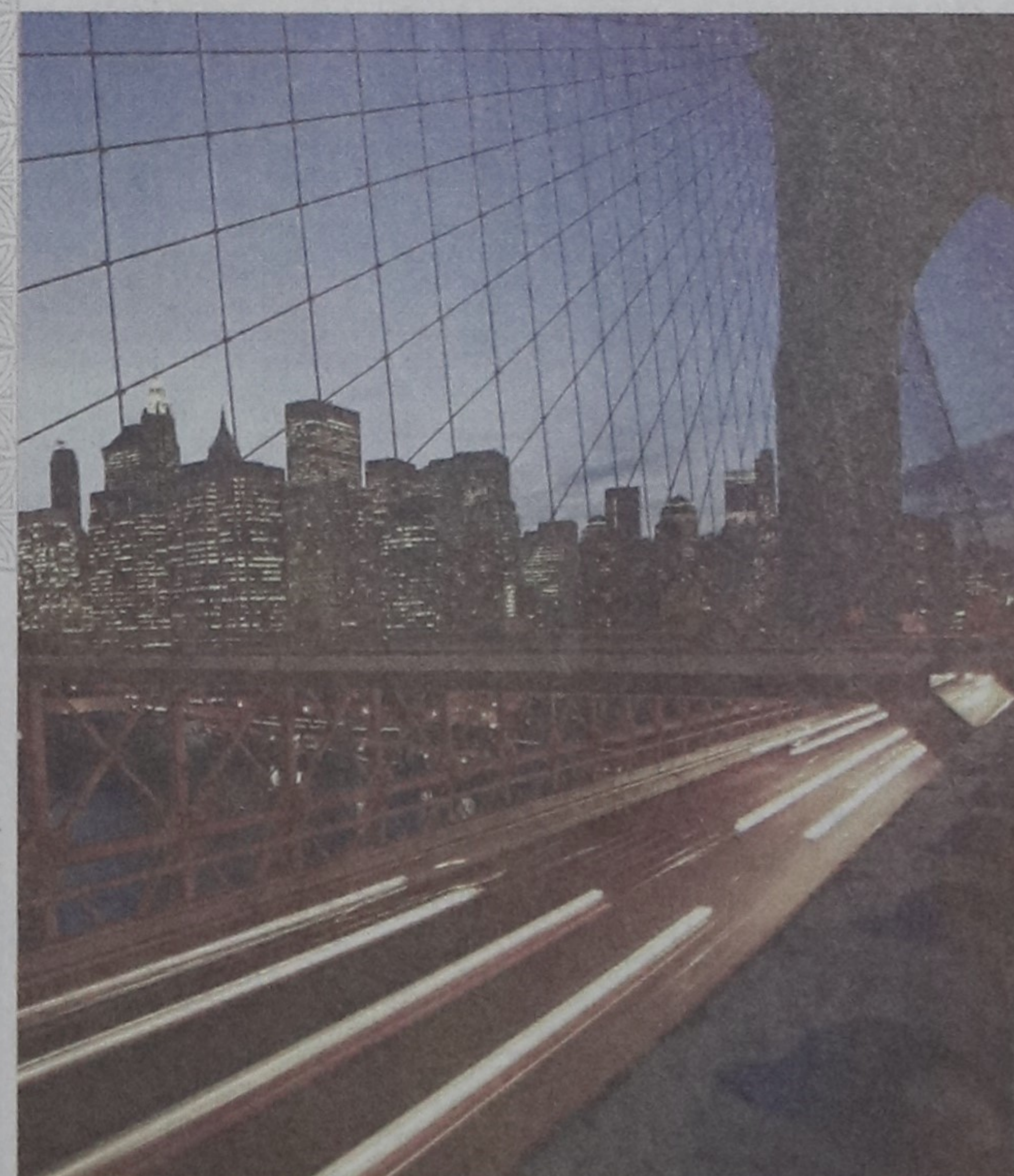
UNB, Dhaka

US Senator John McCain, who was the Republican nominee for this year's presidential election, is scheduled to visit Bangladesh in early December as part of a broader regional trip.

Senator Joseph Lieberman

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