



AKTEL Chief Executive Officer Jefri A Tambi, 3rd from left, and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, 2nd from right, exchange documents after signing a Memorandum of Understanding on an English language programme styled 'English in Schools (EIS)' at a ceremony at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday as Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, 3rd from right, Javed Tariq, extreme left, and Bidyut Kumar Basu, 2nd from left, of AKTEL and Advertisement Manager of The Daily Star Sher Ali, extreme right, look on. (Story on Page 1)

Strengthen water transport system Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to strengthen water transport system in a riverine country like Bangladesh by taking short and long-term measures.

They put forward seven-point demand including appointment of an efficient director general (DG) and experienced chief engineer for the Directorate of DG Shipping to bring mobility in this sector.

The seminar titled 'Existing inland water transport system: What is to be done immediately' was organised by Journalists' Forum for Communication and Environment (JFCE) at the Moni Singh-Farhad Memorial Trust in the city.

While presenting the keynote paper JFCE General Secretary Ashish Kumar Dey said AKM Shafullah, an official of Chittagong shipping department, has been serving as DG for five years instead of

only three months.

Quoting BIWTA, he said out of 26000 km waterways, 20000 km has been extinct and 80 percent of the remaining waterways are inactive due to lack of dredging.

Ashish said from 100 to 150 lakh cubic meter silt is needed to be dredged every year while BIWTA has the dredging capacity of only 30 lakh cubic meter with its three dredgers.

He said a total of 30 lakh people are still dependent on

river transports that carry 30 percent of total passengers and 20 percent of total products.

BIWTA Chairman Badruzzaman Badal decried the donors' reluctance to support Bangladesh for developing its waterways while they are eager to help develop its road transports.

"This is because the donor countries are benefited from the trading of their vehicles," said the chairman.

He also urged the govern-

ment to free the Inland Shipping Ordinance 1976 from some blacklaws.

Vice-chairman of Bangladesh Launch Owners' Association Shahidul Islam Bhuiyan called for freeing the rivers from illegal encroachment.

Parliament members Nazrul Islam Monju and Mir Shawkat Ali Badshah and former shipping minister Dharendra Debnath Shambhu were present at the seminar.

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Hearing on bail petitions of convicts adjourned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday adjourned for one week the hearing on the bail petitions filed by some politicians who were earlier convicted in absentia in corruption cases.

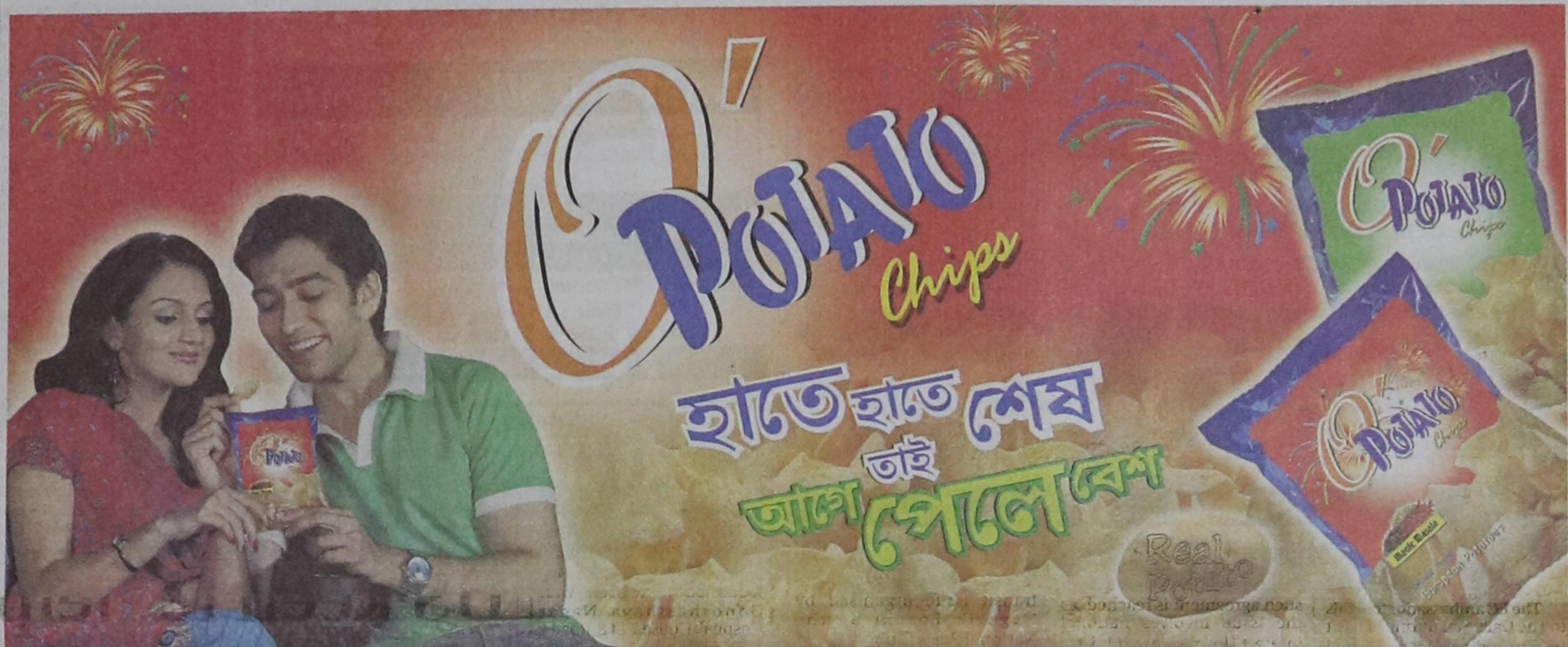
Following a time prayer moved by Additional Attorney General M Enayetur Rahim, the HC bench of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury fixed February 10 as the date for hearing on the matter.

Enayetur Rahim told the court that Attorney General

Mahbubey Alam, who will make submission on behalf of the state, is now abroad and will return next week.

On Tuesday, the HC concluded the hearing of the submissions made by the petitioners' counsels.

The politicians, including former Awami League lawmaker Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju, former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa and former BNP minister M Saifur Rahman's son Shafiqur Rahaman Babu, filed the petitions for bail.



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