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## Polls schedule likely today

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission is likely to announce the schedule for the 12th parliamentary polls this evening.

The EC may also announce that ballot papers will be sent to the polling stations on the morning of the election day, and deputy commissioners and divisional commissioners will act as returning officers, instead of EC officials, something that had earlier been planned.

More than one election commissioner also said they were unlikely to set up CCTV cameras in any polling centres. Monitoring so many feeds would be tough, they said.

While preparing its work plan for the national polls in September 2022, the EC had said it would install CCTV cameras in all polling centres.

Two election commissioners and EC sources yesterday said the commissioners would meet at 5:00pm today to finalise the schedule, and Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal is likely to unveil the details in a televised address to the nation afterwards.

Asked, EC spokesperson and Secretary Jahangir Alam yesterday said he would have a press briefing at 10:00am today about when and how the schedule would be announced.

He said that traditionally the CEC announces the schedule in an address to the nation. "The tradition will continue..."

Asked about US Assistant Secretary Donald Lu's letter to the Awami League, BNP, and Jatiya Party, urging talks without any conditions,

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## AFTER POLLS SCHEDULE BNP may lay siege to EC Secretariat

AL to take out processions welcoming start of election process

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP activists will take to the streets once the Election Commission unveils the polls schedule, party insiders said.

It is likely to announce a siege to the Election Commission Secretariat along with the blockade that is on, they added.

The party is also considering replying to the letter from US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu about talks on the upcoming Jatiya Sangsad polls.

The insiders said if the election schedule is declared keeping thousands of BNP leaders and activists behind bars, the atmosphere would not be conducive to holding any talks.

"Stop the drama in the name of polls schedule. Otherwise, the blockade programme will continue until the government steps down," Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of the BNP, said yesterday.

The Election Commission is likely to roll out the polls schedule today when the BNP's 48-hour nationwide blockade starts. This is the fifth round of blockade being enforced by the opposition party since October 30, demanding resignation of the government and a general election under a non-party neutral administration.

Meanwhile, the Awami League has decided to take out processions



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**Ruhul Kabir Rizvi**  
Senior joint secretary general of BNP

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## Can Black Caps derail the Indian juggernaut?

AL AMIN

As a perfect India team appear in the first semifinal of the 2023 World Cup against New Zealand at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai today, a pertinent question would be if the Black Caps have any magic left in their tank to stop the rampant hosts from taking a bold step closer to winning the coveted trophy for a third time.

India have been so dominant in the group stage that they hardly broke a sweat to win all nine games, which included a comprehensive four-wicket win against New Zealand.

Grabbing the thunder from the lacklustre champions England, India have so far shown little to no weakness in both batting and bowling departments, notwithstanding the fact that their fielding has been equally impressive. With right-arm pacer Jasprit

Bumrah at his best in this tournament and Mohammad Sami enjoying every bit of his replacement role after injury cut short all-rounder Hardik Pandya's World Cup, India won six of their games they chased with the opponents bowled out well

**Complacency could be an unlikely enemy for India at a stage where a defeat could be the end of a billion dreams.**

below the 300-run mark.

When it was their turn to bat first, runs flew like a cascade from the vaunted top order, consisting of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and KL Rahul.

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Kohli, who is out to make the tournament his own, has already struck two centuries to equal Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 ODI hundreds along with five half-centuries at a staggering average of 99.

And with three versatile spinners – Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravichandran Ashwin – in their ranks, India look invincible on home soil.

Still, complacency could be an unlikely enemy for India at a stage where a defeat could be the end of a billion dreams.

The other aspect is that like the other teams, India have not been tested to the limit and their underbelly has not been exposed so far.

With Pandya not around,

someone who has provided the solidity in the lower middle-order like MS Dhoni did in the past, India would be really tested in the event of

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