



**"He miscalculated. For all our common enemies now, he is Russian – and therefore unpredictable and dangerous."**

Former Russian president Dmitri Medvedev on the arrest of Telegram CEO Pavel Durov



DHAKA MONDAY AUGUST 26, 2024

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIV No. 214

BHADRA II, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SAFAR 20, 1446 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00

## Timing of polls 'a political decision'

Says Yunus in address to nation, asks people to fix interim govt's mandate, tenure



- Measures to be taken so that no one can ever turn country into a police-state
- Clauses of laws which hinder freedom of expression to be amended
- Justice to be ensured for all extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances
- Police, bank commissions to be formed for reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urging the people to set the interim government's tenure and mandate, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said when the elections will be held is "completely a political decision".

"Everyone is eager to know when our government will depart. The answer lies in your hands. It is up to you to decide when to bid us farewell. We are not the people to rule the country," he said in a 26-minute televised address to the nation yesterday evening.

He went on to request the people to discuss and prescribe what is the least the interim government needs to do.

"We can get a guideline from this discussion," Yunus said, adding, "But the political decision is the ultimate decision. And political decisions will only come from political discussion."

In his first address to the nation, the chief adviser also assured that he would not seek to extend his tenure.

He said the members of the advisory council took up the responsibilities at the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Saiful Islam and his daughter Sadia Akter cry as they meet after four days in the Lalpol area in Feni yesterday. Saiful said he could not contact his daughter as a severe flood cut all communication in the area.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 50 injured as Ansars clash with students

Ansars earlier besieged Secretariat to press home their demands



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the government's assurance of fulfilling their demands, ansar members continued demonstration by blocking the Secretariat gates yesterday and clashed with students and people.

At least 50 people were injured. The clash broke out around 9:20pm as the students and the people tried to drive away the demonstrators demanding nationalisation of their jobs, said witnesses.

During the clash, the groups hurled brick chunks at each other and chased each other.

At least 40 injured took treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital till 11:00pm, said Bachchu Mia, inspector of DMCH police outpost.

Hasnat Abdullah, one of the conveners of Anti-discrimination Student Movement, was also injured during the clash.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

FLASH FLOODS

## 'We had no clue what was coming'

Says victim in remote area of Noakhali; 10 lakh still marooned

MD ABBAS

When Tuhin Rana, a private company employee in Dhaka, heard last week that floodwaters were entering his remote village in Noakhali, he called his parents and wife who had just given birth and told them to stay safe.

Tuhin thought his family members, natives of the coastal region, would know how to cope with the disaster.

But on Thursday, he found their phones unreachable and read about the devastation the floods were causing.

one-foot deep water in the house," he told this correspondent.

"They are drinking unsafe water. Water in the hand pumps is not clean. I am feeling helpless. They had no idea what was coming."

Most residents of the area took shelter at Batakandi Model School and College. But they also do not have enough food, water and sanitation, locals said.

"Some people set up kitchens and provided food. But they ran out of money. Due to the lack of boats in the area, barely

any relief materials reach here."

Tuhin's family members are among millions in Noakhali, Feni, and Cumilla districts who have been suffering for the past four days.

In Noakhali, eight upazilas were still flooded. Due to a bout of downpour yesterday, the situation worsened.

"I found my elderly parents sitting on the bed of our hut to stay dry. They had not eaten cooked food in two days. My wife and newborn were taken to a safer place by the neighbours. There is still



Some people set up kitchens and provided food. But they ran out of money. Due to the lack of boats in the area, barely any relief materials reach us.

Tuhin Rana, resident of Noakhali

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

MOBILE SERVICE DURING DISASTERS

## No contingency system despite available funds

Telecom ministry fails to set up system in two years

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The telecom ministry has failed to establish a National Emergency Telecommunication System (NETS) to maintain telecommunication and internet services during disasters despite starting the initiative almost two years ago.

In September 2022, following a devastating flood in Sylhet that rendered most of the mobile towers nonfunctional, the Posts and Telecommunications Ministry formed a 12-member committee to develop NETS.

The committee was tasked with formulating a specific plan for NETS, including technical aspects, management and maintenance of the system.

However, the ministry has yet to furnish any plan. Moreover, some organisations listed as committee members are unaware of the committee's existence.

"As far as we know, we haven't been invited to the committee in the last two years – such a system is very essential to ensure smooth communication during the different types of natural disasters," said Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, which was named as a member of the committee.

Every time a cyclone, flood, or other natural disaster strikes Bangladesh, affected individuals first lose access to mobile networks when they need connectivity the most to seek help.

This disruption is primarily due to extended power outages: the standard battery backup duration for base transceiver stations ranges from four to eight hours.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

## Mazumder, Sarafat's bank accounts to be frozen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) yesterday asked banks to freeze the accounts of Nazrul Islam Mazumder, the chairman of Exim Bank and Nassa Group, and Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat, former chairman of Padma Bank, and their family members.



Nazrul Islam Nafeez Sarafat

In separate letters, the anti-money laundering agency instructed the lenders to keep the accounts frozen for the next 30 days in the first phase. The intelligence unit also instructed the banks to suspend their locker facilities.

Sarafat and Mazumder, also the chairman of the private bank owners' forum Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) since 2008,

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

EDN INSTITUTIONS

## Forcing people to resign may lead to collapse

Says edn adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education adviser to the interim government, Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud, said yesterday



that forcing individuals in educational institutions to resign could lead to the collapse of the administrative system.

Speaking at a meeting with ministry officials, the adviser said legitimate complaints against individuals will be addressed, but forced resignations are not an option.

The adviser said that established rules and regulations govern the process of appointments and transfers in government educational institutions, and there is no room for coercion.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6



All-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz (L) runs in to celebrate with teammates after dismissing Pakistan batter Agha Salman during the fifth day of the first Test against Pakistan at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium yesterday. Miraz's four wickets in the second innings helped Bangladesh register a historic 10-wicket victory, their first-ever in the format against Pakistan.

PHOTO: AFP

## A statement victory for Tigers

AL-AMIN

When opener Zakir Hasan swept off-spinner Agha Salman down to the square-leg boundary for the winning runs at the Rawalpindi Stadium yesterday afternoon, it marked the end of Bangladesh's long wait for a Test win against Pakistan.

The 10-wicket triumph in the first of the Two-Test series on a dramatic fifth and final day was not just a win, but a true statement of courage, commitment, self-belief and discipline that deserved to be preserved for posterity.

There are so many heroes in Bangladesh's first ever Test win against Pakistan after 13 unsuccessful attempts. The only occasion the Tigers came close to winning before this was in Multan in 2003 when a portly Inzamamul Haq robbed them with an unbeaten 138 in the second innings, with Pakistan winning by one wicket.

However, there was no Inzy this time around when Bangladesh, riding on an invaluable 117 run first-innings lead, went for the final push for an unlikely win on an otherwise flat track.

Resuming on 23-1 on a 'never trust a fifth day pitch', Pakistan stumbled to 105-6 by lunch with the Bangladesh spin duo of Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz getting some purchase and eventually sharing seven wickets between them.

However, it was right-arm pacer Hasan Mahmud, bowling a probing line throughout the Test, who drew the first blood early in the morning by having Pakistan captain Shan Masood caught behind for 14.

Lanky Nahid Rana with his raw pace then had the 'big fish' Babar Azam, who chopped onto his stumps a widish delivery outside the off-stump for 22.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1