



## Election likely by mid-2026

### Says Prof Yunus, announces commission on national consensus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday said it may be possible to hold the next general election at the end of 2025 or in the first half of 2026.

In his Victory Day address to the nation, he also announced he would lead a commission to forge a consensus among political parties and other stakeholders regarding reforms.

"The first task of the National Consensus-forming Commission will be to reach an early consensus on all the decisions that are necessary for holding the election and also finalise suggestions on when the election can be held after consultation with all."

His announcement of the possible time frame for the election came amid growing calls from political parties for a roadmap to the parliamentary polls.

The Yunus administration, which took over after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina on August 5 in the wake of a student-led mass uprising, has constituted six commissions for promised reforms in different fields.

In his televised address yesterday, he said each of the reform commissions is important to meet people's expectations. However,



A little girl holds onto her balloon, her smile and sparkling eyes embodying the spirit of Victory Day. Dressed in red and green, she was out with her parents to celebrate the occasion in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## The nation celebrates Victory Day

BSS, Dhaka

The nation today celebrated the 54th Victory Day, the most precious day of the nation, by paying glowing tributes to 1971 Liberation War martyrs and recalling the glorious history, the nation scripted 53 years back by freeing the soil from long subjugation.

On December 16, 1971, Bangladesh was born as an independent state at the cost of the supreme sacrifices of three million people and the honour of nearly half a million women.

Marking the day, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus paid homage to the martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar this morning.

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With minimal reforms, polls possible by 2025-end

With desired reforms carried out, election by mid-2026

Voter list update difficult as no verification done over 16yrs

## Four eminent citizens hail polls timeline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four eminent citizens responded positively to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's announcement that the next national election would be held either at the end of 2025 or in the first half of 2026.

Now that the chief adviser has announced the timeline for the national elections and work is proceeding accordingly, it would bring some comfort to political leaders as well as create some credibility about the country for the citizens at large, said Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"It is now to be seen how much we can push through the necessary institutional, administrative and electoral reforms before the election."

All the involved parties will now

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## CA'S POLLS ANNOUNCEMENT BNP seeks specifics, Jamaat okay to wait

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders welcomed Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus's announcement on the timeline of national elections but urged a clear and actionable roadmap.

While acknowledging the statement as a step forward, they said that vague ideas cannot replace a structured plan to ensure credible and participatory polls.

Speaking to The Daily Star, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, "What the chief adviser said about the timing of the election cannot be described as a roadmap. He [Yunus] has merely provided an idea of when the election might take place."

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami, in reaction, expressed conditional support for the timeline.

Jamaat's Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar said, "Despite our initial reluctance regarding the delay, we will remain patient as long as the chief adviser honours his commitment to hold the elections."

"In that case, we are ready to cooperate with him," he told The Daily Star.

Salahuddin Ahmed, another BNP standing committee member, urged the interim government to unveil a specific roadmap, including the date.

The party's Standing Committee Member Khandaker Mosharrar

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## Student leaders for polls after reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of student organisations, who played a key role in toppling the Awami League government, yesterday agreed on the need for necessary reforms before holding elections.

Their comments came after Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, in his televised address to the nation marking Victory Day, opened up to the possibility that the country might see a national election within the first half of 2026.

Prof Yunus suggested elections could be held by late 2025 if the voter list is accurately prepared with minimal reforms. However, with broader reforms based on national consensus, the timeline might extend to early 2026.

Reacting to his speech, top leaders of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement, and the Bangladesh Students' Union opined that essential reforms

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the preparations for and the date of the next national polls hinge on the recommendations of the Electoral Reforms Commission and the Constitution Reforms Commission.

The newly formed Election Commission will also need time, depending on the intensity of the required reforms.

It might be possible to hold the election by the end of 2025 if the election needs to be conducted following political consensus and if the voter list is accurately prepared with minimal reforms, Yunus said.

"On the other hand, if we aim to implement the desired level of reforms in line with the recommendations of the Electoral Reforms Commission and based on a national consensus, it could take at least an additional six months.

"Broadly speaking, the timeline for the election could be set between the end of 2025 and the first half of 2026."

Talking about preparations for the election, Yunus said the EC has already begun its preparatory work.

He said the first and most significant task is to update the voter list, which is very challenging. It has become even more difficult because voters were not given the opportunity to participate in the last three elections. None had the chance to verify the voter list.

He underscored the need for including all eligible voters who have come of age during this period while removing duplicate entries from

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USTAD ZAKIR HUSSAIN (1951-2024)

## The hands that turned 'rhythm into magic'

NAZIBA BASHER

My mother's love for Hindustani classical music was infectious, to say the least.

The twinkling of santoor strings, the sweet sound of the flute flowing like river, or the thunderous beats of tabla would be ringing throughout our home at all times.

She would take it all in and pass it down the umbilical cord straight into my soul even before my birth. As I kicked her belly to teentaal, she began dreaming of me becoming a dancer one day. And that dream was further inspired by majestic tabla playing by none other than one of the greatest percussionists of all time - Ustad Zakir Hussain.

Like his contemporaries in the world of Shastriya Sangeet, Ustad Zakir played an instrumental role in my upbringing.

But, alas! At the age of 73, the greatest tabla player the world has ever known succumbed to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and left the world a darker and quieter place to live in. Such a monumental loss was mourned by stars and musicians and music lovers of all

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The capital's Karwan Bazar was bustling with traders and consumers yesterday as truck loads of winter vegetable -- cauliflower, spinach, lima beans, and more -- have been coming to the capital from all over the country.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## STUDENTS, NAGORIK COMMITTEE We'll form a political party within 2 months

### Committee convener says 'no polls before trials of all AL miscreants'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and Jatiya Nagorik Committee are planning to form a new political party within a month or two, said Nasiruddin Patwary, convener of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

"We are currently a political initiative, born out of the 2024

mass uprising, comprising forces that defeated Awami fascism and aim to rebuild Bangladesh," he told reporters after paying tributes at the National Mausoleum in Savar marking Victory Day yesterday.

Their vision is to present Bangladesh as a dreamland in South Asia and on the global stage.

"With this goal in mind,

the Jatiya Nagorik Committee and the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement will introduce a promising political party within the next month or two."

About elections taking place by the first half of 2026, Nasiruddin told reporters that the new party would never support holding the next

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THE VISIONARY WHO RESHAPED THE LIVES OF MILLIONS THROUGH HIS DEEDS, WE SHINE WITH BRILLIANCE



Alhaj S M Nazrul Islam (1928-2017) Founder Chairman, Walton Group

Alhaj S M Nazrul Islam, Founder Chairman, Walton Group and Pioneer of Electrical & Electronics industry in Bangladesh inspired us with his ethics, values and morals. May Allah grant Jannah to his departed soul, Ameen.

