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Govt prepared to hold polls by mid-2026

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday assured that the government is fully prepared to hold the national election.

He said the focus at this moment is solely on the parliamentary polls and there were no immediate plans for local elections, he told the media at the Election Commission Office in the capital's Agargaon.



Earlier, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in Victory Day speech, mentioned a potential timeline for the next national election, saying it would be held either by the end of next year of the first have of 2026.

In this connection, the CEC said, "We've been working towards the national election from day one. All necessary preparations have been

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Workers pack winter vegetables into sacks at Mohasthan Haat in Bogura's Shibganj upazila. Prices of vegetables have been falling over the last few days due to a surge in supply there. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

Killings at Pilkhana to be probed afresh

Committee to be formed in 5 working days: home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said that a committee would be formed within five working days to re-investigate the killings during the BDR mutiny at its headquarters in Pilkhana.

Speaking at a special press conference at the Secretariat, the adviser said that the committee would comprise retired judges, retired administration officials, retired police officers, and armed forces personnel.

Just two days back on December 15, the home ministry informed the



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DEPUTY, JOINT SECRETARIES Promotions to be based on exams

Reform commission to recommend 50:50 ratio between admin and other cadres for promotion to the rank of deputy secretary, says its chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Administration Reform Commission will recommend promotions to the posts of deputy secretary and joint secretary be based on exams conducted by the Public Service Commission.

However, sitting for the exams will not be required for promotions to additional secretary and secretary.

The commission will also suggest 50:50 ratio between officials of administration cadre and other cadres for promotions to deputy secretary instead of the current 75:25 ratio.

This was revealed by Commission Chairman Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury during a views-exchange meeting with journalists at the Secretariat yesterday.

"We are considering creating specialisations within the cadre services. We are recommending changes to the health and education cadres because

officials under these cadres cannot continue to be structured as traditional cadres. These two cadres will be restructured into specialised departments.

"Are ophthalmologists, dentists, and general physicians being promoted at the same pace? That's why we propose they no longer remain part of the cadre system. Keeping them within the cadre system has been illogical. These cadres must be separated and transformed into specialised departments, with enhanced salaries and benefits."

Mueyed said except for these two cadres, the rest can remain under the current cadre system. "We plan to have more discussions on this matter."

Mokles Ur Rahman, senior secretary of the public administration ministry, said the commission will recommend separating the education and health cadres, similar to how the Judicial Service

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The commission will recommend eliminating the police verification requirement for government jobs and passports.

Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury
Chairman, Public Administration Reform Commission

Nothing wrong in demanding election

Tarique tells BNP event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is nothing wrong in political parties demanding election, said BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

"As a political party, we will participate in elections, we will campaign, we will want elections -- there is nothing to hide. It's normal and simple. The ones who have more public support will run the country," he said, addressing his party activists via video link yesterday.

The BNP is not a party that resorts to sham elections in which votes are cast at midnight, he said.

"We believe in free, fair, and transparent elections where people vote without fear."

He said it would be wrong for the BNP activists to assume that the next election would be easy to win just because the main rival is not there.

"This election will be a lot harder than any other election in the past. Make preparations to win with people's support."

BNP's public support has made

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Top Russian general killed in Moscow blast

Ukraine claims responsibility; Kirillov was in charge of chemical weapons unit

REUTERS, Moscow

A top Russian general accused by Ukraine of being responsible for the use of chemical weapons against Ukrainian troops was assassinated in Moscow by Ukraine's SBU intelligence service yesterday morning in the most high-profile killing of its kind.

Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, who was chief of Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops, was killed outside an apartment building along with his assistant when a bomb hidden in an electric scooter went off, Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes serious crimes, said.

An SBU source confirmed to Reuters that the Ukrainian intelligence agency had been behind the hit. "The liquidation of the chief of the radiation and chemical protection troops of the Russian Federation is the work of the SBU," the source said.

The source said that a scooter containing explosives was detonated, killing both Kirillov and his aide, as they stepped into the entrance of a house on Ryazansky Prospekt in Moscow.

Kirillov, 54, is the most senior Russian military officer to be assassinated inside Russia by Ukraine and his murder is likely to prompt the Russian authorities to review security protocols for the army's top brass and to find a way to avenge his killing.

Former president Dmitry Medvedev, now a senior Russian security official, was cited by the state RIA news agency as saying that Ukraine's military and political leadership now faced imminent revenge for Kirillov's murder.

Moscow holds Ukraine responsible for a string of high-profile assassinations on its soil designed to weaken morale and punish those Kyiv regards guilty of war crimes. Ukraine, which says Russia's war against it poses an existential threat to the Ukrainian state, has made clear it regards such targeted killings as a legitimate tool.



Israeli strikes kill 14 in Gaza

Tanks push deeper into south; Israeli team in Doha talks on potential truce deal

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 14 Palestinians yesterday, at least 10 of them in one house in Gaza City, medics said as tanks pushed deeper towards the western area of Rafah in the south.

Medics said the Israeli airstrike on the house in the Daraj suburb of Gaza City destroyed the building and damaged nearby houses. Four other people were killed in two separate airstrikes in the city and the town of Beit Lahiya north of the enclave said medics, medics added.

In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks pushed deeper towards the western area of Mawasi, known as a humanitarian-designated area, residents said.

Heavy fire from tanks rolling into the area forced dozens of families sheltering there to flee northwards towards Khan Younis.



Palestinians stand in line to collect food at a distribution centre south of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli offensive in the Palestinian enclave.

PHOTO: AFP

Vinicius Jr wins FIFA Best award

REUTERS, Doha

Brazil and Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr was named FIFA men's player of the year in Doha on Tuesday, with Spain and Barcelona midfielder Aidan Bonmati winning the women's award for the second year in a row.

Vinicius scored 24 goals in 39 appearances across all competitions to help Real Madrid clinch the LaLiga and Champions League double, and he also netted in their Champions League final win over Borussia Dortmund.

The Brazilian won the award ahead of Spain and Manchester City midfielder Rodri and his teammate at Real, England's Jude Bellingham.

The 24-year-old, who narrowly missed out on the Ballon d'Or to Rodri in October, was in Doha to collect the award, with Real in Qatar for Wednesday's FIFA Intercontinental Cup final against Mexico's Pachuca.

"It seemed impossible when I played barefoot in the streets of Sao Goncalo and now I'm here," Vinicius said.

Bonmati retained the FIFA women's player of the year award ahead of Zambia's Barbra Banda and Norway's Caroline Graham Hansen, having also won the women's Ballon d'Or for the second consecutive year in October.

Real Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti won the best men's coach award, after the Italian led his club to the league



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