

## ELECTORAL SYSTEM EC opposes key reform proposals

Objects to polls timing, separate body for delimitation

MD ABBAS and  
AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission has objected to 10 key reform proposals, including those on the delimitation of constituencies, the timing of local government polls and the national election, and investigations against election commissioners.

In a letter sent to National Consensus Commission's Co Chairman Prof Ali Riaz yesterday, the EC warned that holding local government polls before the national election would delay the parliamentary polls.

The EC differed with the proposal to complete national and all local government polls within a four-month timeframe, saying that experience shows local elections alone take nearly a year to complete as these polls are held in phases.

It also raised objection to the Electoral Reform Commission's proposal on authorising a parliamentary committee to investigate failures of election commissioners.

Additionally, the EC opposed the proposed Election Commission Ordinance 2025, which seeks to introduce criminal liability for election commissioners for failing to ensure fair elections. This provision would erode the commissioners' independence and expose them to political pressure, the EC said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## BNP cautiously optimistic of polls in December

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP wants to put its trust in the interim government but cannot do so confidently until a specific timeline for the next general election is unveiled.

Despite earlier assurances from the interim government that the polls would be held in December this year, varying statements from Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus have fuelled scepticism within the party leadership.

Addressing police officers, the chief adviser yesterday stressed the need for implementing reforms, saying that the interim administration has "limited time before the upcoming election in December".

Three days earlier, he said the election could take place either in December this year or in June next year, depending on the political consensus around proposed reform packages.

If the political parties agree to a "short reform package", the election could happen this December. However, if they opt for a "comprehensive reform package", the election would be postponed until June next year.

Until the election date is announced, such "floating remarks" are not reassuring, BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

"What is the problem in declaring the election date? There has to be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

**What is the problem in declaring the election date? There has to be a cut-off date for everything. Nothing can be open-ended.**

AMIR KHASRU MAHMUD CHOWDHURY



**Bangladesh situation a 'concern' for US**

Says Tulsi Gabbard; CA's press wing refutes her remarks



STAR REPORT

US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard yesterday said the situation in Bangladesh is a "major area of concern" for the United States, citing "the long-time persecution of religious minorities."

In an interview with NDTV World, she said, "The long time unfortunate persecution, killing, and abuse of religious

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



TOILING UNDER THE HOT SUN... A worker collecting wheat that has fallen during shipment at a jetty at Anu Majhir Ghat on the Karnaphuli river, Chattogram. As the temperature rises, engaging in physical labour outdoors has become challenging. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Be impartial during polls

Yunus asks cops, reiterates commitment to election, reforms by Dec

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

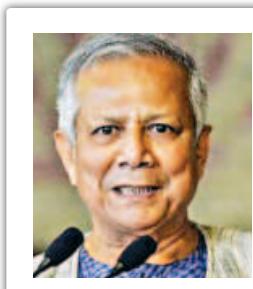
Reiterating the government's plan to hold the next general election in December, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday told police to act impartially and not give in to pressure from any group during the polls.

Prof Yunus also asked them to ensure the safety of women, minority communities, and the underprivileged people.

The interim government doesn't have much time left, he said at a special meeting with senior police officers at his office in the capital's Tejgaon.

"We have already spent seven months. We're saying the election will be held in December. So, within this time, we must accomplish what we want.... We should make the necessary reforms -- whether they are the ones we are discussing or the ones you suggest."

Those who run for office may become desperate, but



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

**CHILD RAPE**  
New DNA labs, tribunal for victims

UNB, Dhaka

The interim government has in principle decided to bring necessary changes to the existing Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, including introducing a provision to have a tribunal to deal with child rape cases.

"A final approval [on proposed amendments] is likely to come on Thursday," Law Adviser Asif Nazrul told reporters at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday afternoon.

The decision was taken at a special meeting of the advisory council held yesterday with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in the chair.

Forests and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam were also present at the media briefing.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Freeze stolen assets parked in UK

BB governor urges British parliamentary body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur sought help from the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on Anti-Corruption in getting sanctions on stolen assets parked in Britain.

During a meeting at Portcullis House in London yesterday, the governor told the British MPs that a handful of business magnates directly syphoned \$20-25 billion out of Bangladesh's banking system.

The figure would stand at \$70 billion if assets pilfered from general corruption were also accounted for, said Ifty Islam, who advises the government on asset recovery.

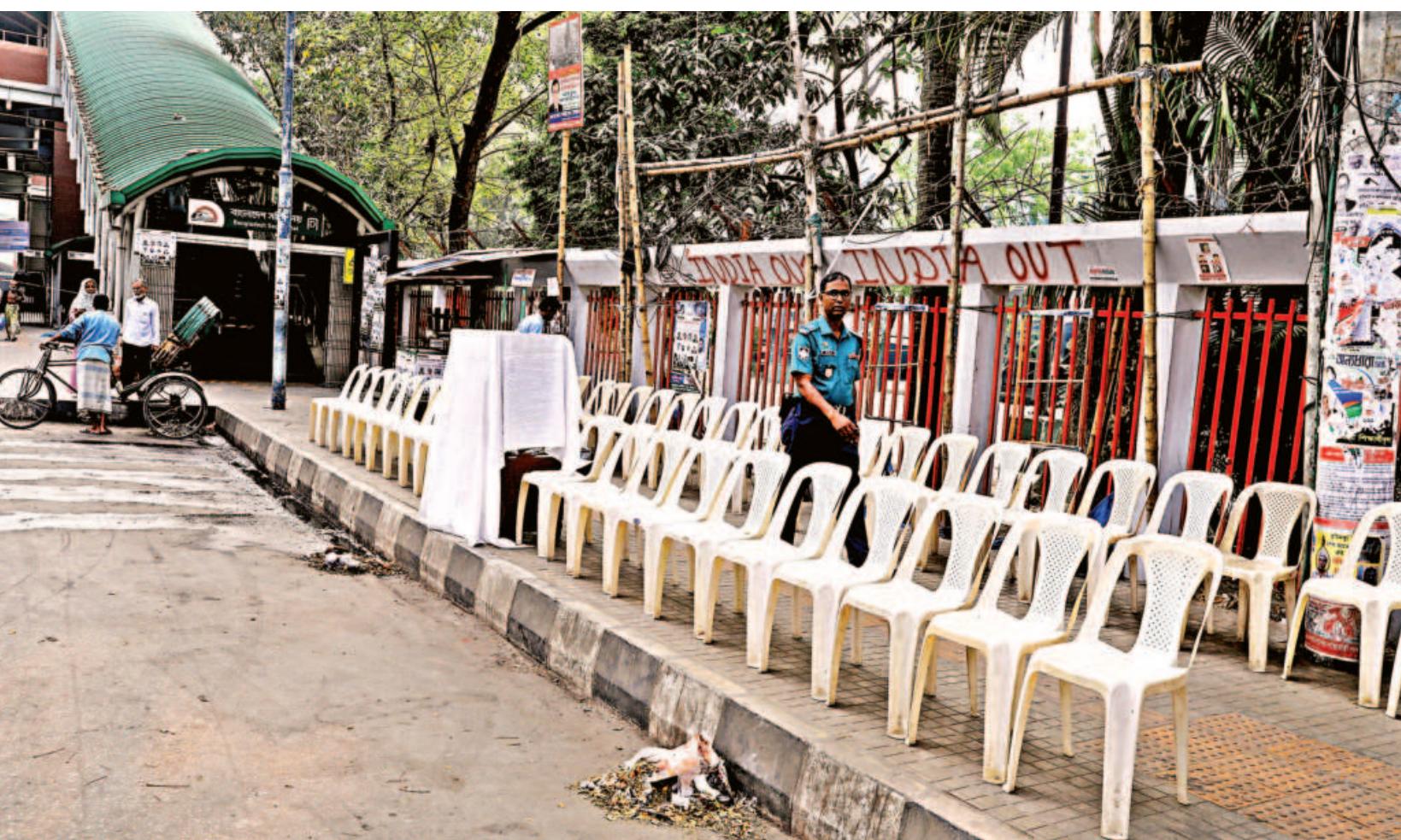
This is the largest asset recovery attempt in history, Mansur and Ifty said.

Former justice secretary Alex Chalk KC and Rupa Huq MP, among others, attended the meeting hosted by Lloyd Hatton MP.

The governor said that the government had identified 160 potential cases and was approaching the issue from both criminal and civil law perspectives.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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RENT-A-RALLY!...The stage is set occupying this footpath in front of the Jatiya Press Club. Dozens of chairs have been put together in rows with a dais, equipped with a microphone and loudspeakers, nestled in between. For Tk 1,500, a party can rent this set-up for an hour and hold a meeting. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**CAAB staffers stage protests across airports**  
**Demand cancellation of plans for new airport security force**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) staffers demonstrated in airports across the country yesterday protesting the authority's proposal of a separate airport security force comprised of civil and military personnel.

Carrying banners, the staffers organised demonstrations in front of their headquarters in Dhaka as well as at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram, Osmani International Airport in Sylhet, Hazrat Shah Makhdum International Airport in Rajshahi, Cox's Bazar Airport, Saidpur Airport and Jashore Airport.

On March 10, 2025, a proposal was made to the CAAB chairman, floating the idea of a new security outfit called "Bangladesh Airport Security Force".

According to the proposal, prepared by CAAB's security department, 70 percent of the people from the new force would be recruited from the air force, while 30 percent would be recruited from civilian staffers. A total of 10,632 people would be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1