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Free, fair polls between Dec and June 2026

Prof Yunus reiterates in address to the nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the next national election would be held between December this year and June 2025, and the government wants it to be the most free, fair, and acceptable election in history.

He also said rumours were spread to destabilise the country and confuse the people, and more misinformation would be spread as the election approached.

"You all know who is behind [the rumours]," he said in his last night's televised address, marking the Independence Day and Eid.

The National Consensus Commission is collecting the political parties' take on the reform proposals, he said.

The goal is to make a list of issues on which the parties agree with each other. Political parties will sign the list which will be the July Charter, he said.

"Our responsibility is to present the entire process



"Whenever you hear a rumour, make sure to find its source. Do not ignore it. Many experienced military strategists are behind these rumors, and funds are poured [into the misinformation campaign]."



Chief Adviser
PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS

transparently before the nation and hold the election once the process is complete," he said.

Regarding the spread of rumours, he said ever since the interim government took office, a misinformation campaign began on social media.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has assured the government that he would support Bangladesh in its fight against misinformation.

Regarding the July uprising, he said, "We must remember that we are in a state of war. Rumours are the biggest weapon of the defeated side.

"Whenever you hear a rumour, make sure to find its source. Do not ignore it. Many experienced military strategists are behind these rumors, and funds are poured [into the misinformation campaign].

"Their main goal is to make the July Uprising fail. We will not let that happen. Our collective unity is making them desperate. They want to break our unity. They are cunning, and you may not even realise when you become their puppet."

He urged the people to make "fugitive forces" lose.

Prof Yunus remembered the martyrs of the Liberation War and July uprising.

PRICES DURING RAMADAN

Major steps have been taken to control the prices of goods and keep electricity uninterrupted, he said, adding that there were reports that the prices had fallen.

Discipline has been restored in the banking sector, and various economic indicators are gradually improving.

He said corruption was the biggest problem. The

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Students light candles at an altar inside the Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University to commemorate the Dark Night of March 25, 1971, when Pakistani forces swooped on unarmed Bangalees to crush their struggle for freedom.

INDEPENDENCE DAY TODAY

THE LEGEND OF NADER 'GUNDA'

A fearless freedom fighter of Old Dhaka

AHMAD ISTIAK

Faruq Hossain, an elderly resident of Hoseni Dalan area in Old Dhaka, furrowed his brow when we asked him if he heard about Nader Mia from Malitola.

"Are you asking about Nader gunda? He was killed by the Pakistan military during the Liberation War. He was a fearless man. But I never saw him in person," he said.

Mohammad Afzal, another elderly man in his 70s from Urdu Road in the capital, gave a similar response. "The very mention of Nader's name would scare people."

Back in those days, "Nader Gunda from Malitola" was widely known in Old Dhaka. Many of those who had never seen him were also familiar with his name, according to Faruk, Afzal, and several other elderly people in the old town.



This faded signboard in Malitola is the only record of Nader's legacy.

Ali Ahmad Ziauddin Bir Pratik, a freedom fighter from Crack Platoon, is also familiar with the heroic tales of Nader, who turned into a "freedom fighter from a street gangster" causing terror to the Pakistan army.

"After the crackdown, we went to India for training to join the war in the first week of April. Later, we returned and fought. But Nader and his gang

put up resistance right from the beginning. On March 25 and 26, it was the civilians who put up the primary resistance at three locations in Dhaka. Among them, Nader and his group organised resistance on English Road in Bangshal," he said.

The two other resistance points were near Dhaka Central Jail and behind the Iqbal Hall (present Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall of Dhaka University), said Ziauddin, who too never seen Nader but was familiar with Nader's valiant fights during the war.

A TALE OF VALOUR

On the dark night of March 25, 1971, when the Pakistan forces launched their brutal massacre on unarmed, sleeping Bangalees, many fled the city, but Nader did not, multiple elderly locals said.

Sensing the situation early in the night, Nader took position on the

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DR SANJIDA KHATUN
(1933-2025)

A legacy of art and activism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Sanjida Khatun, the president of Chhayanaut and a pioneer of cultural movement in Bangladesh, passed away at Square Hospital in Dhaka at 3:10pm yesterday. She was 91.

The Ekushey Padak-winning Rabindra Sangeet artiste had been battling diabetes, pneumonia, and kidney complications for some time and had been under hospital care for the past week.

Her daughter-in-law, Laisa Ahmad Lisa, who also serves as Chhayanaut's general secretary, confirmed the news of her passing to The Daily Star.

As per Chhayanaut's announcement, a public tribute will be held today at 12:30pm at the Chhayanaut Cultural Centre in Dhanmondi, where admirers and well-wishers will pay their final respects to the eminent cultural figure who shaped Bangladesh's cultural consciousness.

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S Alam, wife sued over illegal assets worth over Tk 1,539cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has filed two cases accusing S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 1,539.85 crore.

ACC Assistant Director Mahmudul Hasan filed the cases, ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain told reporters at his office yesterday.

Saiful has been accused of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 796.28 crore while Farzana faces charges of having Tk 743.57 crore in undisclosed wealth.

The cases were filed under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

According to the complaints, Saiful and his wife own movable and immovable properties in Singapore, Cyprus, and the British Virgin Islands, and other places.



Students at the Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University are painting masks for the Mangal Shobhajatra, a procession traditionally taken out on Pahela Baishakh.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

AC BUS OPERATORS Overcharging rampant ahead of Eid

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Jannatul Ferdous usually travels to her village in Gaibandha in Al Hamra Paribahan from Dhaka. The AC bus operator charges Tk 1,200 per ticket.

However, with Eid approaching, the bus company has nearly doubled the fare. She had to pay Tk 2,200 for an advance ticket.

"Overcharging during the Eid rush has become normal, but paying an extra Tk 1,000 is simply ridiculous," she said.

"Besides, I thought things would be different this time, given that a new government came to power following a mass uprising. But nothing has changed here," Jannatul working at a private firm told The Daily Star.

Like Jannatul, hundreds of passengers travelling on AC buses -- except for those run by a few reputed companies -- were forced to pay extra during the Eid rush in the absence of a fixed fare for such services and proper monitoring.

Although the hike is not as steep for non-AC buses, most private operators, particularly lesser-known companies -- are still overcharging passengers ahead of Eid.

Our correspondents visited Sayedabad Bus Terminal and various counters at Arambagh yesterday and spoke to at least 20 people, many of whom bought tickets from different counters across the capital, to know the extent of overcharging by bus operators.

Bus operators were found charging an extra Tk 200 to Tk 1,000.

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