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Six parties back govt's reform-first polls plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six political parties, including National Citizen Party, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, and Jamaat-e-Islami, will support the interim government hold a national election after making the necessary reforms.

The five "anti-fascist" political parties held an emergency meeting on Thursday night at the office of Islami Andolan in the capital's Purana Paltan and reached a consensus on the matter, according to a press release.

The meeting was convened at the call of Islami Andolan leader Mufti Syed Mohammad Rezaul Karim, widely known as Charmonai Pir.

The three other parties are Gono Odhikar Parishad, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, and AB Party.

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman attended the meeting over the phone while top leaders of the other parties were present in person.

During the discussions, the leaders

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Perched atop a cage with its claws tied, a visibly startled owl is on display at the Nayabati bird market in Khulna city's Khalishpur area yesterday. This market, while offering domesticated animals and birds, also illegally sells wild species like eagles, kites, and owls, a clear violation of the Wildlife Conservation and Security Act, 2012.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

'Polls by Dec, not CA's resignation' Salahuddin says people will choose an alternative if Yunus resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP does not want Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to resign, but if he does not wish to remain in office, the people will choose an alternative, said BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday.

He said BNP's demand is a national election by December, not Prof Yunus's resignation.

"We demand that, realising the aspiration of the people and the importance of the issue, he should present a specific electoral roadmap to the nation by December. That is our demand, not his resignation," he said.

"No one is indispensable. We want the honourable chief adviser to stay. We did not want his resignation and still do not want that," he said.

"If he [chief adviser] still thinks he is incapable of carrying out his duty, or he quits his duty being emotional, then the state or nation cannot afford to sit and watch. The state has to find an alternative. There is no place for emotions here," said Salahuddin to the media.

"And if we have made any unreasonable demands, let him say so," he added.

The BNP leader said if the chief adviser wants to resign

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Boost national capacity, don't rely on foreign experts

Says Prof Anu Muhammad about Ctg port management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted economist Prof Anu Muhammad stressed that the government's responsibility is to ensure Bangladesh moves toward an equitable society by strengthening national capacity, making necessary reforms in education and culture, and introducing structural changes in agriculture and industry.

He made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion on the upcoming national budget at Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday.

"The responsibility of the government was to set the direction for building an equitable Bangladesh. This is an interim government; it does not have a permanent mandate. Therefore, it cannot do everything. But reports from the reform commissions have been submitted, there are expectations for certain reforms, and there are tasks that can be carried out quite easily.

"For example, increasing the allocation to education and health sectors is a long-standing and fundamental demand."

"Instead of addressing these critical concerns, the government is further complicating matters, which is not a sustainable solution to the country's problems."

The former economics professor also urged the interim government to focus on enhancing national capacity instead of relying on foreign experts to manage Chattogram Port and resolve other national issues.



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50 killed, missing after Israeli strike in Gaza

WHO warns health system at a breaking point; a total of 107 aid trucks entered Gaza

AGENCIES

More than 50 Palestinians were killed or remain missing after an Israeli air raid on a residential building in the Jabalia al-Balad area of northern Gaza, the civil defence said yesterday.

Civil defence crews described the scene as a "horrific massacre", reporting that they recovered the bodies of four victims and rescued six others from the rubble.

However, more than 50 people are still believed to be trapped under the debris of the four-storey building, reports Al Jazeera online.

The Israeli army said that over the past day, its forces had attacked "military compounds, weapons storage facilities and sniper posts" in Gaza.

"In addition, the (air force) struck over 75 terror targets throughout the Gaza Strip," it added.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that Gaza's health system is at a breaking point as Israel's intensified military operations continue, amidst worsening mass population displacement and acute shortages of basic necessities.

Four major hospitals in Gaza

have had to suspend medical services in the past week due to their proximity to incidents. WHO missions attempting to reach Al-Awda Hospital and the Indonesian Hospital were impeded, it said.

- » Israeli air force strikes over 75 targets across Gaza
- » Four major hospitals have had to suspend medical services
- » Netanyahu accuses France, Britain, Canada of 'emboldening' Hamas

A few of the 90-odd UN trucks able to ferry humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip for the first time since March were "intercepted" by desperate residents, a United Nations spokesman said Thursday.

"We understand that a small number of trucks carrying flour were intercepted by residents and

their contents removed," said the spokesman, Stephane Dujarric.

A total of 107 aid trucks belonging to the United Nations and other aid groups carrying flour, food, medical equipment and pharmaceutical drugs were transferred on Thursday into the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military said.

In a separate development, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the leaders of France, Britain and Canada of wanting to help the Palestinian group Hamas after they threatened to take "concrete action" if Israel did not stop its latest offensive in Gaza, reports Reuters.

The criticism, echoing similar remarks from Foreign Minister Gideon Saar on Thursday, was part of a fightback by the Israeli government against the increasingly heavy international pressure on it over the war in Gaza.

Israel resumed major operations in Gaza on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire.

On Thursday, Gaza's health ministry said at least 3,613 people had been killed in the territory since then, taking the war's overall toll to 53,762, mostly civilians.

Judge halts Trump block on foreign students at Harvard

AFP, New York

A judge temporarily suspended yesterday the Trump administration's move to block Harvard from enrolling and hosting foreign students after the prestigious university sued, calling the action unconstitutional.

On Thursday, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem revoked Harvard University's ability to enrol foreign nationals, throwing the future of thousands of students and the lucrative income stream they provide into doubt.

But Harvard sued, and Massachusetts District Judge Allison Burroughs ordered that "the Trump administration is hereby enjoined from implementing... the revocation of Plaintiff's SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) certification."

There will be an injunction hearing on May 29, a court filing showed.

President Donald Trump is furious at Harvard -- which has produced 162 Nobel prize winners -- for rejecting his demand that it submit to oversight on admissions and hiring over his claims that it is a hotbed of anti-Semitism and "woke" liberal ideology.

His administration has already threatened to put \$9 billion of government funding to Harvard under review and gone on to freeze a first tranche of \$2.2 billion of grants and \$60 million of official contracts, as well as targeting a Harvard Medical School researcher for deportation.

"It is the latest act by the government in clear retaliation for Harvard exercising its First Amendment rights to reject the government's demands to control Harvard's governance, curriculum, and the 'ideology' of its faculty and students," said the lawsuit filed in Massachusetts federal court.



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Scientists create contact lenses that grant 'super-vision'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have created contact lenses that enable wearers to see in the dark using infrared vision, an invention that could lead to advances in emergency and rescue operations.

Unlike traditional night vision goggles, these lenses don't require a power source and enable wearers to see infrared and visible light simultaneously, according to a new study published in the journal Cell.

"Our research opens up the potential for non-invasive wearable devices to give people super-vision," study senior author Tian Xue from the University of Science and Technology of China, said.

The lens uses tiny nanoparticles that absorb infrared light and convert it into wavelengths that are visible to mammalian eyes.

These particles specifically enable detection of "near-infrared light", which has a wavelength range of 800-1600 nanometres.

This is just beyond what mammals perceive, which is a fraction of the wavelengths corresponding to visible light, typically in the 400-700 nm range.



The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has raised the prices of soybean oil, lentils, and sugar, distressing people who have lined up behind the TCB truck for essential commodities at subsidised rates. People from low-income groups rely on TCB products owing to soaring commodity prices. The photo was taken yesterday near Mohammadpur Town Hall.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Major' Ukraine-Russia prisoner swap 'completed'

Says Trump; Russia downs 112 Ukrainian drones

REUTERS

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that a major prisoner swap was just completed between Russia and Ukraine.

"A major prisoners swap was just completed between Russia and Ukraine. It will go into effect shortly. Congratulations to both sides on this negotiation. This could lead to something big???" Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Ukraine submitted a list of 1,000 prisoners of war to Russia in preparation for a major upcoming swap, an official at Ukrainian military intelligence said on Thursday.

An agreement to conduct such an exchange was reached earlier this month in Istanbul during the first direct talks between Russia and Ukraine in more than three years.

Meanwhile, Russia's defence ministry said yesterday its air defence systems had downed 112 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 24 over the Moscow region.

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