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Reforms first priority, then trials, polls

Yunus tells event in Tokyo

"There are opinions that let's get the election done. But it is not all, just one particular party."

PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has outlined three priorities for the interim government: reforms, the trial for the July atrocities, and elections.

During a question answer session at the 30th Nikkei Forum in Tokyo yesterday, he said his government wanted to reform institutions, policies, judiciary, and others.

He added, "We want to design new institutions, new policies. The government doesn't want to go back to the old system where forces killed people and used the judiciary as a weapon."

"Reform is one agenda for the interim government, the next one is the trial of people who committed crimes during the mass uprising. Number three is the election ... Finally, the election. So, we have been explaining to people that the election will be held between the end of this year in December and maximum of June next year."

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A flooded mosque in Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali yesterday. Homes and other structures, not protected by dams, took the brunt of tidal surges caused by a depression over the Bay of Bengal.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Restore democracy

Khaleda urges people on the eve of Zia's death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday called on party leaders, activists, and the people to move forward to reestablish democracy, which she says is facing obstacles.

On the eve of BNP founder and late president Ziaur Rahman's 44th death anniversary, Khaleda said, "He [Ziaur Rahman] embraced martyrdom in the fight to establish democracy and safeguard sovereignty. The uninterrupted journey of that very democracy continues to face obstacles at every step."

"Let this be our pledge on the death anniversary of Zia: we will see democracy reestablished in Bangladesh very soon."

"To achieve this goal, I urge BNP leaders and activists at all levels, and the people of the country, to move forward in a disciplined manner."

The former prime minister's recorded speech, at a discussion commemorating Zia at the Institution of Engineers auditorium, marked her first public remarks after returning from London



earlier this month. She received treatment in the UK and stayed with her son Tarique Rahman, acting chairman of the party.

To honour Zia, Khaleda said BNP leaders and activists should keep in mind the way Zia solved every problem -- through democracy and development for all.

"Every year, this day in May comes to our family with painful memories. On this day, not only our family but the entire country plunged into grief and [as they have been] left without a guardian."

"The name of martyred President Ziaur Rahman is inseparably linked with the birth of our beloved motherland, Bangladesh," she said.

Khaleda continued, "He [Zia] sacrificed his life as a successful, honest, visionary and truly patriotic president in Chattogram, where he had proclaimed independence and made his name an inseparable part of the country."

"Martyr Zia is a unique architect of democracy, independence, freedom of the press and judiciary, self-reliance, development, and the creation of a distinct

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DEPRESSION IN BAY Rain, tidal surge flood coastal areas

Thousands stranded in 5 dists; river transport halted nationwide

STAR REPORT

Heavy rain and tidal surges triggered by a depression in the Bay of Bengal flooded low-lying areas across several coastal districts yesterday, leaving at least one person dead and thousands marooned.

Several areas in Patuakhali, Barguna, Noakhali, Chattogram, and Cox's Bazar have been submerged. Some areas have been cut off.

The depression began crossing the Bangladesh coastline yesterday afternoon, bringing intense rainfall and rough seas. The Bangladesh Meteorological Department issued local cautionary signal No 3 at all maritime ports.

Due to the inclement weather, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) suspended all water transport services on inland and coastal routes across the country.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) issued a special bulletin saying the deep depression, combined with the new moon, may cause tidal surges 2 to 4 feet higher than normal and may inundate low-lying areas of coastal districts.

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\$520b economy by next fiscal year

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

Bangladesh's gross domestic product is projected to surpass the \$500 billion mark for the first time in the upcoming fiscal year contingent upon exchange rate stability.

120.29 per dollar.

If the exchange rate, which has been liberalised this month, remains between Tk 120 and Tk 123 in the next fiscal year, the GDP could reach \$520 billion.

Currently, 45 out of 218 countries have a GDP exceeding \$500 billion. Among

GDP AT CURRENT PRICE

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25 (provisional)
GDP size (billion \$)	460	452	450	462
Exchange Rate (Taka per \$)	86.30	99.46	111.06	120.29

In fiscal 2025-26, the nominal GDP is expected to reach Tk 62,44,578 crore at current prices, according to the finance ministry's projections.

As per the provisional estimate by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the nominal GDP this fiscal year would be Tk 55,52,753 crore, which is about \$462 billion using the exchange rate of Tk

them, seven countries have GDPs ranging between \$500 billion and \$600 billion.

"Whether our GDP will hit \$500 billion depends on how much the taka depreciates against the dollar -- the dollar remains strong and our supply of dollar has increased, so it is unlikely that the taka would depreciate further here," said

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NSC cancels Faruque's BCB directorship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Sports Council (NSC) revoked president Faruque Ahmed's directorship from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday, after eight of the nine board of directors at the BCB sent a no confidence letter against Faruque earlier in the day.

NSC issued a press release late on Thursday, saying it made the decision on the basis of majority of the board directors expressing no confidence in Faruque and after assessing the investigation committee's report on the controversy-laden last season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

The end of Faruque's directorship will also likely spell the end of his presidency at the cricket board, as a non-director cannot be the president of the BCB.

Faruque was one of the two NSC nominated directors in the current BCB board alongside Nazmul Abedeen Fahim and was elected as president of the board on August 21, replacing Nazmul Hassan Papon, who stepped down following the

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Displaced Palestinians carrying bags of relief supplies return from aid distribution centres in Rafah to their tents in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

DHAKA SOUTH MAYER SC puts ball in EC's court

Ishraque issues 'final call' to government for swearing in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Ishraque Hossain yesterday doubled down on his demand for the immediate arrangement of his swearing in as mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), in line with a High Court verdict that declared him the rightful winner of the 2020 mayoral election.

"Accept the High Court's ruling and immediately arrange the oath ceremony. This is the final call to the interim government," Ishraque said in the evening, addressing a day-long sit-in at the DSCC headquarters.

Despite heavy rain, hundreds of his supporters -- alongside employees from various DSCC unions -- converged on Nagar Bhaban from 10:00am, marking the 16th consecutive day of protest under the banner of Dhakabashi. Several DSCC officials also joined the demonstration.



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