



“The ocean is the ultimate shared resource. But we are failing it.”  
Guterres tells delegates at the UN Ocean Conference in France

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## YUNUS-TARIQUE MEET ‘A potential turning point’

Says Fakhrul about talks slated for Friday in London; polls timing may top the agenda

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman are set to meet in London on Friday, which analysts believe will help cut the gap between the party and the government over the timing of the national election.

BNP leaders also consider the planned meeting a significant turn in overcoming a standoff over the polls.

Before travelling to the UK on Monday, Yunus, in his Eid-ul-Azha address to the nation last Friday, said the election would be held in the first half of April next year after necessary reforms. The BNP, however, remains firm on its demand that the polls be held by December this year, saying the reforms can be implemented much earlier.

Speaking to journalists at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan yesterday, party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the meeting is expected to



Bangladesh lost their AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture against Singapore 2-1 at the National Stadium in Dhaka last night, but the story could have been a little different had Tariq Kazi's last-minute header on a cross from Sheikh Morsalin not been expertly tipped on to the bar by the Singapore goalkeeper.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Bangladesh go down fighting

ATIQUE ANAM

Bangladesh suffered a 2-1 defeat to Singapore in their eagerly-awaited AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture at the National Stadium in Dhaka last night, leaving 23,000-plus fans at the ground and millions across the country in deep dismay.

The match was hyped up as the biggest in years for the men in red and

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## At least 10 minors were forcibly disappeared

Says commission report on enforced disappearances under AL regime

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 minors were found to be victims of enforced disappearances, according to the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. All were under the age of 18.

Of the 1,772 complaints registered with the commission as verified active cases since 2009, it closely examined 253 individuals to trace the patterns that have defined enforced

disappearances for over a decade. The professions of 228 victims were documented.

The commission found that 29 percent of the victims were students, followed by businesspersons at 28 percent. At least 15 percent were teachers, while five victims were journalists.

The political identities of 101 victims were also examined. Activists linked to the BNP

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Govt to expand Covid testing facilities

Advises people to use masks as cases rise

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The health authorities are working to expand testing facilities at major hospitals over the next 10 days in response to the sudden spike in Covid-19 cases in Bangladesh and neighbouring countries.

Currently, very few government hospitals carry out Covid tests.

But the expansion move came after the Covid infection rate last month was 17-month high and there was a Covid-19-linked death on June 5 after a long gap.

In the last 24 hours, 13 tested positive out of 101 samples, according to the Directorate General of Health (DGHS).

The infection rate saw a sharp rise in May, according to the analysis of Covid-19 surveillance data conducted by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). Of the 1,409 samples tested in May, 9.51 percent tested positive for Covid-19, the highest since January 2023.

The icddr,b also said Covid cases saw a significant uptick last month. However, its scientists have emphasised that there is currently no major reason for public concern and stressed the importance

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## BUSINESS

### NOTICE

Business pages have not come out today as economic activities have not gained momentum after Eid-ul-Azha holidays. Star Business will be available from tomorrow.

take place between 9:00am and 11:00am (London time) at The Dorchester, the hotel where Yunus is staying during his UK visit.

“The chief adviser has invited our acting chairman,” he said. “We hope this meeting will play a positive role in resolving the challenges facing the political landscape of Bangladesh.”

In the context of recent political developments, he said, this meeting could prove to be a “turning point” in the country’s politics if all goes as planned.

“This meeting is the most significant event at present

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With many having left the capital for the Eid holidays, the city's usual hustle and bustle has quietened. The dinghies that ferry people across the Buriganga sit idle as barely anyone is commuting in the holidays. The photo was taken in Keraniganj yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Yunus-Starmer meet uncertain Says CA's press secy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' meeting with UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer remains uncertain, as the latter is believed to be visiting Canada, said Shafiqul Alam, Press Secretary to the Chief Adviser.

“As far as we know, Keir Starmer is likely in Canada on a visit. A British MP, who met us today, informed us that he [Starmer] is currently in Canada,” he said at a press briefing at the Bangladesh High Commission in London yesterday.

Prof Yunus arrived in London on Monday morning for a four-day official visit.

“We’re in discussions to align schedules. If that happens, the meeting will go ahead. If not, then it won’t. But efforts are ongoing,” said Shafiqul.

On June 4, acting foreign secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique said that Prof Yunus would hold bilateral talks with the British prime minister and be granted a private audience with King Charles III.

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## POLLS IN APRIL BNP ‘disappointed’, Jamaat, NCP ‘satisfied’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' announcement on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha that the next national election will be held in the first half of April 2026 has triggered mixed reactions from political parties.

BNP and like minded parties described the announcement as “disappointing,” while Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party (NCP) broadly welcomed it.

In a televised address on Friday, Prof Yunus explained that the interim government assumed office following the August 2024 fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government, based on three main mandates – reforms, justice, and elections.

“I believe by next Eid-ul-Fitr, we will reach an acceptable point on reform and justice. Especially, visible progress will be seen in the trial of crimes against humanity, which is the government’s collective responsibility to the martyrs of the July mass uprising,” he said.

“After reviewing ongoing reforms in justice, governance, and election processes, I announce that the next national elections will be held on a date in the first half of April 2026,” Yunus announced.

He added that the government aims to organise “the freest, fairest, most competitive, and most acceptable election in history,” and discussions have been held with all parties in this regard.

The announcement came as BNP and allied parties had hardened

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## HONOURING OUR BUSINESS LEADERS

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

THE CATEGORIES ARE:

ENTERPRISE OF THE  
YEAR 2024

BUSINESS PERSON OF  
THE YEAR 2024

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION  
OF THE YEAR 2024

OUTSTANDING WOMAN  
IN BUSINESS 2024

Last date for submitting nominations is June 19, 2025.

For the 23rd time, we are going to honour individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions to business and the economic growth of Bangladesh. Your valuable nomination will help us select the right nominees.

You can nominate via email : [BBA.awards@dhl.com](mailto:BBA.awards@dhl.com)



For further details regarding the information required in the submission, visit our website: <https://shorturl.at/JTy8q>

BBA secretariat:  
Ka-96/8, Joar Shahara Kuril, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh  
Contact :  
Noor-E-Yeasday,  
Phone: +88 (02) 556 68101  
Ext. 46007

