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PROPOSED OWNERSHIP CAPS Foreign telco investors raise concerns

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Leading foreign investors in Bangladesh's telecommunications sector have urged the government to reconsider proposed restrictions on foreign ownership in the upcoming Telecommunications Network and Licensing Reform Policy 2025.

In a letter addressed to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, the CEOs of Axiata Group, Telenor Asia, and VEON warned that the new policy's proposed retroactive caps on foreign ownership could jeopardise future investments and slow the sector's growth.

The letter highlights concerns over a new maximum foreign ownership limit of 80 percent for Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), and tighter caps of 55 percent on other digital infrastructure operators, both proposed to be applied retroactively.

"We are deeply concerned about the proposed imposition of a new maximum foreign ownership limitation of 80 percent Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to be retroactively imposed on present licence holders, in addition to further regressive revisions of existing maximum foreign ownership limits of 55 percent imposed on other digital infrastructure operators, also to be applied with retroactive effect," the letter reads.

They also cautioned against overly prescriptive regulatory mandates such as stringent liberalisation targets and the transfer of international SMS rights to third parties, they said these could raise operational costs

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Govt high-ups
'encouraging
mob violence'
Says left alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) has expressed concern over what it termed the indirect endorsement of mob violence by certain government high-ups.

In a statement issued yesterday, the alliance said, "Remarks made by several government authorities are alarming and are serving to encourage mob violence across the country."

The alliance demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in mob attacks, irrespective of political affiliation. It also called for strong action against perpetrators of rape and violence against women.

The statement followed a meeting of the alliance held at its temporary office, located at the central office of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

The meeting was presided over by LDA coordinator and CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince.

Other leaders who addressed the meeting

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**Polls delay will
push nation
backwards
Warns Fakhrul, says
elected-govt needed**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday warned against delaying the upcoming election, saying the fight for democracy is far from over.

Addressing a party gathering in Sylhet, he urged leaders and activists to earn the trust and love of people.

The BNP secretary general thanked Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for meeting Tarique Rahman, BNP's acting chairman, in London and agreeing on a tentative election timeline around mid-February 2026.

"Let me make it clear -- to the government and to other political parties -- the longer the election is delayed, the further behind Bangladesh will fall," he said while addressing a doa mahfil (prayer gathering) for party founder Ziaul Rahman and Chairman Khaleda Zia as the chief guest in Sylhet's Pathantula area.

"Investments won't come. Our mothers and daughters will be more insecure. Mobocracy will increase. The judicial system will collapse. Law and



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**Playing field not
level for nat'l
election
Says Jamaat**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday said a level playing field for the next general election is still absent, and the party will not accept polls in such a situation.

The party, however, clarified that it is not demanding a deferral of the polls, expected to be held by February 2026.

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, at an event in Rangpur on Friday, condemned recent mob attacks, saying that these incidents have created such an environment that is not conducive to election.

A day later, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said at a programme in Dhaka that the Jamaat was questioning the electoral atmosphere under the interim government because the party wanted to delay the polls.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar faced questions about the issue while talking with reporters during a visit to the Suhrawardy Udyan, the venue of the party's rally scheduled for July 19.

"We never talked about delaying or advancing the election date," he said.

"The Jamaat-e-Islami has clearly said it is ready



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**Reform blockers
are to blame for
polls delay
Says Nahid**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

National Citizen Party does not want to delay election, but those who want to delay reforms are delaying the polls, said its Convener Nahid Islam.

"Somebody says the NCP wants to delay the election, this is not right. The NCP wants the polls with reforms. Those who are preventing necessary reforms are trying to delay election," said Nahid while addressing a rally in Pabna town last night as part of the party's nationwide programme "July March to Build the Nation".

He said after the nationwide march ends, the party will hold a mass rally in Dhaka on August 3, demanding justice, reforms, and new constitution.

At the event, Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator (south) of NCP, said people do not want to see extortionists, rapists, and corrupt people in politics anymore.

Earlier at a rally in the Sirajganj station area, Nahid urged people not to support them blindly, but to evaluate them for their role in the July movement.

"We are not asking for blind support -- keep your support after proper evaluation. Evaluate who were on the streets, who led the movement against



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**9-yr-old's
body found
in a mosque
Police suspect rape
before murder**

STAR REPORT

The body of a nine-year-old girl was found on the second floor of a mosque in Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila on Sunday morning.

The victim, a fifth grader and daughter of a Bahraini expatriate, had been missing since Saturday afternoon. Police suspect she was raped before being murdered.

According to law enforcers and the victim's family, the child left home around 4:00pm on Saturday and never returned. Her uncle filed a general diary with Sarail Police Station around 1:00am after repeated search efforts failed.

The family, with the help of locals, also announced her disappearance over loudspeakers in the village.

Around 9:00am on Sunday, a group of children attending

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**BTCL 5G NETWORK
Taiyeb bins
corruption
allegations**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, the chief adviser's special assistant for Posts, Telecommunications and ICT, yesterday said neither he nor any current officials overseeing the ministry are involved in any form of corruption.

All activities related to the Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) 5G network infrastructure project were completed under the previous government, he said in a press conference to address the recent media reports concerning his letter to the chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission regarding the continuation of BTCL's 5G readiness project.

Earlier in November 2023, Huawei was awarded the tender for being the lowest bidder at Tk 326 crore.

However, the board of BTCL, the implementing agency, violated procurement laws outlined in the standard tender documents of the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), the government body responsible for overseeing public procurement, during the process.

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**Another drama
at JP as Quader
fires secy gen
Patwary replaces Chunnu,
Anisul, Hawlader removed**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday replaced Mujibul Haque Chunnu with Shameem Haider Patwary as secretary general.

He also relieved two other senior leaders -- Anisul Islam Mahmud and ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader -- of their duties as senior co-chairman and co-chairman, according to a press release.

Quader's latest move came when his feud with Anisul reached its peak over the party's council and debate over the arbitrary powers of the chairman in line with the party constitution.

Party insiders said the Jatiya Party is on the verge of another split following the removal of the three senior leaders. The party has suffered split at least four times since its formation in 1986.

Relations between Quader and the three leaders deteriorated recently as they spoke against the arbitrary powers of the party chairman through which he can unilaterally make any decision such as appointing or dismissing anyone.

A section of senior leaders had moved to remove



A volunteer looks for missing people, following severe flash flooding that occurred during the July 4 holiday weekend, in Hunt, Texas. The photo was taken on Sunday.

**Texas floods
toll nears 90
27 missing girls from youth
camp confirmed dead**

AFP, Hunt

Rescuers in Texas yesterday searched for bodies swept away by flash floods that killed almost 90 people, including 27 girls and counsellors at a summer camp that was destroyed by torrents of water.

The United States was shocked at the disaster over the Fourth of July holiday weekend, and forecasters warned of more flooding as rain continued to fall on saturated ground.

"Our hearts are broken alongside our families that are enduring this unimaginable tragedy," Camp Mystic said in a statement confirming the 27 deaths at the all-girls camp that was located next to a river.

State officials yesterday put the overall number of dead from the flooding at 88, and Texas Senator Ted Cruz told reporters that the toll was continuing to rise.

"Texas is grieving right now -- the pain, the shock of what has transpired these last few days has broken the heart of our state," Cruz told reporters.

"The children, little girls, who were lost at Camp Mystic, that's every parent's nightmare."