

## EC to declare polls roadmap next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday said it would publish the roadmap for the 13th national election next week.

EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said they were unveiling the roadmap so that everyone could learn about the EC's preparations.

Akhtar, at the Nirbachan Bhaban in Agargaon, told reporters that the EC would also meet journalists next week to discuss arrangements for media personnel to cast their votes while on duty on election day.

The government sent a letter to the EC to begin preparations for holding the national election in the first half of February next year.

The EC said the election schedule will be announced in the first half of December.

According to the commission, there could be

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## 'My father was a victim of judicial killing'

### Claims SQ Chy's son; vows to prove 'innocence' in war crimes case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Humam Quader Chowdhury, son of BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, who was executed for 1971 war crimes, has expressed hope that he can prove his father's "innocence" and expose what he calls a "judicial killing".

Speaking at a press conference at his father's Dhanmondi residence yesterday afternoon, Humam said the family possesses evidence that could support their claims.

"With this evidence, we will approach the court," he added.

Humam alleged that the war crimes tribunal, which convicted his father, was controversial and influenced by political actors.

"During my father's case, the Skype scandal came to light," he said at the press conference, where Salauddin's wife and two other children were also present.

Humam claimed that his father's verdict was not being written in the tribunal. "It was being written in the law ministry."

He also claimed

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## GRAFT CASE Papia and her husband get 3.5 years in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Jubo Mohila League's expelled leader Shamima Nur Papia and her husband Mofizur Rahman Sumon to three years and six months imprisonment in a case filed over amassing about Tk 6.24 crore illegally.

Judge Mohammad Abu Taher of the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in presence of the couple at the courtroom. The two were on bail.

Soon after the verdict, the judge cancelled their bail and ordered police to send them to jail with conviction warrant.

The judge also fined them Tk 5 lakh each, in default of which they will have to serve six months more in jail.

In the verdict, the judge

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Even in the rain, crowds through a TCB truck in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to buy essentials at affordable prices. Some people cling to the vehicle in desperation to secure the goods. Only three items -- edible oil, sugar and lentils -- were on sale, but even this small relief can help ease the strain of soaring prices on low-income families.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Crores spent, but Ctg roads still crumble

### WASA, various projects, heavy rains leave key roads riddled with potholes

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Commuters in Chattogram are enduring severe hardships due to the appalling condition of major roads, a crisis worsened by the apparent indifference of the authorities.

Ongoing sewerage line construction by Chattogram WASA during the monsoon has left roads riddled with potholes and ditches.

According to Chattogram City Corporation (CCC), the city has 1,442 kilometres of roads, 1,300km of which fall under its jurisdiction. Most are now in disrepair, causing immense suffering for residents.

Over the past decade, CCC has launched at least six road repair projects, completing five. In total, Tk 4,086.77 crore was spent on roads, footpaths, and repairs through both projects and its own funding.

CCC engineers blame heavy rains and frequent WASA excavations, while urban experts point to substandard construction and inadequate drainage as the root causes.

Swapan Kumar Palit, professor of civil engineering at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), said the port city's poor drainage system causes roads to remain submerged during the monsoon.

One of the worst-hit roads is the Port Connecting (PC) Road.

Renovated and carpeted over six kilometres at a cost of Tk 180 crore in 2022, it deteriorated within 18 months due to heavy traffic and repeated digging by WASA and the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA).

A visit to the 2km stretch from Nimtala Biswa Road to Boropol revealed a deplorable state.

On one side, CDA is

Strand Road, connecting Barik Building to Sadarghat, where thousands of goods-laden trucks pass daily.

Similar situation prevailed on Fakir Mohammad Road, Kabir Ahmed Soudagar Road, Akmal Ali Road, Pran Hari Das Road, and several roads in Halishahar, along with Abdul Hamid Road in Shulakbahar, Nur Ahmad

the condition of PC Road is

worsening due to ongoing construction works. "Like me, passengers suffer daily, and traffic jams during rush hours are now routine," he said, adding that the stretch from Nimtala to Taltala is particularly hazardous.

Fazlul Karim Manik, a trader from Bahaddarhat, said small roads and lanes in his area are damaged due to torrential rains and frequent digging. "Even a short rickshaw ride is bumpy," he added.

Other damaged roads include Jamal Khan, Shaheed Saifuddin Khaled, CDA Avenue, Shah Amanat Bridge Link, Arakan, Muradpur-Oxygen, Bayezid, DT, Halishahar, Kapasgola, and Alkanan.

Locals say peeling bitumen and deep potholes have made commuting a nightmare.

Ahsan Khaled, joint secretary of the Chaktai Shilpa and Traders Association, said traders have been suffering for seven to eight months as roads like Madhyam Chaktai and Rajakhali are in the worst condition.

"Nearby Mokbul Soudagar Road and Sobhan Soudagar Road are muddy and broken. At least five roads in the market area are in similar shape, and they're used by vehicles coming from Khatunganj," he said.

Chattogram City Corporation Chief Engineer Anisur Rahman

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building ramps for the elevated expressway; on the other, WASA's sewerage project has torn up the road. Bricks used for temporary coverage have broken apart under heavy vehicles and rainfall, forcing trucks, trailers, and passenger vehicles to sway dangerously while avoiding potholes.

The situation is similar on

Road, Jubilee Road, Ambagan Road, the stretch from Probartak Mor to Gate No-2, CDA Avenue, KB Aman Ali Road, and Ishan Mohajan Road, are also in poor condition. Travel through CEPZ, Karnaphuli EPZ, the Customs area, and Patenga Sea Beach via Airport Road.

Omar Faruk, a private jobholder from Nimtala, said

## BANGLADESHI WORKERS Dhaka, KL push for transparent hiring process

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia and Bangladesh have agreed to work towards establishing a more transparent recruitment process for Bangladeshi workers, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus told Malaysia's state news agency Bernama in an interview published yesterday.

He said the matter was discussed in depth during his meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Putrajaya on August 12.

Prof Yunus also acknowledged flaws in the current process and stressed the need to "clean it up" to avoid problems for either side.

Malaysia froze recruitment of foreign workers on May 13 last year following massive irregularities involving a syndicate of 101 recruiting agents, who were accused of charging each worker between Tk 450,000 and Tk 600,000. There were numerous reports of joblessness, non-payment of wages and other forms of exploitation.

"We had a very elaborate discussion on how to proceed without having trouble for the Malaysian government. We both promised ourselves to clean up the system and to make it easier and transparent," Prof Yunus told Bernama.

The Nobel laureate said while Malaysia needs foreign workers, Bangladesh seeks to ensure that the recruitment of its citizens is transparent, allowing them to work abroad with dignity, proper rights and benefits.

"Malaysia needs people, and we need to have these

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## Looted stones being restored at Sada Pathor

### 35,000 of an estimated 1.80cr cft recovered so far

STAR REPORT

The district administration, during a joint operation in Bholaganj of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila and parts of Sylhet city, has recovered over 35,000 cubic feet of stones previously looted from the Sada Pathor tourist spot.

The operation, which began shortly after midnight on Wednesday and continued till yesterday afternoon, was in coordination with law enforcement agencies.

The administration also seized 70 trucks that were carrying the stones.

According to officials concerned, there were

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## RANGPUR MOB KILLING Four suspects on 3-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Rangpur court yesterday placed four men on three-day remand each in connection with the mob beating that killed two persons in Taraganj upazila on August 9.

Rangpur Judicial Magistrate Court Judge Krishna Kamol Roy passed the order after hearing the remand petition submitted by police around noon, said Taraganj Police Station's Officer-in-Charge MA Faruk.

The OC said, "I have collected several video footages of the mob attack. These are being reviewed, and many of the attackers have already been identified. The drive to arrest them is ongoing."

The arrestees are Akhtarul Islam, 45, of

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## Over one lakh stranded in north as rivers swell

STAR REPORT

Over 100,000 people have been stranded as the Teesta and Dudhkumar rivers swelled above danger level, flooding vast areas of cropland, homes and low-lying regions in northern Bangladesh.

In Nilphamari alone, around 10,000 families in two upazilas have been marooned, with large tracts of Aman paddy, vegetables and homesteads submerged, said Amitav Chowdhury, executive engineer of the Dalia Water Development Board (BWDB). Heavy rainfall and hill torrents from upstream India, which opened all gates of the Gojaldoba Barrage, sent a surge of water through the Teesta, he added.

According to the BWDB in Dalia, the Teesta was flowing at 52.30 metres at 9:00am yesterday, 15 centimetres above the danger mark of 52.15 metres, up from 11 centimetres above just three hours earlier. On Wednesday, the river was 7 centimetres above danger level.

Zahangir Alam, chairman of Khagakharibari union parishad, said 80 families from a shoal attached to Pagolpara had moved to safer ground in the past 24 hours, with more preparing to leave as floodwater swept into their homes. They are in urgent need of drinking water and food, he added.

Hafizur Rahman, acting chairman of Purbo Satnai Union, reported that 1,500 families in his union had been affected.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts, the Teesta and Dudhkumar rivers are also flowing above danger level, flooding extensive char and riverside areas.

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PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Residents waded through waist-deep floodwater in Lalmonirhat after days of heavy rain and upstream hill torrents pushed the Teesta and Dudhkumar rivers above danger level. Inset, a house in Kurigram, almost entirely submerged, with only its shed visible above the water. The photos were taken yesterday.