

# NEWS

## Will step down if asked to follow

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parliamentary election, in line with the timeline announced by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"The day the government seeks to make me act according to its orders, I will no longer remain in this chair," he said at a views exchange meeting with election officials of the Rajshahi region at the Regional Public Administration Training Centre.

The CEC also issued a stern warning against any irregularities. "For those who plan to seize polling centres or snatch ballot boxes, there is no news. Their dreams will be shattered. This time, there is no scope to win the election through violence or capturing centres."

Nasir said the Election Commission has 5,700 officials who served in previous polls, and those found involved in irregularities in the last elections will not be given the responsibility this time.

He said preparations are underway to hold the elections before Ramadan in February. "The law-and-order situation will improve as the polls approach. If anyone tries to occupy polling centres, strict action will be taken. If a centre is occupied, the polling there will be cancelled."

The CEC also said the commission is working to have the army play the role of law enforcement agencies during the polls.

Commenting on the Awami League, Nasir said the party can't engage in

political activities as all their activities are banned at present.

"With ongoing trials against them, Awami League leaders cannot participate in elections. Let's see what happens in the verdicts."

Regarding holding the election under the proportional representation (PR) system, he said as the Constitution does not allow it and that it is not possible unless the law is amended.

"Debate is ongoing among political parties on this matter. I will not join this debate. If the law is changed, then it will be possible," said the CEC, adding, "The Election Commission cannot go beyond the Constitution."

He also provided detailed instructions to regional election officials on the commission's preparations for the polls.

Meanwhile, Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said all necessary preparations are being undertaken for the upcoming election.

"We're preparing for the election as required. We will have no difficulty in holding the election scheduled for next February," he said after visiting the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation's cold storage, central seed testing laboratory, and vegetable seed processing centre.

"Now the people, political parties, and the media are all election focused. No conspiracy will succeed in disrupting this [election]," said Jahangir, also adviser to

the agriculture ministry.

In another development, Ansar and VDP Director General Maj Gen Abdul Motaleb Sazzad Mahmud yesterday said a total of 650,000 Ansar members will be deployed at polling centres across the country to handle electoral challenges.

For this purpose, 180,000 new Ansar members have been trained, he added.

Speaking at an event at the Ansar Academy in Gazipur, he also said constant communication will be maintained with Ansar members at every polling centre. "If any attempt at sabotage occurs, immediate action will be taken."

## Four bodies

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male and one female – bore injury marks and their hands were found to be tied.

Locals spotted the bodies floating at different points of the river between the afternoon and evening, Abdullah Al Mamun, superintendent of Dhaka district river police, told The Daily Star last night.

He said the body of the child was found floating near Mirerbagh Cold Storage under Sadarghat River Police Station around 12:30pm. After an hour, the body of a woman, approximately 25, was also recovered from the same spot.

Later around 7:30pm, the bodies of the man, aged about 40, and a woman, aged about 30, were recovered near Barishur area in Jinjira, the policeman added.

"We informed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). They are working to identify the bodies using forensic techniques," Mamun said.

Sohag Rana, officer-in-charge of Sadarghat River Police Outpost, told The Daily Star, "The CID are trying to identify the bodies of the woman and the child through different means as their fingerprints are missing."

Meanwhile, Monirul Haque Dablu, officer-in-charge of Keraniganj Model Police Station, said, "The hands of the male and female bodies were tied, and injury marks were visible on their bodies."

All four bodies have been sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsy, he added.

## Threat of fresh

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According to them, between 400 and 700 Rohingyas have already fled their homes in Laldia, across from Teknaf's Jalia Island. Many have already tried to cross into Bangladesh but failed due to tight border patrols.

Sirajul Mostafa, a member of Whykong union parishad, told The Daily Star that from Friday evening to early yesterday, he heard sounds of gunfire from across the border, including heavy firing between 11:00pm and 4:00am, which spread panic among locals.

Lt Col Md Jashim Uddin, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion 64, confirmed that gunfire was heard across the border Friday night. "Such incidents often occur along this frontier. We are keeping strict watch, though it is unclear who was involved in the clashes."

Mohammad Zubair, chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, said, "Many Rohingyas have gathered in Laldia fearing clashes between Myanmar troops and the Arakan Army in Maungdaw."

He said past clashes had turned Rohingya villages into battlegrounds, with heavy casualties from gunfire and airstrikes.

"People are now trying to flee before such horrors are repeated. If fighting resumes, there could be another large-scale Rohingya influx into Bangladesh," he warned.

Zubair also said, "Apart from military clashes, Arakan Army's extortion and harassment are also pushing Rohingyas to seek refuge in Bangladesh."

Mohammad Kamal, community leader of Camp-27, said after speaking to his close relatives across the border, he learned that around 300 Myanmar junta troops arrived in southern Maungdaw by navy ship on Friday morning.

At around 2:00pm, they carried out a drone strike on an Arakan Army base locally known as "BGP Camp-8," killing several fighters while others fled into nearby hills,

he added.

"After the clashes, panic spread among local Rohingyas. Around 700 people abandoned their homes in Laldia and are now trying to enter Bangladesh," Kamal said.

Three more Rohingya community leaders in Teknaf also said they heard junta troops had moved into southern Maungdaw but could not provide an exact number of displaced Rohingyas, estimating between 400 and 700.

The Daily Star could not independently verify these claims.

Meanwhile, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mizanur Rahman said he had not received such reports.

A senior official of his office said that BGB patrols had increased along the Teknaf border since Thursday.

Lt Col Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2, confirmed the gunfire was indeed heard across the Whykong frontier Friday night.

Referring to media reports about junta troop movements, he said, "As far as we know, they are still far from Maungdaw town. But there have been reports of airstrikes on Arakan Army positions."

He, however, dismissed claims of a looming mass Rohingya influx as rumours spread by brokers seeking financial gain. "These brokers, both Rohingya and Bangladeshi, are exaggerating the situation to exploit people. We have already launched operations against them," he said, adding that the border was under strict guard.

Clashes between Myanmar forces and the Arakan Army began early last year along the Bangladesh border. By December, the Arakan Army had taken control of Maungdaw township. It now controls 14 of Rakhine's 17 townships, while junta forces have recently launched new offensives to retake lost territory.

## Young

FROM PAGE 3  
areas affected by salinity, and Ecohydra became second runner-up with their idea of a portable water purifier.

In the Energy Transition category, team Eternical won the top prize for its idea of producing a "hybrid fuel" by blending a liquid substance extracted from plastic waste with diesel. Team Sonali Urja was first runner-up for an app-based system to collect farm waste from farmers to produce electricity, while Trendsetters became second runner-up for their idea of generating electricity from Dhaka's garbage using solar power.

Speaking at the event, Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, urged the corporate sector to come forward and implement the amazing ideas.

While climate change has been affecting countries all across the globe, funding to mitigate the challenges remains inadequate, she said.

In his speech, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said there is no way for Bangladesh to progress without innovation.

He said while climate change is a massive global challenge, Bangladesh has also been facing numerous other problems like high population and limited land.

Besides, inefficiency is a major problem, which is like a "disease," he added.

Lauding the young participants for their innovative ideas and solutions to different issues, he said The Daily Star will continue to promote and support these ideas to help turn them into reality. "Even if one, two, or three of these ideas succeed, they can bring a huge change," he added.

The finale marked the conclusion of the fourth edition of the Climate Justice Idea Competition, which was launched in 2022 under the campaign "Our Planet, Our Responsibility".

This year, the competition received 271 ideas across the three categories.

Following a rigorous selection process, a panel of six selectors shortlisted nine finalist teams, who then received mentorship from experts before presenting their ideas at the grand finale.

## Four months

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Another resident, Basanti Paul, 59, said many families have no access to clean water as their tube wells remain submerged. "We are forced to fetch water from other areas or buy it," she added.

Sawpan Paul, 47, said waterlogging has also rendered toilets unusable, creating a severe sanitation crisis.

The residents of the village believe the only permanent solution would be to lay a large drainage pipe under the Dhaka-Barishal highway on the eastern side, channeling the water into the Kumar river.

Abdur Razzak, former councillor of ward 27, said, "A plan was once taken to install a 10-inch pipe under the highway, but landowners objected. Later, a project was proposed to build a drain from Paull Para to the north, connecting to the Kumar river via a canal near Bismillah Shah Dargah. The proposal was submitted to the Local Government Engineering Department, but I don't know its current status."

Faridpur municipality's executive engineer, Md Shamsul Alam, said, "We placed the drainage construction proposal with LGED about six months ago. But without budget approval, work has not started. We are waiting for the project to be sanctioned."

## Education for Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 12  
million is needed to cover educational expenses for Rohingya children this year, but less than \$10 million has been received.

Meanwhile, another two lakh Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh since 2023, raising the total number of refugees to 1.2 million.

The funding cuts forced UNICEF to suspend classes for students from kindergarten to class-4 and lay off 1,100 teaching volunteers in June this year.

While most of the volunteers accepted the decision, a small section protested. It was fine except that the protest turned violent. Some angry ex-teachers issued threats to UNICEF and NGO staff, stormed offices and even resorted to physical assaults, said Flowers.

"They stormed the office of one of our partners... They threw a chair across the room and the person who was hit was hospitalised," she said.

Bangladeshi NGO workers, who have been targeted, are afraid to report to police and that's not okay, Flowers said, adding that violence against the UNICEF staff or against any of its partners cannot be allowed.

She further said UNICEF provided one-month severance pay to the volunteers even though it was not mentioned in their contracts. Besides, around 25 percent of the laid-off teachers joined a new UNICEF skills development programme.

Flowers said education remains the cornerstone of hope for Rohingya children, as it allows the Rohingyas to feel competent, capable and happy.

Currently, UNICEF covers about 75 percent of education programmes in the camps, reaching some 228,000 children in over 4,500 classrooms. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain even a reduced programme.

For now, UNICEF is focusing on continuing classes at the secondary school level, arguing that adolescents are most at risk of child marriage, violence, and involvement in crimes if left idle.

She also warned of a wider humanitarian crisis unless fresh funding arrives, with looming shortages of food, cooking fuel, and basic health services in 2026.

"LPG [supply] will stop at the end of September. That means they [Rohingyas] can't cook. What is the alternative? When you don't have LPG gas, you start cutting down all the trees... and then you get worse landslides."

## Journalist Alamgir

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Last week, when his condition deteriorated again, he was readmitted to the same hospital, said Khalid.

Doctors said he had been suffering from multiple health complications, including urine-related problems, breathing difficulties, and fluctuating blood pressure.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after Maghrib prayers yesterday at the Krishi Laboratories Mosque in the capital's Monipuri Para.

He was buried at the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

Born in Natore, Mohiuddin completed his graduation in English from Rajshahi University. He is survived by two daughters, relatives, friends and admirers.

The Editors' Council has expressed profound grief over the passing of Alamgir Mohiuddin, one of the council's founding members.

In a statement yesterday, the council prayed for the eternal peace of his departed soul and conveyed heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

The message was signed by its President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud. Information Adviser Mahfuz Alam also expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of the veteran journalist.

In a condolence message, the adviser said Alamgir

Nutrition services have already been hit, and acute malnutrition among children increased significantly compared to last year, she noted.

WFP currently has no funding for food in 2026, she said.

"The Rohingya did not choose to be refugees. They fled persecution and violence. It is unacceptable that they should now suffer hunger and deprivation because the world has turned away."

Flowers issued a strong appeal to donors and governments to renew their support.

"We are at a breaking point. Unless resources are restored, we will see reversals in education, malnutrition rates climbing, preventable disease outbreaks, and further desperation among families."

## Entire system

FROM PAGE 12  
from the small town does not come to the capital, then where will the bribe come from?" he said.

He also alleged that university teachers are recruited through bribes, school teachers are recruited through bribes, and nurses are also recruited through bribes.

It is impossible to expect a functional democracy and just society without restructuring the existing state system, which, he said, fosters inequalities and corruption.

He also said inequalities, rooted in Bangladesh's state structure for decades, cannot be eradicated overnight, though structural reforms are essential.

"Instant solutions to long standing issues of injustice, corruption, authoritarianism and structural discrimination cannot be expected," he said.

Fakhrul said reforms of the state framework and the electoral process are still at a preliminary stage. He said the recent mass uprising has opened a new opportunity for change, but cautioned that sustainable reforms require well-defined planning, political sincerity and structural change.

The seminar, titled "How Well is Social Protection Secured?", was organised by Arpon Alok Soghoo. Senior journalist Sohrab Hassan, Ganosamhati Andolon's Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) Chairman Bobby Hajjaj, former BNP MP Rehana Akter Ranu and Policy Exchange Chairman M Masruq Reaz spoke at the event as special guests.

## I too might be pushed

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There remains a possibility that I might be sent back to Bangladesh because my ancestral home is in Dhaka. And I do not have much objection to that," said Sen, who was born in Santiniketan.

The 91-year-old Nobel laureate made the remarks on Friday while speaking at a public discussion in Kolkata on the social opportunities the Indian youth should have.

"I saw in the newspaper that someone was sent to Bangladesh because he was speaking in Bengali. It made me a bit worried," Sen said.

Later, in response to media queries regarding the reported harassment

of Bangla speaking individuals in BJP-ruled states, he stressed the diversity of Indian civilisation, stating that every cultural identity, including Bangalee and Punjabi, has reasons to be celebrated.

"People from Bengal or the Bengali-speaking people are facing professional obstacles and are being disrespected. I am not claiming that the Bengali culture and civilisation are the best, but we must highlight the history of the Bengali language, culture and civilisation. There must be respect for Bengali culture.

If not, there needs to be protests," the economist said.

## Push-ins, border killings

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BGB officials say the Indian authorities also forced in at least 39 Myanmar nationals registered with UNHCR in India and more than 100 Indian citizens.

In the latest incident, Chapainawabganj police arrested six Indian nationals, including a pregnant woman, for entering Bangladesh without valid visas on Friday.

The detainees are Md Danesh, 28; his wife Sonali Khatun, 26; and their eight-year-old son from Delhi's Sahababad village; and Sweety Bibi, 33, with her two sons, aged 16 and six, from Birbhum district of West Bengal. Sonali is eight months pregnant.

"They were detained first, and once their identities were verified, we handed them over to court, which sent them to jail," Mohammad Motiur Rahman, the officer-in-charge of Chapainawabganj Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

They were arrested by Delhi's Kalimata police on June 24 on suspicion of being Bangladeshis. The next day, BSF pushed them into Bangladesh through Kurigram, from where they kept moving around until their arrest.

Officials at BGB headquarters said the push-ins violate bilateral frameworks including the 1975 India-Bangladesh Joint Guidelines, the 2011 Coordinated Border Management Plan and commitments made during earlier DG-level talks. The issue will again be raised

strongly in the upcoming meeting, they added.

Border killings will be another priority since Bangladesh has raised concerns over repeated incidents despite earlier assurances from India to reduce casualties and maintain restraint.

At least 17 Bangladeshis were shot dead by BSF between January and July, compared with 16 in the same period last year, according to Ain o Salish Kendra. The figure stood at 25 for the whole of 2024.

BGB also plans to raise issues related to construction within 150 yards of the border, unauthorised infrastructure, protection of riverbanks, equitable sharing of common river waters and reducing tensions caused by anti-Bangladesh propaganda in Indian media.

In its statement, BSF said the Dhaka talks would focus on action against Indian insurgent groups allegedly sheltering in Bangladesh, tackling smuggling of drugs, arms and ammunition and preventing unauthorised construction within 150 yards of the international border.

The Indian side is also expected to emphasise the need to prevent attacks on BSF personnel allegedly by Bangladeshis, while pushing for the construction of a single-row fence along the frontier, reads the statement.

Implementation of the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP), designed to ensure better communication and

coordination between the two forces, will feature prominently in the talks.

BSF said the agenda will also include measures to build confidence between the border forces, protect riverbanks along the frontier and ensure equitable sharing of waters from common rivers.

The DG-level conference between BGB and BSF dates back nearly five decades and has evolved into one of the most important bilateral forums for resolving border disputes.

The first such meeting was held in Kolkata on December 2, 1975, with the Indian side led by Ashwani Kumar, then BSF DG, and the Bangladesh side headed by Quazi Golam Dastgir, then DG of Bangladesh Rifles (now BGB).

From 1975 to 1993, the conferences were held annually, alternating between the two countries.

In October 1993, following discussions between the home secretaries of India and Bangladesh in Dhaka, it was agreed that the DG-level meetings would become biannual.

The idea was that problems in areas of mutual interest could be progressively resolved through close contact and continuing dialogue at different levels.

Since then, the DG-level conference has become a regular mechanism where the two sides discuss contentious issues, exchange data and review progress on earlier commitments.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
AUGUST 24

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-25	12-45	4-45	6-38	8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-41	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION