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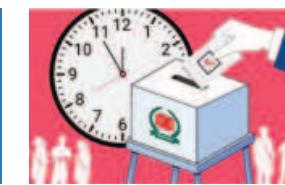
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A dangerous suggestion

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Elections belong to the people, not the politicians

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WORK PLAN FOR POLLS

EC aims to wrap up key preps by November

AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission yesterday unveiled its work plan for the next general election and set November as the deadline for wrapping up all major preparations.

The plan lays out at least 24 time-bound tasks, including updating voter rolls, finalising constituency delimitation, registering new parties and local observers, preparing polling logistics, and holding talks with political parties.

Asked about the election schedule, EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told reporters that the commission will announce it 60 days before polling day.

"The Chief Adviser's Office has advised the commission to arrange the election before the upcoming Ramadan, which is expected to begin on February 17 or 18. So, you can calculate the [polling] date in line with that," he said.

In his August 5 televised address, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said he would request the Election Commission to hold the national polls before next Ramadan in February 2026. The following day, his office sent the formal directive to the EC to complete all necessary preparations by that time.

WHAT'S IN THE WORK PLAN

According to the work plan, dialogues with registered political parties and other stakeholders will begin in the last week of September and

- Draft amendments to RPO, Code of Conduct to be sent to govt by Sunday
- Dialogues with political parties, others to start in late September
- First meeting with home ministry, law enforcement on September 25
- Revised voter list to be published on Saturday, final by November 30

continue for at least one to one-and-a-half months.

Participants will include civil society members, academics, women's groups, newspaper and TV editors, election observers and experts, as well as injured protesters from the July uprising.

The EC has already started working to finalise constituency delimitation, update the voter list, and register new parties. It is also preparing amendments to the Representation of the People Order 1972, the Political Parties and Candidates' Code of Conduct, the Election Conduct Rules, the Election Officers (Special Provisions) Act 1991, and the Election Commission Secretariat Act 2009.

The draft amendments to the RPO and the electoral code of conduct will be sent to the government by Sunday, the work plan says.

Guidelines and management framework for polling centres, as well as policies for domestic and international observers and journalists, have already been finalised.

On law and order, the EC will hold several consultations. The first is scheduled for September 25 with the home ministry and law enforcement agencies to plan security measures at polling centres and within constituencies. A second meeting will take place 15 days before the election schedule is announced, followed by further discussions after the schedule is made public.

"The commission will hold additional law and order meetings as needed," said EC Secretary Akhtar.

The voter list update is also nearing completion. A revised voter roll will be published on Saturday, with the final list due on November 30.

To ensure expatriate Bangladeshis can vote, the EC plans to introduce

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A child bursts into tears as he jostles with others to get rice from a charity kitchen in the west of Gaza City yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: AFP

BNP, CPB welcome EC work plan
Announcement breach of govt's commitment: NCP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP and Communist Party of Bangladesh welcomed the Election Commission work plan for the next parliamentary polls, while the National Citizen Party and Islami Andolan Bangladesh criticised it.

The EC yesterday revealed its work plan and set November as the deadline for wrapping up all major preparations.

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star that the announcement fulfilled people's expectations.

"Everything has been done according to public expectations. I hope there will be no more irrelevant questions about the election now."

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Capital punishment for disappearance leading to death

Draft ordinance, okayed by govt, spells out penalties for those complicit; NHRC may investigate all cases

BAHARAM KHAN

The interim government yesterday approved in principle the draft of the "Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance 2025", which proposes the death penalty as the maximum punishment in certain cases of enforced disappearances.

The draft stipulates the death penalty in cases where enforced disappearance leads to the victim's death, the recovery of their body, or when the victim remains untraced -- alive or dead -- even after seven years of the incident.

In cases where punishments other than the death penalty are imposed, offenders may also be liable to pay a fine of Tk 1 crore.

Members of all state forces -- including the armed forces, police, Rab and Ansar -- may be held accountable

if they are proven guilty in such cases.

The draft ordinance was approved at yesterday's weekly meeting of the Advisory Council at the Chief Adviser's Office with Chief Adviser Prof Mohammad Yunus in the chair.

There will be further discussions on the proposed ordinance before it gets final approval, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told journalists at the Foreign Service Academy.

The draft states that instead of law enforcement agencies, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) will investigate the cases related to enforced disappearances.

The draft also includes a provision for a financial penalty and two years' imprisonment for anyone found guilty in court of filing a false case related to enforced disappearance.

The draft ordinance states

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'I want to see justice before my death'

Abu Sayed's father tells ICT-2

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

The father of Abu Sayed, a student of Begum Rokeya University (BRU) in Rangpur who was killed in police firing on July 16 last year, yesterday appealed to the International Crimes Tribunal 2 to ensure justice for his son before his own death.



"My hope was that my son would secure a job during my lifetime. But that has been shattered. Now, my only wish is to see justice for my son's murder before I die," said Mokbul Hossain, breaking into tears as he gave his deposition as the first prosecution witness in the crimes against humanity case over Sayed's killing during the July 2024 uprising.

As Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam informed the tribunal that Mokbul would testify, the elderly man slowly approached the witness stand, visibly trembling with age and grief. Introducing himself, he said, "I am 85-year-old Mokbul Hossain, the father of martyr Abu Sayed."

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'We will ensure healthy politics on DU campus'

VP candidate Sheikh Tasnim Afroz tells Star

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Sheikh Tasnim Afroz (Emi), vice-president (VP) candidate of the "Protirodh Porshod" panel in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) elections, has pledged to resolve the accommodation crisis for female students and to ensure healthy political practices on campus if elected.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the VP candidate backed by the Left Democratic Students' Alliance said, "All of my panel members, including myself, have a long history of fight and struggle. Our position is clear, and we have no hidden agenda. We don't seek to depoliticise the campus while holding posts in political parties, nor do we want to deprive others of political rights. Everyone should have the right to do politics with dignity, and we've long been fighting for that."

"Sometimes we won, sometimes we lost, but we never gave up. I believe, by electing us, students will join in this ongoing struggle."

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A campaigner distributing Ducusu election leaflets among students in front of the Dhaka University library yesterday. Electioneering is in full swing for the polls scheduled for September 9.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Want to build modern, safe, liveable campus'

JCD-backed panel unveils manifesto for Ducusu polls

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal-backed panel has announced its manifesto for the Ducusu election, consisting of 10 key commitments and 65 specific pledges.

The panel -- led by vice president (VP) candidate Abidul Islam Khan and general secretary candidate Shaikh Tanvir Baree Hamim -- has pledged to build a modern, joyful, liveable, and safe campus by prioritising education and research.

The announcement was made in front of the Faculty of Arts building yesterday. The Dhaka University Central Students' Union election is scheduled for September 9.

The JCD manifesto includes commitments to ensure a safe campus for female students, health protection and empowerment for women, quality healthcare and health insurance for all students, and better facilities for students with special needs.

Other pledges cover modernising the curriculum, infrastructure, and examination system; improving research opportunities; introducing battery-run shuttle services; and providing harassment-free administrative services, student loans, and campus-based employment.

The panel also promised to promote RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 3, 16 SEE PAGE 6 COL 4