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## National polls to take place on schedule

### Hopes Fakhru; warns delay could risk return of fascism

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the upcoming national elections will be held as scheduled,



despite growing uncertainty and frustration among citizens.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony of a book titled Roktoakto July at the Jatiya Press Club, he reassured the public that elections cannot be halted or delayed.

"People are increasingly confused, asking whether elections will take place at all," he said. "A sense of doubt and frustration has spread. But I have always said — elections will be held."

He warned that if polls were postponed or cancelled, the nation

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What was once a 150-metre-wide, roaring river is now a shallow, silt-choked channel. The Salta, having lost its navigability, leaves boats stranded at low tide. With water barely reaching knee height at its centre, residents on both sides of the river are now forced to wade across on foot. This waterway, once vital to the lives of thousands, has been reduced to a lifeless stream.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## EC to set up cell to combat fake news: CEC

### Next election could be 'riskiest', says EC Anwarul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin expressed concern



yesterday that, in addition to political and law and order challenges,

the commission may also have to confront the threat of misinformation and disinformation on social media during the next polls. Highlighting emerging threats to the electoral process, the CEC, while inaugurating a two-day training programme for election core trainers at the Electoral Training Institute in Dhaka, asked all officials to combat "fake news" and ensure accurate information reaches even the remotest areas.

"Misinformation and

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## Economic policies must be freed from grip of oligarchs

### Experts call for power reform, economic overhaul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's economic policies must be liberated from the control of a few oligarchs, bureaucrats, and a narrow capitalist elite to ensure broad-based growth and sustainable job creation, economists said yesterday.

"When power is concentrated in the hands of a few elites, economic growth may occur, but it fails to generate widespread employment," said Mushtaq Khan, professor of economics at SOAS University of London.

**For Bangladesh to move forward it must confront its oligarchic system head-on. That means prosecuting those responsible for mega-crimes and mega-theft.**

Mushtaq Khan, professor of economics at SOAS University of London

Prof Khan made the remarks while delivering a keynote presentation of the two-day international event "Bengal Delta Conference 2025: Bangladesh at the Crossroads" at the InterContinental Dhaka, organised by the Dacca Institute of Research and Analytics (DAIRA), a newly-formed think tank.

In his speech, Khan outlined why Bangladesh was able to generate jobs and drive manufacturing growth for decades and why that progress has now slowed.

"The direction of any economic strategy must be implementable, and that depends on the distribution of

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## Israel strikes kill 48 people across Gaza

AGENCIES

The Israeli army launched a series of early morning attacks across Gaza yesterday, killing at least 48 Palestinians, including five in the southern al-Mawasi area — a zone it had previously designated as "humanitarian."

Six aid seekers were among the Palestinians killed in the attacks, sources in hospitals in the territory told Al Jazeera. In Khan Younis, southern Gaza, a child was killed by Israeli attack, an emergency worker said.

In Sheikh Radwan, a neighbourhood in northwestern Gaza City that has come under sustained Israeli assault, Nihad Madoukh described recent terrifying attacks.

"They launched a firebelt attack only 150 metres (492 feet) away from us. They scorched the entire area. Not only that, but they fired from helicopters ... very scary bombardments," he said.

Displaced Palestinian Ahmed Moqat said he had been continuously on the move in a bid to escape Israeli attacks.

The Israeli army said yesterday its so-called temporary daily "tactical pause" in Gaza, announced last month for humanitarian purposes, will no longer apply to Gaza City.

## 43 bodies a month recovered from rivers this year

Shows data of River Police Headquarters

RAFIUL ISLAM

Bodies of a woman and a child were recovered from the Buriganga River on August 23. Autopsies initially found that they had been strangled before their bodies were dumped. A murder case was filed with Sadarghat River Police Station in this regard.

Police have yet to identify the victims, as their fingerprints are unidentifiable and no one has come forward to claim the bodies.

"It is necessary to identify the victims to find clues. Usually, no progress can be made without knowing who they are. We are trying," said Sohag Rana, officer-in-charge of Sadarghat Police Station, while speaking to The Daily Star.

Police sent the victims' details to various police stations to cross-check with missing persons' entries and have preserved DNA samples in case anyone comes forward.

This is a recurring challenge for police, who often struggle to identify bodies recovered from rivers. According to police and criminology

**301 bodies recovered from rivers from Jan to July**

**92 remain unidentified**

**41 murder cases filed so far this year; 53 cases last year**

**River bodies pose major challenges for police probe**

**Experts say criminals often use rivers to dump bodies and destroy evidence**

experts, criminals frequently use rivers to dump bodies in an attempt to avoid arrest.

Besides, police also recover bodies of suicide or drowning victims from the rivers.

River police recovered an average of 43 bodies every month this year, compared to 36 per month last year.

Data from the River Police Headquarters shows that at least 301 bodies of men, women, and children were recovered from rivers across the country between January and July this year.

The highest number of bodies, 34, was found in Narayanganj, followed by 32 in Dhaka.

Of them, 209 were later identified, while 92 remain unidentified. Last year, at least 440 bodies were recovered from rivers, of whom 141 remain unidentified.

This year so far, at least 41 murder cases have been filed in connection with recovered bodies, compared to 53 cases last year.

River police officials said they register murder cases whenever they suspect foul play, based on

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## POST-JULY UPRISING Greed fuelling new wave of anarchy

Says Dr Kamal Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the aftermath of the July uprising, the country has witnessed a new wave of terror, killings, and mob violence, centring extortion, land grabbing, and establishing dominance, said Gono Forum founder and Emeritus President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday.

"If the government fails to contain this evil force, it could lead to a disastrous situation, which is undesirable," he said in a written statement.

Gono Forum General Secretary Mizanur Rahman read out the statement on Dr Kamal's behalf at a discussion marking the 32nd founding anniversary of the party at the Jatiya Press Club.

Dr Kamal said the country had long been under the grip of an oppressive authoritarian regime, where the absence of democracy led to violations of the rule of law, voting rights, and fundamental human rights.

A deep crisis and uncertainty

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ETHICS VIOLATION

## Thai court sacks PM Shinawatra

### Five candidates eligible to become next premier

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand's Constitutional Court yesterday dismissed prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra from office for an ethics violation after only a year in power, in another crushing blow to the Shinawatra political dynasty that could usher in a new period of turmoil.



Paetongtarn, who was Thailand's youngest prime minister, becomes the sixth premier from or backed by the billionaire Shinawatra family to be removed by the military or judiciary in a tumultuous two-decade battle for power between the country's warring elites.

In its verdict, the court said Paetongtarn violated ethics in a

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Children play at their makeshift family home along the right bank of the Ravi River in Lahore, Pakistan, yesterday, following heavy monsoon rains and rising water levels. Punjab officials said floods have claimed at least 20 lives, mostly due to drowning.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Disruptive forces becoming more and more visible

### Anu Muhammad tells event honouring Jatin Sarkar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is seeing the rise of disruptive, authoritarian forces just a year after the mass uprising that promised a new Bangladesh, said Prof Anu Muhammad yesterday.

"Instead of moving toward a country free from inequality, we are witnessing the rise of discriminatory, non-secular, and authoritarian forces. Their dominance is becoming increasingly visible," he said at an event remembering the life of Jatin Sarkar, a prominent intellectual.

The event was held at the Central Shaheed Minar. Anu Muhammad said the presence of an intellectual of Jatin's stature was needed at these trying times.

"The society Jatin Sarkar dreamed of was one without discrimination," he said, adding that last year's uprising was born out of this very spirit of resistance against discrimination.

"Yet today, we see forces — often with the direct patronage of the government — perpetuating mob terror to suppress such progressive voices."

"We need to build the intellectual and moral strength to resist inequality and bigotry in all forms — class oppression, gender discrimination, caste prejudice, and religious intolerance."

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