



"The genocide in Gaza exposes Europe's failure to act and speak with one voice."

European Commission's Executive Vice President Teresa Ribera

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## EC denied power to appoint its secy, key officials

Cabinet Division rejects reform proposal for separate 'EC Service' and an independent secretariat

BAHARAM KHAN

The Cabinet Division's rejection of a proposal for empowering the Election Commission to appoint its secretary and other key officials runs counter to a key reform initiative recommended by the Electoral Reform Commission, say election experts.

Such a decision undermines the interim government's efforts to strengthen the EC's autonomy and streamline its operations ahead of the upcoming national polls, they noted.

The EC recently sent the "Election Commission Secretariat (Amendment) Ordinance-2025" to the Cabinet Division through the law ministry, seeking to establish a separate "Election Commission Service" to run its secretariat independently.

The proposal is in line with the recommendations made by the Electoral Reform Commission that submitted its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on January 15 this year.

The EC Service is intended to empower the commission to appoint its own officials to key positions, including secretary, additional secretary

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## BNP says 'no' to constitutional reforms under interim govt

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has said it will not support any constitutional reforms before the national election in February 2026, arguing that such changes must be made by the next parliament.

In a letter to Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the National Consensus Commission, the party said only proposals that do not require constitutional amendments may be carried out by the interim government through ordinances, rules, or administrative orders.

It sent the letter last Wednesday after the commission had sought opinions from political parties on implementing the July Charter.

The July Charter, now being finalised, reflects consensus among political parties on 84 points agreed in two rounds of talks on proposals from six reform commissions.

The letter, signed by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, said, "All constitutional reform proposals must be implemented within two years of an elected government assuming office."

The BNP cautioned against giving the July Charter the status of a "supra-constitutional instrument", calling it "legally and constitutionally impossible and unacceptable".

It warned that if any government formed under the current constitution used state power to replace the current system with a new one, it would be "considered a coup, not a revolution".

The party added that it would be "unfortunate for the nation" if any party or group tried to push the interim government, formed after the July uprising, onto a "disrespectful path".

The letter further stressed, "At the same time, it must be remembered

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## Form Constituent Assembly for implementing July Charter

NCP proposes in a letter to consensus commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party has proposed forming a Constituent Assembly, stating that it represents the most democratic means of implementing the July Charter.

The proposal was sent to Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the National Consensus Commission, yesterday.

In a letter signed by NCP Joint Convener Javed Rasin, the party said that since the July Charter reflects the will of the people, its implementation must be done by a body that is directly representative of the people.

A Constituent Assembly will represent all sections of society, political parties, and social forces and will also establish a constitutional framework to implement the proposed reforms and July Charter.

NCP added that such a method would protect the fundamental spirit of democracy and help avoid any future political debate or crises of legitimacy.

The party hoped that the consensus commission would consider its proposal and include the recommendation of formation of a Constituent Assembly as part of implementing the July Charter.



**After exhuming the body of Nurul Haque, agitators set it alight in Padmar Mor area on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Goalanda, Rajbari yesterday. Inset, Nurul's house was also vandalised and set on fire.**

PHOTO: SUZIT DAS

## Israeli offensive reaches 'heart of Gaza City'

Say residents; 44 Palestinians, including 7 children killed; Unicef describes current situation as "unthinkable"

AGENCIES

Israeli forces killed at least 44 people across Gaza yesterday, including seven children among 20 fatalities in strikes on densely populated residential areas of Gaza City, as residents reported that the offensive to seize control of the capital had reached "the heart of the city".

Israel's army claimed it now controls 40 percent of Gaza City and has expanded its assault on residential homes and displacement camps, with the UN children's fund (Unicef) describing the current situation as "unthinkable".

Egypt, however, said it would not tolerate mass displacement of Palestinians and what it described as genocide, continuing to ratchet up its criticism of Israel's Gaza offensive as thousands of residents of Gaza City defied Israeli orders to leave.

"Displacement is not an option and it is a red line for Egypt and we will not allow it to happen," Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told reporters in Nicosia.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said it

struck a high-rise in Gaza City, shortly after announcing it would target a range of structures identified as being used by Hamas, particularly tall buildings, reports AFP.

- Israeli military says it controls 40pc of Gaza City
- Egypt vows to block Palestinian displacement
- Finland joins declaration on two-state solution

Hamas yesterday released footage purporting to show two hostages seized on October 7, 2023 alive in Gaza City late last month. The video shows one hostage in a car being driven through a neighbourhood with destroyed buildings, calling on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to carry out a planned military offensive to conquer Gaza City.

In a separate development, Finland

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Star INTERVIEW

## 'Political power cannot be for sale'

### TI chief calls for transparency in party and campaign funding

PORIMOL PALMA

Transparency in party and campaign funding must be ensured so that political power cannot be used for profit or abuse, Transparency International chair François Valérien has said.

He also said that institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the judiciary must operate free from political or administrative interference if Bangladesh is to dismantle entrenched networks of corruption.

Valérien said the aspirations expressed during last year's mass uprising make him optimistic that corruption is neither inevitable nor unbreakable, and that reforms demanded on the streets -- from judicial independence to genuine accountability -- can succeed.

"Political power cannot be for sale. Yet in many countries, campaign financing is treated as an investment. Businesses or even foreign powers provide money to politicians or parties with the expectation of returns, often through inflated public contracts, at the expense of citizens," he said in an interview with The Daily Star during his three-day visit to Bangladesh from 1-4 September.

During his visit, he met the chief adviser, the chief justice, ACC officials, and reviewed Transparency International Bangladesh's activities. The trip came as the country pursues reforms in various

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François Valérien

## Miladunnabi today

UNB, Dhaka

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, commemorating the birth and demise of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), will be observed across the country today with due religious reverence.

The government has taken up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

The programmes were finalised at an inter-ministerial meeting with Religious Affairs Adviser

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## HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star office will remain closed today on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. Stay tuned to our website for round-the-clock news coverage.

## 1 killed in attack on 'darbar sharif' in Rajbari

Grave desecrated, corpse exhumed, burnt; govt terms incident 'abhorrent', 'despicable'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Hundreds of people attacked a "darbar shari", exhumed the body of Nurul Haque -- widely known locally as "Nurul Pagla" -- from his grave and set it on fire in Goalanda upazila of Rajbari yesterday.

Followers of Nurul, who claimed to be a pir (spiritual leader), and locals under the banner of "Iman-Aqeedah Rokkha Committee" locked into a clash after Juma prayers.

One person was killed, and 22 others, including a journalist, were injured.

The interim government has condemned the incident, terming it "abhorrent" and a "despicable act".

Goalanda Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Nahidur Rahman said the attack was carried out on the Goalanda Pak Darbar Sharif, also Nurul's house, in the Ghonapara area, where the grave was located.

"Later, his body was exhumed and taken to the Padmar Mor area on the Dhaka-Khulna highway, where it was set on fire," he added.

The deceased was identified as Russel Molla, 28, of Debgam village. He was initially taken to Goalanda Upazila Health Complex, said Shariful Islam, its resident medical officer.

He was later transferred to Faridpur Medical College Hospital, where he died, Shariful added. He also said 22 people received treatment at the health complex.

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