

DHAKA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

Plus 12-page supplement on Passport to Abroad

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 232

BHADRA 31, 1432 BS

[www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

RABIUL AWAL 21, 1447 HIJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00



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## Consensus a must, election to be a 'grand festival'

Says Yunus at talks on  
implementing July Charter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday stressed that there is no alternative to consensus on the July Charter, warning that any delay or disagreement could threaten the nation's hard-won stability.

"There is no turning back from the path we have embarked upon. We must reach a consensus. I may be speaking strongly, but this cannot be ignored," he told political leaders.

He sat with the politicians as part of National Consensus Commission talks amid persistent rift over how to implement the July Charter, a document consisting of reforms agreed upon during the dialogues.

Yunus, also the chair of the commission, said the student-led July uprising had created a unique opportunity for a new beginning, and that the only way to secure it was through cooperation and compromise.

"We can argue endlessly, but we must stay on the path of solutions. Some may feel discomfort now, but later there will be peace, and the nation will benefit. If we remain mired in disputes, we cannot predict when or where they might erupt," he said.

Describing the consensus commission's work as unprecedented, Yunus said, "This initiative was not taken from any book. Considering the current situation, we tried this method to solve the problem.

He urged the parties to complete the final stage of implementation flawlessly, so that the commission could set "a global example" for resolving political crises.

Turning to the February election, he said it would be more than just a vote. "The election will be a grand festival, the true rebirth of the nation. All the sacrifices and bloodshed will become meaningful if we achieve

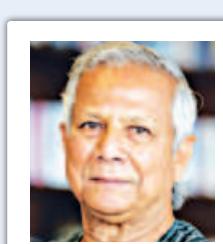
Displaced Palestinians  
move with their  
belongings southwards  
on a road in the  
Nuseirat refugee camp  
area in the central Gaza  
Strip following renewed  
Israeli evacuation  
orders for Gaza City  
yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



"All ways for dictatorship  
must be blocked. Everyone  
must agree to stop  
dictatorship ... I call on  
everyone to agree on the  
charter so that the election  
can be meaningful."

Prof Muhammad Yunus



this new beginning. We must not get lost in minor issues; aim for the bigger goal."

On reforms, Yunus called for unity to prevent any return of authoritarianism. "All ways for dictatorship must be blocked. To stop dictatorship, everyone must agree. There can be no dissent. If disagreement remains, we cannot complete this process. I call on everyone to agree on the charter so that the election can be meaningful," he said.

### BNP OPEN TO MORE TALKS

During the meeting on the second day of the third phase of talks between parties and the consensus commission, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed cautioned against linking reforms, justice, and elections.

"Reforms are a continuous process. Justice cannot be bound by time limits; otherwise it will lead to injustice. Whoever comes to power, trials must continue. But elections cannot be made conditional."

Warning that any delay could trigger instability, Salahuddin said, "If the election is not held in February, it will create uncertainty and open opportunities for fascist forces. Some are calling it a national security threat, but I say it could become a regional security threat. Two regional powers may exploit this situation. We do not want Bangladesh to fall into that trap."

About the July Charter, he said the BNP was open to further discussions on whether to give the document a legal basis.

He said most provisions of the charter were simple to implement, but constitutional issues might require advisory opinions from the Supreme Court under article 106 of the constitution.

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## Israel orders Gazans to evacuate southwards

Intensifies military ops in the enclave;  
48 more Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Israeli forces destroyed at least 30 residential buildings in Gaza City and forced thousands of people from their homes to move south, Palestinian officials said, as US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived yesterday to discuss the future of the conflict.

According to an army post on X, more than 250,000 people have reportedly fled the city. The military is urging remaining residents to travel via al-Rashid Street towards al-Mawasi or camps in central Gaza.

However, a journalist said, "Despite intense bombardment in Gaza City, many residents have stayed put -- or returned after seeking shelter elsewhere -- because many of Israel's designated evacuation zones are desperately overcrowded and under-resourced, including lacking proper water access."

The United Nations estimates from late August indicated approximately one million Palestinians were living in and around Gaza's largest urban centre, where famine conditions are taking hold after months of deteriorating circumstances, reports Al Jazeera online.

The UN and the international community have called on Israel to abandon its plans to capture the city, warning that such an assault could worsen the humanitarian crisis.



- ▶ Over 250,000 reportedly fled the Gaza City
- ▶ 30 buildings destroyed
- ▶ Qatar PM urges world to 'stop using double standards'
- ▶ Netanyahu hosts Rubio at Western Wall ahead of talks

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani yesterday urged the international community to "stop using double standards" and punish Israel for what he described as its "crimes".

He was speaking at a preparatory meeting on

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## Refused to fire on protesters despite orders

2 cops tell ICT-1 during  
cross-examination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two police officials yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that they had defied direct orders to open fire on unarmed student protesters during last year's July uprising, saying they believed every bullet would mean a life lost.

Testifying as prosecution witnesses, Ajay Ghosh and Naik Abdur Rahman, constables of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), recounted how superior officers repeatedly instructed them and others to use lethal weapons against protesters in Dhaka's Chankharpul area on August 5, 2024. At least six students were killed there that day.

Ajay said that when then additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Shah Alam Md Akhterul Islam ordered him to fire on crowds, he hesitated.

The ADC then verbally abused him, snatched his Chinese rifle with 40 rounds of ammunition, and handed it to constable Sujan Hossain, who opened fire along with constables Imaz Hossain Imon and Nasirul Islam.

"I saw students collapsing under gunfire at Nabab Katra, Bakshi Bazar, Mayor Hanif Flyover and nearby roads. Later, I heard six to seven had been killed," he told the tribunal.

He added that Sujan later surrendered the rifle with

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