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Parties agree to referendum on July Charter

Says Ali Riaz; commission hails breakthrough in implementation talks

MD ABBAS

Political parties have reached a consensus on holding a referendum to secure public consent for implementing the July Charter, National Consensus Commission Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz has said.

However, differences remain over the timing of the referendum.

While the BNP and several other parties want it to be held on the same day as the national election, Jamaat-e-Islami prefers it before the polls to ensure the charter's implementation before the next government takes office.

The NCP did not clarify whether it wants the referendum to be held before the polls, or on election day.

If the referendum is held on election day, voters will cast a separate ballot to answer "Yes" or "No" on whether they support the charter. The party forming the next parliament will then implement the charter, said commission members.

After a meeting with the political parties at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday, Riaz said, "All political parties have agreed to hold a referendum to seek the people's approval. We see this as the first major step in the implementation process."

Expressing hope that the parties would reach consensus on other issues as well, he said the commission will send specific recommendations on implementation of the charter to the government soon.

Riaz also said there is now a "virtual consensus" among the parties that the parliament to be formed after the February election will bring reforms in such a way that the changes will be sustainable.

The charter contains 84 reform proposals -- half requiring constitutional amendments and the rest executable through existing laws or government orders.



Displaced Palestinian girls stand beside a tent used as a temporary shelter in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Complete obliteration!

Donald Trump threatens if Hamas insists on staying in power

Hamas is very keen to reach an agreement to end the war and immediately begin the prisoner exchange process in accordance with the field conditions

Senior Hamas official

- BNP says referendum should be held on election day
- Jamaat wants it before polls; NCP yet to clarify position
- Ali Riaz says there is now 'virtual consensus' that next parliament will bring sustainable reforms

Mobilise, resist, take action

Shahidul urges int'l community



STAR REPORT

Photographer-activist Shahidul Alam yesterday urged the international community to show collective courage and help ensure the success of the Gaza-bound freedom flotilla.

"If you can take action on the ground that creates the pressure to allow us to get to Gaza, that will be the best outcome, but the only way it might happen is if there is sufficient public pressure on Israel to do so."

"So this is your chance to step into the action."

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Diplomacy gathers pace amid threats, strikes

Parties set for ceasefire talks in Cairo; 19 more Gazans killed

AGENCIES

Efforts to end the conflict in Gaza gained momentum, with rival parties and mediators scheduled to meet in Cairo today, even as Israeli airstrikes continued across the territory, killing 19 more people.

US President Donald Trump said Hamas will face "complete obliteration" if the Palestinian group refuses to give up power and control of Gaza.

In an interview with CNN, Trump added that he expects to know soon whether Hamas is committed to peace. He also said that the deal would be a great one for Israel.

Earlier, Hamas called for a swift start to a hostage-prisoner exchange with Israel, as negotiators from both sides prepared to meet in Egypt for crucial talks aimed at ending the nearly two-year war in Gaza.

Foreign ministers of several countries, including Egypt, said the talks were a "real opportunity" to achieve a sustainable ceasefire.

"Hamas is very keen to reach an agreement to end the war and immediately begin the prisoner exchange process in accordance with the field conditions," a senior Hamas official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

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GAZA PEACE PLAN

- Rubio says Gaza war is not yet over, priority is to get hostages out
- Netanyahu vows to disarm Hamas through Trump's plan or militarily
- Trump again warns Hamas, says Israel agreed to 'initial withdrawal line'

The diplomatic push follows the Palestinian group's positive response to Trump's roadmap for an end to the fighting and the release of captives in Gaza in exchange for Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

However, the fate of the peace deal remains uncertain. The timeline for implementing Trump's plan is still unclear, with Gaza's devastation posing major logistical challenges. Key issues -- including Hamas's disarmament and Israel's potential

BCB polls today after a series of controversies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) board of directors election is set to take place today, following a series of dramas, controversies, and legal battles.

With a court order yesterday effectively restoring the voting rights of 15 clubs that were under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), the electoral landscape has changed, as previously rejected candidate Iftekhar Rahman Mithu, an influential director of the last board, has been reinstated.

Earlier, the suspension of the 15 clubs had prompted former captain Tamim Iqbal, along with 15 other councillors, to withdraw their nominations, citing government interference.

A total of 157 voters will

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