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## 'UN committed to ensuring no one's left behind'

Gwyn Lewis pays farewell call on chief adviser

BSS, Dhaka

UN Resident Coordinator Gwyn Lewis yesterday paid a farewell call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna.

During the meeting, Lewis commended the chief adviser for his "highly successful" visit to New York during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The meeting also emphasised the importance of sustained collaboration, innovation, and inclusive growth as Bangladesh prepares for its upcoming national elections in February and enters a new chapter in its development journey.

Reflecting on her tenure, Gwyn Lewis said, "Serving the people of Bangladesh over the past three and a half years has been one of the greatest honours and privileges of my career. I have witnessed firsthand the resilience, creativity, and generosity that define this nation. Working alongside government, civil society, and development partners has been deeply inspiring."

"We remain committed to ensuring that no one is left



behind, with gender equality and human rights embedded in all our efforts," she said.

Meanwhile, Jamaat e Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday sought continued support of the UN for the overall development of Bangladesh.

He made the request when Gwyn Lewis met him at his Bashundhara office.

Jamaat also sought UN's cooperation and technical assistance in holding a free, fair and credible election.

## 2 more die of dengue

STAR REPORT

At least two dengue patients died while 715 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, the deaths were reported in Dhaka.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths from dengue this year rose to 217, while total cases rose to 51,404.

Among the total cases, a total of 48,667 dengue patients have been released so far after treatment.

Currently, 2,520 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across Bangladesh, 1,661 of whom are from outside Dhaka.

## The only real safe exit is death: Sarjis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam yesterday slammed some advisers to the interim government, saying those seeking a "safe exit" should remember that "the only real safe exit is death."

"Where will you go for a safe exit?... You may go anywhere in the world, but the people of Bangladesh will still hold you accountable - whether on social media or in person," he said while talking to journalists in Naogaon.

His remarks came days after NCP Convener Nahid Islam said several advisers have links with political parties and are now considering "safe exits".

"We're seeing a tendency among a few advisers to just get through their duties and leave through the elections," said Sarjis.

Sarjis urged the advisers to act decisively in line with the July uprising's spirit and take firm decisions without worrying about their positions.

He also warned that any attempt to create a new version of the Awami League would not be tolerated.

Criticising the Election Commission, he alleged that it was acting arbitrarily over the use of the "Shapla" symbol despite no legal bar.



Numerous illegal battery-run auto-rickshaws lie in the impound zone in Darus Salam area on the capital's Mirpur Road yesterday. The risky movement of such vehicles has disrupted life in the city. Although traffic police have seized many of these vehicles, they are often released after a few days, allowing the problem to persist.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## 'Bar biased officials from poll duties' Speakers demand direct election to women's reserved seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election experts and former Election Commission officials yesterday urged the commission not to assign election duties to "politically biased officials" and those who had served in the past three national polls.

Speaking at a dialogue with the EC, they also stressed the need for the commission to take a stronger and more assertive role in ensuring free, fair, and impartial elections. This includes empowering EC officials with magistracy authority to uphold electoral integrity.

In a separate session, participants called for increasing the number of reserved seats for women in parliament, introducing direct elections to those seats, and ensuring the safety of women voters.

Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) President Munira Khan urged the

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## Govt to declare oxygen as an 'essential drug'

Says CA's special assistant for health ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to declare oxygen as an "essential drug", considering its importance in patient treatment, said Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, yesterday.

The essential drug list is currently being revised, he said at the Bangladesh Oxygen Summit held at a hotel in Dhaka.

Essential drugs refer to life-saving and commonly needed medicines that the government ensures are available, affordable, and of assured quality for all.

Prof Sayedur said the government is taking steps to make non-functional oxygen plants operational and to ensure supply at the upazila level.

The summit was jointly organised by icddr,b, Lancet Global Health Commission on Medical Oxygen Security, Every Breath Counts, and Unitaid, seeking investment for ensuring oxygen supply.

The Lancet Commission was formed in September 2022 following an icddr,b study to analyse the global availability and shortage of medical oxygen.

Sayedur made the announcement at a time when 70 percent of people in low and middle-income countries, including

Bangladesh, do not receive oxygen when needed for acute medical or surgical care.

Citing a report of the Lancet Commission, icddr,b scientist Ahmed

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## A message of unity, direction Say BNP leaders about Tarique's interview

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman's recent media interview has left the party's leaders and activists excited and energised.

They said the interview provided clear directions for both the party and the nation. In an interview with BBC Bangla, Tarique explained BNP's position on several current issues, including the party's strategy for the upcoming national election.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said Tarique's interview proved that he is capable of leading the nation.

Dhaka North City BNP Convener Aminul Haque said, "He [Tarique] gave priority to Bangladesh first and focused more on people's interests. His statement carries an important message for leaders and activists across the country. He made it clear how BNP is thinking about the coming days."

Party Vice Chairman Shamsuzzaman Dudu said, "The interview was simply excellent. The full picture of BNP's politics came out here. He has never spoken so openly about the past, present, and future before."

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A child pokes his head out from behind the plastic cover of a rickshaw, watching the midday rain with curious eyes. Torrential rain over the past week has become a common occurrence, disrupting movement and causing waterlogging in several areas. The photo was taken in the TSC area of Dhaka University yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Take swift action to implement July Charter, hold Feb polls

Says Jamaat leader Taher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher, nayebe-ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, has urged the government to "take some crucial decisions quickly and decisively" to implement the July Charter and ensure that the next national election is held in February as planned.

"This could have been done three months ago. All parties have already reached a consensus in principle. Yet there are delays - this way, that way. If such conspiracies continue and the required reforms and solutions are not implemented, everything will come into question," Taher told reporters yesterday at the VIP terminal of Dhaka airport after returning from the US.

Taher accompanied Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to the United Nations General Assembly session as part of the government delegation.

Emphasising that the election must be held in February, the Jamaat leader further said, "Those who are creating obstacles to implementing the reforms, or if the government delays reforms for any reason that ultimately affects the election, they will have to be accountable to the nation."