

## Yunus leaves for Rome today to join WFF event

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus will leave for Rome, Italy, today to attend a flagship event of the World Food Forum (WFF).



A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight carrying the chief adviser and his entourage will depart from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:30am, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told BSS.

According to the tour schedule, Prof Yunus will deliver a speech as an invited guest at the main session of the WFF.

He will also meet with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and heads of various international organisations. The meetings will focus on global issues, including food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

The WFF is a platform of the Food and Agriculture Organization

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Palestinians, who were displaced to the southern part of Gaza at Israel's order during the war, make their way along a road as they return to the north as a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza takes hold in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## 2 killed as Rab minibus collides with bus in Patuakhali



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two people, including a member of the Rab-8, were killed and around 50 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a Rab minibus on the Patuakhali-Kuakata highway yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Rab-8 minibus driver and Assistant Sub-Inspector Abdul Alim, and three-year-old Prion, son of Rab member and police sub-inspector Prosenjit, said Imtiaz Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Patuakhali Sadar Police Station.

The accident occurred around 8:30am near Fatullah Bus Stand when the Kuakata-bound Rab minibus from Barishal collided head-on with a bus.

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## LPG remains overlooked

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is a very competitive energy source compared to the price of other fuels and their availability, said M Tamim, vice-chancellor of the Independent University, Bangladesh at a conclave titled "LPG in Bangladesh: Economy, Environment and Safety".

"Its cost-effectiveness, cleaner burning, ease of transportation and secured supply have increased the industrial usage by nearly 15 percent in the last two years," he said at the event organised by Daily Bonik Barta at Pan Pacific Sonargaon.

The advantage of LPG is that it is relatively easy to import with lighterage, said Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

"But the major problem lies in its price – it needs to be reduced. The entire LPG sector is controlled by private companies, and prices remain too high," he said, adding the price of a 12-kg cylinder should be below Tk 1,000 but it is more than Tk 1,200.

Drives will be initiated under mobile courts to monitor whether selling rates exceed the rates fixed by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission.

Khan stressed the need to promote LPG use in industries by reducing prices, given the ongoing crisis in piped gas supply.

"We have limitations in LNG [liquefied natural gas] import as we are near to utilising our full regasification

facilities. But it is easier to import LPG."

A section of politicians and their allied businessmen, working together, have created the ongoing crisis in the gas sector.

"In the private sector, many industries were promised gas connections. Even knowing there was no gas, lines were given, unjustly, through corruption," he added.

Azam J Chowdhury, former president of the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh, however, disagreed with Khan's comment about LPG pricing.

If the government can ensure 7 percent profit for importers on each 12kg LPG cylinder sales, the private sector operators would hand over their businesses to the government.

"Everyone in the business is struggling to survive while some are selling LPG at losses. All of the licensees are barely breathing. Some have even been forced to shut down their operations."

But closing a business means bank loans will remain unpaid and jobs will be at risk.

"I have coined a new term for this sector: NSPG – No Subsidy, No Patronisation and No Governance. Everyone is running their business in their own way," said Chowdhury, a director of Omera LPG.

Many places across the country are selling LPG cylinders illegally, while some are refilling small cylinders from larger ones by themselves, which is

highly dangerous.

"Is that the operators' fault?"

Mentioning the licence fee of Tk 1 crore per year for an LPG operator, he said: "On one hand, the government urges the use of green fuel, but on the other, it imposes heavy fees. The government itself sets the prices, so why should the blame fall only on us?"

The LPG market is being "manipulated" as the government has deliberately created the market by shutting down pipeline gas supply, said M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh.

He urged operators to ensure the safe supply of LPG through transparent business practices and proper service.

Besides, he urged the BERC not to take the side of the influential stakeholders in the pricing or in receiving complaints.

"You must ensure proper investigation, rulings and implementation as all the operators are your licensees," he added.

A total of 580 accidents occurred due to LPG cylinder blast in 2025, said Muhammad Jahed Kamal, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate.

"LPG is a growing sector, and its use is expected to rise further in the future." As consumption increases, so does the risk of accidents, so it is crucial to raise awareness from the very beginning, he said.

## Army takes 15 officers into custody

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suspended officers the same way it does to those in service. "If the police act upon the warrants, they may arrest those individuals directly."

However, the army has offered them an option to come under its custody. "A retired officer may go to court or the police himself. But if he prefers, he may come under army custody. We will provide a secure stay. The choice lies with them," he said.

Earlier on October 8, the prosecution formally charged 28 people, including the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 23 top and mid-ranking current and former army officers, in two cases of enforced disappearances, secret detention, and torture in the 15 years of her rule.

On the same day, in a third case, formal charges were pressed against two other army officers, who had served in the BGB, and two police officers, over the killings of 28 people and crimes against humanity in Rampura during the July uprising last year.

Besides Maj Gen Kabir, the serving officers who were formally charged included Maj Gen Sheikh Md Sarwar Hossain, Brig Gen Md Mahbubur Rahman Siddique, Brig Gen Ahmed Tanvir Mazahar Siddique, Brig Gen Md Jahangir Alam, Brig Gen Tofail Mostafa Sarwar, Brig Gen Kamrul Hasan, Brig Gen Md Mahbub Alam, Col K M Azad, Col Abdullah Al Momen, Lt Col Moshir Rahman Jewel, Lt Col Saiful Islam Sumon, and Lt Col Sarwar Bin Kashem, Lt Col Redwanul Islam, and Major Md Rafat Bin Alam Mun.

Besides Hasina's former adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, the nine retired officers are former DGF chiefs Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Akbar Hossain, Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Saiful Alam, Lt Gen (ret'd) Ahmed Tabrez Shams Chowdhury, Maj Gen (ret'd) Md Saiful Abedin, and Maj Gen (ret'd) Hamidul Haque; CTIB director Maj Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Towhidul Ul Islam; DGF official Lt Col (ret'd) Mokhsurul Haque; Col (ret'd) Anwar Latif Khan and Lt Col (ret'd) Muhammad Khairul Islam.

Explaining the procedure, Adjutant General Hakimuzzaman said arrest warrants are issued by the tribunal and sent to the inspector general of police (IGP) for execution, with a specific deadline.

The IGP's office is responsible for delivering them through official channels.

"The warrant is not like an electricity bill. It cannot just appear on social media. It must come through the prescribed route: from the tribunal to the police, then to the individual, who will receive and sign."

Hakimuzzaman added that although copies of the charge sheets or their annexes have been circulated on social and mainstream media, the army has not yet received any formal warrant. "Nonetheless, we respect every law

recognised by the constitution," he said. "That is why, even before receiving any warrant, we acted promptly on October 8 and ordered all serving officers named to report to army custody by October 9."

He said the decision to place the officers in custody was taken to maintain discipline, ensure accountability, and follow precedent.

The adjutant general also spoke of "legal complexities arising from the third amendment" to the ICT Act, passed on October 6, which disqualifies anyone formally charged from holding public office.

He read the relevant provision and noted that the accompanying clause states the disqualification does not apply to anyone acquitted or discharged by the tribunal.

"The army will seek legal clarification from the appropriate authority on how this disqualification clause will apply to serving members of the armed forces. We will ask how it should be executed in the case of soldiers and officers, including whether they remain employed during the proceedings," he said.

Asked whether the officers now in custody would be handed over to police or produced before the ICT by October 22, the deadline mentioned in the tribunal's order, Hakimuzzaman said the army would proceed strictly according to law. "We are seeking legal clarification on the amendment, and once we receive that clarification, we will act exactly as the law requires," he said.

He further said that, unlike civil bureaucracy, the army's personnel management is bound by strict service-age limits. For example, majors retire at 50, lieutenant colonels at 52, and colonels at 54, which can make the timing of legal proceedings significant.

"If a trial continues beyond a person's service age, it raises practical questions," he said. "That is why we need formal clarification from the legal authority on how this law should apply to us."

ICT Prosecutor Mizanul Islam told The Daily Star that under the amended law, members of disciplinary forces can be tried for crimes against humanity and the disciplinary forces include the army, navy and airforce.

He also said they would provide a legal explanation if the armed forces seek any.

Addressing questions on whether the incidents occurred within cantonment areas, Hakimuzzaman explained that the place of occurrence does not automatically determine jurisdiction.

"Rab and DGF were the workplaces of those named, but these agencies are not under Army Headquarters. DGF functions under the Prime Minister's Office, currently under the Chief Adviser's Office. Even as a major general, I cannot simply walk into DGF without prior appointment. The chain

of command is completely separate," he said.

Hakimuzzaman said that both the National Commission on Enforced Disappearances and the ICT chief prosecutor had publicly stated that the Bangladesh Army as an institution was not involved in the alleged offences.

"It was mentioned clearly in the commission's interim report and in the prosecutor's remarks that as an organisation, the army was not involved. These were individual actions by officers who were then serving in Rab or DGF."

He said the army has been cooperating fully with both the commission and the prosecution since the beginning.

"Whenever they asked for documents or personnel, we provided them. Even last Thursday – after the charge sheets were filed – they sought documents, and we sent them immediately."

He admitted that the current legal situation has affected their morale but said the army remains focused on its mission. "Yes, it affects morale, but the chief of army staff has made it clear: we will remain steadfast. We will perform our duty with full discipline."

In response to a question about whether the army would take responsibility for any alleged wrongdoing by individual officers, Hakimuzzaman said, "The army of Bangladesh is the army of every citizen. It belongs to the nation, not to any individual or party. If any officer or member has done wrong elsewhere, the person will face justice. But the institution itself stands for the law, discipline, and the country."

Army Headquarters Director (military intelligence) Brig Gen Selim Azad, Director (military operations) Brig Gen Manzur Hossain, Director (judge advocate general) Brig Gen Asif, and Director (personnel) Brig Gen Mustafiz, among others, were present at the briefing.

Citing the office of the ICT Chief Prosecutor, Chief Adviser's

Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday said that currently there are no plans to issue warrants against any additional members of the armed forces.

On Facebook, he described social media posts that the ICT is going to issue arrest warrants against over a hundred more army officers as "completely baseless rumours".

The press secretary urged the public not to believe misleading information, saying that such falsehoods are part of efforts to create divisions among the general public and within the armed forces ahead of the general election.

He further clarified that the government has no plans to dismantle the DGF.

"The government is considering reforms to enhance the agency's focus on transborder and external intelligence operations," he said.

## Teacher who accused BNP leader

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The matter gained public attention following several media reports on the incident. A day after she revealed her relationship with Sharifuzzaman and his alleged deceit, police arrested her from her home on October 7.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Chuadanga Additional SP Md Minhaj ul Islam said the woman was arrested under the Special Powers Act in connection with a gold smuggling case filed on September 30. "She was arrested after another accused, Asma Begum, mentioned her name in a confessional statement under Section 164."

According to the case statement, police arrested Asma with three gold bars on September 29. The next day, she gave a confessional statement before the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, saying she knew the teacher because her daughter, a second grader, took music lessons from her at the school.

Asma allegedly claimed the teacher had previously offered her to join smuggling activities and that on the day of the incident, she had been asked to deliver a cigarette packet to a man – unaware that it contained gold.

Additional SP Minhaj acknowledged that investigators have not yet found any proof of the teacher's involvement. "They are also unsure whether she had any contact with Asma at all," he said, adding that no criminal record against her was found at the local police station. "If she's found innocent, her name will be dropped from the charge sheet."

Speaking to The Daily Star, the head teacher of the high school where she taught said, "She used to come once a week to take classes. I didn't have much contact with her. However, I don't recognise Asma Begum's daughter. If she's a second grade student, she isn't supposed to be learning music here. [As a high school] We start classes from grade six."

This correspondent spoke to at least 30 residents of the victim's village, all of whom said there was no possible way she could be involved in gold smuggling.

Rahima Begum, a tea-stall owner, said she had watched the teacher grow up. "I've never heard anything bad about her. I can't imagine how this happened."

Rickshaw puller Mamun, sitting at a nearby stall, said, "This is unimaginable. We don't believe she could ever do such a thing. She's such a kind-hearted woman."

A prominent cultural activist in Chuadanga Dhiru Baul said, "Politics is clearly at play here. I've never seen her involved in any crime, nor did I know of any relationship between her and Sharif. Now, we can't even speak out. The atmosphere doesn't allow it – we're in fear ourselves."

The teacher's brother said his sister had been framed. "Everyone knows what kind of family my sister comes from. She doesn't need to smuggle gold to survive."

He alleged that several lawyers they approached in the past two days

refused to take the case. "What crime has she committed that makes them so hesitant?"

He also claimed that his sister went to the police, court, and top BNP leaders in the district with her complaint against Sharif, but no one helped her. "Even the law enforcers advised her to settle the matter privately."

The Daily Star, as per its editorial policy, has not disclosed the victim's and her family's names and location for safety purposes.

Contacted, BNP leader Sharif said, "This woman went to the army, the police, the judge's court, and the juvenile court to file a complaint against me, but no one accepted it. They said evidence was needed, which she couldn't provide. She only showed some screenshots of messages. Later, the authorities sent her back without taking the case."

He claimed it was part of a conspiracy to frame him and block his party nomination in the upcoming election.

Asked why police refused to accept her complaint, the additional SP said, "I'm not aware of the matter. I'll look into it."

President of Chuadanga Bar Association Syed Mahmood Shamim Reza said, "I don't know which lawyer they went to. It's unlikely they couldn't find one."

Sub-Inspector Shamsur Rahman of Darshana Police Station, also the investigating officer of the case, said, "Give us a few days and we hope to come up with results."

## July Charter signing moved to Oct 17

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signing of the July Charter is a historic event" that requires wider public engagement.

The commission on Thursday sent letters to all political parties, seeking their opinions by 4:00pm yesterday, on the repeal of article 4A. By the deadline, 11 parties had replied. BNP and Jamaat had not submitted their responses until 7:00pm.

Confirming the dispatch of letters, Ali Riaz told this newspaper, "We have reviewed the constitutions of 121 countries and found that none of them include a mandatory provision requiring the display of any individual's portrait in offices."

article 4a was introduced through the 15th amendment in 2011 during the Sheikh Hasina-led government, which was ousted in last year's July uprising.

The interim government's Constitution Reform Commission has already recommended abolishing the article, saying, "Such a provision encourages personality cults and paves the way for dictatorship. Bangladesh is the collective outcome of the leadership, sacrifice, and contributions of countless distinguished individuals."

A reform commission member earlier said nearly all of the 33 political parties consulted, except a few leftist ones, favoured repeal.

Contacted yesterday, BNP Standing

Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "This [repealing article 4a] was included as point number 5 in our response to the Constitution Reform Commission's report. At the time, we expressed our agreement with it. There was never any scope for disagreement."

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad also backed the move, saying, "By adding this article to the constitution, the Awami League had established a Zamindari system."

NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tusher said his party, too, supported the proposal.

However, CPB central leader Ruhin Hossain Prince said the matter had not been discussed within his party forum.

## NCP weighing its paths to JS

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seat negotiations ahead of the polls, NCP sources said.

Requesting anonymity, a top NCP leader told The Daily Star, "Half of our party leaders are in favour of joining a BNP led alliance. We are also considering other options."

About why they are seeking an alliance, he said, "The upcoming election is important. NCP's participation in parliament is essential. The party is not yet as politically strong as the BNP or Jamaat – it needs both supporters and financial resources."

"If we fail to secure any seats, we won't be able to directly pursue NCP's key agendas, such as constitutional reforms, implementation of the July Charter, and the formation of a new state. These demands can't be effectively highlighted or implemented without entering parliament. Therefore, NCP cannot remain isolated. We must unite with another party..."

NCP leaders have already met with the BNP over seat sharing, while some of them are also in talks with like-minded

parties to form a broader alliance as a "secondary option".

Last Thursday, NCP senior leaders met with representatives of the Amar Bangladesh Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and the six-party Ganatantra Mancha alliance at the residence of ASM Abdur Rab, founding secretary general of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal. They discussed possible alliances with and without the BNP, meeting insiders said.

While the nine parties discussed the possibility of forming a centrist alliance without the BNP, meeting sources confirmed that some members of some parties were more eager to align with the BNP expected to form the next government.

Ganatantra Mancha is comprised of Ganasamhati Andolon, Nagarik Oikya, Rashtira Sangskar Andolon, Biplobi Workers Party, Bhasani Anusari Parishad, and JSD (Rab faction).

Regarding seat sharing with the BNP, Ganasamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki said, "Discussions regarding seat sharing are

underway. However, nothing is final yet. There will be more discussions."

Nagarik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna confirmed his intent to The Daily Star, saying, "We have been with the BNP and have been agitating together from the beginning, so we will cooperate in building the next state. After finalising our candidates, we will hold discussions with the BNP and make a final decision on this matter within the next three days."

Rashed Khan, general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad, said, "Many kinds of discussions about alliances take place when political parties sit together. We talked about the possibilities of creating an alliance with the BNP and even Jamaat-e-Islami, and also about forming an alliance among ourselves."

AB Party sources said they were pushing for a centrist alliance excluding the BNP so that they could attract voters who would not vote for either the BNP or Jamaat.

"The idea is to collectivise and keep the spirit of the revolution alive," a senior party leader said.