



"We must not allow this opportunity for peace and a path toward a more just and secure future to slip from our grasp."

UN rights chief Volker Turk on Gaza ceasefire

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'A mockery of the people'

Says BNP in its formal response to consensus commission's recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has lashed out at the National Consensus Commission's proposals for implementing the July charter, dismissing them as "meaningless", "one-sided", and "a mockery of the people".

The party accused the commission of forcibly imposing decisions, silencing dissent gathered through months of dialogue, and betraying democratic norms at a delicate political moment.

"We deeply regret that such recommendations will only divide the nation, fostering discord instead of unity. Adopting arbitrary reform proposals risks bringing long-term harm to national life," Secretary General Mirza Fakhurul Islam Alamgir warned at a press conference yesterday.

He alleged that the commission bypassed multiparty consensus and introduced key clauses never discussed in talks with 30 political parties.

The commission submitted its recommendations on implementing the charter's constitutional reforms to the government on Tuesday. The BNP organised the press conference to formally state its position after its standing committee met on Tuesday and Wednesday to review the proposals.

At the press conference, the party questioned the authority of the government to issue an order or pass a bill to kickstart the reform process, and the legitimacy of forming a constitutional reform council alongside a legislature.



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Mirza Fakhurul Islam Alamgir
BNP secretary general



It described the recommendation that reform proposals automatically be incorporated into the constitution if not implemented within 270 days by the reform council as "irrational".

Fakhurul, while reading out the party's statement, acknowledged that they agreed on a referendum to give the July charter a legal backing, but noted that holding the referendum before the election may delay the polls. "There is no confusion about the election in February," he said.

"We cannot endorse the recommendations that excluded the notes of dissent issued during the talks. Many matters that were not discussed in the talks were mentioned in the final recommendations," Fakhurul said.

Asked if the party was considering street protests, the BNP leader said, "We have presented our views in front of the nation, and if necessary, we will go to the chief adviser.... We will not take any protest programme on this matter."

NOTES OF DISSENT

Fakhurul said the July charter clearly states in its dissent section that any political party or alliance submitting dissenting views may act on them if it wins the polls.

Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed, who took part in the consensus talks and signed the charter alongside Fakhurul, told the briefing, "It is not just us who gave notes of dissent; various parties have given notes of dissent at different stages. This is mentioned in the book,

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JULY CHARTER AND THE AFTERMATH

BNP demands referendum on same day as national election

Questions legitimacy of proposed constitutional reform council

Criticises consensus commission for dropping notes of dissent

Says recommendations on implementing July charter "one-sided and undemocratic"

Jamaat says delay in holding referendum will delay the next national election

National election and referendum on same day can create uncertainty over polls in February

NCP wants Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to give July charter a legal basis

Describes BNP's notes of dissent to key reforms as "notes of cheating"



"We strongly urge the interim government to act without delay -- issue the implementation order, declare the referendum date, and begin preparations for the February election."

Jamaat Nayebe-Ameer
Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher

"The BNP no longer has the option to say 'no' to the implementation of the July charter. They have agreed to the marriage and signed the marriage contract. Now they have no opportunity to say 'no'."

NCP Chief Convener
Nasiruddin Patwary

Implementation of July charter is a challenge for govt, says Law Adviser Asif Nazrul

Chief adviser to take the final decision on referendum date very soon

Issue order to implement July charter by today: Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has urged the government to issue the implementation order for the July National Charter by today.

"We want to see the full implementation of the consensus commission's proposals on state reform. So, it'd be ideal if the government issued the order tonight [Thursday night]. If that doesn't happen, there must be no delay in issuing it tomorrow [Friday]," said Jamaat's Nayebe-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher during a press conference at its central office yesterday.

He warned that a delay could erode public trust in the interim government.

The Jamaat leader said a referendum must be held following the issuance of the July charter implementation order. "Any delay in holding the referendum will also delay the national election."

Taher said Jamaat does not want any confusion over its stance on when the

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Rift among parties poses challenge for the govt

Says Asif Nazrul; govt mulls referendum, nat'l polls on same day: source

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deepening rift among political parties over how to implement the July charter poses a challenge for the interim government, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said yesterday.

Citing the parties' contradictory stances on the methods of implementation and the timing of the referendum, he said, "We're failing to understand what to do when you [parties] take such positions. We're genuinely having to think about how we will move forward and what we will do if there's no consensus despite such prolonged discussions."

Speaking to reporters at the Foreign Service Academy after an advisory council meeting, Nazrul said the growing discord among major parties, following 270 days of dialogue on the July charter, is "deeply frustrating."

About the timing of the referendum, he said, "The chief adviser will make the decision soon. We'll assist him under his leadership and stand firm on whatever decision is taken."



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BNP, Jamaat's pointless debate fuelling election uncertainty: NCP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party yesterday criticised the BNP and Jamaat for their "irrelevant debate" on the implementation of the July charter, warning it could derail the process and create uncertainty over the February polls.

"Whether the referendum will happen before or after, this is a pointless argument between Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP -- we [NCP] will not be involved in this debate," said Nasiruddin Patwary, chief coordinator of NCP, at a programme.

Jamaat and the BNP may eventually agree on the issue of referendum, he said at the Dhaka Reporters Unity event.

He urged both parties to set aside all issues and focus on strengthening the Election Commission.

Patwary also demanded that the draft recommendations of the National Consensus Commission be made public, reports UNB.

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Trump rates talks with Xi '12 out of 10'

Strikes deals on tariffs, rare earths, fentanyl, soybean

REUTERS, Busan

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he had agreed with President Xi Jinping to trim tariffs on China in exchange for Beijing cracking down on the illicit fentanyl trade, resuming US soybean purchases and keeping rare earths exports flowing.

Trump's face-to-face talks with Xi in the South Korean city of Busan, their first since 2019, marked the finale of a whirlwind Asia trip on which he also touted trade breakthroughs with South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

"It was an amazing meeting," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One shortly after he left South Korea, ranking the talks a "12 out of 10".

Trump said tariffs on Chinese imports would be cut to 47 percent from 57 percent by halving the rate of tariffs related to trade in fentanyl precursor drugs to 10 percent.

Xi will work "very hard to stop the flow" of fentanyl, a deadly synthetic opioid that is the leading cause of American overdose deaths, Trump said.

China agreed to pause export controls announced this month on rare earths, elements that play vital roles in cars, planes and weapons that have become Beijing's most potent source of leverage in its trade war with the United States.

The pause would last for a year,



US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands upon arriving for talks at Gimhae Air Base, adjacent to Gimhae International Airport in Busan, South Korea, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

China's commerce ministry said in a statement.

It added that the two sides had also reached consensus on expanding agricultural trade and would work to resolve issues around short video app TikTok, which Trump seeks to bring under US-controlled ownership.

The reaction to the detente in global stock markets was muted, with major Asian indexes and European futures

swinging between gains and losses.

The cordial meeting between the leaders, at a South Korean air base on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, lasted more than 1 1/2 hours.

It was normal for the superpowers to have frictions now and then, Xi told Trump via a translator, as they faced each other, flanked by their delegations, at the start of the meeting.

"China's development and rejuvenation are not incompatible with President Trump's goal of 'Making America Great Again,'" Xi added.

The two sides also agreed to pause new US port fees on Chinese vessels designed to combat China's global dominance in shipbuilding, ocean freight and logistics.

China will begin the process of purchasing US energy, Trump said in a post on Truth Social yesterday, hinting at a big deal in Alaska where his administration has been touting a proposed \$44-billion LNG pipeline.

The White House has signalled it hopes the summit will be the first of several between the leaders in the coming year. Trump said he would travel to China in April before he receives Xi in the United States.

Chinese state media portrayed the meeting with Trump as a triumph of Xi's policymaking. "We have the confidence and capability to navigate all kinds of risks and challenges," the official news agency, Xinhua, quoted him as saying.

The agreement broadly returns ties to their status before Trump's "Liberation Day" offensive in April triggered tit-for-tat escalation and leaves only Brazil and India facing higher tariffs among major US trading partners.

But it may be no more than a fragile truce in a trade war with root causes still unresolved, analysts say.

Govt clears path for voluntary kidney donation

Also gives NHRC some teeth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has given final approval to the Organ Transplantation Ordinance, 2025, which would allow people outside a family to donate organs to a person.

"Under previous [existing] legislation, only immediate family members were legally permitted to donate organs such as kidneys or other vital body parts. However, in many cases, patients had to engage in monetary transactions with unrelated donors, an unethical and illegal practice, or be compelled to travel abroad for transplants," said Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Asif Nazrul.

"The newly approved ordinance expands the legal scope, allowing non-family individuals with proven emotional attachment to the recipient to voluntarily and altruistically donate organs," he said at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday after the weekly Advisory Council meeting.

The new legal framework is expected to enable patients to undergo transplants within Bangladesh, thereby reducing both treatment costs and the need to travel abroad, he said.

When asked whether such flexibility could lead to misuse, the law adviser said the issue had been discussed in detail. "A high-level committee will be formed to prevent this."

In 1999, the government enacted the first law, "Human Organ Transplantation Act, 1999", to regulate organ



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