

HK press freedom sinks to record low Says journo survey

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong journalists rated the city's press freedom lower than ever in an annual survey released yesterday, citing fears of sweeping national security laws.

Published every year since 2013 by the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) and the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI), the Press Freedom Index ranks the city's media environment on a zero-to-100 scale -- 100 being a perfect score.

It is based on a poll of over 250 working journalists and around 1,000 members of the public.

More than 90 percent of the surveyed journalists said the city's press freedom was "significantly" impacted by a new security law enacted in March which punishes crimes like espionage and foreign interference.

INDIA LANDSLIDE Teesta dam power station damaged

THE HINDU ONLINE

A landslide damaged six houses and a building of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) at the site of its Teesta-V hydropower station in Sikkim's Gangtok yesterday.

The power station, damaged by the glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in October 2023, has been under construction. Officials said the incident occurred at about 7:30 am at Balutar, the site of the 510 MW Teesta Stage V project.

"The landslide damaged a structure they (the NHPC) call the GIS building, and six houses, whose occupants were evacuated to safety. The Singtam-Dikchu Road was cut off but an alternative passage has been cleared for communication," Gangtok District Collector Tushar G. Nihare told The Hindu.

Biden passes baton to Kamala Harris

Says she will be a 'historic president' of US

REUTERS, Chicago

President Joe Biden cemented the Democratic Party's elevation of Kamala Harris to lead the fight for the White House against Republican Donald Trump with a convention speech on Monday evening that praised his vice president as the best hope for preserving American democracy.

Biden took center stage on opening night of the Democratic National Convention, drawing an extended standing ovation from the party faithful and delivering a farewell speech to the party he has served for half a century - even with five months left in office.

Wiping away tears after being introduced by his daughter Ashley, Biden waved to the crowd that held signs saying, "We (heart) Biden." Beaming, he responded, "I love YOU."

"Are you ready to vote for



freedom? Are you ready to vote for democracy and for America? Let me ask you, are you ready to elect Kamala Harris and Tim Walz?" Biden said, adding that she will be a "historic president". Taking multiple swipes at Trump, Biden promised to be the "best volunteer" Harris and Minnesota Governor Walz, her vice presidential running

mate, had ever seen. Biden's address in Chicago kicked off a four-day event fueled by enthusiasm for Harris and relief that Biden abandoned his own reelection bid and endorsed her to replace him. d Trump for calling the United States a failing nation. "He's the loser," Biden said with fervour.

Mpox not the new Covid Says WHO official

REUTERS, Berlin

A World Health Organization official stressed yesterday that mpox, regardless of whether it is the new or old strain, is not the new Covid, as authorities know how to control its spread.

"We can and must tackle mpox together," said Hans Kluge, WHO regional director for Europe, in a UN media briefing. "So will we choose to put the systems in place to control and eliminate mpox globally? Or we will enter another cycle of panic and neglect? We respond now and in the years to come will prove a critical test for Europe and the world," he added.

Mpox, a viral infection that causes pus-filled lesions and flu-like symptoms, is usually mild but can kill.

The clade 1b variety has caused global concern because it seems to spread more easily through routine close contact.

A case of the variant was confirmed last week in Sweden and linked to a growing outbreak in Africa, the first sign of its spread outside the continent. The WHO declared the recent outbreak of the disease a public health emergency of international concern after the new variant was identified.

Kluge said that the focus on the new clade 1 strain will also help in the fight against the less severe clade 2 variety that has spreading globally since 2022, allowing Europe to improve its response through better health advice and surveillance.

Iran cyber ops targeted Trump, Harris campaigns

REUTERS, Washington

The United States on Monday accused Iran of launching cyber operations against the campaigns of both US presidential candidates and targeting the American public with influence operations aimed at fanning political discord.

"We have observed increasingly aggressive Iranian activity during this election cycle," said a statement by the FBI, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which oversees the defense of government computer systems.

The statement confirmed charges made earlier this month by the campaign of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump that Iran hacked one of its websites, triggering an FBI investigation. At that time, Trump said Iran was "only able to get publicly available information."

ISRAELI POSITIONS Hezbollah fires 'rocket barrages'

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group said it launched several rocket salvos at Israeli army positions in the annexed Golan Heights yesterday "in response" to Israeli strikes on eastern Lebanon the previous day.

Hezbollah fighters launched "intense rocket barrages" at two Israeli army positions in the occupied Golan Heights "in response to the Israeli enemy's attack on the Bekaa" Valley -- which a source close to Hezbollah said targeted weapons depots in the eastern region.

The Israeli military confirmed that around 55 projectiles were identified crossing from Lebanese territory. "Some of the projectiles were intercepted," the military said in a statement.

Tigers take on Pakistan

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on the game in the right frame of mind.

"Everyone went through a tough time in the last few days, it's really sad. Everyone struggled. No one really wishes for it. Also there is no way to live in the past, we have to move forward. But it was a tough time for everyone, every family. Hopefully, we will have better days ahead. And as players, we want to play our game with the right mind," Shanto said.

Both teams are playing their first series since the T20

World Cup. A few from the Tigers' squad have come off the back of franchise duties. Thus, the Tigers will have to get the drift of red-ball cricket early in the match in order to have hope of staging a fight. Test series against Pakistan has however not been kind for Bangladesh as they have managed just one draw in 13 Tests, losing 12.

The onus will be on the batters in terms of how they handle Pakistan's quality pace attack as Rawalpindi Test provides another test of mentality.

AL gov leaves behind

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Dhaka University economics professor Dr Selim Raihan cited the government's failure to mobilise domestic resources to increase public expenditure as one of the key factors behind the rise in debt.

"The government failed to increase the revenue collection over the past one decade or so," said Selim, who is also the executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM).

The second is corruption in activities surrounding the process of taking loans, especially for mega projects with foreign funds, he said.

"A group with vested interests exploited the foreign loan-based mega projects by massively increasing the costs multiple times."

As a developing nation, Bangladesh has to take loans, but the Hasina government had a tendency to take short-term loans as well as high-interest loans while the focus should have been on low-interest and long-term loans with favourable conditions.

This tendency grew over the years. Loans from single sources increased while borrowing from multilateral sources with more accountability and transparency was minimal.

Bangladesh's debt service-to-revenue ratio is projected to cross the 100 percent mark for the first time owing to rising loans and lower tax and export receipts, highlighting the growing risk to the country's capacity to repay.

The debt service-to-revenue and grants ratio stood at 58.7 percent in FY21 but it surged to 72 percent in FY22 and stood at 71.8 percent in FY23, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The ratio is projected to grow to 101.1 percent in the current financial year.

Debt service is defined as the sum of interest and

amortisation of medium, long, and short-term debt.

"The increasing debt service-to-revenue ratio highlights the urgency of mobilising tax revenue to support much-needed spending to achieve pro-poor, green growth recovery," the IMF said in a report.

The ratio increased as the NBR missed its tax target for the 11th consecutive year in FY23, in the face of slowing growth of collections amidst economic slowdowns and ambitious goals set by the government.

The debt-to-GDP ratio of Bangladesh is forecast to cross 40 percent in the current fiscal year as the government continued to borrow to bankroll its expenditures amid the low collection of revenue.

It was 39.8 percent in FY23 and is forecast to be 41.41 percent at the end of FY24, according to a fiscal monitoring report of the IMF.

In the last decade, the debt-to-GDP ratio rose by 13 percentage points. The IMF forecast that the ratio would reach 43.5 percent in 2028-29.

UN ready

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on the interim government to ensure full protection of all citizens, and in particular, of minorities.

"I also strongly urge you to ensure the well-being of Rohingya refugees, especially in view of the deteriorating situation in Myanmar," he wrote.

Stating that Bangladesh stands at a crucial juncture in history, the UN chief said the UN fully supports the efforts of the interim government for an inclusive and prosperous country and remains committed to working with the interim government.

RAPE, MURDER OF DOCTOR India SC orders medical safety task force

AFP, New Delhi



India's Supreme Court yesterday ordered a national task force to examine how to bolster security for health care workers after the "horrific" rape and murder of a doctor sparked furious protests.

The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata on August 9 has stoked nationwide anger at the chronic issue of violence against women.

Doctors' associations from government-run hospitals in many cities across India have launched multiple strikes that cut non-essential services, with protests in their second week.

Demonstrators marched through Kolkata yesterday, holding up signs demanding "justice", while the country's top court issued orders in the capital New Delhi. "The brutality of the sexual assault and the nature of the crime have shocked the conscience of the nation," the three-judge bench said in its order, calling the details "horrific".

Yunus may attend UNGA

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the governments of some of the member countries, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sources said.

This will be the first foreign visit for Prof Yunus as head of the interim government. He assumed this role on August 8, three days after the fall of the Awami League regime.

An official of the Chief Adviser's Office said the chief adviser is also likely to attend the UN General

Assembly in New York. UNGA is scheduled to be held between on September 10 and 24.

"The date for the visit of the chief adviser to the UN General Assembly is yet to be fixed," the official told the Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh will be the next chair of the Bimstec -- the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation -- comprised of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri

Lanka, and Thailand.

The official and ministerial meetings of the group will take place from September 1-3 before the summit.

As the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) remains largely inactive, India has put Bimstec at the centre of its neighbourhood diplomacy.

An official of Bimstec Secretariat in Dhaka said they are working to sign at least four agreements

including maritime transport cooperation during the summit.

The maritime transport agreement would include every aspect of maritime connectivity among the Bimstec member countries. The details of the agreement will be shared once the member states sign the document, he said.

Bimstec adapted its charter on May 20 this year, 27 years after the founding of the regional body.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পিপিআর-২০০৮ এবং তৎসংক্রান্ত পরবর্তী সংশোধনী অনুযায়ী সিলেট জেলা পুলিশ বিভাগের আওতাধীন বিভিন্ন ইউনিটের ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসরের নিম্নে বর্ণিত আইটেমের মালামাল ক্রয়/সরবরাহের লক্ষ্যে অভিজ্ঞতা ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

Table with 2 columns: Item No. and Description. Includes details for various police equipment and services.

১৩। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

Signature and date of the official.

আব্দুল মান্নান, বিপিএম (বার)

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Advertisement for Eastern Bank PLC. Features a large exclamation mark and text: 'লক্ষ্য করুন ব্যাংকিং সেবা ও কার্যক্রমসমূহ সাময়িকভাবে বন্ধ থাকবে'.