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Star INTERVIEW

## Media commission shouldn't be a vehicle for censorship

Says Irene Khan

TANIM AHMED

Free media is a pillar of democratic society but under threat in many parts of the world, says Irene Khan, the UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression and opinion, during an interview with The Daily Star.

She notes that the press in Bangladesh was decimated by the previous regime under former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. "The media sector was almost totally captured and subjugated – so much so that many journalists became demoralised and left the profession. Very few outlets had the courage to speak truth to power."

A former head of the global human rights organisation Amnesty International, Irene explains that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, protected by international law. It can be restricted only in certain limited circumstances that must be clearly and narrowly defined by law and must be necessary and proportionate. "But the Hasina regime introduced draconian laws that went far beyond what is permitted by international law and



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India's star batter Virat Kohli gifted one of his signed bats to Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan after the Men in Blue cruised to a seven-wicket win in the second Test at the Green Park stadium in Kanpur yesterday, wrapping up the series 2-0. PHOTO: AFP

## Shakib's home sign-off in doubt

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI  
from Kanpur

Despite contributing with a four-wicket haul in India's T20-style first innings, Shakib Al Hasan had a tough outing in the rain-hit second Test in Kanpur, where Bangladesh succumbed to a seven-wicket defeat in under three days. For Shakib, uncertainty now looms over whether he will be able to play in the October-November home series against South Africa, concluding his Test career on a fitting note.

The all-rounder's turnout with the bat was not a rosy one yesterday, falling for a two-ball duck as Bangladesh were cleaned up for 146 runs in their second innings, giving India a 95-run chase which was accomplished in style. As the match ended, Shakib appeared to be a little off during the quiet moments.

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## YEAR-ON-YEAR COMPARISON Remittance jumps 80pc in September

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-resident Bangladeshis are sending more and more money home through the official channels, with September's receipts hitting the \$2 billion mark for the second straight month.

Last month, \$2.4 billion was received as remittance, building on the \$2.2 billion sent in August.

If the trend continues, it will contribute towards bringing stability to the foreign exchange market, bankers said.

The remittance inflow in September increased sharply as the inflow was very low in the same month of last year, said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and chief executive officer of Mutual Trust Bank.

The remittance inflow was at \$1.33 billion in September last year, when the exchange rate in the kerb market was much higher than the official rate.

The official exchange rate at present is Tk 120 a dollar. A year earlier, it was Tk 110, whereas the kerb market rate was much higher.

"The steady growth of remittance inflow is very important. Our efforts to collect remittance will have to be upheld," he said, adding that the inflows will increase in the upcoming days.

In September, Islami Bank received the highest amount of remittance (\$402 million), followed by Agrani (\$322 million) and Trust (\$245 million).

Rupali Bank received \$113 million, Janata \$106 million, Bangladesh Krishi Bank \$109 million and City \$101 million, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

"Now we are seeing that the state-run bank is receiving more remittance than the private banks. The USD rate now is increasing after being stable for a few months," Rahman said.

September's receipts take the remittance inflow so far this fiscal year to \$6.54 billion, up 33.3 percent year-on-year.

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## Ex-US envoy Haas joins Excelerate Energy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former US ambassador to Bangladesh Peter D Haas has undertaken the role of strategic advisor at Excelerate Energy – which runs a floating regasification unit that processes around 50 percent of liquefied natural gas (LNG) imported by Bangladesh.

Haas retired from the US Foreign Service on September 27 after 33 years in Asia, Europe, and North Africa, most recently as ambassador to Bangladesh, according to a press release issued by Excelerate Energy yesterday.

The press release said Haas will join the Excelerate's Washington DC office this month.

"I am pleased to have Peter Haas join the Excelerate team. Over the course of his State Department career, he has been a tireless advocate for US businesses and commercial interests," said

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## RISING DENGUE DEATHS Reinfection, late hospitalisation to blame: experts

HELEMUL ALAM

With the deaths of 23 dengue patients over the last four days, experts have said late hospitalisation and reinfections are some of the main causes of this year's fatalities.

They also cited a lack of testing facilities in government primary healthcare centres and the country's overall poor healthcare system as reasons.

Till yesterday morning, 166 patients have died so far this year – 80 of whom died in July alone – and the number of dengue cases stands at 32,082.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, the dengue death rate so far this year is 0.51 percent, up from last year's 0.50.

Prof Ahmedul Kabir, former additional director general of DGHS, said many of the cases they have received are reinfecting patients.

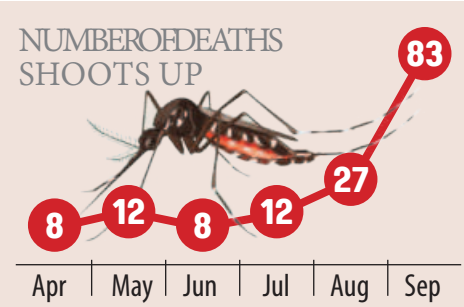
To avoid risks, patients will have to be admitted to hospital immediately after noticing signs and symptoms, which include nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, respiratory issues, weakness, fluctuating body temperature and reduced urination, he said.

Kabir also urged people to go to hospitals in their own districts. "There's no need for referrals [to hospitals in the capital] unless the patient is at a critical stage.

"Local-level hospitals are capable to manage dengue patients. A patient's condition can deteriorate during the journey," he said, adding that the government has opened separate dengue units in all medical college

hospitals. ABM Abdullah, a medicine expert, said the pattern of the infection has changed and some symptoms do not show.

"As a result, a patient's situation can suddenly turn critical."



He added that patients who are infected for the second or third time are more prone to reaching the critical stage compared to those infected for the first time.

"This year, the number of reinfecting patients may be higher, causing the number of deaths to be higher."

Abdullah also said any patient with the symptoms of light fever, runny nose and body pain must consult a doctor immediately.

"Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent death from dengue."

Mushtaq Hussain, a public health expert, said changes in the current treatment strategy

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## Yunus, Modi may meet at Bimstec summit

Says foreign adviser

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are likely to meet in November on the sidelines of Bimstec summit in Thailand.

"The date is yet to be fixed, but it is possibly in November. There, the two sides may further discuss our bilateral relationship," Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said at his ministry yesterday.

"Besides, we will try to establish contacts with India at various other levels and try to address the problems in the bilateral relationship."

He briefed the media on the outcomes of the chief adviser's attendance of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 23-27.

On the sidelines of the event, Prof Yunus held meetings with a number of dignitaries, including US President Biden.

Noting his meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, the adviser said they discussed the situation in Bangladesh and both sides agreed that Dhaka and New Delhi need to establish good relationships for the sake of the two countries.

Touhid said they also discussed the security situation in Bangladesh.

"We said there was practically no government for a few days after August 5. However, eventually, police returned to work and armed forces are backing them. Recently, there have been no complaints

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## Polls tribunal declares BNP's Shahadat Ctg mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Election Tribunal in Chattogram yesterday declared BNP's former port city unit president Dr Shahadat Hossain as the mayor of Chattogram City Corporation.

The court also ordered to publish a gazette notification in this regard within 10 days, said Shahadat's lawyer advocate Moin Uddin Hossain.

The court declared this in its verdict in a case filed by Shahadat on February 24, 2021, seeking cancellation of the result of CCC election held on January 27, 2021, claiming it to have been manipulated by Election Commission officials.

The then CCC mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, returning officer Md Hasanuzzaman, chief election commissioner KM Nurul Huda, and six others were made accused in the case.

In the case statement, Shahadat also alleged that he was shown zero vote in three polling centres but after three



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PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A farmer harvesting a half-rotten gourd from his inundated farmland in Paschim Beel Pabla of Khulna's Dumuria upazila. With the Sholmari river, the only source of water drainage in the region, almost dead, the entire area is subject to severe waterlogging during the monsoon. As a result, vegetable and paddy farms, especially those near fish enclosures, remain submerged throughout the season – ultimately causing damages to the crops and losses to the farmers. The photo was taken recently.

## INDUSTRIAL UNREST 36 arrested over attacks on joint forces

RMG workers block Nabinagar-Chandra highway over arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-six people, mostly garment workers, have been shown arrested in a case filed over attacking joint forces in Ashulia's Tongabari area on Monday.

Rashed Miah, sub-inspector of Ashulia Industrial Police-1, lodged the case with Ashulia Police Station yesterday, said Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The arrestees, who were detained on Monday, have been accused of attacking law enforcers, vandalising their vehicles, and ransacking factories.

However, no case has been filed yet over the death of Kawsar Hossain Khan, 27, a garment worker who was shot dead during Monday's clash between the joint forcers and RMG workers in Tongabari.

Meanwhile, workers of Birds Group demonstrated blocking the Nabinagar-Chandra highway in Savar's Baipail area for the second consecutive day yesterday demanding arrears.

The protest led to about 15km tailback on the highway, causing suffering to the road users.

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