



\$100b RMG export target feasible

B1



'Keep faith on proven performers'

P11



770 killed in Israel assault on north Gaza

P7



Satyajit Ray's ancestral house in ruins

P5

PRESIDENT'S FATE

Decision only after political consensus

Govt starts talking to parties, says there'd 'neither be delay nor haste'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering the demand for President Mohammed Shahabuddin's removal, and it would make a decision only after the political parties reach a consensus.

It has already initiated discussions with the parties to determine the president's fate, several advisers said following an advisory council meeting, presided over by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus at his office yesterday morning.

"The president's issue was discussed at the meeting," an adviser told this newspaper.

Briefing reporters last night, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the demand for the president's resignation was getting stronger.

She added that some political parties have voiced concern that the resignation may lead to a constitutional crisis.

"Then one or two senior political leaders said there would be no constitutional crisis.

"It's now a people's demand ... We're hopeful we'll be able to reach a decision on the basis of a consensus amongst the political parties," she told reporters at the Foreign Service Academy.

"Political parties should make their stances clear ..."

Asked about how long it would take to reach a consensus, Rizwana said it depended on the parties.

"What kind of conversations do we have with them? What are the fears of the political parties? Are they realistic at all? It can't be said that we're in a hurry, but at the same time, we don't have any scope for delaying things."

She said no one wants to be in uncertainty over the matter for a long time.

The adviser further said the government sees the issue as a political one, not a "legal and constitutional" one.

About the process of the president's resignation, she said, "At the moment, we're talking about how we'll deal with the demand for the president's resignation ... Since the demand has come from the people, and our government is the result of a mass uprising, will it be possible to accept every aspect of the constitution literally?"

The demand for the president's removal cropped up after daily Manab Zamin's political magazine "Janatar Chokh" on Sunday published an article where the president said he heard Sheikh Hasina had resigned as the prime minister, but he did not have any documentary evidence.

"I tried [to collect the resignation letter] many times but failed. Maybe she did not have the time," he was quoted as saying.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



"Since the demand [for the president's resignation] has come from the people, and our government is the result of a mass uprising, will it be possible to accept every aspect of the constitution literally?"

Environment Adviser
SYEDA RIZWANA
HASAN

MISSING IN GAZI FACTORY FIRE Families waiting for closure amid admin's apathy

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM

Whenever Amena Begum gets a call from an unknown number, she hopes it would be about her son or younger brother, both of whom went missing when a tyre factory in Narayanganj went up in flames on August 25.

Twenty-six-year-old Apu Mia was her only child. When she heard late at night that he went to the Gazi Tyres factory in Ruppangj where a fire was raging, she called him and found his phone unreachable. She then told her younger brother Nazrul Islam, 40, to go look for Apu.

Both Nazrul and Apu worked at a knitting factory in Ruppangj.

Near midnight on August 25, she found Nazrul's phone switched off too.

The blaze at the massive six-storey building, some floors of which have more than 62,000 square feet space, was doused after five days of continuous efforts by firefighters. The top three floors had caved in by then.

Based on the accounts of the

families looking for their loved ones, Narayanganj district administration made a list of 182 people, including women and children, who went missing during the fire incident.



But the government has not yet taken any visible steps to find them or find the human remains from the rubble in two months.

"I think my son and brother are dead. I just wish I could see their bodies and hold a funeral for them," said Amena.

Her husband Omar Ali is a labourer

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Democracy is more than just elections Speakers say; reforms, strong institutions are as much crucial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Building a strong democracy requires more than just holding elections; it rather requires comprehensive reforms and robust institutions, speakers told a discussion yesterday.

They also stressed the need for changing the political culture and ensuring democratic practices within the political parties for building a truly democratic country.

The discussion titled "Journey towards Democracy: Imminent Challenges and Ways to Overcome" was held at Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad auditorium at Bangla Academy in Dhaka.

Dr Ali Riaz, currently the head of Constitution Reform Commission, said building state institutions is the first challenge in the march towards democracy from autocracy.

"Why did the institutions collapse? They didn't collapse on their own. To establish a dictatorship, the institutions were deliberately destroyed with a well-thought-out plan. These institutions were dismantled to give power to the state so that a single person can use it for their personal gains," said Prof Riaz.

"To confront such a state apparatus, we must think collectively. We may have differing opinions, but attempting to bulldoze them under the guise of national unity won't bring any real benefit"

He said he disagrees with the notion of traditional national unity.

"Many say democracy is a unity. But I say no, democracy is rather a way to create many opinions. Democracy is to ensure an arrangement where I will be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

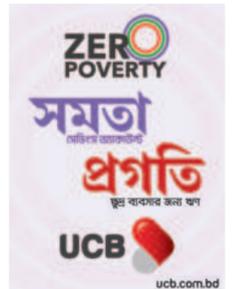
Those who're threatening media to face legal action Says info ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Information and Broadcast in a press release yesterday condemned the recent incidents of some media organisations being threatened.

The press release, signed by the ministry's public relations officer, said the ministry is aware of the threats of laying siege to certain media outlets' offices, and added that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



HC forms panel to probe plots given to Hasina, family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday constituted a three-member committee, led by retired HC judge Justice Miftah Uddin Choudhury, to probe allegations of irregularities in allocation of plots in Purbachal to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her family members.

The other two members of the committee are Supreme Court lawyer Md Jashim Uddin Sarker and engineer Alamgir Hasin.

The committee has been directed to submit its report to the HC within four months.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to cancel all illegal plot allocations in Purbachal, and take legal action against those involved in the allocations, and their beneficiaries.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Students of Wiles Little Flower School and College, along with volunteers of the Bangladesh National Cadet Corps, assist police officials (not in photo) managing the traffic in the capital's Kakrail intersection yesterday afternoon. On October 22, the government announced its plans to formally include 300 students in the city's traffic management system.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

EXAMS FOR PUBLIC JOBS Govt to raise age limit to 32 years

Candidate won't be able to sit for BCS exams more than thrice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to raise the maximum age for applying for public service jobs by two years to 32.

The interim government's advisory council took the decision at a meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, according to a press release issued by the Cabinet Division.

The government also capped the number of times a candidate can take the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations at three, the press release said. There is currently no cap on the number of times candidates can sit for BCS exams.

Protesting jobseekers, however, rejected the government's decision, threatening to stage fresh demonstrations.

Meanwhile, the government appeared firm on its decision.

The current age threshold for all to enter public service is 30. The limit is 32 years for the children and grandchildren of the freedom fighters.

For several years, graduates have been demanding that the government job entry age limit be increased to 35 years. They blocked the capital's Shabbagh intersection during demonstrations on numerous occasions.

The protests intensified after the government on September 22 announced that it was not planning to increase the age limit.

It formed a review committee on September 30 after hundreds of jobseekers staged a massive demonstration in front of the chief adviser's residence.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1