



Tabitha Awal's leadership promises BFF reform
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How has the interim government fared so far?
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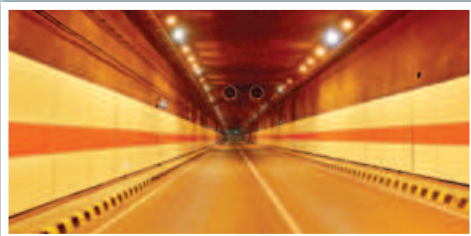
Roadblocks to becoming a successful democracy
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Bangladesh expands lifesaving HPV vaccination
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A good example of a bad plan

A year on, Karnaphuli tunnel losing over Tk 27 lakh a day



- Average daily traffic recorded at 3,910 vehicles
- Daily projection for vehicular movement 18,485
- Daily traffic exceeded 10,000 only thrice

MOHAMMAD SUMAN and REJAUL KARIM BYRON

As the much-hyped tunnel under the Karnaphuli river has seen only a third of the projected traffic since it was opened a year ago, the money it earned is even less than what its maintenance required.

The country's first tunnel, 3.32km long under the river in Chattogram, was opened to traffic on October 28 last year.

As of October 20, the average daily traffic through the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel was 3,910 vehicles. The daily average earning from the motorists was Tk 10.37

lakh, according to the data of Bangladesh Bridge Authority.

But the tunnel's everyday operational cost is Tk 37.47 lakh, and as per a forecast report of the project from January 2023, the average daily number of vehicles using it would be 18,485 this year.

The China Construction Company Ltd has a five-year deal with the Bangladesh government to maintain the tunnel at a cost of Tk 983.82 crore.

Besides, the government is paying the interest on the \$705 million loan taken from China for the tunnel. Payment of the principal amount will

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The project to renovate the Osmani Udyan was taken up by the Dhaka South City Corporation in January 2017 and the original deadline was June 2018. The deadline was then extended to June 2019, then 2020, and then 2021. Now in October 2024, despite significant progress, the work remains incomplete. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

POLITICS AT DU

Old guard to give way to young blood

Student bodies seek to put regular students at helm

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL and RAFIUL ISLAM

The rules of Dhaka University stipulate that a student remains a regular one for eight years — six years for graduation and two for post-graduation degrees.

They also state that no irregular student is allowed in the residential halls.

As the university authorities are following the rules strictly after the August 5 political changeover, student groups, especially BNP student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), have been under pressure to remove irregular students from their committees.

Numerous irregular students, mostly members of ruling party organisations, had occupied the halls for several years in the past. Members and supporters of the Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) had enjoyed this undue privilege until their ouster.

BCL has now been banned as it was involved in deadly attacks on student protesters during the July-August mass uprising. The reasons behind its banning included the notorious "Gono Rooms" and "Guest Rooms", once used by student leaders to exploit juniors. Such practices were abolished after the changeover.

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CALL FOR PRESIDENT'S REMOVAL

BNP yet to be on board, Jamaat is

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Islamist parties have agreed in principle with the student leaders on the demand for President Mohammed Shahabuddin's removal, while the BNP says it will announce its decision after discussing the matter at party forum.

The Islamist parties are the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islami Andolan Bangladesh.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee have been holding discussions with the political parties to reach a consensus on the issue over the past few days.

They met BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir at the party chairperson's Gulshan office in the capital yesterday.

BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed and Joint Secretary General Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie were also present.

"At the meeting, they heard our arguments and said they would let us know [about their decision] after discussing the matter at their party forum," Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the

movement, told reporters after the meeting that started at 5:15pm yesterday.

Party insiders said BNP leaders listened to the student leaders but did not speak much during the two-hour meeting.

They said they had doubts about several factors, including whether there is any vested interests behind the efforts to remove the president, and the aftermath of his resignation.

They said the president's removal may create a constitutional vacuum, and the party is dead set against seeing such a constitutional crisis.

This was the second meeting between the BNP and the two platforms in the last three days, with the first one held on Thursday.

Hasnat said they were holding discussions with the political parties about their proposed new political framework.

The discussion with the BNP focused on three key points — how to establish and proclaim a 'Second Republic'; ways to remove the president at the earliest opportune time to address the political crisis; and how to maintain national

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BNP tells student movement leaders it will decide on the matter after discussion at party forum

ISRAEL STRIKES

Iran says it will defend itself

AFP, Tehran

Iran warned yesterday it would defend itself after Israeli air strikes on military targets killed at least two soldiers and further stoked fears of a full-scale regional war in the Middle East.

Israel warned Iran would "pay a heavy price" if it responded to the strikes, and the United States, Germany and Britain demanded Tehran not escalate the conflict further.

Other countries, including many of Iran's neighbours, condemned Israel's strikes and some, such as Russia, urged both sides to show restraint and avoid what Moscow dubbed a "catastrophic scenario".

The Islamic republic insisted it had the "right and the duty" to defend itself, while its Lebanese ally Hezbollah said it had already launched rocket salvos targeting five residential areas in northern Israel.

The Israeli army said 80 projectiles were fired across

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- Limited damage but 2 soldiers killed: Iran
- Targets did not include energy or nuclear facilities: US

NOTICE

We have published a four-page supplement on Bangladesh Business Awards today along with our regular Star Business. Please collect your copy.

US court stays warrants for Salehuddin, Ahsan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A US court on Friday stayed the arrest warrants for Bangladesh Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

Mushfiqul Fazal Ansarey, who has recently been appointed as an ambassador with the rank of a senior secretary, confirmed this to The Daily Star over the phone from Washington yesterday.

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With nothing to do while waiting, a child prepares for her exams while two other people lounge in a compartment of the Burimari Express, which was delayed by at least four to five hours, at the Kamalapur Rail Station yesterday. Multiple trains had to face such delays, while three trains' operations were cancelled, due to a Panchagarh Express train's derailment the day before, resulting in the sufferings of hundreds of passengers. Rail services across Bangladesh were thrown into disarray due to the incident.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Harris, Trump seek to break deadlock

AFP, Traverse City

Kamala Harris and Donald Trump are battling for holdout votes on a penultimate weekend of campaigning across US swing states, with Michelle Obama joining the Democrat on stage before the Republican nominee hosts an eyebrow-raising rally in New York City.

With just nine days left in a bitterly contested presidential race, the rivals converge yesterday on Michigan, one of the three fiercely-contested "Blue Wall" states — along with Wisconsin and top battleground prize Pennsylvania — that Democrats see as critical to any path to Election Day victory on November 5.



Polls show a dead heat in the race's final days, and with more than 35 million people nationwide already casting early ballots, Americans are deciding whether to elect the country's first-ever woman president, or its oldest commander in chief.

Part of Harris's strategy is to peel moderate Republicans away from an increasingly vituperative Trump, who continues to demean certain Americans as the "enemy."

On Friday he warned that if he wins the White House, people who committed election fraud "will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences."

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