

## Trump’s statement is not based on facts

We urge everyone to do their due diligence about Bangladesh

We, of course, respect the US peoples' right to choose their own leader because we believe in democracy. And we would like to congratulate in advance the winner of the upcoming US elections—whichever that may be. However, as a sovereign country, we expect that the elected leader of the US will be well-informed about the reality in Bangladesh, especially as we seek to not only maintain good relations with the US but take it further forward. In this context, we would like to address the recent remarks by former President Donald Trump, where he referenced “barbaric violence” against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities in Bangladesh. This portrayal is both unfounded and totally contrary to facts, and we hope the US diplomatic team in Bangladesh will provide Donald Trump and his team with accurate information.

The reality is that, following the removal of former autocratic Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, Bangladesh has been under a transitional government—one that the Bangladeshi people believe will prioritise democracy and reform. Yes, some instances of unrest have occurred, that also against only one community. But as various media investigations have revealed, they have largely been politically—not communally—motivated. Nevertheless, even those incidents are highly condemnable. However, the number of such incidents were handful and significantly went down once the interim government took office. These incidents have also been greatly exaggerated by segments of some foreign media and social media. For example, an investigative report by the BBC's Disinformation Team confirmed that many videos shared online to portray communal violence against Hindus in Bangladesh are misleading—if not entirely false and manipulated.

In fact, prominent leaders from Bangladeshi minority communities themselves have publicly rejected claims of organised violence against minority communities. They emphasised that recent disturbances had resulted from broader political instability rather than communal tensions. And the chief adviser to the Bangladesh interim government has repeatedly stated that the government is committed to ensuring peace and protection for all citizens—which we strongly support.

From the onset, the chief adviser has invited all foreign journalists, researchers, and experts to visit Bangladesh and conduct their own investigations. We believe this is the right approach. And those who are genuinely concerned about the human rights situation of all groups in Bangladesh should take advantage of this opportunity to carry out their own independent inquiries. Similarly, we hope all US presidential candidates and their teams will perform their due diligence and correct any misconceptions about the situation in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is committed to restoring democracy and upholding human rights after years of repression. During this critical transition for Bangladesh, we urge all our friends—including the US—to extend us their full support.

## OCCs must better serve victims

Legal system must work towards higher conviction of perpetrators

A report in this daily has highlighted a major problem in our legal system—female victims of violence have struggled to get justice for decades, even after seeking assistance at one-stop crisis centres (OCC). The conviction rate of perpetrators is less than two percent. Since 2001, 66,771 victims have sought support at the OCC, according to the report. Among them, 20,914 cases were filed, but only 310 resulted in punishment.

The media has reported over the years on the appalling number of horrific attacks on women and children, resulting in grievous injuries and trauma that can sometimes be lifelong. It is disappointing that, despite having several one-stop crisis centres in various medical colleges, the legal system continues to fail these victims.

Several factors contribute to this failure. Victims who appear in court for say, sexual violence, often face humiliation, which increases their mental trauma and can discourage many from taking legal measures. Cases can drag on for years, with mounting legal costs and social pressures posing additional obstacles to justice. The cost of bringing witnesses for each appearance is another challenge. In many cases, perpetrators threaten the victims or use influence and money to evade legal consequences. Despite the fact that the concerned law stipulates that the trial is completed within 180 days, lack of witnesses and out-of-court settlements results in very low conviction rates.

While one-stop crisis centres are crucial for victims to receive initial medical examinations (for evidence) and treatment, they are not adequately serving the victims when it comes to legal solutions. These centres are meant to provide comprehensive support, however, according to a *Prothom Alo* report, the conviction rates of cases handled at OCCs are lower than those processed under the Women and Children Repression Act of 2000. The government must ensure that all centres have designated lawyers to provide legal counsel to victims and offer the same standard of support services. In addition to psychological counselling, victims should have the option of going to a safe shelter after being discharged from the hospital.

The reform committee formed under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to analyse the challenges and improve conviction rates must address these basic issues. We hope that this ministry under the new interim government will prioritise the efficiency of these OCCs and ensure that victims get the best possible medical support and can rely on a legal system that will ensure that they get justice.

# We must remain alert to conspiracies



## STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

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We are currently in what the textbook describes as the fourth phase, or the consolidation phase, of a successful popular uprising. Although the Monsoon Revolution bears no direct parallel to any recent revolution, one might be tempted to draw an equivalence between the July uprising in Bangladesh and the May 1968 uprising in France.

The French had come to view de Gaulle's rule as a “quasi-benign political dictatorship,” with de Gaulle assuming power not through a popular vote but after the disintegration of the Fourth Republic during the Algerian Revolution. The assumption of power by Hasina, a usurper bereft of popular support appears similar—except that Hasina corrupted the system and its officials to grab power. But this is not the only similarity between the events of May 1968 in France and July 2024 in Bangladesh. The May 1968 uprising, too, was initially led by students and later joined by the workers. And de Gaulle even fled France briefly to the headquarters of French troops in West Germany, leaving the affairs to Pompidou, only to return stronger later. Some term it as “a revolution without a legacy” because, in a sense, it is still ongoing.

In our case, despite the heavy casualties suffered by protestors, there was a near carnival-like environment post-Hasina's departure. And that is exactly why May 1968 floundered because, according to experts, “if you actually don't redirect and harness all that popular energy strategically against the institutions of power (that was misused to keep a nation under the thumb of an autocrat), you end up, actually, sitting in your own prison. It looks like a carnival, but actually, life goes on around you, and you become a kind of museum of failed revolutionary energy.” One of the student leaders later admitted that May 1968 was more a “social” than a “political” revolution.

What will our Monsoon Revolution become? Whatever name it ends up with, 50 years from now, it must not be remembered as a movement that left no impact. It cannot afford to falter in the face of an entrenched opposition



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

within political parties, whose eagerness for power leaves them willing to tolerate truncated institutions—remnants of the old regime still pulling the strings in administration, and conspirators from across the border working to undermine the sacrifices of our youth.

Unfortunately, the institutions of power are still dominated by the beneficiaries of the autocratic regime. They had been moulded to react to the orders of one person and they have been programmed to bespoil all the plans and programmes of a government hoisted to the position of responsibility by the popular revolution. Will they be able to turn the revolution on its head and consign all the energy displayed during the tumultuous days of July and August 2024 to the archives, like May 1968?

We hope that the significance of the events following the successful student-led movement—orchestrated by the pro-AL elements within and outside the administration—has not

external agencies, has affected our garment exports to the point that many long-term buyers are turning to other suppliers. No prizes for guessing who benefits most from the unrest in Bangladesh's garment sector. Reports indicate a surge in demand for Indian RMG since September 2024.

My question is, and I am sure it reflects the sentiments of the majority of my fellow citizens, has anything been done to identify who are the local conspirators behind the ostensibly “genuine” demands of the garment workers? In September, all 18 demands of RMG workers were accepted. Why has there been such a spurt of agitation in this sector all of a sudden, when in the last 15 years, this front has not seen as many as 114 factories close down at one time?

The recent Mirpur incident reeks of conspiracy. It wouldn't be far-fetched to suggest that, behind a facade of legitimate demands, the real objective is to harm the country's economy at the instigation of supporters of the ousted regime

Hasina that has generated these so-called demands. Reportedly, these demands have flowed from the minds of the AL.

The Indian media has, as usual, overexaggerated the incidents. Trump's comments on the minority situation in Bangladesh (interestingly, it seems Trump's love for minorities is confined to only one particular religious group; he did not bat an eyelid at the persecution of Muslims in India, which has continued unchecked for the last 14 years), should not be taken lightly. There appears to be a deep-rooted conspiracy in it. It is important for everyone to understand that becoming pawns in these conspiracies could ultimately prove counterproductive.

While a successful revolution must not give way to mobocracy, we must tackle the situation firmly. We must take fate into our own hands and dictate events rather than be dictated by events. In the latter case, there is a risk of being overtaken by events and leaving our destiny to chance.

## How the US election impacts the US-China tech war



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In 1993, the United States forced a Chinese vessel, the Yinhe, to be stranded in the Indian Ocean for four weeks by jamming its GPS equipment. This left the ship and its crew in dire straits, highlighting the vulnerability of relying on foreign navigation systems. Fast forward three decades, China's BeiDou satellite navigation system has emerged as a superior, more accurate, and reliable alternative to its US counterpart. Today, no Chinese ship has to depend on American GPS signals anymore.

Despite stringent export controls and sanctions imposed by the US and its allies, China continues its technological advancements. Sanctions failed to stop its missions as the country relentlessly launched satellites and conducted space exploration activities, particularly in lunar exploration. In 2019, China's Chang'e-4 mission made history by landing on the far side of the Moon, exploring the Moon's South Pole-Aitken basin. In 2020, the Chang'e-5 mission returned lunar samples to Earth for the first time in over 40 years

and detected water in its soil. These discoveries are crucial for future lunar missions and potential moon mining projects. China plans to build an International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) and explore Mars, Venus, and Jupiter from there.

Segue to the current nail-biting US presidential race where Kamala Harris and Donald Trump are locked in a fierce battle for the White House, the outcome of which will determine not only the direction of US domestic policy but also influence the country's approach to its strategic rivalry with China, especially the tech war.

The ongoing technology war is a high-stakes contest for global dominance in critical areas such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), space missions, and 5G technology. Both nations are vying for leadership in these fields, recognising that technological superiority is key to economic and military dominance in the 21st century. Regardless of who wins the presidential race, the tech dual is expected to intensify. However, Harris and Trump have different

approaches to this high-stakes rivalry.

Harris will likely continue the Biden administration's strategy of working with allies to impose targeted export controls and restrictions on Chinese technology companies. This approach aims to curb Beijing's technological advancements while maintaining strong international alliances. Harris has emphasised the importance of multilateral cooperation and has called for increased investment in American innovation and research to stay ahead of China.

Trump, on the other hand, may adopt a more aggressive stance. During his previous term, he imposed broad tariffs on Chinese goods and implemented sweeping penalties on its tech companies. He criticised Beijing for unfair trade practices and intellectual property theft, taking a hardline approach to counter its rise. If re-elected, Trump will likely continue this aggressive strategy, potentially escalating tensions further.

The outcome of the US presidential election will have significant implications for global innovation and economic stability. The Washington-Beijing tech war is not just a bilateral issue; it affects the entire world. It has spurred innovation in both countries. However, it also poses risks to global innovation. Technology transfer and collaboration restrictions can hinder knowledge flow and slow technological progress. A more cooperative approach could foster greater innovation and benefit the global tech ecosystem.

The tech rivalry is reshaping geopolitical dynamics, with countries worldwide drawn into the vortex. US allies are pressured to take sides, while China seeks to expand its influence through initiatives like BeiDou's low-cost satellite navigation offers. The outcome of the US presidential election will influence how these geopolitical dynamics play out.

In the movie *Gravity* (2013), an American astronaut Dr Ryan Stone, played by Sandra Bullock, is forced to navigate to a Chinese space station, the Tiangong, to ultimately return to Earth after a catastrophic debris collision in space, effectively being “saved” by the Chinese mission. This cinematic portrayal of international cooperation is a powerful reminder that collaboration can achieve remarkable outcomes. Regardless of who wins the ticket to the White House, cooperation helps everyone everywhere. Trying to defeat an enemy is a short-sighted goal; winning them over is a more sustainable and beneficial vision.

The US presidential race and the technology war with China are intertwined in a high-stakes battle for global dominance. The election's outcome will shape this rivalry's future and impact worldwide innovation and economic stability. As we navigate this complex landscape, pursuing strategies that foster international cooperation, protect national interests, and promote a prosperous and secure future for all is essential.