



A penchant for unwanted surprises

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Trump's victory and why the Democratic Party failed

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World must better adapt to 'climate calamity': UN

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Unapproved college section puts students in jeopardy

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CSA getting scrapped

Advisory council okays draft of Cyber Security Act (Repeal) Ordinance 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday decided in principle to repeal the Cyber Security Act which has been used to curb press freedom and suppress political dissent.

The decision was made at a meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his office.

The advisory council gave provisional approval to a draft of the Cyber Security Act (repeal) Ordinance 2024, which the Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division will now examine before it is finally approved by the advisers, according to a Cabinet Division statement.

The law ministry with secretarial and technical support from the ICT Division will come up with a separate law on ensuring safety and security in the cyberspace, said the statement.

In September 2023, the Awami League government passed the CSA in parliament, replacing the Digital Security Act (DSA) 2018.

Rights defenders and journalists pointed out at the time that the provisions used to repress dissent were carried over from the DSA to the CSA.

There were barely any qualitative or significant changes

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A man melting steel at a factory in South Keraniganj. In the absence of any safety gear, workers like him are prone to burn injuries and various other health risks. Though the lack of workers' safety has been a longstanding problem, the authorities concerned still seem too reluctant to care. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Govt won't tolerate any attacks on newspapers

Says CA's press secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will not tolerate any attacks on newspapers, said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam.

"No newspaper, TV channel or news website has been shut since the interim government took office," he said at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

Shafiqul said there had been no phone calls from the government or the intelligence agencies requesting news outlets to take down or upload any news article. They also did not give any directive regarding speakers of talk shows and barring reporters from certain assignments, he added.

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A law that GAGGED

Victims express relief

ZYMA ISLAM and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Some made a differing comment, some drew a political cartoon and some made a joke online – and they all ended up in jail, in some cases for months. This is how the Digital Security Act (DSA) and later the Cyber Security Act (CSA) were used to gag freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

Until recently, people were afraid to voice their opinions on digital platforms because of the harsh law. But yesterday victims of the "draconian" law expressed relief after the government decided in principle to abolish the law.

Naval Architect Golam Mahfuz Joarder, now convener of the DSA Victims Network, is one of them. He was in jail for 10 months simply for voicing concerns in social media over extrajudicial killings.

"Extrajudicial killings were rampant in 2018-19. At the time, I posted on Facebook opposing these killings. On December 26, 2019, a Rab team detained me, accusing me of writing against the force and gathering data on crossfire," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

His explanation to the law enforcers that he only posted information from published news reports did not work, he said. His bail petition was rejected seven times before he was granted bail.

He was not alone.

Between October 2018 and August 2024, at least 3,208 named and 2,080 unnamed people have been sued under the DSA. Another 372 people have been prosecuted

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3 MONTHS OF INTERIM GOVT

Start of reform process reassuring

TANIM AHMED

The much talked about reforms are finally under way as the government completes its three months in office. There has been a unanimous agreement across the political spectrum about the necessity of reforming institutions that had been rendered into partisan instruments during the 15-year Awami League regime. That the commissions have begun their assignments is heartening.

Since it will be through these reforms that the incumbents will have a lasting impact in Bangladesh, it is imperative that the reforms are done well with due deliberation. It will be based on the platform these reforms provide that the election roadmap will have to be designed. While there have been some indications about a route to the next elections, incumbents will have to present a more concrete roadmap sooner, rather than later. The call for a concrete election roadmap from the political quarters will only become louder and stronger with time. Thus, it will only

allay apprehensions and reassure the people that the country is indeed headed towards an election.

Three months on, law and order continues to be the government's main concern with crimes rising across Dhaka and elsewhere. The ruling interim government had taken over the reins of Bangladesh after a people's uprising spearheaded by the students. Essentially a campaign against reservations in government jobs, the uprising was characterised by excessive violence from law enforcers who killed at least 874 protesters – the government is yet to confirm the final number. Following the hasty departure of the former premier and consequent fall of the dictatorial regime, the police had largely deserted their posts fearing attacks.

Since then, law enforcement has been ailing the incumbent government. The police resumed operations only after reassurances of safety and initially had to be escorted by military personnel. But they have yet to regain their morale. The

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Trump win worries global partners ahead of COP29

Biden calls for calm and promises orderly transfer of power

REUTERS, Washington

Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election has darkened the outlook for a strong deal at the COP29 global climate summit next week and will heap pressure on Europe and China to lead international progress in curbing planetary warming, according to climate negotiators.

Trump, who has called climate change a hoax, has said he plans to withdraw the US from the landmark 2015 Paris climate agreement at the start of his second presidency, and his policy advisors have floated removing the US from the underlying UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ratified by the US Senate in 1992.

Climate negotiators and observers preparing for the COP29 conference from Nov 11-22 in Baku, Azerbaijan, said Trump's decisive win over Vice President Kamala Harris in Tuesday's poll deals a blow to the ability of countries to agree on a new global finance target or increase the pool of countries that should contribute – top goals for the summit.

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- COP29 conference to begin on Nov 11 in Baku
- Trump has called climate change a hoax
- US is expected to withdraw again from Paris deal

Raft of measures soon to tame inflation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has decided to double the amount of rice against one crore family cards and change the market monitoring strategy to tame inflation.

The decision came yesterday at a meeting attended by Finance and Commerce Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed; Planning and Education Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud; Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan; and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur at the Secretariat.

Considering the global market situation and measures taken

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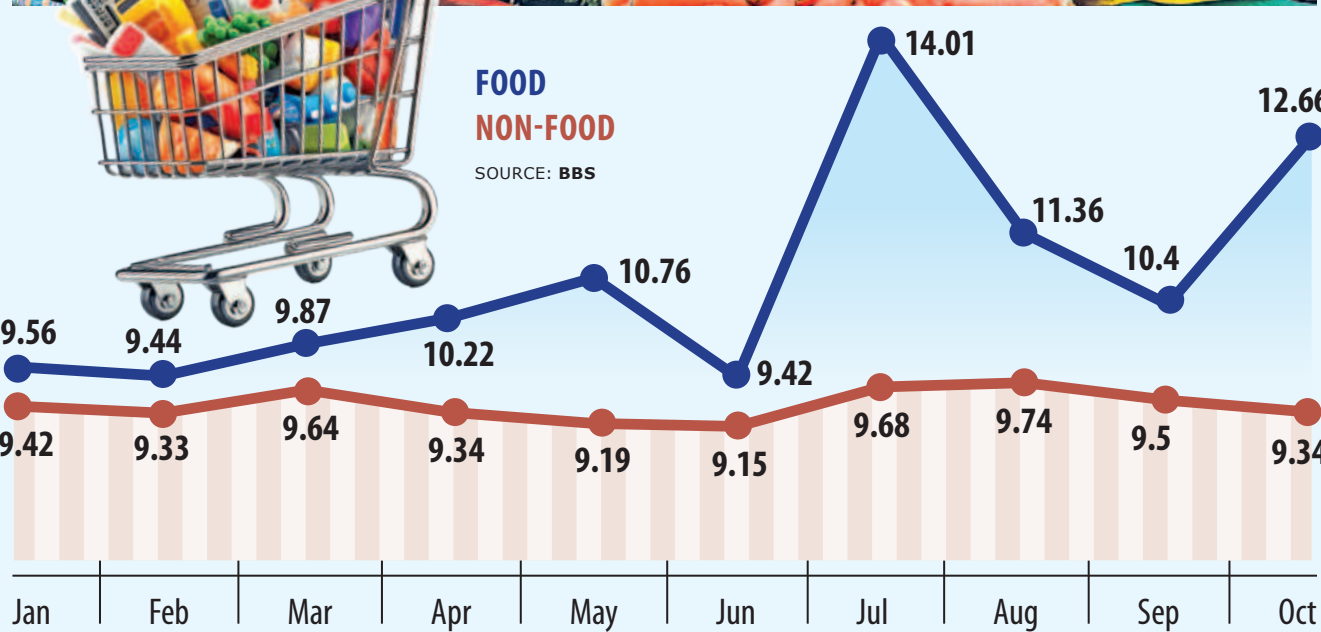
PKSF-TDS ROUNDTABLE

Pathways to prosperity for extremely poor people

Check out the special two-page roundtable supplement on Pages 8 & 9! Some of the country's brightest minds came together at the roundtable, offering valuable insights into strategies for transforming the lives of those living in extreme poverty.



TREND OF INFLATION IN 2024 IN %



Inflation hit three-month high in October

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inflation hit a three-month high of 10.87 percent in October thanks to the soaring food prices, especially the staple rice and vegetables.

Last month, food inflation hit 12.66 percent and non-food inflation declined 16 percentage points to 9.34 percent, according to the latest published data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

The elevated price level comes despite a hawkish policy by the Bangladesh Bank to combat inflation.

In its quarterly report titled "Inflation Dynamics in Bangladesh", the central bank said domestic products accounted for 74 percent of the overall inflation in September.

In contrast, the contribution of import-dependent items to inflation fell to 26 percent in September from 39 percent in June.

In the latest edition of its flagship Asian Development Outlook, the Asian Development Bank projected that inflation this fiscal year would hit 10.1 percent, 3.1 percentage points higher than its previous projection in April.

However, the World Bank, in its latest edition of the Bangladesh Development Update in October, projected that inflation would decline to 9 percent this fiscal year from 9.7 percent in fiscal 2023-24.

"The elevated inflation is generally very painful

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