

No one, not even PM, will be able to abuse power

Pledges Tarique at seminar on BNP's 31-point reform agenda



- If voted to power, BNP will eliminate all tools of suppression used by AL regime
- Follow Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Restore freedom of expression
- Media to have freedom to 'speak truth to power'
- Establish rules-based state structure
- Ensure accountability, transparency at all levels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP, if voted to power, will ensure no one can abuse power or emerge as an autocrat, said Tarique Rahman, the party's acting chairperson.

"We aim to build a Bangladesh where no individual – not even the prime minister – can abuse power with impunity. Accountability and transparency will be ensured at every level of the government,

from the highest offices to the grassroots, so that we can reaffirm that no one is above the law," he said yesterday.

The foundation of BNP's governance will be the rule of law, human rights and freedom of expression, Tarique said while addressing a seminar on "31-Point Structural Reforms of the State and Citizens' Perspective".

The proposed reforms aim to build

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Brick kilns set up on the Dhaleshwari are contributing to air pollution in the Nimtoli area of Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan upazila. Sand traders have also occupied a part of the riverbank, further reducing the river's width. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Indemnity' provision for power sector unlawful

Declares HC following writ petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared unconstitutional two sections of the long-debated "indemnity act" of the power sector that protected the decisions of the government from legal challenges and gave the energy minister the sole authority to approve all sorts of plans for the sector.

In the ruling, which came following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyers Shahdeen Malik and Md Tayeb-Ul-Islam Showrov on August 28 citing public interest, the HC however condoned the actions already taken in good faith under the two sections of the act to avoid legal complexities.

"However, the government will have the right to revisit the activities of the parties concerned with the agreement subject to certain conditions. If any criminal offence is committed, this provisional condonation will not be applicable," said the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury.

It also directed the government authorities concerned to immediately take necessary steps to make all the state-owned power plants fully operational in the interest of national and economic development and for the greater benefit of the people.

The writ petition said that any act to

HOW THE AL GOVT USED THE ACT

- Awarded power and energy projects without tender
- Increased power generation capacity to 27,000MW against the demand for 17,000MW
- Gave Tk 130,000cr as capacity charges in last 15yrs to idle power plants
- Imported high-priced LNG from spot market

provide indemnity to a process where huge amounts of public money and heavy state investment are involved is ill-intended.

Using the act, which was passed by

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Is respect too much to ask for?

Injured victims vent frustrations

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and AHMED DEEPTO

Rasel Alam, 36, a tailor from Mohammadpur, has been fighting two battles since the July mass uprising – one for his health and another for his dignity.

Injured during the protests on August 4, he underwent a surgery on his right leg and another one around his waist at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR).

Despite being discharged on September 15, he is still far from full recovery.

"I can barely sleep at night because of the pain," Rasel told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

"Since I got injured, I haven't been able to work and so there is no source of income ... My wife had to borrow Tk 1 lakh from relatives to cover the mounting expenses, including for my surgeries and medication.

"Doctors said it will take another eight months for me to recover. How will my family survive till then?"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

MASS UPRISING

All the injured to get lifelong free treatment

Govt to issue ID cards to let them access services at public hospitals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Those injured in the July uprising will get identification cards which will allow them to get free care at government hospitals for life, the government decided yesterday.

Certain private hospitals will be bound by contracts with the government to treat those people for free, said Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser on health and family planning.

A framework on the government's initiatives for the injured would be provided within five work days, he said after a meeting at the health ministry attended by six advisers, a group of students, and several individuals injured in the July uprising.

Some of the decisions made at the meeting are already being implemented, he told reporters.

At the meeting, the injured expressed frustration over mismanagement at hospitals and spending for treatment. Sayedur said he told them to keep the receipts so that the government could reimburse them.

The current government stands on the sacrifices made by these people, he said.

Sayedur said beds would be allocated for them at all government hospitals, and the government facilities in Dhaka will be networked for their care.

If the injured file complaints about negligence, there will be thorough investigations, he said, adding that the government would do everything possible to make life easier for those who lost their vision.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Interim govt to carry out vital labour reforms

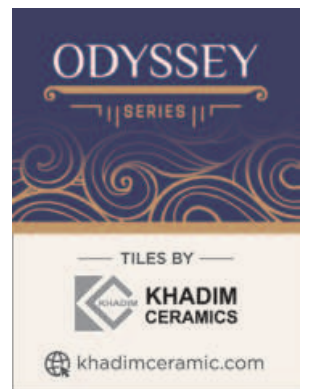
Yunus tells ex-UK PM before returning home

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the interim government would carry out vital labour reforms to attract more foreign investments in the country's manufacturing sector.

He made the comments during a meeting with former British prime minister Theresa May on

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বৈষম্যবিরোধী ছাত্র-জনতার আন্দোলনে গত ৫ আগস্ট, ২০২৪ তারিখে সরকার পতনের পর প্রাক্তন মন্ত্রী, সংসদ সদস্যসহ পতিত সরকারের ঘনিষ্ঠ একাধিক আবাসন ব্যবসায়ী আত্মগোপনে রয়েছেন। এই সুযোগে কতিপয় অসাধু ও স্বার্থাশেষী ব্যক্তিবর্গ নিজেদেরকে পলাতক ব্যবসায়ীদের ঐ সকল আবাসন প্রকল্পের মালিক পরিচয় দিয়ে জমি/প্লট বিক্রয়সহ অবৈধ লেনদেনে জড়িত হচ্ছেন। ফলে সাধারণ জনগণ এই ভুয়া মালিকদের নিকট থেকে জমি/প্লট ক্রয় করে প্রতারিত হচ্ছেন মর্মে অভিযোগ পাওয়া যাচ্ছে।

এমতাবস্থায়, কোন অসাধু ব্যক্তি তথা ভুয়া মালিকদের সাথে জমি/প্লট ক্রয়-বিক্রয়জনিত লেনদেন না করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে সতর্ক করা হলো। ভুয়া মালিকদের নিকট থেকে জমি/প্লট ক্রয় করে প্রতারিত হলে তার দায়-দায়িত্ব বাংলাদেশ ল্যান্ড ডেভেলপারস এসোসিয়েশন (বিএলডিএ) গ্রহণ করবে না। জমি/প্লট ক্রয়ের পূর্বে সংশ্লিষ্ট আবাসন প্রকল্পের প্রকৃত মালিকানার তথ্য যাচাই-বাছাই করার জন্য পরামর্শ প্রদান করা হলো। এ বিষয়ে প্রয়োজন হলে বাংলাদেশ ল্যান্ড ডেভেলপারস এসোসিয়েশন (বিএলডিএ) এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো হলো।

মোস্তফা কামাল মহীউদ্দীন
মহাসচিব



প্লট # ৩৩৫, (২য় তলা), ব্লক # ডি, আলহাজ্ব আব্দুস সোবহান রোড, বসুন্ধরা আ/এ, ঢাকা-১২২৯।
ই-মেইল : blda.bd@gmail.com



Sri Lankans
vote in
parliamentary
election

P7



Ending
impunity
for crimes
against
journalists

P8



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In Everlasting Memory of
MD. MUJIBUR RAHMAN

Founder Chairman of Blessing Group
Managing Director of Roxy Paints Ltd.
Former President of Bangladesh Paints Dyes & Chemicals Merchants Association

On his 4th Death Anniversary

The void he left, no one can heal. The memories that we cherish no one can steal. His values will continue to inspire us to take his noble works forward. He will live on with us always in our thoughts and forever in our hearts.

Deeply missed and remembered by.....

(15 November, 2020)



Tabligh factions agree to have Biswa Ijtema in 2 phases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both factions of Tabligh Jamaat will run the Kakrail Mosque in turns and organise the upcoming Biswa Ijtema in Tongi in two separate phases, as they did over the years, until the government addresses the conflict between the two groups in April next year.

The decision was made at a meeting between followers of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and Maulana Zubair Ahmad in presence of advisers to the home and religious affairs ministries on Tuesday, according to a press release issued by Maulana Shahriar Mahmud yesterday on behalf of Ulama-Mashayekh Bangladesh.

The first phase will be organised by the followers of Maulana Zubair and the second phase by the followers of Maulana Saad, the press release said.

Maulana Saad will not come to Bangladesh to join the Ijtema, it said, adding that the control of Kakrail Mosque, the main centre of Tabligh Jamaat in Bangladesh, will be shared by both factions.



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman virtually addresses a party seminar on its 31-point outline for reform of state structure at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Indemnity provision

FROM PAGE 1

parliament in 2010 initially for five years but was amended several times to extend its validity to 2026, the previous Awami League government awarded power and energy projects without floating tenders.

In so doing, Bangladesh's power generation capacity soared to 27,000 megawatts (MW) even though the demand is around 17,000 MW. And due to a fuel supply shortage, the government failed to produce more than 15,600MW of electricity.

Subsequently, the state had to give capacity charges amounting to Tk 130,000 crore to the idle power plants over the last 15 years, according to the data from the Bangladesh Power Development Board. Of the sum, about Tk 32,000 crore was given in fiscal 2023-24 alone, a major leap from Tk 5,600 crore handed out in fiscal 2017-18.

Not only in the power sector, major decisions in the energy sector like making deals to import high-priced liquefied natural gas from international spot markets and awarding multibillion-dollar gas infrastructure to selected companies were also taken using the 2010 act.

This was enabled by two sections of the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act that the HC yesterday declared unlawful.

Section 9 states that no question about any action done or deemed to be done, and any order or direction given under this law, cannot be raised before any court.

In addition, section 6 (2) says that any planning or proposal related to the buying or investment decisions has to be approved by the energy minister and sent to the cabinet committee for approval after communicating and bargaining with one or more institutions.

The interim government has announced that it will not use the act to make decisions for the power sector.

Challenge for govt

FROM PAGE 12

Experience suggests that the longer an interim government is in power, the louder calls for early elections gets and the larger doubts about its legitimacy grows.

Managing, let alone meeting, sky-high public expectations will be extremely challenging, reads the report.

The report mentioned that Yunus and his colleagues for now are enjoying widespread support, but popular expectations are "double-edged". If the interim administration falters in making reforms, the outcome is likely to be an early election with little progress; in the worst-case scenario, the military could assume power.

Over the past fifteen years, hundreds of billions of dollars have likely been funnelled illegally out of Bangladesh. Much of the money appears to have ended up in the United Kingdom, the US, the EU, Singapore and the Middle East, the report stated.

Already in bad shape, Bangladesh's economy is limping along, having taken a further hit from more than a month of protests and the uncertainty of the transition. Yunus's team has struggled to restore law and order, dependent largely on a police force that was heavily implicated in the anti-protest repression, it reads.

It said rebuilding the country's institutions will also be no mean feat, and while the interim administration is the most inclusive Bangladesh has ever seen, many of its members have little experience in government or management.

The interim government should look to keep its social support base strong as it builds consensus around key reforms and prepares the country for credible elections. International actors should back Yunus's administration and bolster the Bangladeshi economy to help inaugurate a new era in national politics, reads the report.

No one, not even PM, will be able to abuse power

FROM PAGE 1

an inclusive, liberal and democratic Bangladesh, according to the party.

Diplomats from various foreign missions stationed in Dhaka, members of the civil society, and representatives of different political parties attended the seminar, where Tarique joined virtually from London as the chief guest.

The BNP said the framework for the structural reform agenda has been drawn from party founder late president Ziaur Rahman's 19 points, the Vision 2030 of Chairperson Khaleda Zia, and extensive public engagement.

"When I personally speak of reform, I envision transformative change that enhances people's lives – not mere revision to a few constitutional paragraphs. We cannot afford to be bound by conventional governance – we must embrace modernisation and innovation," Tarique said.

He proposed limiting the tenure of any individual as prime minister to two consecutive terms to prevent the recurrence of authoritarian rule in Bangladesh.

The BNP wants to balance power between the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, said Tarique, who has been heading the party as acting chairperson since 2018.

To ensure the representation and participation of the learned and accomplished professionals in governance, the party proposed introducing a bicameral parliamentary system.

A government's foremost duty is to govern within the guardrails of a rules-based order, said Tarique, who has been in exile since 2008.

By establishing a rules-based structure, Bangladesh will systematically attract private investment and capital from around the world, he said.

"Unlike the crony capitalism of the Awami League, which resulted in a family-run kleptocracy, converted Bangladeshi businesses into oligarchy and syndicates creating division and discriminations, we will establish a fair business climate, prevent institutional

Is respect too much to ask for?

FROM PAGE 1

Rasel, like many others, had joined the protests on Wednesday near NITOR to demand better medical treatment for those injured in the July uprising.

"We risked our lives and limbs for this country, the government has given us separate wards and food, but where is the respect for our sacrifices? I have applied for assistance from the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation. But I am yet to receive any help. We hear many stories about rehabilitation, but we receive nothing."

The frustration runs deep among the injured protesters, many of whom have lost limbs or suffered severe life-altering injuries. The Daily Star spoke to 15 such protesters, all of whom complained of inadequate treatment, a lack of respect and an uncertain future.

Many said financial assistance for the injured was announced on August 12 but before that, they had to spend from their own pockets for their treatment – money that will never be returned to them.

Their frustration boiled over on Wednesday afternoon when injured protesters blocked the car of Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum on NITOR premises. Some lay in front of the vehicle, while others climbed onto it, after she was leaving the hospital after talking to a few patients.

The protesters then left the hospital and blocked the road in front of it around 2:00pm, demanding that Nurjahan meet all of the injured victims. They also demanded

decay and politicisation across all levels of the Bangladeshi society."

The BNP will create the "right business atmosphere, where local and international private capital will flow in to work hand in hand with our public sector to drive national growth and productivity", Tarique said.

"We believe, whenever there is rule of law, accountability and good governance, sustainable and inclusive development will naturally follow."

If elected by the people, the BNP government will make every effort to eliminate the climate of fear that became the norm during the 15 years of AL rule, said Tarique, who turns 57 next week.

"We will eliminate all the tools of suppression used by that regime, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, excessive force, politically motivated trials, warrantless mass arrests and various other forms of gross human rights violations."

Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the party will work to protect the rights and basic freedoms of every citizen.

The BNP's policy is to ensure equal rights and security for all citizens, Tarique said, adding that Bangladesh was liberated by freedom fighters through immense sacrifices so that every citizen, regardless of religion, political affiliation or social identity could enjoy their religious, political, cultural and social rights without any hindrance.

"Thus, in an independent Bangladesh, we do not view anyone as a so-called 'minority'. This ideal of 'Bangladeshi nationalism' underpins all our politics – where we believe that our religion, political affiliations, and ideologies are personal; but the state belongs to everyone."

He also pledged to restore freedom of expression for all and uphold media freedom so that the fourth pillar of democracy can have the liberty to "speak truth to power" and critique the government openly through investigative reports, political talk shows, comedy, and satire.

Over the past 16 years, the nation

better treatment and financial rehabilitation from the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation.

The protests continued till 3:15am yesterday after four advisers visited them and assured them that the demands would be met.

Thirty-year-old Mohammad Shaon, a motor mechanic, was shot in his left elbow during the uprising. Before the incident, he earned Tk 35,000 to 40,000 per month and was able to comfortably support his family. All that has changed since the day he was shot.

"I've sold my [child's] cot, refrigerator, and TV to make ends meet. My landlord is hounding me for four months of unpaid rent."

Shaon has been receiving treatment at NITOR since August 12.

Though the hospital is providing free treatment and food, he lamented the indifferent behaviour of the hospital staffers and interim government advisers.

"So many have benefited from our sacrifices. Some of them even became advisers. Yet, they show no concern for us. They've built their futures on our sacrifices, but we're left on our own."

About hospital staffers, he said, "Firstly, they said my arm might have to be amputated and that frightened me. However, a team of medical experts from the UK performed my surgery and it went well ... One of the NITOR doctors, during my first surgery in mid-August, asked me why I even joined the protests. It was very rude.

"We're not asking for luxury –

was systematically stripped of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of association, Tarique said.

"You may recall how a section of the media once published unfounded stories against me and then prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, engaging in media trials and propaganda. Yet, as it is now well documented, the former BNP government did not suppress media freedom, harass journalists or imprison any editor in retaliation back then."

The BNP's goal is to create a state structure where no one will be harassed for expressing views on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and other online spaces, or for merely commenting publicly on high-ranking officials, including the prime minister.

"Neither mainstream nor social media will be coerced into concealing the truth or pressured to spread misinformation," Tarique said, calling upon the country's media to maintain neutrality and objectivity in their roles toward national development.

About the transition of power, he said it should not be about passing the state's governing authority from one party to another.

"Rather, it should usher in a new political culture that reflects the evolving landscape of society and the true aspirations of the people, particularly the younger generation," Tarique added.

The BNP previously unveiled the 31-point outline on July 13 last year "to turn the country into a democratic state in the true sense".

Speaking at yesterday's programme held at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said his party, along with over 50 other parties, had prepared the 31-point state reform proposal during the simultaneous movement against the "fascist regime of Sheikh Hasina".

He said the BNP decided to present the 31-point framework to the public once again because it believes the reform proposals that may emerge from the commissions formed by the interim government to oversee state reforms will "closely align" with the party's outline.

just respect and proper care for the sacrifices we made," said Shaon, adding, "Is that too much to ask for?"

Asked whether he received any financial assistance from the July Foundation, he kept mum.

On the other hand, NITOR Director Prof Dr Kazi Shamim Uzzaman said, "We're giving the injured victims [of the July uprising] the highest priority in terms of treatment. Many patients are alleging they aren't being treated with respect, which is not true. They aren't aware of the complications and treatment procedures."

Shilpi Akhtar's 15-year-old son Shahin had to undergo four surgeries since he was injured during the July uprising.

"Doctors said it'll take six more months for him to recover but there's no guarantee. His education is in jeopardy, while he is writhing in pain in hospital."

She said the adviser's lack of empathy towards victims like her son is where her frustration really lies.

"They came to the hospital but didn't even visit all the victims. How can we not feel betrayed?"

Currently, 84 injured protesters from the uprising are undergoing treatment at NITOR. Till date, 21 people have had their hands and legs amputated, while six patients have died.

Md Badiuzzaman, deputy director of NITOR, said, "We've been providing excellent medical care and treating them with utmost priority ... Any claims of us not providing proper treatment are not true."

Protecting minorities our job, India need not speak about it

Says Nahid in interview with BBC Hindi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"The minorities in Bangladesh are our citizens, and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety. India doesn't have to say anything about this. India should say something about the mass killing that happened here in July and August," Nahid Islam, interim government's adviser for the information ministry, said in an interview with BBC Hindi.

Reminded that India frequently talks about the protection of Bangladeshi minorities, Nahid said the question should be: "What kind of support can India offer to overcome the challenges facing Bangladesh? This is where discussions should focus."

He then said, "I would also like to mention that the Indian media has been spreading false information about our government, and India should address this. We want discussions based on facts and aimed at improving relations."

India has yet to make clear how it views the massacre committed by the Awami League in July and August. If



SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

All the injured to get

FROM PAGE 1

"They will get a one-time financial assistance, if necessary, and a training as per their education and abilities so that they can avail employment opportunities," he said, adding that those with physical disabilities will be provided with physiotherapy and equipment funded by the state.

Those suffering from mental trauma will get psychotherapy through a telemedicine network, he added.

The government will open a support centre in every divisional city to provide some of the aforesaid services.

Adviser Nahid Islam later said he doubted whether the political parties and the media were fulfilling their responsibilities toward the injured.

"The stories of the martyrs and the injured should be part of national discourse. But people are simply placing all responsibility on the government and talking about the election and several other issues," he said.

"The voices of the injured are not being featured enough in political discussions or the media. It is the political duty of the parties that supported the July-August uprising to work for the injured and [family of] the martyrs," Nahid said.

It is unfortunate that the injured had to take to the streets, he added.

The meeting scheduled for 2:00pm,

started two and a half hours late, due to what witnesses said were arguments among the injured attendees.

The meeting was initially intended for those who demonstrated in front of the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation the night before.

However, several individuals from other hospitals and some who are not currently admitted to any hospital arrived, causing anger among the first group.

Eventually, Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam, two key leaders of the student movement, persuaded everyone to proceed with the meeting.

On Wednesday, a group of the injured people in the July uprising held a protest in front of the national traumatology institute, demanding better treatment and rehabilitation.

Four advisers rushed to the spot at 2:30am yesterday and promised to meet their demands.

Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdho, brother of a martyr and chief executive of the July Martyrs Memorial Foundation; Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum; Social Welfare Adviser Sharmin S Murshid; Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhtar; Information and Broadcasting Adviser Nahid Islam; Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan; and Adviser without portfolio Mahfuj Alam attended the meeting.

Interim govt to carry out

FROM PAGE 1

the sidelines of the COP29 global climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.

"The labour issue is one of our top priorities. We want to resolve all labour issues," Prof Yunus told her as they discussed Bangladesh's recent developments.

May expressed her desire to work on the issue. She also discussed human trafficking and migration with Bangladesh's interim leader.

Prof Yunus called for increased migration to Europe from Bangladesh through legal channels, saying that it will cut risky and irregular migration and act as a deterrence against human trafficking.

He gave her a copy of the Art of Triumph, a book on graffiti and murals painted by Bangladeshi young people during the uprising.

Meanwhile, Prof Yunus returned home yesterday evening wrapping up his Baku tour, reports BSS.

In Baku, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev told him that his country would deepen ties with Bangladesh and take its bilateral relationship to a new height.

Azerbaijan was also keen to invest in Bangladesh and explore the possibility of opening an embassy in Dhaka as both nations seek increasing opportunities for trade, commerce, and international cooperation.

Aliyev said this when he met Prof Yunus on the sidelines of the COP29.

The Azerbaijan president said a high-level team of the Azerbaijani government will visit Bangladesh early next year in a move to sign a comprehensive arrangement with Bangladesh.

Aliyev praised the student-led uprising, saying that he has been following events in Bangladesh for months.

He congratulated Prof Yunus for assuming the leadership of the interim government and said Bangladesh will grow and prosper under his leadership. "Your task is very challenging. But I know you are the one who can face the challenge."

The chief adviser also called for stronger ties between the two nations.

He said both nations could prosper if there were increased bilateral trade, people-to-people interactions, and cooperation in major international forums.

Prof Yunus also stressed the need for job opportunities for Bangladeshis

Student dies three months after being shot in mass uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A student who suffered bullet wounds during the anti-discrimination student movement on August 5 died at Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka yesterday morning.

Abdullah, a fourth-year student of political sciences department at Government Shahid Suhrawardy College, breathed his last around 7:00am, more than three months after he suffered bullet wounds in the head, his father Abdul Jabbar told The Daily Star.

The body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Jabbar said his son was shot in the Tantibazar area during the movement on August 5. He was first given treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and then shifted to CMH.

The body was taken to his village home in Jashore after a namaz e-janaza at Central Shaheed Minar.



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus returned home yesterday evening wrapping up his Baku tour to attend the global climate meet Conference of Parties-29 (COP29). A flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the chief adviser and his entourage reached the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka around 8:00pm.

PHOTO: CHIEF ADVISER'S PRESS WING

Woman held over murder of businessman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanangani

Police yesterday arrested a woman in connection with the murder of Joshimuhammad Masum, a prominent businessman.

The arrestee was identified as Ruma, 28, Joshim's alleged girlfriend.

"The businessman was in an extra-marital affair with Ruma, who killed him at her flat in Dhaka's Shewrapara out of anger, and dismembered his body into pieces," Pratyush Kumar Majumder, superintendent of police in Narayanangani, told reporters at a briefing hours after Ruma's arrest from her flat yesterday.

Police also seized a machete, a hacksaw blade and the suit and shoes of the deceased from another flat in Dhaka's Banani area.

Joshim had promised to marry Ruma but was dillydallying about it, while he was also maintaining relationships with other women. All this had irked Ruma,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Reinstate caretaker govt, repeal Article 70

Experts place suggestions to constitution reform body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Constitutional Reform Commission yesterday received a series of recommendations, including the restoration of the caretaker government system -- which established the caretaker government system -- and the repeal of the 15th amendment, which removed it.

In addition, experts called for amendment or repeal to Article 70 of the constitution, which currently allows a party to vacate the seat of an MP who votes against their party in parliament, and proposed ensuring fundamental rights remain unconditional.

These suggestions emerged during consultations involving constitutional experts and representatives from various professional organisations, marking the commission's fourth such meeting.

The session was held in the cabinet room

of the national parliament.

In the afternoon, Justice Md Abdul Matin, Advocate Hasnat Quaiyum, Prof K Shamsuddin Mahmud, and Legal Commission Adviser AK Mohammad Hossain shared their perspectives on the need for reforms.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Justice Matin underscored the need to reinstate the 13th amendment and repeal the 15th amendment to restore the caretaker system, while recommending changes to Article 70 to allow MPs more freedom to vote independently.

Justice Matin suggested returning Article 116 to its original 1972 form, while retaining certain other unaltered articles of the constitution.

Supreme Court lawyer Hasnat Quaiyum advocated for the removal of conditions attached to fundamental rights, proposing

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Dengue claims 5 more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died and 1,107 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the total number of deaths rose to 384 and the total number of cases stood at 77,128.

Currently, 4,149 dengue patients are undergoing treatment, of which 2,308 are from outside Dhaka.

A total of 72,595 patients have been released till yesterday, 43,227 of which are from outside Dhaka.



15TH AMENDMENT
It was passed thru parliamentary fraud: lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The constitution was violated through "parliamentary fraud" by passing the 15th amendment without a referendum, BNP's lawyer Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal told the High Court yesterday.

He said the amendment, which abolished the caretaker government system, was introduced to allow the Awami League government to "remain in power indefinitely," compromising the constitution's foundational structure.

He made the remarks before the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury on the sixth day of hearings questioning the legitimacy of the 15th amendment.

After the day's proceedings, the court adjourned the hearing until next Wednesday.

The 15th amendment, enacted in 2011, repealed the 13th Amendment, which had established the non-partisan caretaker government system in 1996 to oversee elections.

During the same hearing, Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir argued in court that the 15th Amendment undermined the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

BNP delegation meets US embassy chargé d'affaires

UNB, Dhaka

A three-member BNP delegation, led by the party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, met Megan Bouldin, the US Embassy chargé d'affaires in Dhaka, at her Gulshan residence yesterday morning.

The meeting, which lasted for about an hour, commenced at 10:00am, according to Sayrul Kabir Khan, a member of the BNP media cell.

Fakhru was accompanied by BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Organising Secretary Shama Obaid.

The delegation visited the US envoy's residence at her invitation, Sayrul said.

The discussions reportedly covered various issues of mutual interest between Bangladesh and the US, Sayrul added, without elaborating on specific topics.



Students of seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University have been demanding scrapping of DU affiliation and merger of their colleges into a new independent public university.

FILE PHOTO

DU AFFILIATED 7 COLLEGES
A rocky relationship heading for separation

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

The seven colleges' journey with Dhaka University may soon come to an end, with both parties aiming for a fresh start -- separately.

The affiliation was intended to improve education quality and ease session jams.

But this "union" has proved far from harmonious. Forged in 2017, the relationship now appears to be heading for a formal split, as students from both sides have called for an end to the affiliation.

When the government first shifted the colleges from the National University to DU, the plan was to raise academic standards and streamline administrative processes.

However, this transfer lacked a solid operational plan, leading to multiple setbacks for the students. With exams frequently delayed and results often caught in administrative backlogs,

the intended benefits never materialised.

The colleges in question are Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Government Titumir College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Mirpur Government Bangla College, and Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College.

For the students here, the "DU affiliation" has come to mean session jams, uncertainty, and mounting frustration.

Meanwhile, DU students have often blamed the affiliation for stretching university resources and straining academic schedules.

Many DU students have even labelled the colleges as a "burden" on the institution, calling for their separation.

Following prolonged student protests, the government is now considering a "divorce" of sorts --

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



DU would welcome the decision
Says pro-VC Mamun Ahmed

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Dhaka University would support the government's decision to remove the seven colleges from DU's affiliation, said pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) Dr Mamun Ahmed in a recent interview with The Daily Star.

"If the government decides to remove these colleges from our affiliation, we would be happy," Mamun said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

FOR 2025
ADMISSIONS OPEN

SCAN TO WATCH

SEPARATE SECTIONS FOR
MALE & FEMALE STUDENTS

COMPUTER LAB,
DIGITAL BOARD, PROJECTOR,
MODERN LABORATORIES

ADMISSION FROM
NURSERY TO CLASS 8

আবু
১৩৬
BOTH BANGALI MEDIUM
AND ENGLISH VERSION
CURRICULUMS

MOSQUE, LIBRARY,
CAFETERIA

SCHOOL BUS SERVICE
CAR PARKING ZONE

BASHUNDHARA
PUBLIC SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

www.bashundharapsc.com
+880 1799-998070, +880 1704112399, +880 1704112381
Plot # 02, Block # N, Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh



I aspire to see myself on the silver screen

PARSA EVANA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The budding actress Parsa Evana has reached a notable position in the industry today after having delivered multiple dramas over the last few years. Many of these dramas earned much adulation from the audiences. She became widely recognised by people of all ages, particularly after her role in the drama *Bachelor Point*.

She recently starred alongside Mosharraf Karim in the web-film *Mirza*, directed by Sumon Anowar.

Regarding the project and her co-star, Parsa shared, “I worked with Mosharraf *bhai* eight to nine years ago, and after a long gap, we reunited for *Mirza*. He’s still the same! When we first collaborated, I was almost a newcomer, and he supported me as a co-artist then. This time, he has been just as helpful.”

“Mosharraf *bhai* is obviously a huge star, but I’ve never seen any manner of arrogance in him. He is humble and grounded,” she conveyed.

Parsa Evana portrayed a unique character in the web-film *Mirza*. She mentioned, “The story and the character were both appealing to me, and I thoroughly enjoyed working on the project. Our director Sumon Anowar took care of the production with great attention to detail.”

On top of that, the actress is all geared up to make an appearance in a Vicky Zahed directorial one-hour-long drama, which has yet to be officially titled.

She recently wrapped up shooting an advertisement directed by Ashfaque Nipun. When inquired about her experience, she replied, “A good team is key to producing great work.” She highlighted the teamwork of *Bachelor Point*, praising it as fantastic. “Throughout my career, many dramas have been well-received by audiences. However, *Bachelor Point* is a significant turning point because it reached a wide audience,” she admitted, praising director Kajal Arefin Ome for his excellent supervision of the show.

Parsa mentioned that *Bachelor Point* stands

out due to its high-quality production writing, “Every character in it plays an important role, as a result, there were no specific hero or heroine. The story was compelling, leaving an impact on the people.” She added, “Many people would even address me by my character Eva’s name. The show transformed my image, making me memorable to the audience.”

Recalling her professional start, she said, “I began with dancing, and it made me feel I would remain a dancer. Then one day, I began acting but my heart would still push me towards dancing. Dance has stayed with me since I was a school-going student.”

“Once I began actively acting after entering this community, I worked on projects directed by Maburur Rashid Bannah and Imraul Rafat. It was also the point when people would praise my acting skill which in turn sparked my growing interest in the craft.”

“For the past three years, I paid earnest attention to my acting career by putting my heart into every role. Now my commitment to acting has grown even stronger, and I am more focused than ever before.”

When asked if she wants to star in films, Parsa expressed, “I aspire to see myself on the big screen. I want to be part of movies that will not only draw audiences to theatres but also earn their applause. If I come across a film offer that resonates with me, I will definitely take on the project.”



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



Shakib Khan’s ‘Dorod’ premiers in 100 theatres

The highly anticipated film *Dorod*, featuring Dhallywood’s leading star Shakib Khan, has been released in theatres today.

Star Cineplex will be featuring 22 daily screenings of *Dorod* across all branches, starting from today.

Directed by Anonno Mamun, the romantic thriller features Bollywood actress Sonal Chauhan alongside Shakib Khan.

The director stated, “The film is releasing in almost 100 theatres, even without an Eid release. I am confident that viewers will have a positive experience watching the film.”

Alongside Bangladesh, the film will also have its global premiere in 22 countries worldwide.

‘Gladiator II’ to hit local screens before US premiere



Gladiator II will premiere in Bangladesh before it even reaches US theatres. The film, directed by Ridley Scott, is set to debut at Star Cineplex today, ahead of its scheduled US release on November 22.

The original *Gladiator* (2000) featured Russell Crowe and Joaquin Phoenix in lead roles. Considered one of the most iconic films of the century, it captured audiences worldwide with its intense action and powerful storytelling.

Now, 24 years later, *Gladiator II* introduces a new chapter in the saga, with British actor Paul Mescal in the lead role. The cast also features acclaimed actors Pedro Pascal and Denzel Washington, among others.

NEWS

Textbooks to feature July uprising

FROM PAGE 12

The interim government had decided to remove any “exaggerated” historical information or “unnecessary” glorification of individuals from the 2025 textbooks.

According to NCTB officials, materials reflecting the former government’s narratives, including speeches of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, would also be removed.

While the current textbooks focus heavily on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s role in the Liberation War, the new editions will also feature the contributions of other key figures, such as Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Tajuddin Ahmad, Syed Nazrul Islam, Gen Ataul Gani Osman, and Ziaur Rahman, according to some members of the textbook revision committee.

In the Bangladesh and Global Studies book for classes four to 10, there might be a change in the chapter on the history of the Liberation War.

According to NCTB sources, “Declaration of Independence by Bangabandhu on 26th March” may be revised. The text may read: “On

March 26, Ziaur Rahman declared independence,” and on March 27, a declaration of independence was made again on behalf of Bangabandhu, they said.

Additionally, various materials in the Bangla textbooks for classes 11 to 12 are undergoing revisions. As part of this, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s essay titled “Days of ‘52” will be removed. Pieces by Muhammed Zafar Iqbal and Mahadev Saha are also being dropped, sources said.

Rakkhal Raha, a writer and researcher involved in the textbook revision process, said the primary challenge from an educational perspective is how recent movements can be incorporated into the textbooks.

“There were discussions with the stakeholders about where and how this content should be included. Although there are various points of view, everyone agrees that at least a minimal amount of content on the recent uprising must be added,” he said.

He said textbooks are intended to serve educational purposes, which was not reflected in the actions of

the previous government. “We are focused on avoiding any potential repetition of those past approaches.”

“Our aim is to retain the integrity of the textbooks’ purpose while considering how and to what extent recent history can be included in a way that keeps textbooks educationally focused,” Rakkhal told this newspaper.

Fatihul Quadir, chief editor (in charge) of the NCTB, said there would be poems and essays in some textbooks. “But the contents are not finalised yet. We’re still developing those materials and are hopeful of completing the content within a week.”

This year, the NCTB is printing over 40 crore copies of textbooks for free distribution among over 4 crore students of primary and secondary schools.

Books for classes one to three have already been sent for printing, while the rest is expected to be completed by the coming month.

“We expect to send over 90 percent of textbooks for all classes by December 25 this year. We may see slight delays in distributing the remaining books,” said Prof Reazul.

Freeze accounts

FROM PAGE 12

the board members of NRBC and provided them with loans, violating banking rules.

Despite being the chairman, Tamal behaved like the managing director of the bank and made the one responsible for the post a puppet, industry insiders said.

NRBC official sources said Tamal did not go to the bank’s head office regularly in the last two months, which he used to do before the fall of the Awami League government on August 5 this year.

A joyous stroll

FROM PAGE 12

An old brick wall along the street, weakened by time, collapsed, crashing Jisan under the rubble.

Locals rushed to help, frantically lifting bricks to free Jisan. But it was too late.

Jisan was declared dead by doctors when he was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said his uncle Nayan Sarder.

“Fatema was playing with a rattle toy. Suddenly, it slipped from her hands and flew several yards away,” he said.

“As Fatema reached for it, her mother, Jhumur Begum, stepped forward to help retrieve it. That’s when the wall collapsed and fell on Jisan as he was near the wall,” Nayan told The Daily Star.

“The old wall stood there in a crumbling state for a long time posing a risk to everyone who used the street. Vehicles ply on it and people use it frequently... It’s a miracle that Jisan’s sister and mother survived,” he said.

Jisan’s distraught mother Jhumur was still at a loss to describe how it all happened.

“My children were frolicking to the hotel to bring breakfast and tea. They love to accompany me on such errands. Suddenly, the wall collapsed, collapsing my world in seconds,” she said as her husband Miraj Hossain tried to console her.

Md Faruk, in charge of DMCH Police Outpost, said the body was kept at the hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The family does not want to file a complaint and wants to take the body without an autopsy, Rampura police said.

Protecting minorities

FROM PAGE 2

Some countries have shown support for the people of Bangladesh, but India has remained silent. Additionally, India has provided refuge to a person who is responsible for all this, he said.

If India genuinely empathises with those who lost loved ones, the people of Bangladesh will appreciate it. “I would like India’s support in ensuring that legal action is taken against those responsible for those acts of violence.”

Replying to another question, he said he was fully aware of what had happened and of the hardships minorities have endured. “It’s important to remember that without timely action, things could have been much worse. For example, during Durga Puja, there were warnings of potential violence.”

“We deployed enough law enforcers, and the celebrations went peacefully. Our government has engaged with the minority communities and assured them of their safety.”

Nahid said he would argue that no previous government has worked as closely with minority communities as

the current administration has. Past governments have used these issues for political gains, eroding the trust of minority communities.

Asked whether extremist groups that are security threats to both Bangladesh and India were gaining strength, Nahid said the people of Bangladesh did not support extremist groups.

“Bangladeshis want a democratic government. What you’re saying reflects a narrative promoted by the Awami League, suggesting that without the party, extremist groups would grow.”

“The Awami League has ruled for many years, and India has supported this viewpoint. But the question is, why should Bangladesh’s internal politics impact its relationship with India? If India truly built its relationship with the people of Bangladesh and not just with the Awami League, this wouldn’t be an issue. For example, we don’t question who is in power in India, whether it’s the BJP or Congress. The same principle should apply here – relations should not hinge on whether the Awami League is in power.”

Talks grapple

FROM PAGE 12

take ownership of building bridging solutions.”

A previous finance goal of \$100 billion per year, which expires in 2025, was met two years late in 2022, the OECD said in May. Much of it was in the form of loans rather than grants, something recipient nations say must change.

Setting the tone at the start of the discussion yesterday, a report from the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance said the target annual figure would need to rise to at least \$1.3 trillion a year by 2035 if countries fail to act now.

“Any shortfall in investment before 2030 will place added pressure on the years that follow, creating a steeper and potentially more costly path to climate stability,” the report said.

Behind the scenes, negotiators are working on draft texts, but so far early-stage documents published by the United Nations climate body

reflect the huge range of views around the table.

So far the conference – which many global leaders decided to skip altogether – has been marked more by division than unity.

French climate minister Agnès Pannier-Runacher on Wednesday cancelled her trip to COP29, after Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev accused France of “crimes” in its overseas territories in the Caribbean.

Meanwhile, Argentina’s government withdrew its negotiators from the COP29 talks yesterday.

Argentina’s President, Javier Milei, has previously called global warming a hoax. He is due to meet Trump, also a climate change denier, this week.

When asked whether Argentina would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, Ana Lamas, undersecretary for environment for Argentina, who led the country’s delegation at COP29, told Reuters: “We are only withdrawing from COP29.”

Dhaka unhappy

FROM PAGE 12

Toufique said the foreign ministry has not yet received any request from the ministry concerned.

Responding to a question about the issuance of a low number of visas by the Indian high commission in Dhaka, the foreign ministry spokesperson said Dhaka has communicated this to New Delhi. However, the Indian authorities said that they had to suspend the processing of visas for some categories due to a manpower shortage.

According to the official, the foreign ministry is trying to ensure that Bangladeshi students, who need to go to India to obtain visas for a third country, can have their visas from other countries like Vietnam, Uzbekistan or Pakistan.

LABOUR COUNSELLOR STAND RELEASED

Toufique said the government has ordered Mohammed Kamrul Islam, counsellor (Labour Wing) at the Bangladesh mission in Geneva, to return home immediately. It also dismissed a local staff member of the mission following the recent

harassment of Law Adviser Asif Nazrul in Geneva.

“It was an unfortunate and unexpected incident... we have already taken actions against one of our officers and a local staff member.”

The foreign ministry spokesperson noted that his ministry has already instructed all Bangladesh missions abroad to take measures to ensure the security and appropriate protocol for the high-level government dignitaries during their visits abroad.

A video circulating on social media shows a group of people confronting Asif at the Geneva Airport when he went there to attend an ILO event.

The incident occurred just before the adviser entered the airport to catch his return flight, with Kamrul accompanying him. At that moment, the labour counsellor allegedly remained passive.

MEDIA REQUESTED TO MAINTAIN CAUTION

Toufique said some newspapers recently ran reports on a few foreign ministry officials, particularly those supposed to be appointed as

ambassadors.

“This is unfortunate. Officials who are appointed as ambassadors have experience of at least 25 years. The government also considers their ability to represent the country abroad. If such a negative media campaign is run, it hurts the country’s image.”

He requested the media to report on a particular issue only after thorough investigations.

Asked if any reforms initiatives were initiated for the foreign ministry, Toufique said no such initiative has been taken.

He, however, said the government recently decided not to extend the tenures of the ambassadors who have retired.

“We had been demanding this for long. You can consider this initiative as part of reforms.”

He informed journalists that UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Indo Pacific Catherine West will be visiting Bangladesh on November 16-17.

She is scheduled to hold meetings with the chief adviser and the foreign adviser.

EU fines Meta 797m euros over abusive practices

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Commission yesterday fined Meta Platforms €797.72 million (\$840.24 million) over abusive practices benefiting Facebook Marketplace, it said in a statement, confirming an earlier report by Reuters.

“The European Commission has fined Meta ... for breaching EU antitrust rules by tying its online classified ads service Facebook Marketplace to its personal social network Facebook and by imposing unfair trading conditions on other online classified ads service providers,” the European Commission said.

Meta said it will appeal the decision, but in the meantime, it will comply and will work quickly and constructively to launch a solution which addresses the points raised.

TOXIC SMOG Stricter anti-pollution curbs imposed in New Delhi

NDTV ONLINE

India's New Delhi has enforced tighter rules to control air pollution after the air quality index, or AQI, reached the 'severe' category. All non-essential construction and demolition work are banned, among other actions.

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) took the decision to raise the pollution mitigation level to GRAP-3, effective from 8:00 am today.

Primary schools in Delhi will switch to online learning mode from today, Chief Minister Atishi announced in a post on X. She said the online classes for primary school children will continue “until further directions”.

Doctors have cautioned people to stay indoors as much as possible.



A rescuer stands in the courtyard as fire rages inside a UN school-turned-shelter after it was hit in an Israeli strike in the Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Destruction in north Gaza widespread

Say displaced Palestinians as rights group warns some may never return

REUTERS, Cairo

Palestinians displaced from northern Gaza said Israeli forces had inflicted widespread destruction on their home districts in their latest six-week-old offensive and a rights group raised concerns Israel might put some areas permanently off-limits.

Jabalia, one of the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, as well as the towns of Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun and nearby villages, were among the first targets of Israel's ground offensive in October 2023 after Hamas members attacked Israel.

Tanks have gone in several more times in what Israel says are necessary operations against Hamas fighters there who still pose a threat. Yesterday, it said its troops had killed dozens of “terrorists” and found a large quantity of weapons.

Former construction contractor

Abu Raed, who was displaced from Jabalia, said Israeli forces were blowing buildings up remotely after booby-trapping them or sending in robots.

Palestinian health ministry officials said Israel's latest airstrikes killed at least 15 people across the enclave, including four at Gaza City's Salahudeen School, which shelters displaced families. At least 43,736 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive on Gaza since Oct 7, 2023.

The Human Rights Watch report was the latest to warn about the dire humanitarian situation.

“Forced displacement has been widespread, and the evidence shows it has been systematic and part of a state policy. Such acts also constitute crimes against humanity,” it said.

It said the displacement “is likely planned to be permanent in the buffer zones and security corridors”.



Sri Lankans vote in parliamentary polls

President expects ‘strong majority’

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake was confident of a victory as polls closed in yesterday's snap legislative elections.

Dissanayake took power in September presidential elections on a promise to combat graft and recover the country's stolen assets, two years after an unprecedented economic meltdown, when then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa was ousted.

Yesterday, the 55-year-old said he expected “a strong majority” in parliament to press ahead with his platform.

“We believe that this is a crucial election that will mark a turning point in Sri Lanka,” Dissanayake told reporters after casting his ballot a polling station in the capital.

“At this election, the NPP expects a mandate for a very strong majority in parliament,” he said referring to the National People's Power coalition in which his JVP, or the People's Liberation Front (JVP) is the main constituent.

The results will be announced today.

Spain's Vanguardia joins The Guardian in leaving X

REUTERS, Madrid

Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia will stop posting on billionaire Elon Musk's X platform and plans to suspend its accounts, saying yesterday the social media network had become an “echo chamber” for disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Spain's fourth most-read newspaper for general news said it would stop posting directly but would allow its journalists to maintain personal accounts.

The editor, Jordi Juan, said he had suspended his own account. X did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The move follows Britain's the Guardian, which also cited racism and conspiracy theories for its exit from the platform on Tuesday.

The Barcelona-based newspaper, which has 1.7 million followers on the platform previously known as Twitter, said X lacked an “effective and reasonable” moderating process since Musk bought it in 2022.

“Since the arrival of Musk to X, this platform has increasingly tolerated toxic and manipulated content thanks to the proliferation of bots,” Juan wrote in an editorial.

“Ideas that violate human rights, such as hatred of ethnic minorities, misogyny, and racism, are part of the viral content distributed on X, where they gain virality and capture more user time to earn more money from advertising,” the paper added in a leader.

Won't negotiate under ‘intimidation’

Iran tells UN nuke chief

AFP, Tehran

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said yesterday that Iran will not negotiate under “intimidation” as he held crunch talks with the UN nuclear chief weeks before US President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said achieving “results” in nuclear talks with Iran was vital to avoid a new conflict in the region already inflamed by Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

His visit comes just days after Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Iran was “more exposed than ever to strikes on its nuclear facilities” giving Israel “the opportunity to achieve our most important goal”.

Grossi said Iranian nuclear installations “should not be attacked” but Trump is expected to give Israel a far freer rein after he takes office in January.

The IAEA chief described his meeting with Araghchi as “indispensable” in a post on X.

IBA

Institute of Business Administration

MBA ADMISSION TEST

Regular Program | Session: 2024-2025

Required Academic Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in any discipline with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 (in a 4.00-point scale) or 2nd class;
- Minimum GPA of 3.00 out of 5.00 (or 2nd division) in both SSC and HSC exams separately.
- Minimum GPA of 2.00 in both O Level and A Level separately. For details, please visit our admission portal.
- No 3rd division/class at SSC/HSC/bachelor's level of education.
- In order to be eligible for the test, an applicant must obtain published official result of his/her bachelor's degree on or before **21 November 2024**. An applicant obtaining his/her result at a date later than this shall be considered as 'disqualified' from the admission process.

- MBA Admission Test (2024-2025) of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka will be held on **Saturday, 30 November 2024, at 10:00 am.**
- The test has two components: Written test and Interview. The written test component evaluates applicant's aptitude in English Language & Communication, Mathematics, and Analytical Ability. An applicant must obtain a minimum qualifying score in each of the above areas to pass the written test. After qualifying in the written test, short listed applicants must appear before an interview board.
- An applicant with a foreign nationality and foreign university degree(s) may be exempted from taking the written test if s/he has a GMAT/GRE score of minimum 75 percentile. However, s/he is required to appear before an interview board.
- For all foreign certificates/degrees (excluding O Level and A Level), equivalence will be determined by the Equivalence Committee of IBA. Without such equivalence, the applicant will not be eligible to apply for the admission test.
- An applicant with a degree from UGC unapproved program of any university is not eligible to apply for the admission test.
- Total application fee is Tk. 2080/- (including online processing fee). The application must be submitted online by **Thursday, 21 November 2024**. For detailed application procedure, please visit: **www.mba.iba-du.edu**
- For further information, please call 01764119001 or 01764119002 between 10:00 am to 06:00 pm on any working day till **Thursday, 21 November 2024**.

Director
Institute of Business Administration
University of Dhaka

GD- 955

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH

Purchase & Procurement Department

Plot 16, Block B, Aftabuddin Ahmed Road, Bashundhara Residential Area, Dhaka 1245
Hotline: 09612 939393, Extention: 1652 and 1653

REVISED TENDER FOR NETWORKING EQUIPMENT (ACTIVE & PASSIVE)

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) invites sealed quotations from the reputed manufacturers/bona-fide dealers/suppliers for supplying, installation, testing & commissioning of active networking equipment along with passive networking and cabling works. The detailed specifications, quantity of the products and other terms & conditions are mentioned in the tender schedule. Interested bidders are requested to purchase tender schedule from the Purchase & Procurement Department (Admin Building, Level 1, Room no. 2031) on cash payment of Tk.2,000/- (non-refundable) to the Finance & Accounts Department between the office hours 9:30 am to 4:00 pm (Sunday through Thursday) till **November 19, 2024**.

The sealed bids (technical and financial) will be submitted by the bidders in two separate envelopes to the Purchase & Procurement Department. The bids will be received up to **November 28, 2024**. The financial bid must accompany an earnest money (2.5% of the quoted amount) in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in favor of Independent University, Bangladesh. The university authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason. The IT firms, who purchased the tender documents earlier, will not need to purchase again.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Executive Engineer

District: Cumilla
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.1900.000.07. 427.2024-7121

Date: 13/11/2024

e-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No: 27/2024-2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Works as stated below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of Works	Tender/ Proposal ID No.	Document last selling/ downloading Date and Time	Tender/ Proposal Closing Date and Time	Method of Tender
1.	LGED/CUM/VRRP/OL/24-25/W-249	Rehabilitation of Batabaria R& H - Dhambahar R&H via Noagav bazar Road from Ch: 00-1000m (Road ID: 419724009) under Laksham Upazila, District: Cumilla.	1033868	02-Dec 2024 16:00 BST	03-Dec-2024 12:30 BST	LTM
2.	CDWSP/CUM/BURI/W-11	Widening & Strengthening of Burichong UP Office-Rajapur UP Office Road Ch. 00-5900m Road ID No: 419183001 under Burichong Upazila, Cumilla District (Value of Recovered Material Tk= 10,09,490.00).	1035849	17-Dec 2024 16:00 BST	18-Dec-2024 12:30 BST	OTM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no Off-line/Hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any Branches of registered Bank.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

The Tender Notice will be available on the website: www.lged.gov.bd and www.lged.cumilla.gov.bd

(Md. Ziaul Islam Majumder)
Executive Engineer
LGED, Cumilla
Phone: 081-68960
E-mail: xen.cumilla@lged.gov.bd

GD- 956

Swift release of aid for July victims vital

Why would the injured need to demand what should be readily given?

We are quite troubled to see that a street protest—that too for 14 hours—had to occur for those injured in the July–August uprising to put the spotlight on their grievances surrounding treatment, promised compensation, and rehabilitation. This is an issue that should not have arisen in the first place. Those who suffered injuries or lost their loved ones during the movement to bring down a fascist regime deserve our gratitude and sincere cooperation, not the frustration of having to fight once more to receive basic support.

Reportedly, injured protesters staged a sit-in in front of the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) after Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum visited the hospital but apparently only met a few of the injured, triggering angry reactions among others. This led to a prolonged road blockade that stretched into early Thursday. The protesters, later joined by patients from the nearby National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital (NIOH), were still bearing the scars of the uprising, many with bandages or using crutches or wheelchairs. As well as expressing their grievances, they also called for the resignation of the health adviser. It was only after the intervention of four government advisers late at night that they agreed to return to their hospitals.

It may be recalled that at least 873 individuals lost their lives, and 19,931 were injured, during the uprising. So far, the health authorities have taken various measures to assist the affected and their families. Government hospitals have been providing free treatment, and doctors from abroad have been brought in to address complex injuries. Meanwhile, according to an estimate given by the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation, the families of 200 deceased, and over 500 injured individuals, have received compensation so far.

That means a large number of the victims are still waiting for compensation, even after over three months, while many require advanced treatment which is not possible in local hospitals. These issues coupled with concerns over their rehabilitation have caused frustrations. The delayed release of funds is apparently due to verification issues as many claimants still needed further documentation. However, Sarjis Alam, general secretary of the foundation, stressed that once the verification process is completed, funds can be released to 500 people every day, and that everyone would get their compensation by December. The government, after Wednesday’s protests, also promised to devise a framework for the treatment and rehabilitation of the injured, in consultation with the latter, and implement it by December.

We are encouraged to hear that, but we must urge the authorities to ensure nothing comes in the way of fulfilling these promises. The July victims and their families have already endured unimaginable hardships; it is our duty to ensure they are given the dignity, care, and support they deserve. To meet the deadlines set by the government, it is also vital to streamline these processes to reduce the chances of bureaucratic delays or obstacles.

Carbon neutrality is non-negotiable

Major polluters must help nations most vulnerable to climate change

As Bangladesh and other vulnerable countries grapple with the devastating effects of climate change, the urgency for global action has never been clearer. With the world passing through what is expected to be the warmest year on record, the stakes are higher than ever. At COP29, nations are presently discussing their next course of action, but ongoing tensions, especially after climate change denier Donald Trump’s victory in US elections, reveal a worrying lack of political resolve. Equally concerning is the fact that, nearly a decade after the Paris Agreement was signed, efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius remain woefully inadequate, while climate finance promises also remain unmet.

Against this backdrop, recent research highlights a sobering reality: that to address the current environmental degradation, the world needs to achieve net-zero CO2 emissions by the late 2030s, not 2050. This is a stark reminder that we are running out of time. Thus, it is painful to see ongoing political inertia, funding crisis and refusals, as well as continued resistance from major polluters. This is not only threatening our planet but disproportionately impacting countries like Bangladesh.

One of the most striking moments at COP29 came from Bahamian Prime Minister Philip Davis, who pointed to how vast financial resources are mobilised for military conflicts while affluent nations remain reluctant to address the existential threat of climate change. His criticism is particularly poignant when we consider the environmental toll of war. For instance, the first 60 days of Israel’s war following the October 7 Hamas attack on Gaza produced approximately 281,000 metric tonnes of CO2. These realities underscore the irony of a world that can finance war but struggles to do the bare minimum to prevent its downfall.

Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus’s message at COP29—calling for a “zero waste” world and an economic model that reduces consumption—also resonates powerfully. He expressed frustration with the climate finance negotiations, calling it “humiliating” for vulnerable nations to beg for financial assistance. Yunus argued that these nations, which have contributed the least to global warming, should not be put in a position where they must plead for help, while wealthier nations that have contributed the most continue to evade their obligations.

The fact is, achieving carbon neutrality is not a negotiable goal. It is essential for the survival of nations like Bangladesh. As the world approaches critical climate thresholds, we must push for stronger global response, and ensure that the wealthiest nations deliver on their commitments on emissions and climate financing.

Ending impunity for crimes against journalists

Newer impediments for the free press

THE THIRD VIEW



Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

It was somewhat ironic. I was attending the UNESCO conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to commemorate the 2024 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEA) at a time when, in Bangladesh, the highest number of journalists in our history had been accused of “murder,” with four of them being in jail. These charges are so farcical and unfounded that the credibility of the interim government may now come under question. Thankfully, this topic did not come up at the conference.

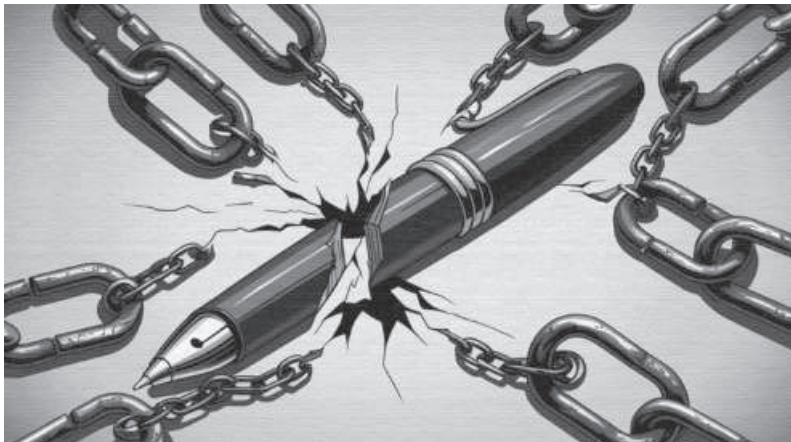
What came out in the UNESCO conference is that violent crimes against journalists were on the rise, especially in conflict zones where journalists not only faced violent attacks but were targeted in many places by the contending fighting forces who enjoyed complete impunity from their respective governments. The killing of journalists in Gaza by the Israeli army is by far the worst example in recent history. According to various sources such as *The Guardian* and NBC News, as of November 5, around 134-147 journalists and media workers, including 120 academics and over 224 humanitarian and aid workers have been killed. The silence or very muted reaction to these crimes against journalists by the Western media and media protection bodies has indeed been shameful, to say the least.

A joint paper presented by UNESCO and the African Union at the conference stated that, “Too many (journalists) pay unacceptably high prices, including death, enforced disappearances, torture, unlawful detention and kidnapping for producing independent, reliable and verifiable information.” In conflict areas, journalists being killed have doubled in the 2022-2023 period, reversing a five-year trend of improvement. This has happened mostly in Africa (Gaza incidents are not included here) where, in the 2023-2024 period, 14 journalists have been killed, predominantly in countries experiencing conflict. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), in 2024, 14 journalists have been disappeared in the same region and 32 journalists have been detained. In 12 sub-Saharan African countries, at least 47 journalists have been detained

on charges of defamation, censorship violation, anti-state news reporting, religious insults, etc.

A new reality is emerging for journalists covering environmental issues. Just as climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent, journalists reporting on them are facing serious threats and challenges to their work. In May 2024, for World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO released a report revealing that 70 percent of journalists covering environmental issues have been attacked in connection with their work.

The situation for journalists in Bangladesh is similarly disheartening. Between 1992 and 2024, 26 journalists were killed according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). None of these cases have seen



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

justice completed. As Zyma Islam from this daily reported, “...in the last two and half decades, cases filed over murders of at least 13 journalists have apparently got lost in the annals of time. The stories are the same for all of them—investigations navigating through a labyrinthine judicial mess, never ending probes and traceless culprits—all in all, complete impunity.”

Since the change in government in August, a new cause for worry has descended upon journalists—sweeping murder charges. In my column published a month ago, I wrote, “...cases have been filed against 129 journalists in Dhaka, Chattogram, Bogura and Rajshahi” on various charges of murder, attempted murder, etc. Although mass filing of cases

against journalists has now stopped, those who have already had cases filed against them remain victimised. Though they are not imprisoned, their livelihoods have been severely impacted, with some experiencing complete professional destruction. Life is particularly difficult for journalists in district and upazila towns. They live under constant fear of being picked up by the police or being physically assaulted by their political opponents and professional rivals. Daily life for their families has also been affected, including those of their children who fear going to schools or sitting for examinations.

In the midst of it all, Asif Nazrul, our law adviser, commented a few days ago that, “the wholesale filing of cases is embarrassing the government.” He said that common people, particularly the political victims and rivals of the previous regime are the ones filing these cases, not the government—as was common under the previous regime. However, any indication that such wholesale case filing, even if they are not being done by the government, will be stopped or at least examined in some way before being filed, was missing in his statement. As someone

Act of 1923—pending their repeal or amendment in line with international human rights standards.”

This would be an important step to take at the start of Bangladesh’s new journey, reflecting a strong commitment to freedom of expression and the media. Our history has shown that whenever we have the chance to begin anew, we often dwell too much

What came out in the UNESCO conference is that violent crimes against journalists were on the rise, especially in conflict zones where journalists not only faced violent attacks but were targeted in many places by the contending fighting forces who enjoyed complete impunity from their respective governments. The killing of journalists in Gaza by the Israeli army is by far the worst example in recent history.

on the past and too little on the future. This time it appears different as Prof Yunus’s government has established six new reform commissions, including one on media, to suggest forward-looking changes. We expect the media reform commission will create a legal framework to clarify the freedoms and autonomy of media institutions, making media freedom a lasting element of Bangladesh’s future.

We also endorse CPJ’s suggestions for the “withdrawal or dismissal of hundreds of criminal cases lodged against journalists in retaliation for their work.” Many cases filed by the previous government were purely political, aimed at punishing specific media outlets or journalists. These should be dismissed immediately. With the repeal of the Cyber Security Act, the withdrawal of such cases should be straightforward.

As for the murder cases filed under the current government, efforts should be made to review and dismiss those without evidentiary basis. Such actions would significantly enhance the present government’s commitment to a free press.

Though the signals are mixed—the recent withdrawal of accreditation for 167 journalists without explanation being the latest example—we still hope that the media in Bangladesh will see a new dawn and that the whole world of freedom of expression will finally flourish here.

Bangladesh should endorse the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty



Farzana Faruk Jhumu
is a climate activist and a co-founder of Kaathpencil.

FARZANA FARUK JHUMU

Bangladesh is currently in a crucial transition period with reform initiatives taken in a number of areas. Urgent reform in the energy sector is also needed. As a climate justice activist, I have been advocating for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty since 2021, around the same time that Professor Muhammad Yunus—now the head of the interim government in Bangladesh—first endorsed the proposal for a global treaty to manage a fast and fair transition away from coal, oil and gas extraction.

Bangladesh is a country particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Being a low-lying delta, we are highly susceptible to sea-level rise, which is causing coastal erosion, displacement of communities, and saltwater intrusion into agricultural lands. Our nation is prone to cyclones, floods, and droughts, which have devastating consequences for its population and economy. The primary contributor to climate change causing such catastrophes in Bangladesh is the fossil fuel industry.

The fossil fuel industry is not only

at the heart of climate change but it is also intertwined with decades of corruption in Bangladesh. The wave of corruption cases increasingly shows the role of the fossil fuel industry in an era of deception and misconduct. Fossil fuel industries have monopolised the energy sector through unnecessary power plant constructions, contract extensions, inflated service charges on fuel imports, and excessive capacity payments. Because of the former government’s policy, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDDB) had to buy electricity from privately owned fossil fuel-based companies at inflated prices. Although a large part of the power generation capacity remains unused throughout the year. Even when there is no electricity production by these companies, BPDDB still has to pay capacity charges to the power plants. Additionally, the country has been left in a bad state due to electricity imports from an Indian company. As a result, our dependence on fossil fuels makes us more vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply disruptions.

All these indicate that we need to

reform our energy sector—one that is free of fossil fuels. If we are bringing change, we need to depend on a new system, to stop the dependency on fossil fuel imports, and avoid market monopolisation by fossil fuel lobbyists. For that, we are calling on the current government to join the bloc of countries seeking to negotiate a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty.

The climate movement in Bangladesh has been calling for justice and rights. Our work is not over even after a successful mass resistance and protest against injustice and the silencing of rights of Bangladeshi people. Now begins the more difficult work of creating actual, lasting reform.

The climate movement in Bangladesh has been calling for justice and rights. Our work is not over even after a successful mass resistance and protest against injustice and the silencing of rights of Bangladeshi people. Now begins the more difficult work of creating actual, lasting reform.

Global treaties have historically proven effective in addressing

worldwide threats such as the ozone layer depletion and phasing out landmines. The fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty would provide a similar international framework to phase out fossil fuels based on three pillars: i) non-proliferation—ending the expansion of new coal, oil and gas fields; ii) a fair phase out—transitioning away from existing production in line with 1.5C global temperature threshold, with wealthy countries shifting first and fastest; iii) a global just transition—support and financing a global shift to renewables in which no worker, community, or country like ours is left behind.

Favourably, the proposals in the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty align with Bangladesh’s national climate change strategy, which aims to reduce vulnerability to climate change and promote sustainable development. Supporting the treaty and a fast and fair transition away from fossil fuels can attract investment in renewable energy projects, creating jobs and boosting the economy.

As a youth champion of the treaty, I urge the interim government to take the initiative to endorse it during the ongoing COP29 UN climate summit in Baku. By endorsing the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty, Bangladesh, under Dr Yunus’s leadership, can demonstrate its commitment to addressing climate change and protecting its population from the devastating impacts of global warming. We could take the lead as the first nation in South Asia to back this bold, powerful, and historic proposal.

When art and politics collide

Dr Samina Luthfa, associate professor at the Department of Sociology in Dhaka University, talks about the recent controversy surrounding Shilpakala Academy and the theatre scene in Bangladesh with Monorom Polok of The Daily Star.

The halting of a theatre performance at Shilpakala early November caused quite a stir. Could you share your thoughts on this incident?

The decision to halt the theatre performance on November 2 was an unprecedented and unfortunate event in the history of Bangladeshi theatre. A group of people came and threatened to set fire to the Shilpakala Academy, attempting to attack the premises. This incident created a sense of insecurity and fear among the theatre group and audience members—and I fully acknowledge that there were real and genuine security concerns for us all.

In such a situation, what do you believe should have been Shilpakala Academy's role?

Shilpakala Academy has a responsibility to ensure the safety of both theatre practitioners and the audience. Although other institutions across Bangladesh had resumed normal operations, the academy was the last to reopen, and even then, only on a limited scale. Although the venue finally reopened post-uprising, Shilpakala Academy has not returned to its usual state. The halls are still heavily guarded, with the army stationed there. The academy, once a cultural centre, has effectively become an army encampment. We understand that the army's presence is necessary for maintaining law and order, but why should they occupy Shilpakala?

The state should find an alternative solution. If the army needs accommodations, there are other options. Placing them at Shilpakala shows how cultural activities are not prioritised by the government. The prevailing attitude seems to be that shutting down artistic spaces temporarily will not have any serious consequences. But this approach is fundamentally flawed. Using Shilpakala to accommodate the army reflects a lack of appreciation for the power of cultural practices in challenging authoritarian mindsets.

Has this incident impacted the financial stability of theatre groups? Could you explain how?

The decision to open only the largest hall, which is costly to use and requires a significant audience turnout, has placed tremendous financial pressure on theatre groups. Even so, groups have tried to continue performing on Fridays and Saturdays. However, staging plays at the National Theatre Hall remains economically challenging, and one group, even after paying for their performance date, was unable to complete their show. Symbolically, this incident has damaged the government's image, while also creating severe financial difficulties for the theatre group involved and discouraging audiences from attending performances. Such outcomes have seriously harmed the theatre and cultural scene.

The director general of Shilpakala has claimed the performance was halted to ensure audience safety. Was this the correct response in your view?

The director general of Shilpakala claimed that the performance was stopped to ensure audience safety. But when a small group of 10-15 people threatened to set fire to the building where the army was stationed, the situation was clearly mishandled. I understand that he faced a difficult dilemma: defying the mob's demands, aligned with the sentiments of the July uprising, or upholding the age-old tradition of "the show must go on." He chose to halt the performance, a choice that has had significant repercussions. Had the incident been handled more decisively, it might have been prevented. Instead, indecision triggered a ripple effect, worsening the situation.

An additional complication arose because one or two members of the theatre group were known supporters of the previous fascist regime. But if you look across Bangladesh, you will find numerous people affiliated with the Awami League. There are undoubtedly many AL supporters within the theatre community as well. Yet, would it be justified to punish a person for their speech in the new Bangladesh? Does it make sense to condemn an entire troupe for one person's opinions? On November 2, protesters demanded that this individual be handed over to them. This signifies a complete disregard for judicial



DR SAMINA LUTHFA

processes, suggesting an intent to enforce their own form of justice.

I am not defending this individual's actions. His Facebook posts were inappropriate and crossed boundaries of decency. However, punishing an entire theatre group for one person's actions is unfair, and cancelling a performance on these grounds is indefensible.

Ironically, those causing disruptions did not even know the name of the theatre group or the person they were targeting, who wasn't a performer but a member of the ensemble. This highlights how the cultural enablers of Hasina's regime—as well the leaders of Dhaka's theatre scene—have created a disconnect between their so-called "holy shrine" of art (Shilpakala Academy) and the masses.

This seems to highlight a deeper issue of intolerance in the public sphere. How would you describe the behaviour of the disruptors that day?

The disruptors seemed to lack an understanding of theatre customs and norms. They attempted to incite violence in a coordinated way, which should not be tolerated by the government, as it ultimately

harms its reputation. Additionally, theatre activists need to engage with these individuals and bring their art closer to the public to bridge this divide.

The day after the incident, theatre practitioners protested outside Shilpakala Academy. We submitted our six-point demand to the director general, including the immediate resumption of the play at no cost to the group and the reimbursement of incurred expenses. Additional demands, such as removing the military presence, were also raised. If the venue had been accessible to theatre practitioners and audiences, a small group of disruptors would not have caused such chaos. This was evident on November 8, when a large number of theatre workers were present, preventing further disturbances.

Despite efforts of resistance, the conflict continues to escalate. The Federation of Theatre Groups has organised more protests, and some groups have suspended performances in protest. But this could have been prevented if the initial error had been handled differently. Now, even the fascist enablers situated abroad are organising protests, stating that the government has shut down all cultural activities in the country. Meanwhile, concerts, festivals, and events continue across Dhaka, yet theatre at Shilpakala remains in turmoil.

Were incidents like this common under previous regimes, or have things changed over the years?

No, nothing like this occurred under previous regimes. Historically, Bangladesh's theatre community supported the AL. They actively defended the party's actions and suppressed dissent. In the 1980s, groups like the Group Theatre Federation opposed Ershad's dictatorship through street protests and protest theatre. However, over the last 10-15 years, many of these same figures aligned themselves with the AL's cultural agenda.

This cultural control stifled dissent, equating criticism of the AL government with anti-Liberation War sentiments. Organisations like the Group Theatre Federation enforced this narrative, determining performance schedules,

government grants, and resources based on political loyalty.

Is this the first time that theatre has been used to protest issues beyond politics, like environmental concerns?

One example is the play by the group Tirandaj, which was cancelled during the Sundarbans movement in 2016. They planned a debate on whether a power plant near the Sundarbans was justified, unrelated to their play. Yet, the play and the debate were both cancelled. This decision was met with little resistance from theatre groups, except for a few. Our group, BotTala, opposed this injustice and was subsequently denied performance dates at Shilpakala Academy for 18 months, until we threatened legal action.

Another incident involved attacks by Awami League's youth wing activists during a university theatre performance, where the audience and performers were harassed. Instead of condemning the attackers, theatre practitioners held a meeting to admonish those who spoke out against the violence on Facebook. This pattern of silencing criticism persisted, with cultural enforcers protecting the political interests of the last government.

Theatre should be a space for expressing reality and confronting injustices. We cannot have genuine artistic expression unless those who have supported authoritarian practices in the last regime admit their mistakes. True artists must have the courage to acknowledge their errors and seek reconciliation. If someone has publicly justified violence, the massacre in July, or enabled cultural fascism, they must apologise and make amends. Only then can we move forward.

For those of us who use theatre as a medium of protest and expression, it is difficult to share space with people who have vilified and undermined the July uprising, its martyrs, and their sacrifices. We cannot forget the harm they have done, both to individuals and to the cultural landscape. Reconciliation must begin with accountability from those responsible for past harms. Otherwise, our commitment to art and social progress will be meaningless.

We need a 'public interest override' in the RTI Act

Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh, RIB. They can be reached at rnb@rictech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

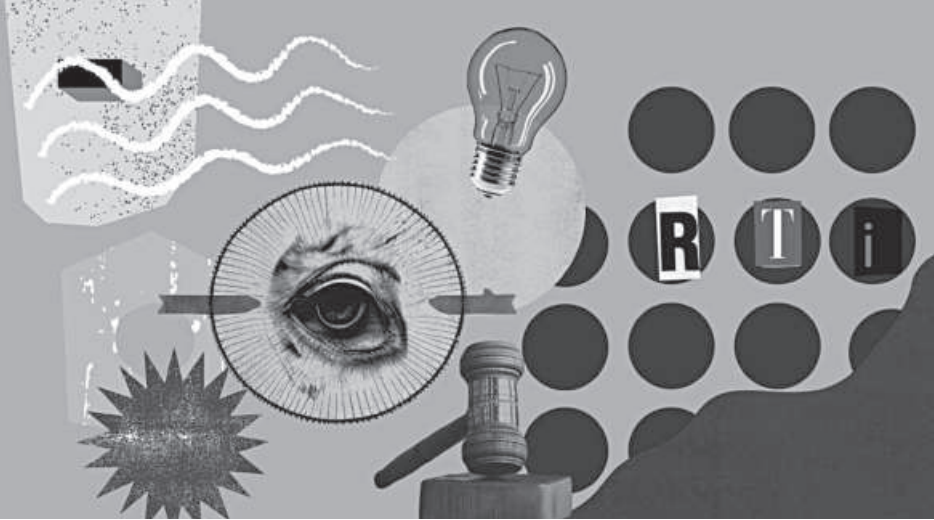
Since the interim government of Bangladesh assumed power in August 2024, we have been advocating for the immense potential of the Right to Information Act (RTI) 2009 in promoting transparent and accountable governance. In today's column, we highlight a crucial principle of transparency currently missing from our RTI Act but deserving inclusion: the "public interest override." The principle has been incorporated into the laws of many liberal democracies worldwide, making it a part of a larger global movement.

International standards for transparent governance, which have evolved since the end of the Second World War, advocate for the "principle of maximum disclosure" as the ideal for all RTI laws. It asserts that, as a general rule, citizens have the right to access all information held by the government, with very few exceptions. These exceptions should be as narrow as possible and aimed solely at protecting the state's legitimate interests. In other words, public interest should be the yardstick when balancing citizens' right to information concerning governance and the state's legitimate need to safeguard certain sensitive information.

RTI Acts, also known as Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts—adopted by over 130 countries worldwide—typically contain specific provisions known as Exemption Clauses, which permit public authorities to withhold certain information from citizens. This information often relates to national security, international relations, personal privacy, commercial confidentiality, etc.

To prevent misuse of these exemptions for withholding information of particular public interest, a "public interest override" clause has been added to most RTI laws enacted since 1990. This means that if the public interest outweighs the likely harm to the state's interest, even an exempted piece

Consider these examples from different parts of the world. In Ontario, Canada, the Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) deemed certain parts of records on a worker's death on company premises to be of compelling public interest. The release of this information would "help inform the



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

of information must be disclosed by public authorities, thus exempting the exemption clause. Public authorities must, therefore, carry out an inherent "harm test" when making decisions about information requests that may fall within the purview of the exemption clause.

The Bangladesh Act does not contain such an "override" clause. But given the country's recent surge for democracy, we believe it is time to consider its inclusion. This clause would require public authorities to justify their decisions more thoroughly when rejecting citizens' requests using exemption provisions.

Conversely, in the UK, the application of the principle led to a decision against disclosure. A FOI request was sent to the office of the deputy prime minister for a copy of the London Resilience Team Report, which contained findings and recommendations for improving emergency planning and response arrangements in London to cope with serious terrorist incidents. The request was denied on national security and defence grounds and upheld by the ombudsman. Despite recognising the very strong public interest in matters that had the potential to cause harm to the security of London, the Appeals Court found that the benefit of disclosure outweighed the damage it may cause to security. The release could allow terrorists access to information about the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of London to respond to a terrorist attack.

Another UK case involved a journalist who suspected that a university was paying a staff member without any duties and asked whether the staff member was receiving a salary and for details of her duties. The university initially refused the request on grounds of the staff member's privacy, but the appellate authority ruled that the accountability of a public institution outweighed the privacy interests of the employee.

An Ireland case related to a request for information on the total expenses paid to each member of a group, including travel expenses, telephone and other related costs in a given period. The concerned authority initially anonymised the released information, arguing that the members' identities and how much each received was personal information that was entitled to exemption. On appeal, however, the Irish Information Commissioner mandated full disclosure, as the public interest in ensuring accountability for public funds was considered to outweigh the officials' privacy concerns.

In another UK case, an information seeker

asked the Department of Agriculture and Food for certain records relating to two companies involved in poultry processing. It was refused on the grounds of protecting commercial interests. In its decision, the Information Commissioner recognised that the records contained information which could damage the reputation and commercial interests of the companies but found significant public interest in the matter since the department carried out regulatory functions in health, food safety, and disease control. He concluded that the interest of the public, as ultimate consumers of poultry products, outweighed the need to protect the commercial interests of the companies.

In neighbouring India, an RTI applicant sought information about the selection of eleven deputy directors of Mines Safety by the Union Public Service Commission. This was denied, citing exemption on personal privacy grounds. Faced with a complaint, the Information Commission ordered the release of the information with the seniority-cum-merit list of the selected candidates without, however, releasing their personal information. On appeal, the court ordered disclosure of personal information as necessary for larger public interest and hence exempt from the exemption provision of the law.

Applying the "public interest override" principle is not straightforward, as defining "public interest" can be challenging. RTI/FOI laws worldwide deliberately avoid doing so, mainly because such interests cover a wide range of situations which are not static but dynamic and evolve continually over time. Its application calls for individual determinations on the specifics of each case. It requires mature judgment and expertise by public authorities and the Information Commission. Despite these challenges, current developments in Bangladesh make it an opportune time to enhance the RTI Act to this higher standard.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

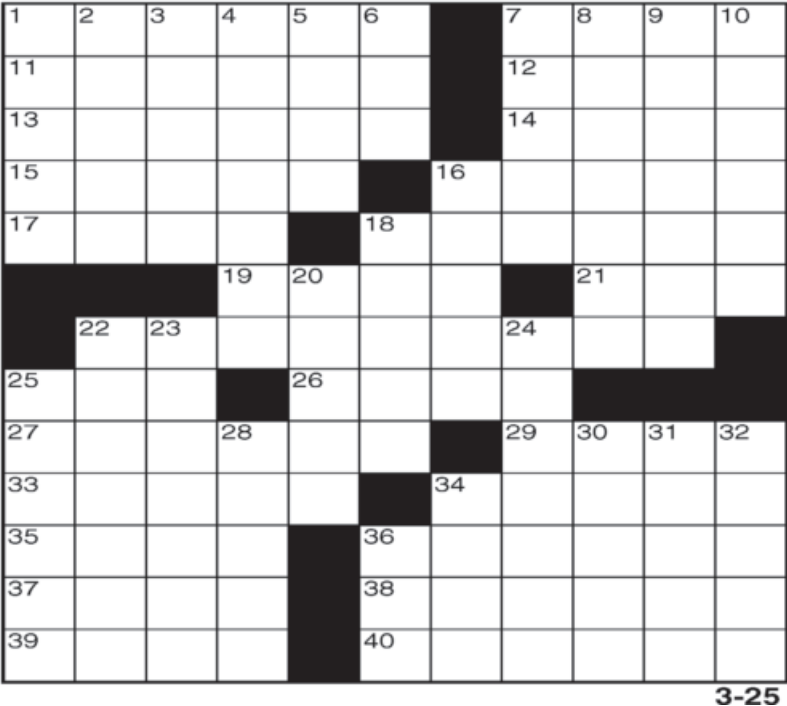
ACROSS

- 1 Little lad
- 7 Standard
- 11 Holiday event
- 12 Open space
- 13 Bankrupt
- 14 Veto
- 15 Dined at home
- 16 "Love Story" writer
- 17 Holler
- 18 Placid
- 19 Norse trickster
- 21 Got together
- 22 Quadrilateral type
- 25 Runner Sebastian
- 26 Stratum
- 27 Come to
- 29 Crimson Tide, for short
- 33 Light lunch
- 34 "Eat up!"
- 35 Ninny
- 36 Genetic oddity
- 37 Take it easy
- 38 Skilled ones
- 39 Needle features

40 Galileo's crime

DOWN

- 1 Mist
- 2 __ cuisine
- 3 "The Tempest" sprite
- 4 Cream soda flavor
- 5 Perfect place
- 6 Spectrum end
- 7 Au naturel
- 8 Folding art
- 9 Akin
- 10 Croquet need
- 16 Grab
- 18 Yarn buy
- 20 Made a choice
- 22 Take to the impound lot
- 23 Become aware of
- 24 Satellite
- 25 Rook
- 28 Hudson and Jackson
- 30 Visibly stunned
- 31 Breath fresheners
- 32 Fidgeting
- 34 Slacker address
- 36 __ jongg



MONDAY'S ANSWERS

P	A	R	E	R		R	A	M	I	S
A	T	O	N	E		A	V	A	N	T
R	O	O	D	S		M	A	R	T	Y
I	N	K			C	A	B		G	A
S	C	I			U	N	O		I	C
H	E	E	D	E	D		A	N	T	S
					M	O	R	O	C	C
A	R	I	A		R	E	E	F	E	R
D	O	S			U	R	N		E	L
L	O	T			S	A	T		R	O
I	M	A	G	E		I	D	R	I	S
B	I	K	E	R		M	O	O	S	E
S	E	E	M	S		O	G	R	E	S

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

LAW VISION

Bangladesh needs to introduce a good samaritan law

The Bangladesh Constitution imposes a duty upon the State to ensure the right to life and medical care in Articles 32 and 15(a), respectively. Thus, the parliament, being an organ of the State, is obliged to protect these rights and the voluntary saviours of these rights—good samaritans—by legislature.

MD. ASADULLAHIL GALIB

The common scenario concerning road accidents is that there are usually three types of people other than victims and wrongdoers, namely, reluctant spectators, stealers, and voluntary rescuers. The reluctant spectators are liable for breaching the obligation 'to perform public duties [of rescuing victims] and to protect public property [which ought to include lives of people]' as enshrined in article 21(I) of the Constitution of Bangladesh. The stealers are clearly offenders of theft and thus liable under section 379 of the Penal Code 1860. The voluntary rescuers, who act as saviours for victims, perform their constitutional obligation under Article 21(I). They are known as 'samaritans' or 'charitable or helpful people.'

Since the samaritans perform public duties voluntarily, the statutory law should protect them from unwanted harassment by medical officials and police, and further unreasonable incrimination. They facilitate the emergency medical treatment which victims need the most within one hour—the golden hour. The global trend, developing gradually in this regard, is to enact a specific 'Good Samaritan law' that provides legal protection to the samaritans by immunising them from legal liability that

might arise from injury or death consequential in the rescue process. For example, Canada enacted the Good Samaritan Act in 2001, Ireland enacted the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act in 2011, and the UK enacted the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act in 2015. Such an immunity clause is 'generally' found in Bangladesh in section 92 which exempts from liability 'act done in good faith for benefit of a person without consent'. However, the scope of this section is limited to criminal liability only.



The trend of enacting specific laws for the protection of samaritans is followed by India as it inserted section 134A de novo by an amendment in 2019 in the Motor Vehicle Act 1988. This section immunises 'good samaritan' from any sort of legal action that may likely arise due to 'any

injury to or death of the victim of an accident involving a motor vehicle' on condition that such good samaritan 'render[s] emergency medical or non-medical care or assistance.' Such immunity even extends to negligent acts or failure to perform certain acts in the rescue process. This legislative change was introduced in compliance with the Indian Supreme Court's direction to the government, in *Savile Foundation v Union of India* (2016), to formulate a legal framework for the protection of good samaritans.

The development in Bangladesh in this regard is the Emergency Medical Services for Road Accident Victims and Protection of Good Samaritans Guidelines 2018, prepared by the Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The guidelines were subsequently approved in 2020 by the High Court Division in *Syed Saifuddin Kamal v Bangladesh* (2020). The Court held the guidelines as legally enforceable 'up

until necessary legislative enactments are brought forth.' The term 'legislative enactment' is an indication to primary

legislation and an implied direction towards legislature to enact laws in this regard.

The guidelines contain 16 rules including a preamble. One of the objectives of the guidelines is to provide protection to good samaritan of road accidents victims. As per rule 5.8, a good samaritan refers to an individual who willingly steps forward to assist injured persons, without expecting monetary payment or reward. The concept of 'Golden Hour' is recognised in rule 6.2. Furthermore, rule 13 provides immunity to good samaritan



from detention or harassment by hospital authority, and also prohibits requiring Good Samaritan to disclose his/her identity or to give evidence or to pay compensation for any bonafide loss during rescue process. Now, it is high time we converted the guidelines into statutory law as a manifestation of compliance with HCD direction.

To conclude, the Bangladesh Constitution imposes a duty upon the State to ensure the right to life and medical care in Articles 32 and 15(a), respectively. Thus, the parliament, being an organ of the State, is obliged to protect these rights and the voluntary saviours of these rights—good samaritans—by legislature.

The writer teaches law at the Dhaka International University (DIU).

LAW REFORM

Preventing illegal human organ trafficking

ATIQR RAHAMAN

The Human Organ Transplantation Act 1999 has been enacted in Bangladesh to prevent commercial organ trade. Section 2A of the Act says that no hospital can transplant human organs without permission from the government. According to section 3, a healthy person with a sound mind



can donate his/her organs for transplantation to a close relative if there is no fear of it disrupting his/her everyday life. If the person has been declared 'brain-dead', any of his/her legal heirs can permit in writing the transplantation of the organs from the body of the person.

Section 9 of the Act strictly prohibits buying and selling human body organs or getting any benefit in exchange and giving any advertisement or other kind of promotion. Section 10 of the Act further penalises the giving of false information about being close relatives, or encouraging, inducing or intimidating someone to make such false representation. Such person shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding two years or with a fine not exceeding five lakh takas, or both. In addition, if he violates any other provision of this Act or assists in the violation, he shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding three years or with a fine not exceeding ten lakh takas, or both. The doctor, if convicted, will get his/her registration canceled by the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.

Section 10A of the Act further enunciates that if any offence is committed by any hospital under this Act, the hospital's permission to transplant organs will be canceled, and a fine will be imposed. However, the author believes that despite existing laws, illegal organ trade is not being prevented or controlled. This is because firstly, there is a lack of implementation of the law in our country. Secondly, the Act has made it too narrow as to who can do voluntary donate organs for transplantation, creating obstacles for emergencies. India's Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act 1994, and Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Rules 2014 state that other emotional donors can donate their organs apart from close relatives.

In 2017, a writ petition was filed in the High Court Division (HCD) challenging the provisions that limit such donations. Then, in 2019, the HCD directed the government to amend the law to address this problem. Indeed, the government should amend the law and increase the punishment and fine so that illegal organ trafficking can be prevented in society; otherwise, such crime will only increase day by day. On the other hand, those who are 'emotional donors', should be allowed to donate. These amendments are urgently needed to address a pressing need of the society.

The writer is student of law, University of Asia Pacific.

RIGHTS AND REMEDIES

Compensation as a remedy under constitutional tort law in Bangladesh

MIR MOHAMMAD MOHI UDDIN RAFI

Article 102(I) of the Constitution enables the High Court Division (HCD) to give directions or orders as may be 'appropriate' for the enforcement of any fundamental rights. Thus, the Article permits the petitioner and the HCD to choose any suitable remedy, including compensation, for the enforcement of fundamental rights, as it does not specify the sort of redress.

Mahmudul Islam, a prominent constitutional thinker of Bangladesh, explains that the HCD has significant authority to determine what constitutes an 'appropriate' remedy under Article 102(I), but the enforcement of the basic rights is not subject to discretion. Hence, the inherent nature of the right to seek redress for abuses of fundamental rights impose a similar duty on the court to create innovative and efficient legal remedies for such violations.

According to articles 44(I) and 102(I), in the case of a violation of the rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution, the party affected by such infringement has the option to approach the Supreme Court and submit a writ petition, as demonstrated in the case of *Kazi Mukhlesur Rahman v Bangladesh*. The same constitutional

provisions apply when the petitioner claims remedies under tort.

In the case of *CCB Foundation v Government of Bangladesh*, the court applied the doctrine of negligence and *res ipsa loquitur* to award monetary compensation of taka 20 lacs against Bangladesh Railway Board and Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence for gross negligence that resulted in the death of a 4-year-old child. This case established a significant precedent for public authorities to be held liable for the negligence of their employees or servants. The Court stated that, in contrast to the Indian Constitution, there is no provision for sovereign immunity, permitting courts to award monetary compensation to aggrieved families for violations of the right to life protected by Article 32 of the Constitution. The court further held that the award of monetary compensation under public law will not preclude the harmed party or victim from seeking compensation under private law, and respondents' liabilities under private law will remain.

Compensation was also acknowledged as a legal remedy under Article 102(I) in the case of *Bangladesh v Ahmed Nazir*. In this case, the Appellate Division (AD)



determined that the Court possesses the authority to exercise its discretion in granting the remedy, which is contingent upon examination of the facts and circumstances. The responsibility for determining suitable remedies under Article 102 lies with the HCD, whether they

are monetary or otherwise.

However, the question of monetary relief under Article 102(I) was first raised in the case of *Azharuddin Ahmed v Bangladesh*, where the petitioner was forced into early retirement in violation of the due procedure. The HCD found the act to be

illegal and awarded 10 thousand Taka as compensation. On the question of who is to pay the compensation to the victim, the Court held that the public body, whose officials acted unlawfully, were 'generally' liable according to the Rules of the HCD of East Pakistan (1960). But such rules being sufficiently vague, the answer was left to the Court's discretion. Subsequently, in the case of *Habibullah Khan v Shah Azharuddin Ahmed*, the AD affirmed the decision of the High Court while adding that such discretion 'must be applied judiciously' in accordance with the rule of law.

In Bangladesh, constitutional torts are implemented by both Article 44 and Article 102(I) of the Constitution. When the statutory authority is liable for the violation of the constitutional rights guaranteed in Part III of the Constitution, a writ claiming compensation can be filed at the High Court Division holding the state responsible. Therefore, it becomes abundantly clear that only the violation of the constitutional rights guaranteed in Part III of the Constitution attracts constitutional torts.

The writer is student of law at East West University, Dhaka.

THE NATION'S LARGEST ROD MANUFACTURER

★★★★★



WITH MORE CAPACITY, WE ARE MORE READY TO BUILD TOMORROW'S BANGLADESH

 **BSRM**
building a safer nation

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport

Terminal 3,

Proud Construction Partner



A joyous stroll with mother turns tragic

5-yr-old dies as wall collapses on him in Rampura

RAFIUL ISLAM

Five-year-old Jisan joined his mother early yesterday morning on a simple errand—to bring tea and breakfast from a nearby eatery in the capital's Rampura area.

Bursting with joy and excitement, he was frolicking behind his mother, holding his two-year-old sister Fatema Akter with one hand and carefully balancing a mug to bring back tea with the other, just a few hundred yards from their rented tin-roofed home in the Kunjaban area.

But little did they know about the tragedy that was about to strike them.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Jisan

SQUIRRELING ABOUT... An orange-bellied Himalayan squirrel spotted while tree-hopping in the Rangamati's Kaptai National Park. The rodent is found in Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan. Like other squirrel species, it is primarily arboreal and herbivorous. One of its most distinguishable features is its vibrant colouration – the fur is predominantly a dark or reddish brown while its belly is a striking shade of orange. It's known to be an agile and solitary creature, preferring to remain on its own until breeding season. Despite its range across South Asia, its numbers have been dropping over the years due to rampant deforestation. The IUCN has categorised the species as "Near Threatened" in its Red List.

PHOTO: NOBEL CHAKMA

Challenge for govt is to meet expectations

Says ICG report on interim govt's 100 days in office

STAR REPORT

The interim government should be unstinting in seeking consensus among political parties and other key groups, such as the army and students, as it faces key challenges in carrying out political, economic, administrative, and electoral reforms, said Brussels-based International Crisis Group in a report yesterday.

The report also stressed the need for foreign governments and multilateral institutions' support for carrying out the reforms.

ICG in its report titled "A New Era in Bangladesh? The First Hundred Days of Reform" said the Bangladesh government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus should balance demands for justice with the need for reconciliation, staying within the bounds of the constitution to mitigate the danger of its decisions being invalidated later.

The ICG report came as the interim government completed its 100 days in office following the ouster of Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5. The Yunus-led government took charge on August 8.

The report said the government, which is expected to remain in office for another year or longer, should seek to hold fresh elections under a reformed polling system within a realistic timeframe, which should not extend beyond eighteen months.

According to the report, after fifteen years of Hasina's rule, Bangladesh has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve governance and put checks in place that would stop another autocratic regime from emerging. If the interim government falters, however, the country could revert to the status quo ante or even enter a period of military rule.

The interim government should aim to produce quick results to maintain public support for more ambitious reforms. It should avoid staying in power too long and build consensus on new measures among political parties. External actors should offer aid; India should work to repair its image with the Bangladeshi people, it added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Talks grapple with trillion-dollar task

Spats continue as Argentina leaves COP29

REUTERS, Baku

Developing countries need at least \$1 trillion per year by the end of the decade to cope with climate change, economists told UN talks in Baku, where early efforts to reach a finance deal risk being overshadowed by diplomatic rows.

Money is a focus at COP29 whose success is likely to be judged by whether it can agree a new target for how much richer countries, development lenders and the private sector must provide each year to help developing countries finance the transition to greener energy and protect against extreme weather.

Reaching a deal is likely to be especially hard at a summit where the mood has been soured by disputes and pessimism about shifts in global politics.

"Parties must remember that the clock is ticking," COP29 Lead Negotiator Yalchin Rahiyev told a news conference. "They must use this precious time to talk to each other directly and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Textbooks to feature July uprising

Materials like images, poems, essays to be in next year's books for classes five to 10

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The government is set to incorporate content on the student-led uprising into school textbooks for the 2025 academic year.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has already begun developing materials depicting the uprising, NCTB Chairman Professor Reazul Hassan told The Daily Star.

He said the materials are likely to appear as images, poems, or essays and will be featured in Bangla and English textbooks of classes five to 10.

The Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government, ousted on August 5, had introduced the National Curriculum-2022, which was rolled out for classes one, six, and seven in 2023, and to classes two, three, eight, and nine this year.

Describing it as "unimplementable", the interim government decided to discontinue this curriculum and revert to the one framed in 2012.

The textbooks being printed now are of the 2012 curriculum. Printing of Bangla and English books for classes five to 10 has not begun yet.

Asked if stories would focus on individuals who lost their lives, the NCTB chairman said there might be stories about figures like Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed, Khulna University student Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho or other individuals.

"There would be materials on all major uprisings in the history of the country. In those articles, we have plans to incorporate the recent uprising and its heroes," Prof Reazul added.

The textbook board chairman said there will also be content on graffiti and Generation Z (those born between the late 1990s and early 2010s), which played a pivotal role in the uprising, he said.

He also said the cover pages of the textbooks will feature several pieces of graffiti depicting the uprising, which had been decided earlier.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

The NCTB chairman said there might be stories about Abu Sayed, Mugdho and the like.

Loyalists, firebrands get top posts in Trump cabinet

Matt Gaetz to head justice dept, Tulsi Gabbard to be director of national intelligence

Tulsi Gabbard

Matt Gaetz

REUTERS

US President-elect Donald Trump chose loyalists with little experience for several key cabinet positions on Wednesday, stunning some allies and making clear that he is serious about reshaping - and in some cases testing - America's institutions.

Trump's choice of congressman Matt Gaetz, 42, for US attorney general, America's top law enforcement officer, was a surprising pick. The former attorney has never worked in the Justice Department, or as a prosecutor, and was investigated by the Justice Department over sex trafficking allegations. His office said in 2023 that he had been told by prosecutors he would not face criminal charges.

Trump chose Tulsi Gabbard as director of national intelligence. The former Democratic congresswoman-turned-Trump ally has in the past spoken out against military intervention in the civil war in Syria under former president Barack Obama and implied that Russian President Vladimir Putin had valid grounds for invading Ukraine, America's ally.

Freeze accounts of NRBC Bank chairman

BFIU asks banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banks have been asked to freeze all personal and private company accounts of three top former and current officials of NRBC Bank.

They are Parvez Tamal, chairman; Mohammad Adnan Imam, former executive committee chairman; and Md Jafar Iqbal Howlader, vice president of the financial administration division.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) through a letter ordered banks to keep their personal and private company accounts frozen for 30 days in the first phase.

The intelligence unit also sought an update on the details of their personal and company accounts within five working days.

There are several allegations of corruption related to money laundering and recruitment business against a number of board members of the bank, including Tamal and some top management officials.

A central bank report found that the bank outsourced various services at higher rates from the companies of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Fish traders have set up makeshift shops on this road in the capital's Karwan Bazar area, obstructing traffic. Police personnel in a vehicle appear to be unbothered by the blatant violation of rules. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Air strikes hit Beirut, south Lebanon

Five killed; ceasefire terms come into focus

REUTERS, Beirut

Israeli forces launched airstrikes on Hezbollah-controlled areas in Beirut for a third consecutive day yesterday, hitting locations in the capital's southern suburbs early in the morning after a night of heavy bombardments.

Plumes of smoke rose over Beirut as the strikes continued, while raids also reached southern Lebanon's Bint Jbeil, where overnight airstrikes and artillery shelling inflicted heavy damage on buildings and residential complexes, according to Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA).

Five people were killed in airstrikes on the towns of Bazourieh and Jumayjimah, NNA reported.

Lebanese authorities said areas in Beirut's southern suburbs have been largely evacuated. According to the health ministry, Israeli attacks have killed at least 3,365 people and wounded 14,344 across Lebanon since October 7.

A senior Lebanese official has signalled that Hezbollah is ready to pull its forces away from the Lebanese-Israeli border in any ceasefire, whilst rejecting Israel's demand for freedom to act against the Iran-backed group in the future.

Ali Hassan Khalil, speaking to Al Jazeera late on Wednesday, said Lebanon was ready to "precisely" implement a UN Security Council resolution that ended a 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. Its terms require Hezbollah to remove fighters and weapons from areas between the border and the Litani River.