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## POST-AUGUST MEDIA LANDSCAPE Allegiance shifts, so do faces at the helm

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh's media industry has seen some major shake-ups, with more than two dozen outlets shuffling leadership positions following the July mass uprising last year.

Editors in at least eight newspapers and heads of news in 11 private television channels have been either dismissed or "forced to resign", while some left their jobs.

Key positions such as executive editor, chief news editor, and news editor in around a dozen houses also saw changes.

These positions have been largely filled by individuals affiliated with BNP and Jamaat-leaning journalist associations, leaders of various other journalist associations, or reporters who covered BNP and Jamaat beats for a considerable period.

Mostly, media owners who had strong ties to the now-deposed Awami League government made those changes in the aftermath of August 5.

The Daily Star has learned this after speaking with over 30 journalists, including some who have lost their jobs. They, however, would not comment on the record for fear of reprisal.

Many of the dismissed senior journalists, accused of having ties to the previous regime or benefiting from its patronage, are facing lawsuits



Thousands of tents have been pitched on the Tongi Jtama ground on the bank of the Turag as devotees from home and abroad start gathering there to join the first phase of the Biswa Jtama, one of the largest congregations of Muslims, that begins today. The photo was taken around 1:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Yunus' reform agenda must have full EU support: ICG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The EU should put its full support behind the interim government's reform agenda as its opponents attempt to derail its efforts or push for early elections, said the International Crisis Group in its latest report on Bangladesh.

"In the wake of Hasina's fall from power, Bangladesh has a rare opportunity to reshape its national political system and render it more inclusive and accountable," it said in the report titled "Bangladesh: The Dilemmas of a Democratic Transition", which was published yesterday.

International backing -- rhetorical, technical and

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## Dhaka must focus on people-centric foreign ties

Speakers say at Star discussion on geopolitics

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign policy and trade experts have stressed that Bangladesh must address its economic and political governance issues to maintain foreign relations based on mutual respect and benefits.

They pointed out that the July uprising reflected the people's desire for equality and dignity, urging that it is time to correct past mistakes when relations with some countries served the interests of cronies instead of being people-centric.

The observations were made at a panel

discussion titled "Bangladesh at Geopolitical Crossroads," organised by The Daily Star at its Dhaka office yesterday.

Speakers noted that while geopolitical conflicts are rising globally, the interim government, which is working on reforms, must reassess its foreign policy and recognise the ministries responsible for efficiently handling Bangladesh's bilateral relations.

Former Ambassador Farooq Sobhan said, "I think the most important issue at the moment is fixing the economy. That's of fundamental

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## IMF pushing for 15pc VAT on 213 goods

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund has set a prior condition for introducing a full 15 percent statutory VAT rate on 213 products before placing the \$645 million loan proposal for the fourth tranche to its executive board.

The loan proposal could be placed in the IMF board meeting in the second week of March.

In keeping with the prior action, the National Board of Revenue this month hiked the value added tax on nearly 100 goods and services but later excluded some of the goods amid severe criticism.

The IMF has asked for a VAT rate hike on nearly double the number of goods and services that the NBR had initially increased, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star on Monday.

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over killings during the student-led mass uprising that ousted the Sheikh Hasina government. They are now living in seclusion.

The authorities concerned are also investigating their bank accounts. Contacted, Information Adviser Nahid Islam yesterday said the interim government neither helped anyone nor intervened in changing the ownership or leadership in any privately owned media houses.

"The government only brought changes in the state-run news organisations following due procedure," he told The Daily Star.

Private news organisations might have changed their leadership on their own, he added.

The media reform commission, which is looking into these issues, and the government will act, if necessary, and if the commission gives any proposal in this regard, he said.

Besides, the government did not receive any allegations from any media, he said adding they will take steps if they receive any allegations

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Students of Titumir College block the Mohakhali-Gulshan road, demanding that the institution be recognised as a university in its own right. The students took to the street in the morning and stayed there late into the night, causing tailbacks in many areas. The college, established in 1968, currently functions under Dhaka University.

### BUSINESS

#### Barishal tops poverty rankings

Bangladesh's poverty map has changed as Barishal now has the highest percentage of people living in poverty among all the eight divisions, according to the national statistical agency.

Earlier, northwestern division Rangpur was the poorest division. Economists think increasing climate vulnerability is redrawing the poverty map.

At the district level, Madaripur has the highest poverty rate, while Noakhali has the lowest rate.

STORY ON B1

## People suffer for hours as Titumir students block city road

They demand recognition of college as university

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commuters suffered for hours as students of Government Titumir College kept the capital's Mohakhali-Gulshan road blocked for almost the entire day yesterday demanding that the college be recognised as a university.

The demonstrators blocked both sides of the road around 11:00am, and as of the filing of this report near midnight, they were still there.

Soon after they took to the street, tailbacks spread to Banani, Gulshan, Airport Road, Pragati Sarani, Dhaka Elevated Expressway, and many neighbourhoods.

Office goers, patients, and parents with children remained stranded on the roads for hours. Many abandoned their vehicles and walked to their destinations.

Arijit Chandra Barman, who was walking near Mohakhali, carrying his two-year-old in the afternoon, said "We decided to leave the bus and walk home

to Agargaon. It's heartbreaking to see our child suffer."

Shafiul Alam, a commuter with a broken arm in a cast, also had no choice but to walk home to Mirpur after waiting in vain for over 30 minutes.

"Why do we have to pay the price? What have thousands of us done to deserve this?" he asked.

Driver of a BRTC bus on Mohakhali-Gulshan road said his passengers left on foot, and he had to return their money.

Jonaed Jahedi, assistant commissioner (Mohakhali) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said as the traffic was diverted to other streets, people faced congestion.

After 5:00pm, when most people left offices, the tailbacks kept getting longer, he said.

On Wednesday afternoon, five students of Titumir College began a hunger strike, demanding that the

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### গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাধীন প্রকল্পের আওতায় Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) System ইতোমধ্যে কার্যকর করা হয়েছে। BSW মূলত একটি অনলাইন প্ল্যাটফর্ম, যা ব্যবহার করে একজন আমদানিকারক-রপ্তানিকারক পণ্য খালাসের জন্য প্রযোজ্য সব ধরনের সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট (CLP) এর জন্য অনলাইনে আবেদন করে স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে CLP সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। CLP গ্রহণের পূর্বে Business Identification Number (BIN) ব্যবহার করে BSW সিস্টেমে (Website: bswnbr.gov.bd) নিবন্ধন করতে হবে। এ সিস্টেম ব্যবহারের ফলে আমদানি-রপ্তানি কার্যক্রমে যে সুবিধা সমূহ পাওয়া যাবে সেগুলো হলো:

- একটি কমন প্ল্যাটফর্মে আমদানি-রপ্তানি পণ্যের জন্য প্রযোজ্য সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স এবং পারমিট সংক্রান্ত সকল কার্যক্রম সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল সংস্থা কর্তৃক যুগপৎভাবে অনলাইনে সম্পন্ন করা হবে;
- সরকারী কাজে ব্যক্তিগত যোগাযোগ (হিউম্যান ইন্টারেকশন) না থাকায় স্বচ্ছতা ও জবাবদিহিতা নিশ্চিত হবে;
- পণ্য আমদানি-রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে সময় ও ব্যয় হ্রাস পাবে;
- দেশি-বিদেশী ব্যবসায়ীদের মধ্যে আস্থা সৃষ্টির মাধ্যমে বিনিয়োগ ও বাণিজ্যের প্রসার ঘটবে।

০২। প্রাথমিক পর্যায়ে সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট ইস্যুকারী ১৯টি সংস্থার মধ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত ৭টি সংস্থার ক্ষেত্রে গত ০২ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ খ্রি. তারিখে সরাসরি BSW সিস্টেমের মাধ্যমে CLP এর আবেদন দাখিল ও ইস্যু করার কার্যক্রম শুরু করা হয়েছেঃ

১. ঔষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তর (DGDA) ;
২. বিস্ফোরক পরিদপ্তর (DoEX) ;
৩. রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো (EPB) ;
৪. বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় কর্তৃপক্ষ, রাসায়নিক অস্ত্র কনভেনশন (BNACWC) ;
৫. বাংলাদেশ অর্থনৈতিক অঞ্চল কর্তৃপক্ষ (BEZA) ;
৬. বাংলাদেশ রপ্তানি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ অঞ্চল কর্তৃপক্ষ (BEPZA) : এবং
৭. পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর (DoE)।

০৩। জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ডের পরিপত্র নং: ১(৩৩) NSW প্রকল্প/মন্ত্রণালয়ের সাথে যোগাযোগ/২০১৮/২৪১৮, তারিখ: ১৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী, ৩১ জানুয়ারী ২০২৫ খ্রি. তারিখের পর হতে আমদানি ও রপ্তানি পণ্যচালান শুদ্ধায়নের ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত ০৭টি সংস্থা কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট BSW সিস্টেমের মাধ্যমে দাখিল বাধ্যতামূলক করা হলো। উল্লিখিত তারিখের পর কোন ধরনের ম্যানুয়াল সার্টিফিকেট, লাইসেন্স ও পারমিট গ্রহণ করা হবে না। আমদানি-রপ্তানি বাণিজ্যে যুক্ত সকল অংশীজনকে Bangladesh Single Window বাস্তবায়নে সহযোগিতা করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো হলো।

[ জুয়েল আহমেদ ]  
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