

'Interim govt has no right to stay for 5 years'

Says BNP Standing Committee Member Selima Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has no right to remain in power for five years, said BNP Standing Committee Member Selima Rahman yesterday.

"We want fair elections. The home affairs adviser has said the country wants this government to stay for five years. But we know what the people really want," Selima said at a special council session of the Central Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Diploma Medical Association in the capital.

"This is an interim government, and it is not meant to take on long-term responsibilities," she added.

Her remarks came in response to a statement made by Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury in Sunamganj on Thursday, where he claimed that people are urging the government to stay for five more years.

Selima said BNP remains

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Jayanta Kar, a fisherman, carries net over his shoulder as he walks through the twilight glow while the sun sets. After a hard day's work, he returns to his family, who rely on his fishing for their sustenance. However, due to various reasons, local fish are not as plentiful as they once were, leaving people like Jayanta and his family struggling. The photo was taken in the Fenchuganj upazila of Sylhet recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Accountability key to resolving Rohingya crisis

Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, now visiting Turkey, yesterday emphasised that accountability for the crimes against humanity perpetrated against the Rohingya community is a crucial factor in ensuring justice and the ultimate resolution of the crisis.

He also reassured that Bangladesh will continue to lend its unwavering support for the just cause of establishing an independent Palestinian state in accordance with multiple UN resolutions.

On the sidelines of the "Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2025," Hossain had a meeting with Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Karim AA Khan KC and discussed the issue.

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Md Mahfuj Alam, Bangladesh Ambassador to Türkiye, and other senior officials from both sides attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed all aspects of engagements between Bangladesh and

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RAMNA BATAMUL BOMBING

24 years on, justice still eludes victims

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Twenty-four long years have passed since the bomb blasts at Ramna Batamul during Pahela Baishakh celebrations, yet justice remains out of reach for the victims.

Prolonged legal delays have kept the case pending, with no final verdict delivered.

The 2001 blasts, which shook the nation, left 10 people dead and several others injured.

Now the case remains stuck in legal limbo, despite a trial court sentencing several accused in 2014.

Legal complications delayed the hearing and disposal of the convicts' appeals and the death reference, as several HC benches declined to hear the case for various reasons, and the state repeatedly sought adjournments.

The High Court has yet to deliver a verdict on the appeals and death reference — required to confirm death sentences — even though hearings concluded on February 18 this year.

Earlier, legal complications delayed the hearing and disposal of the convicts' appeals and the death reference, as several High Court benches declined to hear the case for various reasons, and the state repeatedly sought adjournments.

On February 18, the HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Nasreen Akter wrapped up

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451 cases filed in 2024, highest in 5 years

ACC ramps up activities after July uprising

DIPAN NANDY

Following the ouster of the Awami League government on August 5, the Anti-Corruption Commission has significantly increased its activities, as the number of cases filed, charge sheets approved, and complaints investigated in 2024 surpassed those of the past five years, according to the commission's draft annual report.

ACC Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen said the commission is working impartially and not favouring any political party.

Following the mass student and public uprising on August 5, the ACC began investigations against former PM Sheikh Hasina — who led the Awami League for over 15 years — her family members, former ministers, and lawmakers. More than 200 party leaders and activists were also sued.

ACC activities were briefly halted after the resignation of the previous commission led by Moinuddin Abdullah on October 29. The commission resumed its work after Dr Abdul Momen took over on December 12.

According to the draft annual report, the ACC received 15,842 complaints in 2024. Of these, 1,894 were accepted for investigation, and 1,012 were forwarded to other

departments.

In comparison, complaints accepted for investigation were 845 in 2023, 901 in 2022, 533 in 2021, and 822 in 2020. The ACC filed 451 cases in 2024, mostly against



AT A GLANCE

Probe launched against former PM, ministers, AL leaders

15,842 complaints received in 2024; 1,894 accepted

403 charge sheets approved, marking a record high

Tk 170.55cr in assets confiscated by court orders

Tk 190.90cr in assets frozen in other cases

ministers, state ministers, and MPs affiliated with AL. The number of cases filed in previous years was 404 in 2023, 406 in 2022, 347 in 2021, and 348 in 2020.

Charge sheet approvals reached a five-year high in 2024, with 403 approved by the ACC. The report credits this rise to better training for investigators and improved monitoring by supervising officers. In comparison, the numbers of approved charge sheets were — 363 in 2023, 224 in 2022, 260 in 2021, and 228 in 2020.

The ACC also made progress in asset recovery. In 2024, assets worth Tk 170.55 crore were confiscated in 69 cases through court orders, and another Tk 190.90 crore was frozen in 38 other cases.

However, fines collected totalled Tk 1,147.33 crore in 2024, which is lower than the previous two years. The amount was Tk 1,683.67 crore in 2023 and Tk 2,632.41 crore in 2022, while Tk 75.18 crore was collected in 2021 and Tk 72.48 crore in 2020.

Despite the post-August 5 momentum, many cases against BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman and other party leaders ended in acquittals.

The ACC Chairman clarified that since the commission resumed operations only on December 12, none of these acquittals were made by the ACC. Those were court decisions, which are outside the commission's jurisdiction.

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'Time to move away from fossil fuel'

Youths demand revision of energy plan, fair climate finance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Young climate activists have called for urgent revisions to Bangladesh's Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP), warning that the country's continued dependence on fossil fuels undermines both national and global climate goals.

As part of the Global Climate Strike, more than 200 youths under the banner of YouthNet Global staged a peaceful demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, demanding



a just transition to renewable energy and greater access to international climate finance.

Similar protests took place in 50 districts across the country, with students from schools, colleges, and universities taking part.

Holding placards that read "Time to move away from fossil fuels" and "We demand renewable energy, don't sell our future," the demonstrators said the current IEPMP risks increasing Bangladesh's reliance on costly and polluting fossil fuel imports.

Speakers warned that continued fossil fuel

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A heap of waste burns openly on a street in Lalmatia, disregarding its impact on both passersby and the environment. Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan had earlier warned that without effective waste management, protecting Dhaka's residents from air pollution would be difficult. This scene is a perfect demonstration of the poor state of waste management in the capital, where trash is regularly set on fire without concern for the consequences. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Dengue risk looms with onset of monsoon

HELEMUL ALAM

With rainfall starting in various parts of the country, the risk of an outbreak of Aedes mosquitoes — carriers of dengue and chikungunya — is rising significantly.

Experts warn that without prompt and effective measures to control mosquito breeding, the situation could worsen during the upcoming monsoon.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, at least 14 dengue-related deaths have been reported this year, with 2,052 people hospitalised as of yesterday.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department has forecast rain and thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds in one or two places across Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Sylhet divisions in the next 24 hours from 9:00am today.

Elsewhere, the weather is expected to remain mostly dry with some cloud cover.

Professor Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said the steady influx of nearly 50 dengue patients daily is concerning.

"This indicates a growing risk.

Authorities must act quickly to eliminate potential breeding sites and control the Aedes population," he said.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman noted that even light rainfall can cause a spike in dengue cases.

"The first generation of mosquitoes that matures after rain significantly increases the overall population. If BTI or other eco-friendly larvicides are applied now, a major outbreak can be prevented," he said.

BTI is a naturally occurring soil bacterium used as a microbial insecticide to control mosquito larvae and other insects.

He added that while city corporation efforts were poorly coordinated last year, there has been some improvement this year — though still limited.

Rahman stressed the need for local administrations to remain alert and called for dedicated mosquito control units across the country.

"Early detection of Aedes clusters is crucial. Once the rains begin, immediate drives to destroy breeding grounds and larvae are essential. Taking preventive action now is the key to avoiding a major outbreak," he said.

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