

## Law being drafted to ensure Rab accountability

Rab DG tells Police Week seminar

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A draft of the Rab Law 2024 is being prepared to ensure accountability within the force, AKM Shahidur Rahman, director general of the Rapid Action Battalion told a meeting yesterday.

**Two and a half months ago, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in its fact-finding report on the July uprising, recommended disbanding the force, citing serious human rights violations and abuses.**

"If this law remains in effect, no one will be able to use force for personal gain," he said in a presentation during a closed-door seminar as part of the ongoing Police Week, according to sources.

The Rab has long been accused of violating human rights. In 2021, the US imposed sanctions on the Rab and six former top officials of the agency over reports of gross human rights violations.

Two and a half months ago, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in its fact-finding report on the July uprising,

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## Chinmoy Das granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari yesterday got bail from the High Court after 156 days in jail in a sedition case filed in connection with disrespecting the Bangladesh national flag.



However, Justice Md Rezaul Haque, the chamber judge of the Appellate Division, stayed the bail moments later following a petition moved by additional attorneys general Mohammad Arshadur Rouf and Aneek R Haque on behalf of the state.

Later, the apex court chamber judge withdrew the stay order on a suo moto (voluntary move), Chinmoy's lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattacharjee told The Daily Star.

The SC chamber judge may hold a hearing on Sunday on the state's petition challenging the HC verdict on bail in presence of the lawyers from both sides, Deputy Attorney General Farid Uddin Khan told The Daily Star.

The HC bench of Justice Md Atoar Rahman and Justice Md Ali Reza granted the bail after a hearing on a rule that earlier asked the state to explain why he should not be granted bail.

Senior lawyers ZI Khan Panna, Prabir Ranjon Halder and Bhattacharjee placed arguments

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## BANGLADESH'S RESPONSE TO TRUMP TARIFFS US will get work plan by next week

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh will send the work plan to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) within the next week to reduce the trade gap as part of the efforts to bring down Trump's reciprocal tariff, currently on pause until July 9.

The government is preparing the work plan by incorporating the feedback from stakeholders, said Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, who took part in the first round of negotiations with the USTR last week in Washington DC.

The USTR has given Dhaka more than a month to send the work plan, which cannot be longer than five pages. But the government will send it within the next five to seven days so that the next round of negotiations can be started as soon as possible, he said.

"We will not promise anything outside the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules." For instance, if any duty is reduced, it will also be reduced for all other countries under the WTO's most-favoured-nation (MFN) clause.

Bangladesh should rationalise its tariffs regardless as part of the preparations for graduation from the least developed country bracket in November 2026, Mahbubur said.

The government will build a warehouse such that more US cotton can be imported. Currently,

### DHAKA'S WORK PLAN

- Warehouse to facilitate more US cotton imports
- LNG import deals
- Labour law reforms
- Protection of IP rights
- Free trade agreement

Bangladesh imports most of its cotton from neighbouring countries and Africa for shorter distances and lead time than the US.

Moreover, Bangladesh will sign contracts with the US for importing LNG from the US. Currently, Bangladesh imports LNG from the Middle East at higher prices, Mahbubur said.

In the work plan, Bangladesh will also inform on the status of labour law reforms and the progress made in areas of protection of Intellectual Property Rights.

Bangladesh will also push for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US.

After sending the work plan to the USTR, Bangladesh will send the draft proposal for FTA negotiation to the US, the commerce secretary added.

If consensus on tariff reduction cannot be reached through negotiations, Bangladesh will seek an extension of the 90-day pause, said Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed while addressing a group of businesspersons at the pre-budget consultative meeting.

However, Bangladesh will not anger the US; rather, the government will enhance engagement with the Trump government.

"Engagement is the best way forward in negotiations," he said, adding that the

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## Firing, suing of journos worrying Says Ain o Salish Kendra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) has expressed concern over the recent dismissal of three TV journalists, the naming of at least 137 journalists as accused in connection with July uprising cases, and the filing of attempted murder cases against cultural activists.

In a statement signed by its Senior Coordinator Abu Ahmed Faizul Kabir, ASK cited media reports indicating that the three TV journalists were removed from their jobs after a press conference at the office of the cultural affairs adviser turned confrontational.

It said journalists had posed questions about the name change of Mongol Shobhajatra, its UNESCO recognition, the use of a mask resembling the face of a former prime minister, and the number of casualties in the July-August uprising.

Following the press briefing, a Facebook page called for action against the journalists and threatened a "march to Deepot TV, Channel i, ATN Bangla" if no action was taken within 24 hours. The three were subsequently dismissed.

On the broader issue of legal harassment, ASK said at least 137 journalists have been accused in 32 criminal cases across Dhaka, Chattogram, Bogura, and Rajshahi, with some even facing charges under the Explosive Substances Act.

Referring to a committee formed in October 2024 to monitor harassment cases against journalists, ASK said, "Even after its formation, new cases against journalists continue to appear, while the status of earlier cases

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Mourners attend the funeral of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. More than 52,000 people have died in the tiny Palestinian territory since Israel began its offensive on October 7, 2023.

PHOTO: AFP

All-round Miraz leads Tigers to innings victory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh produced a dominant display to beat Zimbabwe by an innings and 106 runs in the second Test of the two-match series in Chattogram yesterday.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz was the star of the show, shining with an all-round display, as the Tigers cruised to a decisive victory within three days in Chattogram to level the series 1-1 after losing the first Test in Sylhet.

Miraz notched up his second ton in the format on Day 3 -- a 104 -- and forged partnerships worth 63 and 96, respectively, with Tajul Islam (20) and Tanzim Sakib (41) as Bangladesh added 153 more to their overnight total of 291-7 to post a formidable 444 after bundling out the visitors for 227. Opener Shadman Islam had scored his

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Bangladesh players celebrate taking a wicket on the way to sealing a commanding innings and 106-run victory over Zimbabwe on Day 3 of their second Test at the Bir Shreshtho Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. Thanks to a century and a fifer from all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Bangladesh managed to get a 217-run lead before bundling out Zimbabwe for 111 in 46.2 overs to level the two-match series 1-1.

PHOTO: BCB

## 'Abolish Women's Affairs Reform Commission' Demand Islamist parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islamist parties under the banner of Jatiya Olama Mashayekh Aemma Parishad yesterday demanded immediate abolition of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission.

They also rejected the recommendations of the commission and called for a new commission comprising "pious, educated, and socially conscious women who truly represent the country's female population".

Expressing concern, they said the government had taken comprehensive reform initiatives to cleanse the remnants of past autocratic rule, a step supported by the public, and some commissions, like the Constitution Reform Commission, reflected commendable intentions.

However, speakers said the recommendations made by the Women's Affairs Reform Commission are contrary to, what they say, the nation's beliefs, values, and traditions, and have directly hurt religious sentiments.

The speakers claimed that many of the commission's recommendations are inspired by Western ideologies and contradict Bangladesh's social realities and the true needs and struggles of the country's women.

Addressing the event held at the Diploma Engineers'

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TV channels hurting due to Asiatic bank account freeze

Say station owners, seek govt intervention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Association of Television Channel Owners (ATCO) yesterday said they are suffering financially due to the freezing of the bank accounts of Asiatic Group and sought government intervention for a speedy resolution in this regard.

"Recently, all the television channels of the country are suffering financially due to the suspension of institutional bank accounts of Asiatic Group and sought government intervention in today's emergency meeting of the Executive Council of the ATCO," said a statement signed by its President Anjan Choudhury.

The Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has recently directed all banks and non-bank financial institutions to freeze the accounts of Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd, a leading advertising agency in the country.

## Court orders confiscation of Joy, Putul, Rehana's assets

Residential building, a flat, 117 katha of land to be seized

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to confiscate a residential building, a flat, and 117 katha of land owned by Sheikh Rehana, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Saima Wazed Putul, Rehana's children Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby and Azmina Siddiqi, in connection with corruption allegations brought against them.

Both the building and the flat in question are owned by Putul. They are located in the capital's Baridhara and Gulshan, respectively. The building has a market value of Tk 4.98 crore. Meanwhile, located in Gopalganj and Khulna, the 117 katha of land owned by Rehana, Joy, Bobby, and Azmina are currently worth Tk 1.23 crore.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special

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