

Independent commission needed to make police pro-people



“If the police’s investigative power isn’t separated from the government’s executive authority, you’ll see someone with 20 cases be jailed – only for all those cases to be dismissed when power changes.”

MD NURUL HUDA, former inspector general of police



“All political parties agreed to have an independent police commission during the Consensus Commission meetings. However, the Home Ministry opposed it.”

BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR, member of Consensus Commission



“We have all, at some point, used the police – either to stay in power or to return to power. The police also allowed themselves to be used.”

SALAHUDDIN AHMED, standing committee member, BNP



“They [police] were not only used; they allowed themselves to be used. In doing so, they gained advantages, enjoyed power, and violated citizens’ rights.”

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN, executive director, TIB



“No political party should have any influence over whom I can file a case against or name in a charge sheet – this minimum freedom must be ensured.”

BAHARUL ALAM, inspector general of police



“Sensitive cases of gender-based violence should be investigated by a separate investigation team, equipped with the appropriate mindset and focus.”

FAHMIDA AKHTER, women’s rights activist



“During my last detention in July 2024, I was forcibly disappeared for four days. They pushed me against a wall and beat me until they got tired. I had a heart attack during the first day of remand.”

MOBARAK HOSSAIN, central committee member, Jamaat-e-Islami



“Police often conduct arbitrations. When people come to the station to file a case, officers decide whether the matter is suitable for arbitration.”

JAVED RASIN, senior joint convener, NCP

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Former additional IGP Motiur Rahman Sheikh said pressure to serve the ruling party hinders accountability and transparency. “The institutional sub-culture has been aligned with political loyalty rather than law enforcement ethics.”
Rizwanul Islam, law professor and dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, North South University, said bureaucratic impact would diminish if the police could be made more independent.
The depoliticisation can be achieved by focusing on key areas like recruitment and resource allocation, said speakers.
Justice Farid added, “We have to be very serious at the recruitment level. The political allegiance of the candidate must not be made public during recruitment. Recruitments must be finished in the shortest possible time so that there is no scope to lobby on anyone’s behalf.”
Rizwanul stressed that the recruitment method needs to be changed so that the constable can have some hope of climbing the ladder.
Iqbal noted accountability and entitlement in the police force exist only up to a certain level of the force. “Beyond that, there is a grey area.”
He also highlighted resource shortages. “At the thana level, if



Speakers at a roundtable titled “Need for Police Reform: Civil Society Perspective” held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

a police officer finds a dead body, they must cover transport costs themselves and are reimbursed a year later. The budget must be instantly available to duty bearers.”
Md Mobarak Hussain, a central committee member of Jamaat-e-Islami, narrated how he was arrested

seven times, and tortured in custody. “During my last detention in July last year, I was forcibly disappeared for four days. They pushed me against a wall and beat me until they got tired, and then they came back again. They broke my finger such that it was misshapen and bent and

I had to undergo a surgery. “After being produced at court, I was taken into remand. I had a heart attack during the first day of remand,” he recalled.
Javed Rasin, senior joint convener of National Citizen Party, called for transparency in the evaluation and

monitoring of performance of police officers.
“The police often conduct arbitrations. When the people come to the station to file a case, the police decide whether arbitration can be conducted,” he said.
Women’s rights lawyer Fahmida

Akhter said survivors of gender-based violence suffer because “investigating officers do not have the necessary budget to serve survivors” and are burdened with general duties.
“There should be a separate investigation team for sensitive cases,” she said.
Sibgat Ullah, an additional IGP heading the Criminal Investigation Department, said promotions depend on political subservience rather than merit.
“We have not been able to create a guideline for posting or promotion. During the July Uprising, many police officers were forced to be on duty without choice. A proper guideline could prevent this,” he said.
Additional IGP Kazi Md Fazlul Karim described how the force is overstretched and resource-strapped.
Some speakers said impunity, not external stressors, fuels abuses.
“If the transgressions were only due to an external force, where is the external force now? Custodial deaths are still happening,” said Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua.
Moderating the event, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said, “We want a pro-people, democratic, honest, ethos-based, rules-based police force.”

Indonesia volcano erupts as alert level raised

AFP, Jakarta
A volcano in eastern Indonesia has erupted multiple times, spewing a column of ash kilometres into the sky after authorities raised its alert level to the highest, prompting a local airport to suspend operations on Saturday.
Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki, a 1,584-metre-high twin-peaked volcano on Flores island, launched into a series of eruptions Friday evening, with the largest at 10:46 pm local time sending volcanic material six kilometres (nearly four miles) above its peak, the volcanology agency said in a statement.

Volcanic activities resumed on Saturday morning, with the agency recording several eruptions including one that sent an ash tower 2.5 kilometres into the sky.
The eruptions came after the geology agency raised the volcano’s alert level to the highest of Indonesia’s four-tiered system on Friday night.
Geology agency head Muhammad Wafid warned residents and tourists to stay at least six kilometres from the volcano’s crater and said volcanic ash could disrupt airport operations.
“Volcanic ash from Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki’s eruption could also disrupt airport operations and

flight paths if it spreads towards the airport area and aircraft routes,” he said in a statement.
Residents, particularly for communities near rivers, should also be on alert for the possibility of hazardous lahar floods — a type of mud or debris flow of volcanic materials — if heavy rain occurs, Wafid added.
An airport that serves domestic flights in the town of Maumere, also on Flores, suspended its operations following the eruptions.
Frans Seda airport head Partahian Panjaitan told AFP authorities would monitor developments on Sunday before deciding whether to reopen.

Trump hits H-1B visas with \$100,000 yearly fee

AFP, Washington
US President Donald Trump on Friday ordered an annual \$100,000 fee be added to H-1B skilled worker visas, creating potentially major repercussions for the tech industry, where such permits are prolific.
The new measure, which could likely face legal challenges, was announced alongside the introduction of a \$1 million “gold card” residency program that Trump had previewed months earlier.
“The main thing is, we’re going to have great people coming in, and they’re going to be paying,” Trump told reporters as he signed the orders in the Oval Office.
H-1B visas allow companies to sponsor foreign workers with specialized skills — such as scientists, engineers, and computer programmers — to work in the United States, initially for three years, but extendable to six years.
The United States awards 85,000 H-1B visas per year on a lottery system, with India accounting for around three-quarters of the recipients.
Large technology firms rely on Indian workers who either relocate to the United States or come and go between the two countries.
Tech entrepreneurs — including Trump’s former ally Elon Musk —

have warned against targeting H-1B visas, saying that the United States does not have enough homegrown talent to fill important tech sector job vacancies.
“All the big companies are on board,” said Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, who joined Trump in the Oval Office.
Trump has had the H-1B program in his sights since his first term in office, but faced court challenges to his earlier approach, which targeted the types of jobs that qualify. The current iteration has become the latest move in the major immigration crackdown of his second term.
According to Trump’s order, the fee will be required for those seeking to enter the country beginning Sunday, with the Homeland Security secretary able to exempt individuals, entire companies, or entire industries.
The order expires in a year, though Trump can extend it.
The number of H-1B visa applications has risen sharply in recent years, with a peak in approvals in 2022 under Democratic president Joe Biden.
In contrast, the peak in rejections was recorded in 2018, during Trump’s first term in the White House.
The United States approved approximately 400,000 H-1B visas in 2024, two-thirds of which were

renewals.
Trump also signed an order creating a new expedited pathway to US residency for people who pay \$1 million, or for corporate sponsors to pay \$2 million.
“I think it’s going to be tremendously successful,” Trump added.
Yunus leaves for NY tonight
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On September 30, the UN will, for the first time, host a high-level conference on the situation of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar.
The chief adviser will deliver his speech at the UNGA on September 26, said Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain.
The chief adviser, who is scheduled to reach New York on September 22, will return home on October 2.
Chief Adviser’s Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder on Thursday said inclusion of political leaders in the delegation is a welcome step, as it provides an opportunity to showcase national unity before the world, regardless of political differences.

World should not be intimidated by Israel

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annex the West Bank if Western nations press ahead with the recognition plan at the UN gathering.
But Guterres said, “We should not feel intimidated by the risk of retaliation.”
“With or without doing what we are doing, these actions would go on, and at least there is a chance to mobilise the international community to put pressure on them not to happen,” he said.
“What we are witnessing in Gaza is horrendous,” Guterres said as Israel threatened “unprecedented force” in its ongoing assault on Gaza City.
“It is the worst level of death and destruction that I’ve seen my time as Secretary-General, probably my life and the suffering of the Palestinian people cannot be described — famine, total lack of effective health care, people living without adequate shelters in huge concentration areas,” he said.
Israel’s far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has called for the annexation of swaths of the West Bank with an aim to “bury the idea of a Palestinian state”.
Israel’s staunch ally, the United States, has held back from any criticism of the war in Gaza or vows to annex the West Bank — and excoriated its allies who have vowed to recognise a Palestinian state.
Portugal became the latest country

in announcing plans to recognise a Palestinian state. In a statement on Friday, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the recognition will take place on Sunday, a day before a high-level conference on Palestinian statehood at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
On the ground, Israel’s military kept up its assault on Gaza City and the wider Gaza Strip yesterday, dismantling underground shafts and booby-trapped structures.

The military estimates it has demolished up to 20 Gaza City tower blocks over the past two weeks and believes some 350,000 people have left Gaza City since the start of September. Another 600,000 or so remain, however.
Meanwhile, according to The Wall Street Journal, the Trump administration is seeking congressional approval to sell more than \$6bn in weapons to Israel.
The planned package includes a deal worth \$3.8b for 30 AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and \$1.9b for 3,250 infantry assault vehicles for the Israeli army. In addition, the Reuters news agency reported that \$750m worth of support parts for armoured personnel carriers and power supplies are also working their way through the sale process.
Yesterday, Hamas’ military wing released an image of the hostages on the messaging site Telegram, warning that their lives were at risk due to Israel’s military operation in Gaza City.
In almost two years of fighting, Israel’s offensive has killed 65,208 and injured another 166,271 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities. The offensive has started a famine in the blacked Palestinian territory, demolished most of its structures and displaced most of the population, in many cases multiple times.

- Guterres slams annexation drive of the occupied West Bank
- Trump admin pursues \$6bn weapons sale to Israel: WSJ report
- Portugal latest country to recognise a Palestinian state

Israel’s intensified military demolition campaign targeting high-rise buildings in Gaza City began this week alongside a ground assault.
Its forces, which control Gaza City’s eastern suburbs, have in recent days been pounding the Sheikh Radwan and Tel Al-Hawa areas from where they would be positioned to advance on central and western parts of the city, where most of the population is sheltering.

Stay united, follow party decisions

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finally brought its downfall.
He said BNP may have differences of opinion with some political parties, but when it comes to Bangladesh, people’s right to vote, their security, employment and livelihoods, there is no disagreement, as BNP wants to ensure these rights.
He stressed the need for establishing a government that is accountable to the people, based on the people’s opinion and mandate, to ensure the country’s development and the nation’s welfare.
Stating that the interim government will hold national elections next February, Tarique said if BNP’s 31-point agenda is to succeed and win the people’s verdict, all party members and activists across the

country must remain united at any cost.
The BNP leader pointed out that different views may exist within a large party, but once the leadership and party policymakers make a decision, every member has a duty to stand behind it.
“Are you workers of an individual, or of the sheaf of paddy? You are soldiers of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia’s ideals. That means we must remain united behind the party’s decisions and implement them at any cost,” Tarique said.
He emphasised that unity is essential. Just as family members follow the decisions of their elders, party members must rally behind the decisions of the policymaking body, he added.