



61% women in agro-industries face abuse
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Thai-Cambodia border clashes reignite
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The silent worlds of neglected children
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INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

Graft taints the graft watchdog

6 top officials dismissed this year; 2 ex-bosses under probe; 245 employees disciplined over 17 years

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission is facing a crisis within its own walls, as fresh allegations of bribery and illicit benefits surface against its officials, including some tasked with investigating graft.

In 2025 alone, six ACC officials have been dismissed, three of them in September, among whom is a director-level officer.

Over the past 17 years, the commission has taken disciplinary action against 245 officials and employees for bribery, unethical benefits, and involvement in corruption. Among the penalised, 34 have been dismissed, while many others faced forced retirement, demotion, or salary cuts. More than 10 officials currently face departmental cases.

Today, as the ACC observes International Anti-Corruption Day under the theme "Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity," the shadow over its own integrity looms large.

ACC Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen decried corruption by its own officials, claiming it takes immediate action whenever such allegations surface.

However, campaigners warn that corrupt ACC officials, like other accused, must face trial, not just action by ACC as such revelations strike at the heart of the institution's credibility.

"Departmental action alone is not enough; they must be handed over to the court for trial," said Iftekharuzzaman, head of the ACC reform commission and executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

"The commission cannot function properly while retaining corrupt officials. Dismissal alone is insufficient; they must be prosecuted," he told The Daily Star when asked for comments.

6 OFFICIALS FACE ACTION

The ACC dismissed Khan Md Mizanul Islam as its director on September 8 for allegedly accepting medical expenses from a private hospital director, who is being investigated by the ACC.

On September 4, Deputy Director Mahbubul Alam, and Deputy Assistant Director Mohammad Zulfikar were removed over separate allegations.

Mahbubul reportedly extorted around Tk 1 crore from the principal and administrative officer of Ideal School in Motijheel by threatening to file cases. He is also accused of taking Tk 10 crore in bribes from the managing director of Essential Drugs.

Zulfikar allegedly received financial benefits from the former

ACC's internal anti-corruption committee dysfunctional

Reform commission proposed task force to tackle internal graft

Campaigners say corrupt ACC officials must face trial

chairman of Arcade Real Estate Limited in exchange for resolving a case. He and his family were reportedly living in a flat without purchase or rent.

On August 6, Deputy Director Ahsanul Kabir Polash was dismissed for negligence in a corruption investigation.

On July 17, Deputy Director Komlesh Mandal faced the same consequence for negligence in probing allegations against officials of the Dhaka Water Supply Network Improvement Project.

On October 5, Assistant Director Abdullah Al Mamun was suspended for allegedly forming a syndicate involved in fabricating documents, preparing false notesheets for submission to commission meetings, and targeting upper-middle-class and wealthy individuals with these forged documents.

In March, Assistant Director SM

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People help a family carry a sick newborn whose ambulance got stuck in a jam near Shanir Akhra on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in the capital yesterday. The ambulance taking the critically ill child from Dhanmondi to Bangladesh Neonatal Hospital in Narayanganj was stuck as locals blocked the highway demanding uninterrupted gas supply.

PHOTO: STAR

Plots afoot to derail democratic process

Tarique says country going through 'abnormal times'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With democracy and accountable governance absent, the country is passing through an abnormal time, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman said yesterday.

Restoring democracy is the only way to return the nation to normalcy, he added, speaking virtually at the closing session of the party's two-day "Plan to Build the Country" programme in the capital.

"Why is the share market crashing? This is abnormal. Bank after bank is closing down, shutting down, collapsing. This is abnormal. These abnormal things cannot continue," he said.

He added that mills and factories were shutting, investors unwilling to invest, hospitals lacking adequate treatment facilities, and educational institutions struggling to run academic activities. All of these are signs of "abnormal situations", he said.

Tarique alleged that conspiracies were underway to derail the democratic process and insisted that an elected government is essential to restoring normalcy.

He said people now fear being mugged when stepping outside, and even if they avoid that, there is no guarantee of returning home safely due to frequent road accidents.

"More than 7,000 people were killed in road accidents last year. What happened to the families who lost their only breadwinner? Does anyone think about them the next day?" he asked.

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Polls schedule 'tomorrow or the day after'

EC asks BTV, Betar to record announcement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday asked Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar to prepare to record on December 10 CEC AMM Nasir Uddin's address to the nation unveiling the polls schedule.

The address will be delivered at the EC office in Agargaon.

Speaking to reporters at the Election Bhavan in the afternoon, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said that although the address will be recorded on December 10, it may be broadcast either on the same day or the following day.

"The EC has already sent letters to BTV and Bangladesh Betar in this regard."

In the 12th national

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We work with religion, we don't use it

Says Jamaat ameer; eight-party accepts referendum on polls day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said yesterday that they strongly believe a national government is necessary for at least five years to restore the country's stability and economy, establish the rule of law, and eradicate corruption from society.

"If we are voted to power, we will form this [national] government. We will accept just two things from those who would join this government. We expect that no one will engage in corruption or show leniency towards it in any form. And secondly, they must not interfere in ensuring equal justice for all," he said.

Shafiqur made the remarks while talking to journalists after a meeting with a high-level delegation of the European Union at its embassy.

He added that Jamaat is willing to form a national government with those who agree to these two conditions.

Jamaat will form a national government even if it wins a majority in the upcoming 13th national

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Fifty-three years after independence, many stories of the Liberation War remain untold. Part 5 of this 12-part series turns to Manikchhari in Khagrachhari, where an indigenous king opened his palace to refugees, stood by freedom fighters, and fought alongside them -- leaving behind a legacy unlike any other.

Mong Prue Sain: A monarch who fought for freedom

AHMAD ISTIAK

Mong Prue Sain, the seventh king of the Mong dynasty, emerged as a symbol of resistance during the Liberation War. He threw his support behind the struggle for freedom. He opened his palace and treasury to shelter refugees and freedom fighters, set up a temporary hospital there, and even fought on the battlefield himself. His actions set a rare and powerful precedent in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

MONG PALACE

In July, this correspondent visited Manikchhari upazila in Khagrachhari to document the role of King Mong Prue Sain and his palace. Conversations with former palace members, freedom fighters, and elderly residents revealed remarkable stories of courage.

The Manikchhari upazila headquarters sits along the Khagrachhari-Chittagong highway.



TALES OF FREEDOM

At one end of the local bazaar stands the Mong palace, once the administrative centre of the monarchy. Beside the main building is the Nanuma Devi Memorial Hall, which functioned as a wartime hospital.

After the massacre of March 25, 1971, panic gripped Chittagong district. Civilians fled in fear, and Bangalee soldiers, though initially

resisting, were eventually forced to retreat. Many crossed the border seeking refuge in India.

Along the way, thousands found shelter at the Mong palace, where King Mong Prue Sain opened his doors to welcome them.

The palace set up community kitchens to feed refugees and soldiers, and all 150 staff members were drawn into the war effort. Freedom fighters on their way to India for training often stopped there for shelter.

One such freedom fighter, Md Shafi Uddin, now 75, told this newspaper that right after March 7, King Mong Prue Sain began coordinating with Badshah Alam, the freedom fighter organiser in Fatikchhari, and that the royal palace became an essential transit point and base camp.

He remembered: "Many of the refugees who travelled from North

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BUSINESS

Economy at a crossroads, says GED report

The country's economy shows signs of stabilising, but it remains at a critical juncture, according to a new government report.

Rising inflation, weak investment, governance issues and external pressures threaten growth and living standards.

"Foreign direct investment remains critically low," said the report by the General Economic Division (GED). It also highlighted potential for a rebound if reforms are carried out swiftly and seriously. Economists said without faster action, the country risks slower growth, rising poverty, and a deepening debt trap.

STORY ON B1

Mother, daughter murdered in their Mohammadpur flat

Suspect domestic worker left the home wearing victim's school uniform



Laila had at least 30 stab wounds and her daughter had five. They were stabbed mostly in their throats and necks, according to police and officials at Shaheed Shurawardy Medical College morgue.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman and her teenage daughter were stabbed to death at their residence in Dhaka's Mohammadpur yesterday, allegedly by their part-time house help hired only four days ago.

The victims were identified as Laila Afroze, 48, and Nafisa Nawal Binte Aziz, 15, wife and daughter of AZ Azizul Islam respectively.

The double murder took place on the seventh floor of a 12-storey building

on Shahjahan Road in Mohammadpur when Azizul, a teacher at an English-medium school, was out.

Laila had at least 30 stab wounds and Nafisa had five. They were stabbed mostly in their throats and necks, according to police and officials at Shaheed Shurawardy Medical College morgue.

The house help Ayesha is the primary suspect as CCTV footage shows her to

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