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US President Donald Trump

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Unite to shield press freedom

Journalists urge rising above divisions at media convention organised by Noab, Editors' Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists yesterday slammed the government for failing to protect media houses and workers from mob violence, saying stalled reforms and bureaucratic inertia have left the press more vulnerable than ever.

Warning that a fragmented media remains an easy target for political intimidation and physical violence, top editors and journalists at the Media Convention 2026 called for national unity to keep the country on a democratic path

"By invoking the 'July spirit' to justify violence, they [attackers] are actually trying to destroy the core democratic spirit of that movement," said Nurul Kabir, president of the Editors' Council and editor of the daily New Age.

"When media institutions are attacked or silenced, the rights of the whole society are bound to be obstructed."

He said, "I will carry a lifelong trauma knowing that the attack on The Daily Star was not merely an attempt to destroy a physical building, but rather medieval brutality... They [attackers] deliberately set

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- 1 Formulating code of conduct for journalists, editors and owners proposed
- 2 Stalled reforms, non-enactment of law to protect journalists frustrating amid continued insecurity
- 3 Threat is constant, protection is minimal for journalists outside Dhaka as past attacks remain unpunished
- 4 Journalist leaders mull regional conventions

and protect media freedom.

This was the first edition of the convention, jointly organised by the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh and the Editors' Council at the Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh auditorium in Dhaka, to protest sustained attacks on freedom of expression and democratic values.

Speakers said assaults on the media stand in stark contradiction to the spirit of the July uprising.

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Journalists rise for the national anthem at the opening of the Media Convention 2026, held yesterday at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

'We'll always stand by you'

Tarique tells grieving families of enforced disappearance victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will always stand by the families who lost their dear ones in the fight against fascism, party Chairman Tarique Rahman said yesterday.

He added that any democratic government has an obligation and responsibility towards the victims and their families.

"Many children are still waiting, hoping that their disappeared father will one day return and knock on the door. Many mothers are still holding on to hope that their lost child will once again call out to them.

"This waiting carries a profound responsibility for

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MANIFESTO EXPECTATIONS

With the national election less than a month away, political parties are finalising their manifestos. The Daily Star spoke to experts to identify the pressing issues that should top the agenda for parties.

Affordable care must be next govt's focus

Say health experts

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

As major political parties prepare to roll out their election manifestos, health experts say that ensuring quality primary healthcare for all and reducing high out-of-pocket expenditure should be their top priority.

They note that primary healthcare remains weak and underfunded, particularly in urban areas, despite its

critical role in preventing diseases and protecting people from falling into poverty due to high medical costs.

Health should not be treated as the sole responsibility of a single ministry; rather, it should be integrated into all government policies and activities, they observe.

To achieve these goals, the experts have called for an overhaul of health

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman consoles a distraught mother of a victim of enforced disappearance during a programme held yesterday at the China-Bangladesh Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY
WE ARE DEEPLY GRIEVED

Today 18 January 2026 is the First Death Anniversary of Mrs. Nurun Nahar Gias (Saqi) BSc (Hons) (DU) MSc (DU) EMBA (AIUB); Wife of: Prof. Dr. ASM Giasuddin MSc (DU) PhD (London) PGD (London) MPH (SUB, BD) Emeritus MNYAS (USA), Founder Director & Senior Consultant of Laboratory Medicine, Impulse Hospital, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208; Second Daughter of: Late Mr. Bazal Ahmed (Founder/First Managing Director of United Commercial Bank Ltd/UCBL, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She was a 'Mathematics teacher and Senior Academic Supervisor and Head of Senior Section' at Scholastica School & College, Uttara, Dhaka for many years. Mrs. Nurun Nahar Gias (Saqi) hailed from Daulatpur, Fatiksari, Chittagong and her husband Prof. Dr. Giasuddin hails from East Syedpur, Sitakund, Chittagong, Bangladesh. Presently, the family lives at Mohakhali DOHS, Dhaka-1206, Bangladesh.

On this occasion, we earnestly request you all to pray to Almighty Allah for eternal peace and salvation of her departed soul in haven.

Prof. Dr. ASM Giasuddin (Husband), Prof. Dr. Rubayat Sheik Giasuddin (1st son) & his wife Dr. Nafisa Tabassum, Engr. Mr. Shafaat Sheik Giasuddin (2nd son) & his wife Mrs. Farzana Sultana, Inaya (1st Grand Daughter), Zaina (2nd Grand Daughter), Kiyana (1st Grandson) & Farzan (2nd Grandson)



The second part of The Daily Star's 35th anniversary supplement 2026,

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