



## No legal bar to NCT deal with DP World

SC upholds HC verdict; port workers call strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

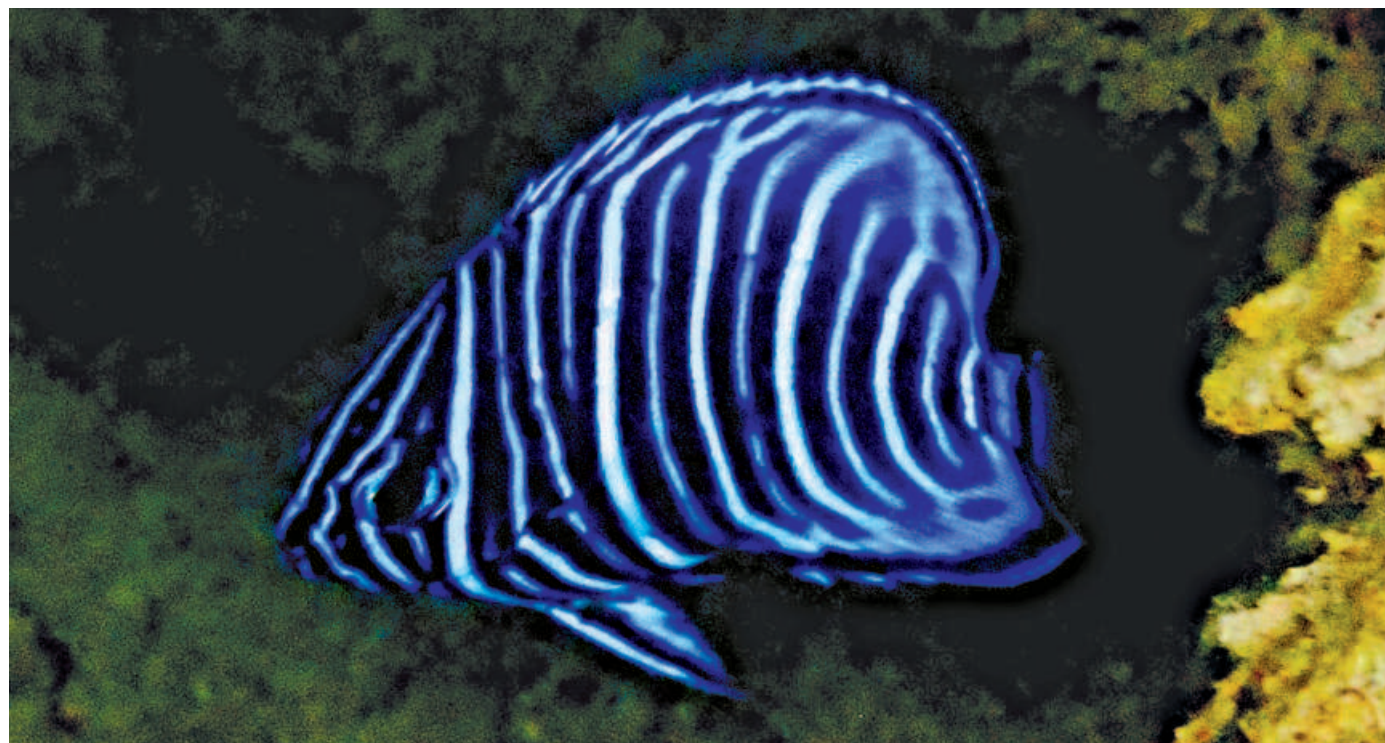
The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday upheld a High Court verdict rejecting a writ petition that challenged the legality of the government's move to award a contract to UAE-based DP World for container handling at the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), the largest functional facility of Chattogram port.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed the "no order" on a petition filed by the Bangladesh Jubo Arthanitibid Forum challenging the HC verdict and seeking an order of status quo on the entire process of awarding the contract for NCT.

The Bangladesh Jubo Arthanitibid Forum, a philanthropic organisation, filed the petition as a public interest litigation with the HC last year.

Earlier in the day, the HC bench of Justice Zafar Ahmed rejected the writ petition as the process

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## BLUES IN MOTION

A juvenile semicircle angelfish glowing under the Bay of Bengal off Saint Martin's Island. Native to the Indo-Pacific, from the Red Sea and East Africa to Japan and Australia, these angelfish drift through coral reefs, lagoons, and rubble slopes, sheltering in crevices when startled. Their diet is eclectic and reef-bound: sponges and tunicates form the core, with algae and small invertebrates rounding it out. With age, the inky blue fades into greenish-blue, a bold black mask forms, and the tail turns bright yellow. Listed as Least Concern by the IUCN, the species still faces local threats from coral loss due to rampant water pollution.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR



## REFERENDUM 'A non-serious proposition'

Prof Sobhan says reforms proposals too complicated for most to understand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reforms through the referendum, being conducted in an opaque manner, is a non-serious proposition, said noted economist and political scientist Prof Rehman Sobhan.

He said people are being asked to approve 38 complicated reform proposals which ordinary citizens do not understand.

Prof Sobhan was speaking at a session of the day-long conference titled "Rupture, Reform, and Reimagining Democracy" organised by the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) at the BRAC Centre yesterday.

"This non-seriousness is evident in the current election campaign. The revealed preference of the main players is clear: no one is talking about reforms," he said.

He said he has not heard either of the two alliances stand up and say "here are 38 essential reforms required to reimagine your democracy – let us mobilise public consciousness around them".

"Instead, what we have are employees of the banking



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## 2016 KALYANPUR KILLINGS Hasina, Kamal, 6 others charged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday brought charges against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and six former senior police officers over the killing of nine youths in what it described as a "staged anti-militant operation" at Kalyanpur's Jahaj Building in 2016.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 accepted the charges after taking the formal charges into cognisance and issued arrest warrants against six accused who remain absconding.

Two of the accused – former inspector general of police

**The case dates back to an operation on July 26, 2016 at a fourth-floor flat of the six-storey Jahaj Building in Kalyanpur, following the Holey Artisan Bakery attack earlier that month.**

AKM Shahidul Hoque and former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia – are already in custody.

The four other cops accused are former DMP additional commissioner Sheikh Mohammad Maruf Hasan; former CTTC chief who later became the SB chief Md Monirul Islam; then DMP joint commissioners Krishna Pada Roy and Mohammad Abdul Baten, who were later promoted to additional IGP and deputy inspector general respectively.

The case dates back to an operation on July 26, 2016 at a fourth-floor flat of the six-storey Jahaj Building in Kalyanpur, following the Holey Artisan Bakery attack

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## 3 MURDER SUSPECTS They walk out of jail without bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Mymensingh

Three accused in a murder case have been mistakenly released from Mymensingh Central Jail without any bail order from court, prison authorities confirmed yesterday.

The murder suspects are Anis Mia, Rashedul Islam, and Jakirul Islam – sons of Hazrat Ali of Tarati Paschimpara village in Tarakanda upazila of Mymensingh.

Aminul Islam, senior jail superintendent of Mymensingh Central Jail, told The Daily Star that prison officials wrongfully released the trio on Tuesday evening.

"It was a wrongful release. The details of the incident will be known later," he said, adding that police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-14) have already been informed to arrest the three.

Mohammad Touhidul Islam, deputy inspector general (DIG) of prisons for Mymensingh division, said the three accused were sent to jail by a court on January 23 this year in a murder

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## Two ordinances to protect women, kids in all spaces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday gave the final approval to a draft ordinance aimed at preventing sexual harassment at workplaces and educational institutions.

Called 'Workplace and Educational Institutions Sexual Harassment Prevention Ordinance, 2026', it defines sexual harassment broadly to include all forms of unwanted and degrading physical, verbal, non-verbal and online conduct.

It also brings sexual harassment through social media, email, messaging platforms and other digital technologies under its purview. It makes these protections enforceable across the country as well as in other government-affiliated organisations operating outside Bangladesh.

The development comes 16 years after the High Court issued a set of guidelines and directives defining sexual misdemeanours to prevent any kind of physical, mental or sexual harassment of women, girls and children at their workplaces, educational institutions and other public places including roads.

The directive, which comes following a writ petition, stipulates the authorities concerned to form a five-member harassment complaint committee headed by a woman at every workplace and institution to investigate allegations of harassment of women.

It also directed the government to make a law on the basis of the guidelines and ruled that the guidelines will be treated as a law until the law is made. However, no law was enacted and the directives were seldom observed.

In April 2010, the education ministry issued a circular directing all educational institutions to form such committees within three weeks.

While many institutions did set up the committees, they have largely remained

ineffective due to the absence of any monitoring mechanism.

The ordinance approved yesterday is expected to provide a strong legal foundation for ensuring safety, justice and accountability in workplaces and educational institutions.

It will play a pivotal role in fostering an honourable, inclusive and humane society, according to a press release from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

Every workplace and educational institution will be required to set up an Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) within a stipulated timeframe.

The ICC will be tasked with receiving

- Internal complaint committee at every workplace
- Penalties include reprimand, demotion, termination, expulsion
- Survivor-centric procedures to safeguard complainant's safety
- Safeguards to ensure fairness in cases of false complaints

and investigating complaints, ensuring the complainant's safety during the inquiry and recommending appropriate disciplinary action. Penalties may range from formal reprimand to demotion, termination or even expulsion in the case of educational institutions.

The ordinance mandates survivor-centric procedures to safeguard the complainant's safety, confidentiality and dignity.

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## Tiny shoes that'll never be worn again

Sister recalls holding  
her brother's hand  
when he fell into  
the pit

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Nine-year-old Mim Akhter sat quietly at the doorway of her family's small home in an Ashrahan project at Raozan upazila of Chattogram yesterday. In her lap was a plastic bucket filled with her three-year-old brother Misbah's clothes. She picked out two tiny pairs of shoes that Misbah will never wear again.



On Wednesday afternoon around 4:30pm, Misbah was playing outside when he slipped into a deep, narrow tube-well pit near their house that was abandoned and left uncovered.

Mim was next to him. As he fell into the nearly 30-ft hole, she managed to grab his hand and held on for several minutes.

But her grip gave way.

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## NATIONAL FILM AWARDS 2023 'Sataao' wins Best Film, Afran Nisho Best Actor

A&E DESK

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting yesterday announced the names of 30 films, artists, and technicians across 28 categories for the National Film Awards 2023.

In a gazette notification, it announced that the lifetime achievement awards are being conferred on Tareque Masud and Abdul Latif Bachchu for their outstanding contributions to Bangladeshi cinema.

The film "Sataao" has been selected as Best Film, while its director, Khandaker Sumon, will receive the Best Director award.

Afran Nisho is set to get his first National Award as Best Actor award for his first film "Surongo", while "Sataao" actress Aynun Putul has been named Best Actress.

Among other notable winners, Monir Ahmed Shakeel has received the Best Supporting Actor award for "Surongo"; Nazia Haque Orsha for Best Supporting Actress for "Ora 7 Jon"; Ashish Khandakar for as Best Actor/Actress in a Negative Role; and Shahiduzzaman Selim for Best Actor/Actress in a Comic Role. Mohammad Leon has been recognised as Best Child Artist. In the music categories, Balam is set to get Best Male Singer for "Priyotoma"; Abanti Sathi Best Female Singer for the song "Gaa Chuye Bolo" from "Surongo", while Shomeshwar Oli has received the Best Lyricist award for "Ishwar" from "Priyotoma". Prince Mahmud has won Best Composer for "Ishwar" from "Priyotoma".



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh women's futsal team players celebrate atop an open-top bus in Dhaka yesterday after returning home from Bangkok, Thailand, following their triumph in the maiden SAFF Women's Futsal Championship. The women in red and green topped the seven-team round-robin tournament with 16 points from six matches, finishing four points clear of runners-up India.

## Set up one commission for media, not two Recommend jurnos at consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most media professionals yesterday recommended the establishment of a single media commission instead of having two separate bodies.

They expressed their views at a consultation meeting held at the Department of Films and Publications (DFP) to discuss two draft ordinances – the Broadcast Ordinance, 2026 and the National Media Commission Ordinance, 2026.

The event was organised by the information and broadcasting ministry.

While many media professionals attended, representatives of several key organisations, including the Association of Television Channel Owners (ATCO), Editors' Council, Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and Broadcast Journalist Centre (BJC), were absent despite being invited.

At the meeting, Information Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said

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