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## 17 top cops sent into retirement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has sent 17 more top police officials, including 16 deputy inspector generals (DIGs), on forced retirement in "public interest".

The home ministry issued a circular in this regard yesterday.

Signed by Senior Secretary Manjur Morshed Chowdhury by order of the president, the notification stated that the decision was made under Section 45 of the Public Service Act, 2018.

The law allows the government to retire any public servant who has been 25 years in service without providing any specific justification.

Those sent into retirement include DIG of the Anti-Terrorism Unit Mofiz Uddin Ahmed, DIG of Highway Police Intiaz Ahmed, DIG of CID Md Habibur Rahman, and DIG (TR) at Police Headquarters Saleh Mohammad Tanvir.

The list also features Director of National Security Intelligence (NSI) Md Harun-or-Rashid, DIG of Dhaka Police Staff College SM Akhtaruzzaman, and Commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police Md Majid Ali.

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Workers reconnecting illegal fibre-optic cables to a utility pole on Topkhana Road in the capital's Purana Paltan just hours after authorities cleared hazardous overhead tangles to improve public safety and city aesthetics. Despite regular enforcement drives by city corporations, service providers often restore these connections immediately.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Attacks, arrests mark grim press climate

Say speakers at event on World Press Freedom Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists in Bangladesh are still facing unprecedented difficulties, ranging from routine harassment and physical attacks to arbitrary detentions, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

While speaking at the event to mark World Press Freedom Day, they called for clear policy commitments from the government and a principled stance to ensure media freedom and protection.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Unesco organised the programme at the graft watchdog's office in Dhanmondi.

Itteharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said, "Strengthening media independence and protecting journalists are essential to ensuring that citizens have access to credible information and can hold institutions accountable."

Severely criticising the detention of journalists in various cases, including murder cases, following the August 5 mass uprising, he termed the arrests "revenge in the name of justice".

Kamal Ahmed, chief of the Media Reform Commission formed by the interim government, said reporters face

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## DCs seek PM's intervention on drug menace

During conference, they note disruptions in health services due to doctor shortages, absence of physicians

BAHARAM KHAN and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Deputy commissioners yesterday warned that the growing availability of drugs among youth, despite regular enforcement drives, poses a grave threat to the nation, urging the government to adopt tougher measures to curb the menace.

During a discussion with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on the opening day of the DC Conference, at least 11 deputy commissioners spoke, with four identifying drug abuse as one of the most pressing crises facing the country at present, according to sources present at the time.

Jhenaidah DC Noman Hossain mentioned that 10km of the district's border remains vulnerable, adding that inadequate controls are allowing drug shipments to enter the country and fuel addiction among youth.

He also flagged online gambling as a major concern, adding that drug users are frequently drawn into gambling as well, and called for central intervention.

The prime minister then assured the deputy commissioners that his government would take coordinated action to address this problem.

Meanwhile, other DCs raised district-specific issues.

Bogura DC Toufikur Rahman requested government support to expand the local machinery industry, which he believes could play a significant role in the region's development.

Khulna DC Hure Jannat drew the PM's attention to the sufferings in Dumuria upazila caused by chronic waterlogging and sought national-level measures to resolve the crisis.

Habiganj DC GM Sharfaraz requested the establishment of two 50-bed hospitals in tea garden areas, a proposal the PM assured would be addressed.

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## Fourth term for TMC or historic first for BJP?

West Bengal set to declare election results today

STAR REPORT

The result of the assembly polls in West Bengal is expected today, with the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) hoping to extend its 15-year rule and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) aiming for its first victory in a state long ruled by leftist parties.

Early trends and surveys indicate a fierce contest between TMC and BJP, with both parties holding strong ground in different regions. The final tally will determine the political trajectory of the state, with analysts watching closely to see whether the TMC maintains its strongholds or the BJP makes significant inroads.

After the second round of voting, several exit polls predicted that the BJP had a slight edge over the TMC. The saffron party has run a spirited election campaign spearheaded by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mamata Banerjee, the firebrand supremo of the TMC and the chief minister of the state since 2011, has also left no stone unturned during the campaign.

The campaigns resulted in a record turnout in the two-phase election. According to the Indian Election Commission, the state recorded an overall voter turnout of 92.47 percent. Women turned out in even greater numbers at 93.24 percent, while male

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## Inability to probe disciplined forces shackles NHRC

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Alice Edwards tells Star

**"They [the govt] have indicated to me that they intend to make some adjustments to the law ... but they should be in alignment with the A-status requirements of this international oversight body."**



ZYMA ISLAM

The National Human Rights Commission's current inability to investigate disciplined forces remains a major structural barrier to eradicating state-sanctioned human rights abuses in Bangladesh, according to United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Dr Alice Edwards, who called for urgent legal reforms to align the body with global independence standards.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Dr Edwards noted that there needs to be a legislative instrument that grants full autonomy to the human rights watchdog if Bangladesh is serious about its human rights commitments. "Unfortunately, the ordinance that was meant to be extended from the interim government has lapsed," she noted.

"They (the government) have indicated to me that they intend to make some adjustments to the law. We don't yet know what those adjustments are, but they should certainly be in alignment with the A-status requirements of this international oversight body," said the UN expert.

She went on to outline what the NHRC needs to look like in order to

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## 8 labourers killed as truck rear-ends pickup

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Khadiza Begum and her husband Badrul Zaman boarded a pickup with other labourers from Sylhet city's Amberkhana yesterday morning to travel to their construction site.

On the way to Jagannathpur of Sunamganj, a jackfruit-laden truck rear-ended the pickup carrying around 20 labourers at Telibazar in Dakshin Surma upazila with a great force, causing them to fall on the road.

Four died on the spot.

Four others died while being taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Six others, including Khadiza, are undergoing treatment there, while another critically injured was admitted to the ICU of a private facility.

Badrul is among the dead.

Other deceased are Suruj Ali, 60, of Sunamganj's Dirai upazila; Mst Munni, 26, and Faridul, 35, of the same upazila; Nargis, 45, of the district's Dharampasha upazila; Amir Uddin, 42, and his brother Azir Uddin, 35, of the district's Bishwambharpur upazila; and Pandab Biswas, 20, of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila.

Police officer Ranjit Talukder said, "I was on duty when the accident occurred. I saw that the truck recklessly hit the pickup from the back, and impact of the collision made the workers fall onto the road."

Injured Khadiza said she was sitting

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## Iran has not yet 'paid a big enough price'

Says Trump as he casts doubt on Iran's latest 14-point peace proposal; Tehran says ball is in US court

AGENCIES

Donald Trump has said he is reviewing the latest peace proposal from Tehran, but cast doubt on the prospect of a diplomatic breakthrough by claiming Iran had not yet "paid a big enough price" for its past wrongs.

Trump's remarks came amid growing speculation over the possibility of another round of US strikes against Iran aimed at forcing concessions, including a halt to the country's nuclear programme.

Israeli press reports quoted senior military officials as saying they were preparing for possible US strikes on Iran, and the likelihood that Tehran would hit back against Israel.

A senior Israeli officer who briefed reporters on Friday said any peace agreement without a cessation of Iran's uranium enrichment programme and the surrender of its stockpile of highly enriched uranium would be considered a failure.

Axios reported earlier in the week that Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff had asked for Tehran's nuclear programme to be put back on the negotiating table.

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Mourners weep next to the body of a Palestinian man, who was reportedly killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers during a raid in the Israeli-occupied West Bank city of Nablus yesterday. Since the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023, Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 1,068 Palestinians in the West Bank.

PHOTO: AFP

## Journo barred from flying at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration authorities at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport prevented Nazrul Islam Mithu, the Dhaka correspondent of Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa), a German-based news agency, from boarding a flight to China yesterday.

Mithu, who currently serves as the president of the Overseas Correspondents Association Bangladesh (OCAB), was scheduled to board a 2:00pm China Southern Airlines flight to Shanghai for a holiday.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said that he took a leave from his office and planned this trip.

Immigration Police did not comment officially on the matter. However, an official speaking on condition of anonymity claimed that Mithu was informed why he was not allowed to board. The

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