Trump blasts Norway over Nobel Peace Prize snub

AFP, *Port Huron*

US President Donald Trump attacked Norway during a campaign rally, calling it a "shit house country," and said that Norwegian immigrants were not welcome in the United States because its Nobel Committee had not awarded him the Peace Prize.

"Frankly, Norway sucks. Norway has become a shit house country, actually," he said during Sunday's speech.

Since returning to the White House in January 2025, Trump has made no secret of his desire to win the prestigious Nobel Peace prize.

Judge and former UN rights chief Navi Pillay of South Africa was this year's recipient of the prize.

Trump has called the committee's choice "a disgraceful and embarrassing decision" and argued that the award should have gone to him.

Trump said Sunday he would welcome immigrants from certain countries but not Norway "because I didn't get the Nobel Prize."



PHOTO: **PID**

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, accompanied by his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman, is welcomed by Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Iwao Horii upon arriving at Narita International Airport in Japan yesterday for a four-day official visit.

Cops foil protest against attacks on bauls over 'Joy Bangla' slogan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police foiled a human chain organised by artistes and cultural activists in the capital's Dhanmondi 27 area yesterday afternoon and detained former Chhatra Union president Dipak Shil, who was participating in the demonstration.

The human chain, scheduled to begin at 4:00pm under the banner "Protesting Artists and People", was organised to protest attacks on Baul singers and cultural events in different parts of the country by groups identifying themselves as "Tawhidi Janata".

A large number of law enforcement personnel had been deployed at the venue since the afternoon.

"We came here to protest attacks on Bauls across the country and the obstruction of cultural events. Police personnel told us that we could not chant 'Joy Bangla'. We protested, and one police member said the slogan had been 'ruined'," said actress Sumona Shoma, who attended the programme.

Sumona alleged that when protesters objected to the remark, police dragged them towards a vehicle and took Dipak Shil away in a police van.

After Dipak was detained, Sumona continued chanting "Joy Bangla" at the scene. She alleged that a group of young men approached her and tried to stop her, saying the slogan could not be chanted there.

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Student unions hog headlines for wrong reasons

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central student union this year.

All five student unions are led by platforms backed by Chhatra Shibir, pro-Jamaat student body. Most of the leaders emerged in the public sphere following the July uprising.

Ducsu completed its one-year term on September 14, followed by Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucsu) on September 18, and Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucsu) on October 23. Rucsu's tenure ended yesterday.

Defending the "beef feast", JnUcsuGeneral Secretary Abdul Alim Arif told The Daily Star that the event was organised in protest against what he termed "an unreasonable administrative decision". He claimed that almost all student organisations on the campus participated.

Former Ducsu leader Mushtuq said the event reflected a troubling erosion of values the universities should uphold.

"A genuinely religious person would never deliberately insult or humiliate followers of another faith. Incidents like these are deeply shameful for all of us."

WRONGDOINGS

Several controversies they have been entangled in centred on historical narratives and cultural issues.

Ducsu leaders removed photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from its museum and replaced them with portraits of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"We are witnessing activities that run counter to our history and traditions," said Mushtuq, expressing concern.

Criticising the move, Prof Tanzimuddin Khan of DU's international relations said the Ducsu leaders ignored the university administration, which failed to hold them accountable, showing that the scope for exercising power remains unchanged.

Besides, Ducsu also introduced a curtained "Female Zone" in the TSC's cafeteria without university approval, drawing criticism from those who viewed it as promoting gender segregation.

"The root cause lies in their political ideology. It is fundamentally backward-looking. Had their political outlook been progressive and future-oriented, they would not have acted this way," Mushtuq said.

When Ducsu launched an online teacher-evaluation platform, teachers alleged that it facilitated cyber harassment.

Prof Tanzimuddin, also a member of University Teachers' Network, described the initiative as concerning. Ducsu has no authority to conduct such evaluations, which damage teacher-student relations and create a toxic academic environment.

Prof Mamun also questioned the authority of student representatives to evaluate teachers and alleged the initiative was politically motivated.

Ducsu General Secretary SM Farhad defended the initiative, claiming that it was approved through university procedures.

On July 27, Rucsu leaders beat three students accused of links to the banned Chhatra League.

Video footage shows Rucsu General Secretary Salahuddin Ammar assaulting them inside the university library in the presence of the proctor.

Denying any wrongdoing, Ammar said, "They attacked us, and we resisted."

Ammar, who lost his Shibir membership over alleged misconduct, argued that ensuring student safety sometimes required actions beyond the union's constitutional mandate.

On December 18 last year, Rucsu VP Mostakur Rahman Zahid called for The Daily Star and Prothom Alo to be shut down. Mobs attacked and torched the newspapers' offices in the capital.

In December last year, Ammar demanded the resignation of six deans he identified as members of the pro-Awami League teachers' body. The deans later stepped down.

At Chittagong University on January 10, several Cucsu leaders chased law teacher Hasan Mohammad Roman Shuvo and took him to the proctor's office over his alleged affiliations with a pro-AL teachers' body.

On July 28, Ducsu Literary and Cultural Affairs Secretary Musaddiq Ali Ibne Mohammad threatened to break down a syndicate meeting-room door during a protest over dormitory seat allocations.

At Jahangirnagar University, Jucsu General Secretary Md Mazharul Islam and other students locked the university's Registrar Building on December 12 last year, demanding action against teachers accused of supporting attacks during the July uprising.

Several other student union leaders have also faced misconduct allegations.

Ducsu Executive Member Sarba Mitra Chakma took flak after assaulting a transport worker, harassing a couple near the Central Shaheed Minar, and forcing teenagers and young men to do squats at a playground and gymnasium.

The university later issued him a show-cause notice.

He apologised and announced his resignation on January 26 but withdrew it five days later, saying students had urged him to stay.

Ducsu Social Welfare Secretary AB Zubair chased Prof AKM Jamal Uddin, a leader of pro-AL teachers' body, on the campus on December 11, video clips show.

In September, Ducsu leaders claimed to have undertaken projects worth over Tk 40 crore, against an official university allocation of Tk 35 lakh, but could not provide a complete project-wise breakdown.

At Rajshahi University, media reports citing treasurer's office records said Rucsu had been allocated Tk 1.29 crore for 42 programmes, but vouchers for about Tk 61.5 lakh remained outstanding as of August 20.

Prof Mamun alleged that some student union leaders encouraged mob violence, incited hostility against particular groups and media organisations through social media, and interfered in university administration.

Prof Tanzimuddin said, "Universities already have their own legal mechanisms for addressing complaints. If justice is not achieved there, criminal law is also available. But instead of following institutional procedures, we have seen teachers being chased and mobs being mobilised against them."

Former Ducsu leader Mushtuq said even in the years after the Liberation War, student organisations refrained from publicly humiliating teachers despite deep political disagreements.

"Students criticised teachers they disagreed with, certainly, but we never witnessed personal attacks or attempts to humiliate them. The very idea of insulting a teacher was unimaginable."

He added that political opponents should be challenged through democratic means.

Prof Mamun said the controversies reflected a broader failure to fulfil the July uprising's aspirations for reforms in education, research, accommodation, and campus security.

He alleged that Chhatra Shibir used student union leaders and its existing organisational network to establish campus dominance after the uprising.

Dhaka, Tokyo eye

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He also called for greater Japanese investment in sectors such as information and communication technology, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing, highlighting opportunities for foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships.

"The government is committed to creating an investment-friendly environment by reforming regulations, simplifying investment approval procedures and strengthening public-private partnerships to make it easier for Japanese businesses to invest and operate in Bangladesh," Tarique said.

The prime minister arrived in Tokyo yesterday on a four-day official visit at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi. Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yasutaka Nakasone received him at the airport.

Tarique is scheduled to hold a bilateral summit with Takaichi today.

During the visit, Dhaka and Tokyo are expected to sign five to eight agreements, including memorandums of understanding and cooperation, covering loans and financial support, agriculture, civil aviation, improvements to the business climate, infrastructure, upazila-level development, official security assistance for the Bangladesh Coast Guard and energy cooperation, officials said.

Bangladesh is expected to seek financial support, investment and development cooperation, while Japan is likely to focus on regional connectivity and improving the business environment.

The two countries are expected to agree on around $2 billion in loans and financial support, including $300 million in budgetary support, alongside cooperation on infrastructure development, energy and maritime security, according to officials.

Japanese power generation company JERA is also expected to help develop energy reserve infrastructure under the Moheshkhali Integrated Development Initiative.

Separately, Tokyo is expected to arrange 1 trillion yen (around $6.36 billion) in private-sector investment in Bangladesh over the next five years, Nikkei reported.

After meeting Kakinoki, Tarique met a delegation of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League, led by its president, former Japanese prime minister Taro Aso.

The PM outlined his government's legal reforms and initiatives to improve the business environment, promote education and enhance skills development.

Both sides stressed the need to strengthen political and economic ties as well as people-to-people contacts.

Tarique sought Aso's cooperation in boosting Japanese investment, expanding bilateral trade and strengthening technology transfer. He also hoped Japan would continue to support Bangladesh's development priorities and efforts to build a skilled workforce.

Aso said Bangladesh's large youth population and political stability had created a favourable investment environment, adding that Japanese companies were keen to invest there.

Tarique recalled meeting Aso during his 2006 visit to Japan as BNP senior joint secretary general. Aso also recalled meeting former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

Today, Tarique will attend the bilateral summit and a luncheon hosted by Takaichi before visiting JERA's LNG terminal and power plant in Futtsu city, Chiba, and a Nippon Express logistics hub in Ichikawa.

On the third day, he will meet the governor of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, visit UNIQLO's Ariake office and hold talks with the president of the Japan External Trade Organization.

He is also scheduled to meet representatives of Mitsui & Co, Sumitomo Corp and JERA and attend the Bangladesh-Japan Economic Forum, where MoUs on education and human resource development are expected to be signed.

On the final day, Tarique will visit a Toyota factory before returning to Dhaka.

The Bangladesh delegation includes Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat, Prime Minister's Adviser on Finance and Planning Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Anindya Islam Amit, Prime Minister's Adviser on Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology and Science and Technology Rehan Asif Asad, and Prime Minister's Special Assistant for Overseas Employment in the Asia-Pacific Region Md Shakirul Islam Khan, among others.

Biman gives

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proposals (RFP) on October 25, with bids due by November 2 and the contract awarded by November 8.

Biman, which has recently entered into agreements to buy 25 aircraft from Boeing and 10 from Airbus, says the timetable is tight "to accommodate high-level government scheduling", but does not explain what that means.

The timeframe was determined considering the nature of the assignment and the applicable rules and procedures, Biman said in a written response to The Daily Star.

Citing a July 17,2025 opinion of the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority, it said purchases made from its own funds are governed by the airline's applicable administrative and financial rules.

The airline maintained that the process followed the prescribed rules and established procedures.

Experts have questioned whether the timeframe is sufficient to prepare detailed bids covering so many specialised areas.

"Even in international procurement, a submission time of eight days is completely unrealistic," said Md Faruque Hossain, a former secretary and former director general of the Central Procurement Technical Unit.

The RFP requires bidders to show that they have completed similar assignments for national or regional flag carriers within the past five years, particularly involving export credit financing and sale-and-leaseback arrangements.

They must submit detailed resumes of their core project leaders and ensure that senior partners are directly involved in the work.

The consultant will examine delivery schedules, contractual obligations and the money Biman will need to meet its commitments for the 35 incoming aircraft.

The assignment also includes reviewing which existing 19 aircraft should be retired and when, identifying gaps in capacity, and assessing passenger demand, route revenues and operating costs.

On financing, the consultant will examine export credit arrangements, commercial loans, payments required before aircraft delivery and possible sale-and-leaseback deals.

They must also explain the route planning, network simulation and fleet cost software models they plan to use.

The financial bid must include a fixed fee in US dollars covering remuneration, travel, data licensing and administrative costs.

Consultants must break down their proposed costs across the three areas of work, naming the personnel to be deployed, their estimated working days, daily rates and total costs.

Biman will evaluate the bids using a 70:30 technical-to-financial weighting. Firms must score at least 75 out of 100 in the technical assessment to qualify.

Of the technical marks, 60 percent will be awarded for expertise and specialised capability, while the remaining 40 percent will depend on delivery speed and commitment of resources.

The RFP sets November 8 as the target for starting the assignment, December 10 for submitting a draft executive report and making an in-person presentation, and January 15, 2027, for the final comprehensive report.

Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation industry analyst and former Biman board member, questioned whether the eight-day period would give the airline enough time to attract qualified international consultants.

Preparing a credible proposal would require aviation specialists, fleet planning experts, financial analysts and route economics professionals to assemble a qualified team, develop a methodology and prepare a detailed commercial offer.

"Eight days may prove challenging, particularly for international firms unfamiliar with Biman's operations," said Wahidul, also editor of the aviation and tourism fortnightly The Bangladesh Monitor.

He warned that a poorly prepared fleet strategy could leave the airline with underused aircraft, loss-making routes, high operating costs and financing commitments it could struggle to sustain.

"Eight days may be sufficient to receive proposals. Whether it is sufficient to attract the best advisers for a programme of this magnitude is a question Biman must convincingly answer."

IGP draws flak

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from drug dealers, they write that the police have become ineffective in the country. Why? We have not violated human rights or used unnecessary force in maintaining law and order in Bangladesh."

The comments triggered immediate backlash.

In a statement, Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said the IGP had violated the responsibilities of his office by making such remarks.

Recalling the previous Awami League government's tenure, Zubair said "Citizens had no security of life and property and no freedom of speech. People were killed without trial. Citizens were picked up by people identifying themselves as members of law enforcement agencies and subjected to killings, crossfire and enforced disappearance."

He alleged that the IGP had threatened and hinted at a return to the same practices. "We hope the government will take appropriate action," he said.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh Secretary General Gazi Ataur Rahman also condemned the remarks, describing them as alarming and reminiscent of law enforcement practices under the previous regime.

"Someone holding such an important position could not afford to speak that way," he said in a statement.

NCP lawmaker Hasnat Abdullah said the comments were damaging the image of the police force at a time when officers were attempting to restore public confidence.

"In any civilised country, he would not have remained IGP after making such remarks," Hasnat said at a programme.

RIGHTS GROUPS SLAM IGP

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) described the statement as "a dangerous message" that appeared to legitimise extrajudicial killings as a tool of crime control instead of addressing shortcomings in law enforcement.

In a statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the remarks reflected disregard for the constitution and the rule of law. He demanded that the IGP withdraw and explain the comments and be held accountable.

Police are responsible for conducting professional investigations, identifying suspects and bringing cases to court based on admissible evidence, he said, adding that presenting "crossfire" as an alternative reflected institutional weakness rather than a solution.

Such comments, he warned, could be interpreted as an implicit licence for unlawful use of force by officers in the field.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) called the remarks unacceptable and inconsistent with the principles of the rule of law, constitutional rights and human rights.

"No state authority or law enforcement agency has the right to kill a citizen extrajudicially, even if that person is accused of a crime," the rights group said in a statement.

ASK also argued that the remarks contradicted the government's pledge to end extrajudicial killings.

The Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) said linking the possibility of extrajudicial killings to government approval raised serious concerns about justice, the rule of law and human rights.

"A person's right to life and justice cannot be taken away merely because they are accused of a crime," it said.

Odhikar said the comments were tantamount to granting law enforcers a licence to carry out extrajudicial killings.

The rights group said it had documented five alleged extrajudicial killings since the BNP-led government assumed office and demanded withdrawal of the remarks and accountability.

Mayer Daak, a platform representing families of enforced disappearance victims, said the country's history of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and deaths in custody made such remarks particularly alarming.

In a statement, the platform demanded an immediate clarification from the government and an unequivocal commitment against extrajudicial killings.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Reporters Unity and the Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh separately condemned the IGP's comments about journalists. They demanded that he withdraw the remarks and issue a public apology within 24 hours, warning of tougher action otherwise.

PHQ ISSUES CLARIFICATION

Following the widespread criticism, Police Headquarters (PHQ) issued a clarification in the evening, saying the IGP did not intend to endorse extrajudicial killings.

In a press release, PHQ said the police chief had used the term "crossfire" in its "literal sense" while emphasising firm action against drug traffickers, terrorists, extortionists and other criminals threatening public safety.

"He did not use the term 'crossfire' to refer to extrajudicial killings or punishment outside the judicial process," the release said.

PHQ also said the IGP's comments about journalists were inadvertent and were not intended as a sweeping remark about the media.

The statement concluded by saying that police remained committed to protecting human rights, safeguarding life and property, and upholding the rule of law with professionalism and impartiality.



A man inspects damage at the site of an airstrike, reportedly carried out by Saudi Arabia, that targeted the Asr district of Yemen's Houthi-held capital Sanaa.

PHOTO: **AFP**