Ex-FBI chief, Trump critic Comey hit with fresh charges

AFP, *Washington*

Former FBI director James Comey has been charged with allegedly disclosing national defense information, the third criminal case brought against the outspoken critic of US President Donald Trump.

In a criminal complaint unsealed on Monday, Comey is accused of communicating the information in October 2016, when he was head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to a "person not entitled to receive it."

Comey was charged in September 2025 with making false statements to Congress and obstructing a congressional proceeding in what was widely seen as retribution by the Republican president against a political opponent.

A federal judge threw out the case on the grounds that the US attorney handpicked by Trump who brought the charges had been unlawfully appointed.



An Indian Pond Heron (Ardeola grayii), locally known as Deshi Kani Bok, leaps towards its prey in a waterbody beside Northern University on Khulna City Bypass Road yesterday. They are commonly found in wetlands, canals, beels and rivers, where they feed on fish, insects, and other small aquatic animals. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

CPB demands justice

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of the banned organisation be handed over to them.

However, Shafiqul Islam, investigation inspector of Paltan Police Station, denied that any such attack had occurred.

Speaking to The Daily Star around 6:00pm yesterday, he said, "They [CPB] did not file any written complaint. There was no attack or vandalism."

Dhaka South BNP Member Secretary Tanvir Ahmed Robin also questioned the allegations.

"It should first be verified whether the incident actually took place. If it did, we need to determine who was involved. But allegations against the BNP should not be made hastily. I do not even know whether such an incident occurred," he said.

"They have not made any specific allegation either, which makes the matter confusing."

In their statement, the CPB leaders noted that the party had participated in every democratic movement in Bangladesh and that many of its leaders and activists had sacrificed their lives in those struggles. They also said Mukti Bhaban had served as an important centre during the 2024 mass uprising.

Regardless of the political identity of those involved, such actions constitute an attack on democracy, democratic rights and freedom of political activity, they said.

The CPB leaders added that threats and attacks would not deter people's aspirations for democracy. They said the public would assess the government's commitment to democratic values based on whether those responsible were identified and brought to justice.

The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JaSod) also condemned the alleged attack and the assault on CPB leaders and activists.

In a statement, JaSod described mob violence as a "national curse" and called for a united national resistance against such acts.

Urban slum children face rising climate risks

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Poor housing, unsafe drinking water, and inadequate sanitation further increase children's vulnerability, she said.

The survey found that 43.5 percent of households live in tin-shed houses and 64.5 percent use shared toilets.

The study recommended strengthening climate-resilient healthcare, improving drainage and sanitation, expanding early-warning systems, and raising community awareness.

At the event, Dr MA Muhit, state minister for Health and Family Welfare, said the government had pledged free primary healthcare for all citizens and planned to recruit 1,00,000 additional health workers.

Young volunteers had been mobilised for dengue prevention, while 2,000 doctors had received refresher training in dengue patient management, he said. "These efforts had helped reduce the mortality rate by around 40 percent."

The government also planned to equip health workers with modern tools, he added.

Muhit said more than 300 children with severe disabilities had been identified in Korail slum within a month, but bureaucratic complications had delayed initiatives to support them.

He urged the media and civil society to ensure transparency in healthcare spending, saying not a single taka of the Tk 16,000 crore expected to be spent on healthcare tenders should be lost to corruption or waste.

Sanaul Islam, professor of Soil, Water and Environment at Khulna University, said the loss of rivers, canals, wetlands and ponds, alongside expanding concrete structures, is worsening urban heat.

He called for restoring water bodies, preserving forests and rethinking urban development to build a sustainable, climate-resilient environment.

MP Anisur Rahman Khokon said the government is committed to environmental protection and safeguarding people's fundamental rights.

Prof Md Nurunnabi, director of Center for Sustainability and Climate; Anowar Hossain, deputy programme manager of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Resilience; Syed Mahbubul Alam, secretary of the Center for Law and Policy Affairs; and Md Ferdous, director of the Cell for Adaptation, Resilience, Security and Disaster Resilience at Islamic Relief Bangladesh, were present, among others.

Proposed cyber law

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posts since the national election had been detained for making "so-called derogatory remarks" or harshly criticising the prime minister, ministers, or their associates.

"Currently, half of these cases are filed under the existing Cyber Protection Act, while the remaining 50 percent have to rely on other laws. They are introducing the new amendment to solve this very problem so that arresting critics gets easier," she added.

Joining virtually, Kamal Ahmed, former chief of Media Reform Commission, said the draft conflates political criticism and free expression with offences such as online gambling, fraud, and sexual harassment.

He cited a case in Mymensingh in which a woman was arrested and jailed for saying on Facebook Live that she had made a mistake by voting for the BNP in the election.

He also criticised the proposed National Cybersecurity Council to be formed under the act, saying the draft law would grant it powers similar to those of an executive body.

He also questioned the inclusion of a retired judge nominated by the chief justice, arguing that it would draw the chief justice into the council's work.

"If a citizen is harmed by any decision of this council, where will they seek justice? Will they go to the very court whose chief justice is a part of this process?" he asked.

Kamal, also the consulting editor at The Daily Star, recommended making prior court approval mandatory for arrests and searches and treating defamation as a civil rather than criminal offence, punishable through hefty fines.

Barrister Priya Ahsan Chowdhury of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) said the power to block content is being extended beyond the Cyber Protection Agency to the information and broadcasting ministry and any government-authorised agency.

She also criticised the removal of certain safeguards from the current act, including the requirement for Cyber Tribunal approval within three days of blocking content, failing which the content must be unblocked. The draft also removes the requirement to publish a transparent list of blocked content, she said.

Chairing the discussion, photographer and rights activist Shahidul Alam said the proposed amendment made no changes to provisions concerning hacking, malware or attacks on critical information infrastructure, focusing instead on controlling what people say and share online.

"This is not a cyber protection law; it is a law to gag voices," he said.

National Citizen Party lawmaker Akhter Hossen, Daily Waadaa Editor Shafiqul Alam, and Alternatives organiser Dr Tajnuva Jabeen also spoke at the event, among others.

The discussion was moderated by Voice for Reform co-convenor Fahim Mashroor.

Gambia students protest over study conditions

AFP, *Banjul*

Hundreds of Gambian students demonstrated on Monday to protest deteriorating studying conditions as well as issues with food and internet access, AFP journalists reported, echoing demands by students across Europe.

The protests at the University of The Gambia (UTG) in the capital Banjul, the country's leading higher education institution, come weeks after demonstrations sparked by persistent power cuts in the West African country whose President Adama Barrow is seeking a third term in an election scheduled for 5 December.

"We're fed up," the protesters chanted, a day after their student union had stated that "students continue to endure inadequate transport, limited access to drinking water, the closure of a canteen, unreliable internet and disruptions to academic activities."

The Ministry of Higher Education stated it had "taken note of the concerns raised by the students".

PRAYER TIMING
OCTOBER 28

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-50	12-45	4-00	5-32	7-15
JAMAAT	5-25	1-15	4-15	5-35	7-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Migrants

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On October 14, the Special Response Battalion said 20 of 30 Bangladeshis sent to Russia with promises of construction jobs had been killed. The workers had paid an average of Tk 10 lakh each and undergone 21 days of training, it said.

The probe examined recruitment involving 48 countries, drawing on 245 testimonies, travel records and Russian military contracts. It found close coordination between recruiters and Russian authorities. Men from at least 29 of those countries were identified as trafficking victims.

Russian officials have publicly denied illegal recruitment, the report noted.

According to the report, recruiters offered jobs as drivers, security guards, electricians and construction workers, arranged travel and then handed recruits over to the Russian military. Their passports and phones were often confiscated, while military training ranged from 20 minutes to a month.

Shariful Islam Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration Programme, said BRAC had warned about the practice last year.

"Many Bangladeshis were lured to Russia with promises of jobs but were later recruited into the war. Some travelled on work visas, while others went on tourist visas."

He urged the government to trace around 8,500 Bangladeshis who had travelled legally to Russia over the past two years and determine how many were working, fighting, missing or dead.

He also called for figures on visas issued by the Russian embassy.

The commission urged Russia to release trafficking victims and investigate recruiters. It said captured recruits were entitled to prisoner-of-war protections and urged their home countries not to prosecute the victims.

3 Hindu homes

FROM PAGE 2

Bogura's Shibganj upazila. He was later formally arrested in a case filed by local resident Aminul Islam on allegations of hurting religious sentiments, the OC said.

Separately, Bishu filed a case with Pirganj Police Station the same day over the vandalism and looting.

Eight people were named in the case, while 60 to 70 unidentified individuals were also accused. Police arrested one of the named accused, Shafiqul Islam Arif, 30, in connection with the case, the OC said.

According to eyewitnesses and the victim families, 50 to 60 people armed with sticks, iron rods and locally made weapons attacked the houses around 7:00pm on Monday.

The assault lasted about an hour, during which the homes and furniture of the three families were vandalised. Some attackers also looted livestock and other belongings.

Bishu told The Daily Star that his son had married about a year and a half ago and had not maintained contact with the family since.

"I don't even have his mobile phone number. If he has committed an offence, why should we be punished?" he said.

He said the attackers damaged a television, furniture, walls and doors of his house and took away two goats.

"We are poor people. Everything we had has been damaged. We cannot afford to repair the house or buy new furniture," said Saurav's mother, Taru Rani Mohanta, 45.

Jagadish and Dinesh said their houses, doors, fences and furniture were vandalised, while televisions and other valuables were looted.

Jagadish's wife, Arati Rani, said she fled her home to save herself.

"When the attackers stormed our house, we pleaded with them to stop. But they threatened to kill me," she said.

After the attack, fear has gripped the village, where about 65 Hindu families live, residents said.

Members of the community also said they identified some of the attackers as residents of adjacent villages.

"Police have been deployed in the area to prevent further untoward incidents. Operations are underway to arrest the remaining accused," the OC said.

Pirganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdullah Al Bakiul Bari said the affected families would receive financial assistance.

'Oh, my son! Where have you gone?'

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Two of the injured, including Rakib, later died while undergoing treatment at CMCH.

The other deceased were identified as Fatema Akter, 38, daughter of Md Abdul Hai, from Mohammad Nagar in Chattogram; Absa, 44, daughter of Abdul Hashim; and Swapna Akter, 30, daughter of Nizam Uddin, both from Kishoreganj. The fifth victim was an unidentified man, aged around 49.

Speaking to The Daily Star hours after the crash, Azharul, a farmer, said he had travelled to Chattogram city to bring his wife and Rakib, the younger of their two sons, back to their village home in Madan upazila of Netrokona.

His wife Fatema works at a readymade garment factory in the Karnaphuli Export Processing Zone and had been living in a rented house in the Narikeltola area under Patenga Police Station.

Azharul's brother, Anwar Hossain, said the family boarded a Netrokona-bound Shapla Paribahan bus from Narikeltola around 12:30am.

Around 1:00am, the bus broke down in Sitakunda. As the driver and his assistant tried to repair it, the heat inside became unbearable, prompting some passengers, including Azharul and his family, to get off.

"We were standing beside the bus with around 20 other passengers. I could hear the driver talking to the bus owner over the phone.

"My son was just two yards away from me. Suddenly, a tank lorry trying to overtake another vehicle ploughed into the passengers standing beside the bus."

Azharul said he saw his son lying in a pool of blood.

"Both my legs were injured, but I didn't feel any pain. All I could see was my son. I shouted for help to save him. Locals rushed to our rescue and took us to CMCH, but my son could not be saved," he said, breaking down in tears.

The accident took place near Royal Cement Gate in the Chhota Kumira area of Sitakunda upazila in Chattogram, said Sitakunda Police Station OC Mohinul Islam.

Inspector Shamim Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Baro Awlia Highway Police Station, said at least five people, including three women and a child, were killed in the collision. Six injured passengers were receiving treatment at CMCH.

"While the Dhaka-bound bus was being repaired, the passengers got off and stood by the roadside. Suddenly, a speeding Dhaka-bound lorry ploughed into them," he said.

Police seized the lorry, but its driver fled the scene, he added.

The injured were admitted to different hospital wards, with several in critical condition, said Nurul Alam, in-charge of the CMCH Police Camp.

Dengue death toll now 400

FROM PAGE 12

ill patients.

He has also observed severe complications, including liver failure, kidney failure, respiratory failure, heart failure and myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle, among dengue patients this year.

Such complications appeared to be more common than in previous years, although further studies are needed to establish the reasons behind the increase in severe cases and deaths.

The circulation of dengue virus serotype 3 (DENV-3) could be another contributing factor, Ahsan said, adding that variations within a serotype might influence disease severity.

Repeat dengue infections and delays in diagnosis and treatment are among the key factors contributing to the rising number of deaths, said ABM Abdullah, medicine specialist at Central Hospital.

Many patients who died might have been infected with dengue previously, potentially increasing their vulnerability to complications from subsequent infections.

He urged people to seek medical advice and get tested for dengue if they develop symptoms such as fever, body aches or other signs of illness, rather than waiting for their conditions to worsen.

He also advised patients with suspected dengue to drink sufficient fluids, including water and oral rehydration solution (ORS), to prevent dehydration.

Paracetamol may help control fever under appropriate medical guidance, but patients should avoid other painkillers unless prescribed by a doctor.

"If a patient cannot take fluids orally, staying at home is not advisable. They need to be taken to hospital for proper assessment and treatment," he said.

Public health expert Mushtuq Hussain suggested piloting free dengue testing at existing primary healthcare facilities and referring vulnerable patients to hospitals when necessary.

Reducing dengue deaths required a comprehensive approach involving community-level prevention, affordable early testing, timely referrals and proper hospital management, rather than relying solely on tertiary hospitals.

Ballon d'Or glory for Kane, Putellas

FROM PAGE 12

showing determination and hard work can really achieve."

The competition for this year's award was fierce. Kylian Mbappe broke World Cup scoring records. Lamine Yamal helped Spain to World Cup glory. Yet Voters ultimately chose 33-year-old Kane, however, with Mbappe second, followed by Lamine, Rodri and Lionel Messi.

Spain midfielder Alexia Putellas won the Ballon d'Or Feminin for the third time.

Putellas was presented with the women's award after winning the treble with Barcelona in the 2025-26 campaign, in addition to the Spanish Super Cup. She moved to Women's Super League side London City Lionesses in July after 14 years at Barca.

Putellas paid tribute to her friends, family and team, who helped her get back to her best after knee problems stemming from a cruciate ligament injury in July 2022.

"I know that if I was able to enjoy myself again last season, it was thanks to all of you," she said.

Spain and Barcelona players won the young talent awards, Lamine picking up his third trophy and Vicky Lopez taking home the women's award for the second successive year.

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente was named men's coach of the year, while Barcelona's Pere Romeu won the women's coaching award.

The men's goalkeeper award went to Unai Simon of Spain and Athletic Bilbao, while Cata Coll of Spain and Barcelona took the women's award.

Natore-4 MP's son

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Asked why the lawmaker's son was being interrogated, Natore DB Officer-in-Charge Nazrul Islam said Nooruzzaman's name had surfaced during the investigation into the murder. He declined to provide further details, citing the interests of the investigation.

Shakil Islam, 30, joint general secretary of JCD's Gurudaspur upazila unit, died at a hospital on Monday night, 12 days after he was attacked by a group of assailants.

Police said a group of helmeted attackers hacked Shakil with sharp weapons in the Chachkoir Bazarpara area on October 14.

He was initially taken to Gurudaspur Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital before being referred to Dhaka for advanced treatment.

On October 19, the victim's father filed a case with Gurudaspur Police Station against eight to 10 unidentified people.

Locals alleged that Aziz's two sons, Nooruzzaman, also known as Mintu, and his younger brother, Mahamuduzzaman, had long been engaged in a rivalry for political influence in the area and that the killing might have been linked to the dispute.

Denying the allegation, Aziz said the disagreement between his sons was a "family matter" and had no connection to Shakil's death.

"The loss of Shakil feels like losing my own child. I want those responsible for his killing punished, even if it is my own son," Aziz said, adding that he had fully cooperated with police when they came to take Nooruzzaman into custody.

"I will not seek bail for my son unless his innocence is proven," he added, calling for a thorough investigation to identify those responsible.

Shakil's death triggered protests among local BNP and JCD activists in Gurudaspur. Chhatra Dal leaders and activists brought out a procession demanding exemplary punishment for those involved in the attack.

Md Kamruzzaman Bepari, general secretary of the Natore district unit of JCD, told The Daily Star that the perpetrators must face exemplary punishment.

"Shakil was a dedicated Chhatra Dal leader. He was always vocal against drugs and irregularities. He was brutally killed by criminals. We want a proper investigation to identify the real culprits and bring them to justice," he said.

Netanyahu faces

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coalition have been divisive at home and have deepened Israel's international isolation. But he has portrayed himself as the only leader with the mettle to face down Israel's foes.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader with 19 years in office, is an unmatched political survivor, and his nationalist politics are increasingly entrenched. Israel's fragmented system makes it difficult for an array of opponents to force out his coalition of right-wing, far-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

His main rival Gadi Eisenkot, a military ex-chief of staff and security hawk, aims to unseat him with the support of parties on the right and centre, as well as the rump of an increasingly marginalised left. Opinion polls show a close race, giving neither man an easy path to power.

Forecasters were hesitant to guess what impact the strong turnout might have on the result. A surge in votes from Israelis of Palestinian heritage could limit gains for Netanyahu's right-wing coalition and make it more likely that any government formed to oust him would require Arab parties' support, a contentious prospect among Jewish party leaders.

Netanyahu urged supporters to come out to vote to balance high turnout among his opponents on the left and Arab Israelis. "You all need to stream to the polls," he said. "This is a fateful moment."

"I think these elections are the most important of all the ones I've known," said Ruth Epstein, an 81-year-old longtime left-wing voter in Ramat Gan near Tel Aviv, who voted for the opposition Democrats.

Netanyahu has campaigned on an endorsement from US President Donald Trump, his ally in the war against Iran, who has said they should "finish the job".

If neither Netanyahu nor Eisenkot can form a governing coalition in the 120-seat parliament, Netanyahu could stay on as caretaker until another election is held.