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The voice of the US folk legend falls silent
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BANK LOOTED THRU' TUNNEL

It's solo job

Culprit a construction worker; idea came from wife's uncle; Tk 16.19cr recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a daring heist and he went for it all by himself.

Habib alias Soheli applied all his construction skills to pull off the robbery at the Sonali Bank branch in Kishoreganj on Friday.

The 37-year-old man, who worked as a construction worker in Dubai for three years from 2008, spent a year and a half to dig the tunnel to the bank's vault.

Habib from Patuakhali got the idea of the heist from his wife's maternal uncle Siraj and befriended an employee of the bank to get details.

"Siraj has an account with the bank. He gave me the idea at the beginning of 2012, as he failed to return the money he owed me,"



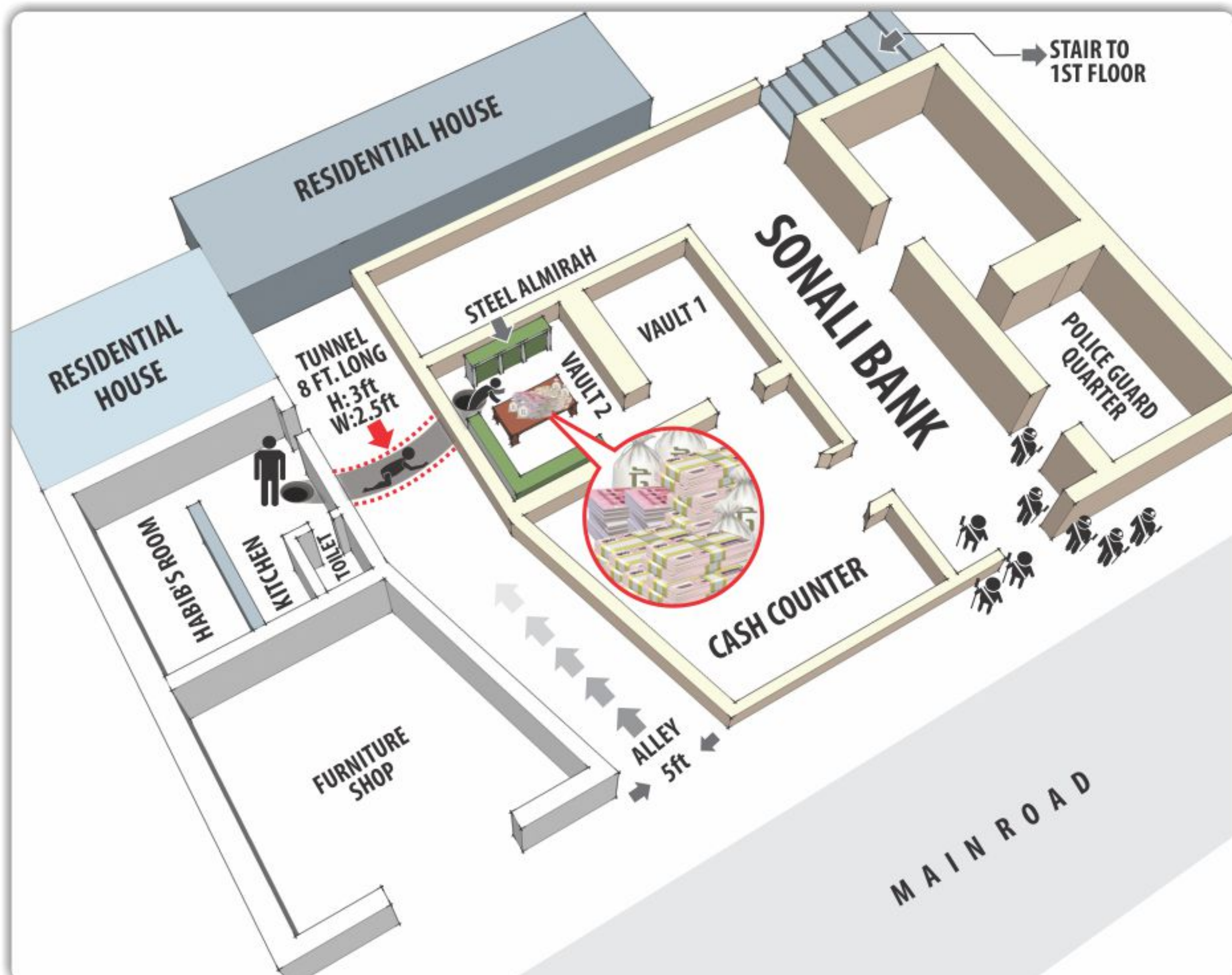
said Habib, who was arrested along with his ex-colleague Idris alias Motahar in the capital's Shyampur yesterday afternoon, two days after the robbery was unearthed.

Rab arrested the two with Tk 16.19 crore around 3:00pm at a flat that Habib rented on Saturday. The elite force was yet to recover the rest of the looted Tk 16.40 crore.

Habib, who worked at a cable-manufacturing company for around 15 years since 1993, was paraded before reporters at a press briefing at the Rab headquarters in the evening.

On his return from Dubai in 2011, Habib lent Tk 5 lakh to Siraj, who failed to pay him back, Habib told the reporters.

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Sorry

Says minister for smoking in public

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Social Welfare Minister Syed Mohsin Ali yesterday apologised for smoking on the dais at a children's function in Sylhet city on Monday.

"I apologise for the mistake. I promise it won't happen again," he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday afternoon.

"I am not denying I am a chain smoker. But it was not right to smoke in a public place. I hope people would forgive me," he added.

The minister first offered his apology in a post on Facebook. He also expressed his regret at a press briefing at his residence in Moulvibazar town.

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No meddling in upazila polls

Hasina warns AL lawmakers

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked her party lawmakers not to interfere in the selection of candidates for the upcoming upazila elections.

Besides, she asked the MPs who have been elected unopposed to donate Tk 10 lakh each to the party coffers, sources said.

Hasina gave the instructions at an AL Parliamentary Party meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban in the evening. The meeting lasted nearly two hours.

About upazila elections that begin on February 19, the AL chief asked the lawmakers to make an all-out effort to see the party-backed candidates win. "Your duty is to work for victory of the party candidates. No need to stick your nose into the candidate selection process," she was quoted by an AL lawmaker as saying.

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Friendly JS starts rolling today

Shirin to be Speaker, Fazle Rabbi deputy

SHAKHAWAT LITON

With a handmaiden and unusual opposition against a most brute treasury bench led by the Awami League, the 10th parliament begins its journey today, raising questions about how such an opposition could hold the government to account.

The main opposition Jatiya Party's MPs will sit on both the treasury and opposition benches to play a double role which, according to constitutional experts, is unprecedented and a breach of the norms of parliamentary democracy.



Recognised as leader of the opposition in parliament, JP de facto boss Raushan Ershad will lead the opposition bench that is responsible for holding the government accountable. Bizarrely enough, Raushan has kept three of her lawmakers in treasury, who will defend the cabinet, which is accountable to the House.

Alongside 31 JP lawmakers, 15 independent MPs will sit on the opposition benches. The independent MPs won without AL blessings although almost all of them are AL leaders. This raises further

Not safe even among people

Study reveals 43pc women find public places most common spots for sexual harassment

ZYMA ISLAM

Women almost regularly face sexual harassment in public places, mostly on streets, in markets and on public transport, according to a government survey.

About 43 percent of the 12,600 women surveyed recently have said public places are the most common spot where they are sexually harassed.

The survey, jointly done by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Population Fund, covered all the seven divisions of the country. The women were randomly chosen from city, urban and rural areas.

"I hardly know a woman who has not been verbally harassed or groped in the streets," said Umme Nahar, an official of a private firm in the capital.

She claimed she was first groped at the age of twelve and that she is sexually harassed every day on the streets.

"My friend was nearly raped the other day," said Shejuti Hridi, a student at a Chittagong university.

Relating the incident, Shejuti said her friend was returning home just before the evening when she noticed a middle-aged



man following her. It was a quiet residential area and there was nobody around, so she started walking faster. Suddenly the man tackled her from behind and threw her to the ground.

"My friend screamed and the man got up and ran away," Shejuti said, adding that what happened next affected her friend in a far worse way.

"An old man came running to help her and started admonishing her for travelling alone, saying it was her fault.

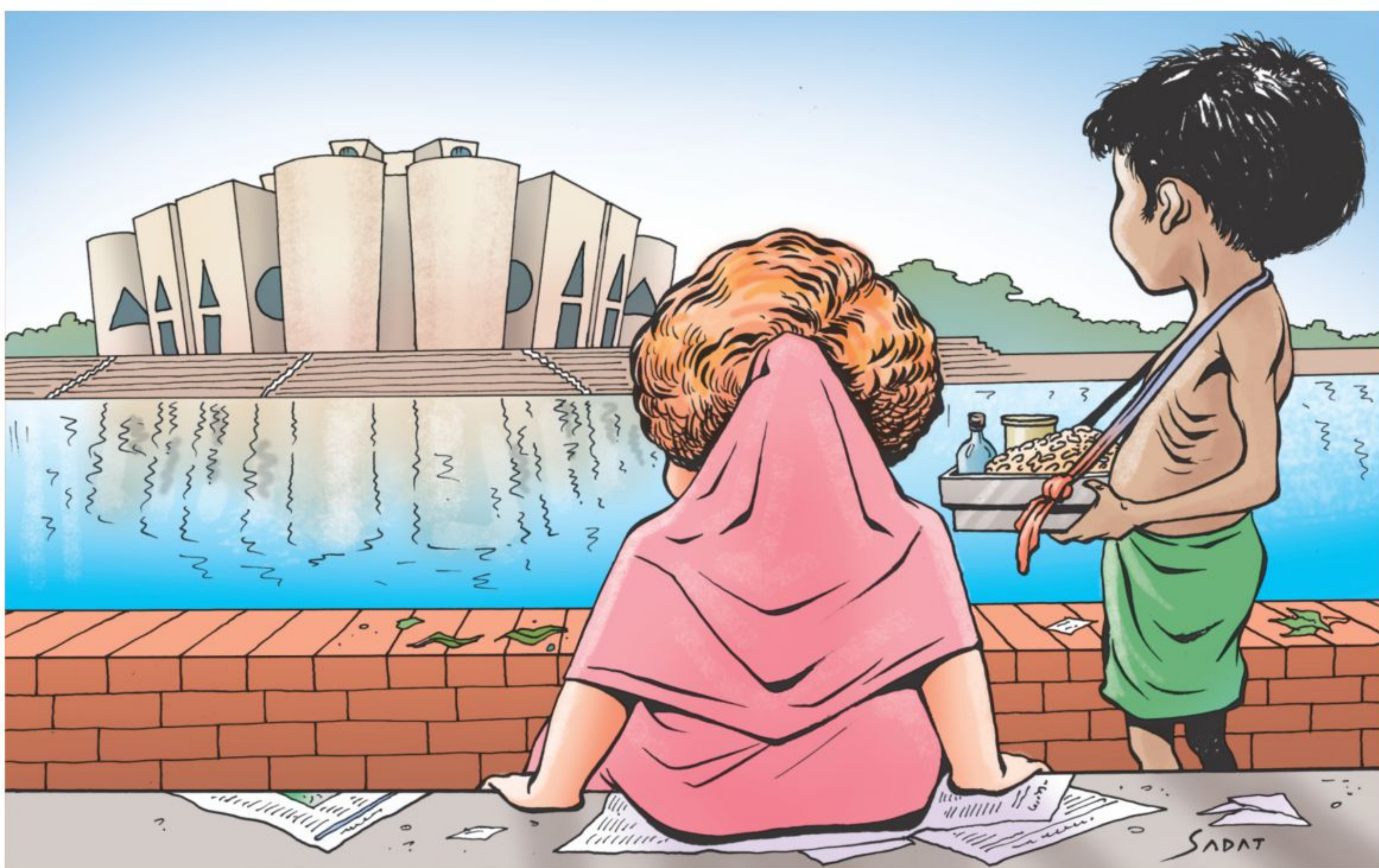
When she told her friends about it, they too agreed, saying that since she is taller than the average girls, she is more attractive and so she must wear a veil," she told this correspondent.

Asked for her comments, Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said women's attire was not the issue here.

"Women wearing all types of clothing face sexual violence. It cannot be generalised that women wearing a certain kind of clothing face more sexual harassment," she said.

According to a survey by the ICDDR, B and the United Nations Population Fund,

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BLACK FLAG PROCESSION

BNP denied permission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led 19-party opposition alliance will today show black flags in every ward of the capital as police denied it permission to stage a black flag procession on city streets on "security grounds".

"As police have denied us permission for holding the black flag procession, we will show black flags in every ward and hold the

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Three Musketeers back down

Bangladesh's Test future safe for now

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh made its case in the strongest possible manner at the ICC (International Cricket Council) board meeting in Dubai yesterday where the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) president Nazmul Hasan Papon said that he would vote against anything that bars Bangladesh from playing Test cricket.

Living up to the hopes and expectations of the whole nation, which is protesting the controversial draft



position paper that proposed a two-tier Test system virtually relegating Bangladesh from Tests, the BCB chief registered an official memo to the ICC in which it stated: "BCB will not endorse any proposal that compromises Bangladesh's full member rights in terms of status and participation".

The draft of the Big Three led by BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket India) that proposed structural and financial overhauling of the ICC was

not put to a vote on the first day of the two-day ICC meeting. Bangladesh is the only country who opposed the draft while three other members from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Africa asked for a deferral.

However, there was a six-hour heated discussion once the radical draft, which was reportedly tweaked, was tabled. There was nothing conclusive that came out after the meeting.

An ICC release on the meeting stated that there had been a "unanimous approval for a set of principles

