

## Core aspects

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been implemented," Larma, president of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS), told a press conference at a hotel in the capital.

The PCJSS organised the briefing marking the 20th anniversary of the accord signing on December 2, 1997. Expressing concerns regarding the full execution of the pact, Larma also alleged that many activities of the government rather go against the interests of the Jumma (indigenous) people.

Reading out a written statement, he said the government did not keep its promise of implementing the accord fully.

"As a result of this, the problem centring the CHT has not been resolved... the CHT Regional Council Act has also not been implemented yet and the council is kept non-effective."

Larma further alleged that the Jumma people were not getting jobs on a priority basis in the CHT area.

He said the CHT Regional Council and three CHT district councils were established to introduce a special ruling system in the hilly districts but those rather became "branches of the ruling political party and corruption".

The establishment of the CHT Regional Council's head office is still pending, he said, adding that it proved the reluctance of the government to implement the accord.

He also alleged that instead of implementing the CHT peace accord, the government "seemed to be against the agreement" and that was leading to "complications" in the CHT.

"At least 20 communal attacks have taken place since the signing of the accord and 11 of them were carried out during the regime of the present government. The main purpose of all those attacks was to drive away Jumma people from their own land."

The PCJSS chief also said the land dispute resolution commission was yet to start its functions although the "controversial" provisions of the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001 were amended over a year ago.

"Although there is a CHT Land Commission, it does not have sufficient manpower and funding."

According to the first clause of the peace accord, Larma said, the government recognises the CHT as a tribal-populated region and also recognises the necessity of its protection.

He then accused the government of breaching the accord by including outsiders in the voter list as permanent residents of the CHT areas.

The Adivasi leader called upon the democratic, non-communal and liberal political parties as well as the people of the country to play effective roles in executing the accord for the greater interest of the country.

Dhaka University's Prof Mesbah Kamal, noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud and Oikya Nap President Pankaj Bhattacharya were also present during the press conference yesterday.

## 4 journalists

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Protesting the attack, journalists brought out a procession in Pabna town.

They then held a rally at Traffic Intersection and gave the local administration a 24-hour ultimatum for arresting the attackers, including land minister's son Shirhan Sherif Tomal, who is also the president of Ishwardi upazila unit of Jubo League.

Demanding resignation of the land minister, the journalists said they would not cover any news of the minister if his son was not punished.

"We went to Ishwardi for covering the story about the preparation on the occasion of prime minister's visit for inaugurating construction of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant," said injured Partho.

During the time, they were informed that the followers of Tomal were damaging banners and posters welcoming the PM hung by their rival groups at Natunhat intersection. They rushed to the spot and started recording footage of the incident, he added.

Seeing this, Tomal's supporters, in his presence, started beating them up with sticks and iron rods around 3:30pm, Partha alleged.

They also damaged two laptops, three mobile sets and two motor-bikes, he added.

This correspondent could not reach Tomal for his comments after repeated attempts.

Land Minister Shamsur Rahman, also the lawmaker of Pabna-4 (Ishwardi-Atghoria), told journalists that if his son was found involved in the attack, he should be punished.

Talking to The Daily Star, former lawmaker of the constituency Panjab Ali Biswas alleged that supporters of the land minister and his son damaged his banners and posters. They also beat up his men, he said.

The attackers also assaulted men of another AL leader, Robiul Alam Budu, as they protested the incident.

Earlier, Tomal and 10 other AL men were arrested over attacking and vandalising the house of a Chhatra League leader in Ishwardi on May 19 this year.

Later, they were released on bail.

Talking to this correspondent, Jihadul Kabir, superintendent of Pabna police, said they would take action against the attackers.

## Scourge of violence

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sites in 18 districts were surveyed for the study. The households were from 16 marginalised communities -- Chakma, Khyang, Khumi, BAWM, Marma, Tripura, Garo, Santal, Oran, Harijan, Rishi, Kaiputra, traditional fisher folk, Hindu & Christian, brothel-based sex workers and people with disabilities.

According to the report, different powerful actors including majority people, law enforcement agencies, household members, close relatives and other influential individuals or groups in the society are perpetrators of violence against the marginalised people.

"Violence against marginalised communities is widespread in Bangladesh and is on the rise due to the absence of the rule of law as well as persistent institutional discrimination and inequalities."

The study revealed that majority groups torture the marginalised people physically and mentally, evict them from their homes or settlements, grab their land, threaten them with harm if they do not vote for the candidate from the majority side, block their participation in social and religious events and refuse the right to their inherited properties.

Other violence includes killing, abduction, rape, trafficking, destruction of properties and looting of assets.

"Over 32.3 percent of the marginalised community is mentally tortured by majority people in their locality," the report said.

On average, 1.56 percent respondents informed that female members were victims of rape. Besides, 21.9 percent household members faced other forms of sexual assaults last year.

The prevalence of sexual violence is higher compared to other forms of violence against the marginalised communities, the report added.

It stated that more than 61 percent sex workers faced highest number of violence while religious minority communities faced the lowest 21.70 percent in 2016.

Apart from this, 41.6 percent households from Dalit communities, 39.8 percent from Adivasi communities in the plains and 33.67 percent people with disabilities experienced different forms of violence, harassment and threat throughout the last year.

Marginalised people are subjected to violence and torture not only by the people from the mainstream society, but also by law enforcement agencies, reads the report.

## Overcome prejudice

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religion.  
**LATIN SONGS BY NUNS**

Earlier yesterday, the pope delivered a message of forgiveness in an open-air mass before a sea of Catholics in Yangon, many wearing colourful costumes from the country's myriad ethnic groups.

"I never dreamed I would see him in my lifetime," said Meo, an 81-year-old from the Akha minority in Shan state.

A choir of Myanmar nuns sang in Latin, accompanied by organ music, as Francis delivered a homily urging compassion -- opening his speech with "minglabar", Burmese for "hello".

"I can see that the Church here is alive," he said of a Catholic community numbering around 700,000 -- a tiny fraction of the country's 51 million people.

The pontiff noted that many Myanmar people "bear the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible".

But he urged his audience to forgo anger and respond with "forgiveness and compassion".

His visit has been as much political as religious in a country on the defensive after the global outrage over the plight of the Rohingya.

He held private talks with both civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the powerful army chief Min Aung Hlaing, who are part of a delicate power-sharing arrangement as the country emerges from decades of junta rule.

His caution so far will bring relief to Myanmar's Catholic leaders, who had urged the pontiff not to wade into the treacherous issue for fear of sparking a backlash from Buddhist hardliners.

Even the mention of the name Rohingya is incendiary to many among the majority-Buddhist population, who deny the group are a distinct minority and insist on calling them "Bengalis".

**DIPLOMATIC DANCE**  
Reactions to the pope's handling of the issue have been mixed, with some Rohingya expressing disappointment that he did not directly confront his hosts in public on their suffering or even mention their name.

But Kyaw Min, a former MP and prominent Rohingya activist, said he understood the pressures the pope was under and applauded his nuanced approach.

"He said there were some people who have been bullied and need to get their rights ... this was about the Rohingya," Kyaw Min told AFP.

But hardline nationalist Buddhists

The study found that the prevalence of forcible eviction of the marginalised people from their homes and settlements has been on the rise. Besides, indigenous people in the plains and in hilly areas, Hindus and sex workers face the highest threat of eviction.

The survey pointed out that indigenous people in the plains are more vulnerable to eviction from their homesteads for two reasons -- they are poor and they are religious minorities.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said people from influential quarters want to keep the marginalised people "powerless".

She said people should change their mentality to overcome the worsening situation of the marginalised people. "We are all trying to ensure the basic needs of the marginalised communities. The other important point is dignity. We have to ensure that too as it is also their fundamental right. But unfortunately fundamental rights are being violated in the country time and again.

"We have a responsibility towards the minority people. We should not depend only on the state. We have to bring changes to our personal life as well. We have to increase our capacity to accept the differences -- it could be differences of opinions and religions. We have to keep in mind that we are citizens of Bangladesh," she added.

Addressing the discussion, eminent rights activist Sultana Kamal praised the report as a comprehensive study and a step forward to achieve an equitable society.

She said the state is not solely responsible for ensuring equality, but its citizens are also responsible. "It's a national problem. So we have to be united to address the problem. We have to identify whether the marginalised groups are lagging behind or made to lag behind. Otherwise, we will be betraying the spirit of the Liberation War which inspired us to ensure an equitable society for all."

Former chairman of National Human Rights Commission Mizanur Rahman said the disparity between the people from mainstream society and marginalised people was still prevailing in the society, although the country achieved independence 45 years ago.

Criticising the country's civil society, he said it was not working properly and failed to put forward inputs for battling social injustice.

swiftly claimed his visit as a victory.

"We worried before he came here that we would talk about the Rohingya issue," Sithu Myint, a member of Buddhist nationalist force, told AFP.

"We thank him for not using the word 'Rohingya'... his speech about Myanmar was good."

Firebrand monks, including the notorious Wirathu, have stayed silent in the run-up to the pope's visit, but have previously claimed the Rohingya exodus as a feather in their cap in their campaign to repel what they say is Islamic infiltration.

Less than five percent of Myanmar's 51 million population is Muslim.

## Another step

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Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (BAERA) issued a licence for the design and construction of the power plant.

"Although there are huge limitations to setting the first nuclear power plant in Bangladesh, we already have the ability to set up the mega plant in the country guided by the IAEA," Dr Shawkat Akbar, project director of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, told The Daily Star.

He added that they hope to generate electricity from the plant from 2023 as a test case and more 2,400 megawatt electricity would be added to the national grid within 2025 from this project.

The commissioning of unit 1 of Rooppur NPP is scheduled for the year 2023 while the second unit is scheduled for 2024.

Giving priority to the most safe and secure measures, the government will set up the country's first nuclear plant in Bangladesh, Yafes Osman, said, adding that the plant brings pride for the nation. It will meet the country's electricity demand and create around 12,000 new jobs, with 4,500 of those being for Russian specialists.

Rooppur NPP, with two VVER-1200 reactors and a total capacity of 2,400 MW, is being constructed using Russian design, some 160 km away from Dhaka, in accordance with the general contract.

The design, currently used for Novovoronezh NPP Phase II, a Russian nuclear power plant, has been selected for Rooppur NPP.

The Rooppur NPP project is set within the framework of an in-depth concept defense system which guarantees environmental protection, multi-layer protection and mitigation of man-made accidents and human factor consequences.

## 5face trial

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clothes of Rupa were mentioned as evidence.

Expressing satisfaction with the charge framing, Rupa's family demanded justice for Rupa.

The accused -- bus helpers Shamim, 26, Akram, 35, and Jahangir, 20, driver Habibur, 45, and bus supervisor Safar Ali, 55 -- were brought to the court from Tangail District Jail yesterday.

"Lawyers of the accused filed three petitions with the court, seeking bail of their clients, discharging them from the case and reinvestigation into the case," said advocate Ataur Rahman Azad, general secretary of Tangail district unit of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Bastobayon Sangstha, which assists the state side in the case.

After hearing from both the sides, the judge rejected all the petitions and framed charges against the accused, he added.

On August 25, police recovered an unidentified body of a woman near Tangail-Mymensingh road in Tangail's Madhupur upazila. Following an autopsy, the body was buried at the Tangail central graveyard the next day. A murder case was filed with Madhupur Police Station the same day.

Seeing the news in the media, Rupa's family members went to Madhupur Police Station on August 28 and identified her from photographs.

The next day, law enforcers picked up five employees of the bus at Madhupur. The arrestees during interrogation admitted their involvement in the crime, police sources said.

The Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tangail on August 29 and 30 recorded their confessional statements and sent them to jail.

Following a court order, police on August 31 exhumed Rupa's body and handed it over to her family. The victim was later buried at her village in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila.

Saiful Islam Khan, resident medical officer at Tangail General Hospital, submitted the autopsy report to the Tangail civil surgeon on September 12, mentioning that Rupa was raped before being murdered.

## Identity

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Owner of the house, his wife and mother-in-law are still being detained by Rab. Officers said they would decide whether to arrest them in a case filed over the incident after further interrogation.

Saber Reza Ahmed, officer-in-Charge of Chapainawabganj Sadar Police Station, said no case was filed in connection with the incident.

## In pursuit

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Unable to achieve solvency she didn't give up. Lovely tried dairy and fish farming, and growing organic vegetables. These activities ran for five years, and in 2012 Lovely availed the opportunity to travel to Malaysia for training in oil seed production. But at home it was the fish farming that seemed most viable. She decided to concentrate on that.

"In August 2012, I leased four ponds for Tk 1 lakh and released fry. The business began in earnest from then," Lovely says. Since then, her business has grown. In the upcoming harvest season next April, Lovely estimates she will sell Tk 15 lakhs worth of fish.

Her reputation as a fish farmer means many people ask her for advice. "With the assistance of the fisheries office I have trained around 120 people in fish farming," she says, "including housewives, students and other farmers."

"After training with Lovely Yasmin, I have taken a lease on a pond to farm fish for myself," says one neighbour, Shilpi Begum.

Lovely currently employs twenty labourers on her farm, which now stretches across seven ponds. In her spare time, she is the general secretary of a human rights group which works against child marriage, dowries and domestic violence.

Needless to say, Lovely is more than a little pleased with her new life. Her eldest son works as a textile engineer in Tangail, the middle son is studying computer engineering at a private university in Dhaka while the youngest current boards at a residential school and college, also in the capital.

"Undoubtedly fish farming is very profitable," she remarks. "From my farm profits I have bought five decimals of land in Magura and almost thirty in Jhenidah."

She currently has a Tk 2 lakh bank loan for her business, and regrets that interest rates weren't more reasonable, since if they were she would be able to employ more labourers.

"Lovely is a successful entrepreneur," says Jhenidah sadar upazila's senior fishery officer Timir Baran Mondol. "She is energetic and skilled at fish farming. Through hard work she has achieved much, creating for herself and her family a prosperous future. Others would do well to follow her example."

## Govt finalises

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to the president today through the prime minister for approval, a law ministry high official requesting anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday.

If President Abdul Hamid approves the rules, the law ministry would issue a gazette notification to this effect, he said, adding that the disciplinary rules were prepared with SC and the government's consensus.

The Supreme Court recently went through the draft and sent it back to the ministry with its opinions.

The official refused to disclose further details on the rules.

On November 16, Law Minister Anisul Huq met five judges of the Appellate Division of the SC and discussed the rules and then told The Daily Star that the problem regarding issuance of a gazette notification determining the discipline of lower court judges had been solved.

The gazette notification might be issued by December 3, the date scheduled for the next hearing of the Masdar Hossain case, known as the judiciary separation case, at the Supreme Court, he said.

On November 5, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told reporters that [the then] chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha wanted to see that the rules curb the power of the president. The government, therefore, was trying to resolve the issue through discussions with the SC and the law ministry, he added.

While presiding over the Appellate Division bench, Justice Sinha had expressed annoyance and dissatisfaction several times at the

government's failure to issue a gazette notification on the rules.

Article 116 of the original charter of 1972 had empowered the SC to decide on the posting, promotion and leave of lower court judges. The top court had also control over the magistrates' exercise of judicial powers and could discipline the judicial service staffers when necessary.

Over the years, this article has been amended several times, curtailing the apex court's powers.

Currently, the powers to control and discipline subordinate courts are vested in the president, who exercises these powers in consultation with the SC.

However, according to article 48 (3) of the constitution, the president acts on the advice of the prime minister. This gives the government ample scope to exercise power over the judiciary.

In a message on October 31 last year, Justice Sinha had said such a "dual rule" was hampering the judicial work and was also increasing justice-seekers' sufferings.

"The Supreme Court alone cannot take steps regarding lower court judges' promotion and transfer or any disciplinary actions against them due to the [present] article 116. Judges cannot be appointed to fill many vacant posts at district courts on time due to the dual rule," he said in the message issued on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the separation of the judiciary from the executive.

The lower judiciary was separated from the executive branch on November 1, 2007, following the Supreme Court directives in the Masdar Hossain case.

## One convict hanged

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reporters at the jail gate.

Around 8:45pm, Additional District Magistrate Rahenul Islam, Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Mahmud Hasan and Civil Surgeon Monzurul Haque led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Farzana Mannan entered the jail and left after the execution.

Shahidul had been in Dhaka Central Jail since he was arrested. He was taken to Kashimpur in 2012.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, a class-IX student of Scholastica school, was killed at her Gulshan home on April 23, 1998. Her father Latifur Rahman is the chairman of Transcom Group.

The trial took place in Dhaka's 2nd Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression.

On September 2, 2003, the tribunal sentenced six accused for the rape and murder of Shazneen.

They are domestic help Shahidul, a contractor renovating the house Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan and his assistant Badal, housemaids Estema Khatun Minu and her sister Parvin and carpenter Shaniram Mandal.

When the allegations against

## It now has 3 months

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journalists after the meeting.

The Farmers Bank, that began its operation just four years ago, has been facing liquidity crunch for the last few months due to huge irregularities over loan disbursements.

The bank has taken an initiative to mobilise funds by issuing a bond worth Tk 500 crore, which would help maintain its statutory liquidity ratio and cash reserve ratio with the central bank, Athar said.

Asked whether the restructured board would take legal actions against its former directors, who have resigned for their alleged involvement in financial scams, he said the board would not take any steps against them as it was not its job.

Farmers Bank Chairman Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir and Audit Committee Chairman Md Mahabubul Haque Chisty were forced to step down from the board on Monday in line with a BB directive.

In reply to a question, Athar said the bank's Managing Director AKM Shameem would continue his job and the board would not take any decision in this regard.

The BB would take a decision whether Shameem would continue in the job, he noted.

On Sunday, the BB issued a notice to Shameem, asking him to explain within a week why he would not be removed from his post for failing to manage the bank efficiently and address its liquidity crunch.

It also asked him to explain why the bank disbursed fresh loans despite having restrictions on lending, according to the BB notice.

The restructured board would try its best to speed up its drive to recover

Shahidul were read out before him in the trial court, he confessed his crimes and said, "I am guilty. I want to be hanged."

After the lower court verdict, the death reference reached the High Court for confirmation of the sentence. At the same time, the accused appealed to the HC against their conviction and sentence. The HC acquitted Shaniram.

Later on, Hasan, Badal, Minu and Parvin appealed to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC verdict. Shahidul filed a jail appeal.

On August 2 last year, the Appellate Division granted the appeals of Hasan, Badal, Minu and Parvin and dismissed Shahidul's appeal.

On March 5 this year, the apex court rejected Shahidul's petition for review of the verdict. Then he sought the presidential mercy.

His mercy petition was sent to the home ministry on May 8 from the office of senior jail super at Kashimpur.

The date and time for the execution was fixed after the president rejected the mercy petition this month.

the defaulted loans, Athar said.

As of September this year, Farmer Bank's non-performing loans (NPLs) amounted to Tk 377.68 crore, up by around Tk 100 crore from a year ago. The bank's NPL accounted for 7.45 percent of the bank's total outstanding loans.

Subbankar Saha, spokesperson and executive director of BB, told reporters after the meeting that the central bank asked the directors of Farmers Bank to inject fresh equity from their own sources to tackle the ongoing liquidity crunch.

Earlier this month, the commercial bank failed twice to honour a cheque of Tk 35.44 crore presented by Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd due to fund shortage. The state-owned telecom firm got the money later.

A central bank report has recently mentioned that Farmers Bank does not have any capacity to pay back the depositors' fund.

The board has been asked to avoid excess expenditure to tackle the ongoing crisis and recover the loans from the defaulters, Saha said.

Between September and November in 2015, the BB conducted special inspections at three branches of the Farmers Bank in the city's Gulshan, Motijheel and Shyampur, and found gross violations of the banking rules in disbursing loans of around Tk 400 crore.

Last year, the central bank appointed an observer to the bank to help it restore corporate governance, but the initiative went in vain.

Against this backdrop, the central bank took an initiative last week to restructure the troubled bank's board and asked two directors to resign.