

# Govt yet to amend Warrant of Precedence

## SC directive issued over two and a half years ago

**ASHUTOSH SARKAR**

The government is yet to take any initiative to amend the Warrant of Precedence, over two and a half years since the Supreme Court (SC) released a full verdict on an appeal, directing it to do so.

Warrant of Precedence lays down the relative precedence in terms of ranks of important functionaries belonging to the executive, legislative and judicial organs of the state, including members of the foreign diplomatic corps.

The warrant or order is generally used for the purpose of invitation of dignitaries to state and important official functions including their seating arrangements, and sequence of presence to receive and see off Very Important Persons such as the president or prime minister when they go abroad, and also to receive their counterparts within the country, according to Banglapedia.

While asked why the government has not amended the existing Warrant of Precedence in line with the Supreme Court directive, Law Minister Anisul Huq last month refused to make any comment on this issue.

However, a law ministry high official, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star last month that the government has not amended the Warrant of Precedence, as it has filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the SC, seeking review of its judgement on this issue.

The existing Warrant of Precedence will remain effective until the review petition is

disposed of, the official added.

However, no such petition has been heard by the Supreme Court yet, since the release of the full SC verdict.

Advocate M Asaduzzaman, who argued for a writ petition before the High Court for the amendment of the Warrant of Precedence, told The Daily Star a few weeks ago that the government's inaction in amending the Warrant of Precedence despite the SC directive is tantamount to continuation of the contempt of court.

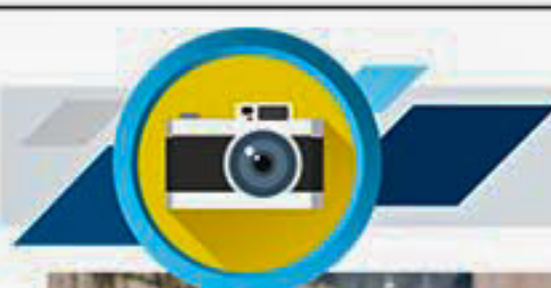
"If my client instructs me to move a contempt of court petition against the government, I will do so," he added.

Md Ataur Rahman, a former secretary general of Bangladesh Judicial Service Association, filed the writ petition on behalf of the organisation in 2006 with the HC, saying that the Cabinet Division had framed the existing Warrant of Precedence in 1986 in an arbitrary manner, without evaluating the dignity and status of judicial officials.

Following the writ petition, the HC on February 4, 2010, declared the existing Warrant of Precedence illegal and void, and directed the government to issue a new Warrant of Precedence for the republic's officers and to give district judges and equivalent judicial officers' precedence over the chiefs of the armed forces, and government secretaries.

The cabinet secretary, chiefs of staff of the army, navy and air force, and the principal secretary to the PM hold 12th position in the Warrant of Precedence.

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## PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



People huddle on the footpath and vehicles wade through mud and water after incessant rain in the capital yesterday. The photo was taken in Karwan Bazar.

# Kader Siddique quits Oikyafront

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Eight months into joining Jatiya Oikyafront, Krishak Samik Janata League (KSJL) officially quit the opposition alliance yesterday.

"Oikyafront is no longer found in the country's politics since the last election. Therefore, we will walk a new path to stand by people," party president Abdul Kader Siddique said in a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

He said that his party will continue their endeavour with like-minded parties to uphold democratic values in the country.

"But it does not mean that we will not work with the people of Oikyafront in future," he said.

"I feel top leaders including Dr Kamal Hossain are reluctant to lead Oikyafront, and the alliance could neither run any political programme nor stand by the people during their need after the election," he said.

Kader said his party will totally forget the alliance, as its leaders are failing to support the people on national issues. "I think people have also forgotten about the existence of the alliance," said the former Awami League MP.

Reading out a written statement, General Secretary of the party Habibur Rahman Talukder said their party is determined to initiate a mass movement.

"We will include other like-minded political parties to build up a national solidarity to establish a sound political environment," he said.

He claimed that BNP had predominantly nominated their own candidates in the last national election, ignoring opinions of other partners of the alliance. "We joined the alliance to establish people's right to vote, but BNP did not fulfill the people's expectations," Talukder claimed.

He also slammed parliament

members from the opposition alliance for taking oath.

Jatiya Oikyafront was formed by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Gono Forum, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and Nagorik Oikya on October 13 last year ahead of the 11th parliamentary elections. KSJL formally joined the alliance on November 5, and took part in the December 30 national election with BNP's symbol under the leadership of Dr Kamal Hossain.

BNP won six seats while Gono Forum bagged two in the polls.

On June 28, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convener of Nagorik Oikya, slammed Oikyafront for failing to launch any movement against the government.

Speaking in an event marking the party's seventh anniversary, Manna also blamed BNP's negligence behind the failure.

# HSC results out on July 17

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The results of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations will be published on July 17.

Chief of Inter-Education Board Coordination Sub-committee Ziaul Haque said Education Minister Dipu Moni and chairmen of all 10 boards will hand over the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the morning of July 17.

All candidates will be able to get their results from their respective exam centres, educational institutions, websites of their respective boards and through SMS from 2pm, officials said.

A total of 13,51,505 examinees from 9,081 educational institutions under 10 education boards appeared in the HSC and equivalent examinations.

A total of 11,38,747 candidates sat for the exams from eight general education boards, 88,451 under the Madrasa Education Board and 1,24,264 from the Technical Education Board.

# 'What happened in 6 months that caused a rise in rapes?'

## 731 women raped this year: Mahila Parishad

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Incidents of violence against women, particularly rape, have gone up significantly in the recent months compared to those in the previous year, according to a report of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

Around 942 women were raped last year. But within the last six months [January to June], the number of rapes has reached 731, said the report.

The number of violent incidents against women were 3,918 last year. Halfway through this year, the number of gender violence instances already stands at 2,083 -- which is alarming, it added.

Mahila Parishad, a women's rights organisation, prepared the report based on news published in 14 national dailies in the corresponding months. The report was unveiled at a press conference held

at the organisation's office in the capital yesterday.

Of the rape victims this year, 113 were gang-raped and 26 were murdered after rape.

At least 123 others were victims of attempted rape and 70 were harassed sexually, found the report.

It also found more than 276 women were murdered in the last six months, while 117 were physically assaulted and 63 were abducted.

The organisation observed that the culture of impunity, which has prevailed in the country over the years, is the reason behind the spike in sexual violence.

"Only three to four percent of culprits were punished so far since 2014 for carrying out violence against women. The culprits are remaining beyond reach due to such

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## DHAKA TODAY

<b>SESSION</b> Dhaka Speed Mentoring Organiser: Founder Institute Bangladesh Attendees can get feedback from experts about start-ups. Venue: ULAB, Dhanmondi Time: 6:30pm	<b>FESTIVAL</b> Special Fuchka and Pani Puri Festival 2019 Organiser: Laboni Tasty Kitchen Venue: Dhaka Business and Professional Women's Club, Bailey Road Time: 10am-9pm
<b>FAIR</b> Brickho Mela Venue: National Parade Ground Time: 10am-8pm	<b>SEMINAR</b> US University Admission Requirements Venue: EMK Center, Dhanmondi Time: 3:30pm
<b>TALK</b> I Know Future Works A talk on technology and automation in the future. Venue: Bangladesh Skill Development Institute, Dhanmondi Time: 5pm	<b>EXHIBITION</b> 15th Anniversary Exhibition A selection of works done between 1957-2019. Venue: Galleri Kaya, Uttara Time: 11am-8pm

# Media freedom essential for democracy: UK envoy

**UNB, Dhaka**

British High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson yesterday said freedom of expression and media are essential qualities of any functioning democracy.

"As Bangladesh continues its journey to middle income status, it is vital to allow space for a vibrant civil society, through which the people -- especially young people -- can channel their energies, and indeed their frustrations, within the law," he said.

The British envoy made the remarks at "DCAB Talk" organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) at the auditorium of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

DCAB President Raheed Ejaz and General Secretary Nurul Islam Hasib also spoke at the event.

The High Commissioner said people must be allowed to discuss and debate issues

freely, to challenge their governments, and to make informed decisions.

The diplomat said the UK is committed to media freedom and the protection of journalists across the world and will be co-hosting the "Global Conference for Media Freedom in 2019".

The conference will be the first of its kind and will take place on July 10 and 11 in London.

The conference, the High Commissioner said, will look at four areas -- national frameworks and legislation, protection and prosecution including impunity, building trust in the media and countering disinformation, and media sustainability.

Dickson said six journalists and media activists from Bangladesh are attending this conference.

The Bangladesh high commissioner in London will also be attending the event.

The envoy said the conference will shine

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Manusher Jonno Foundation organised a human chain in Wari yesterday, demanding justice for the rape and murder of Samia.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Visually impaired jobseekers under the banner of "Chakuri Prottyashi Drishti Protibondhi Graduates" formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, to press home their six-point demand including proper employment.

PHOTO: STAR

# Mahbub Talukder complains of being 'downgraded' on domestic flight

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar has alleged that private airliner Regent Airways made him and his wife travel sitting in economy class on a domestic flight, despite having business class tickets.

Talukdar, in a letter to Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda on July 2, said legal action could be taken against Regent Airways, as their business class travel was downgraded to economy, which is "disgraceful" for the EC.

In the letter, Mahbub said his wife and he were travelling from Chattogram to Dhaka on flight RX-0786 of Regent Airways on June 29. They had business class tickets for seats 1A and 2D, with VIP stamped on the boarding passes.

However, when they boarded, the flight attendant asked them to sit in economy class without showing any reason.

Regent Airways chief operating officer Ashish Rai Choudhury said that they have come to know of the incident. "We are investigating the matter and will take action if we find anyone guilty," he said.

# WARI RAPE Victim's father demands justice

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Father of the girl, who was raped and murdered in Wari on Sunday, yesterday demanded that the government ensure proper punishment to the culprit by finishing his trial at the earliest.

He placed the demand at a human chain, jointly organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad in front of the victim's school in Wari.

"I wish nobody has to suffer the fate of mine," added Abdus Salam.

Speaking at the event, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam called for forming committees in every neighbourhood to prevent rape incidents.

"Parents, child organisations, human rights bodies, schools, colleges and youths should come forward to ward off such crimes," she added.

# 'Society is deteriorating'

## JSD MP Shirin Akhter demands exemplary punishment of rapists

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) lawmaker Shirin Akhter yesterday in parliament demanded that the government enact a new law ensuring exemplary punishment of rapists and oppressors of women and children.

Shirin, elected from Feni-1, made the demand while placing a call attention notice.

Pointing to yesterday's news reports on increasing number of rape incidents and violence against women and children, Shirin asked, "Where is our society headed?"

"Why is our society deteriorating while we are claiming that we are heading towards development... while we are talking about good governance under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina? We must find out the reason," she said.

Pointing out the recent rape in Wari and the brutal killing of Rifat, she said the government should formulate a new law so that culprits get exemplary punishment without any delay in the name of trial.