

Will be able

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option, which can now be used for free, said a member of the joint team.

The government now needs to make a regulation on the "SIM-less" emergency service can be used, he added.

"Against this backdrop, mobile operators need to align their network with this system and then users can access these facilities," said Md Zahik Hossain Khan, senior assistant director of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

"It's like a normal call. The joint team has tested it by removing their SIM cards and they found response," Khan, also the spokesperson of the BTRC, said.

The emergency number can prove very useful in cases of natural disasters, mostly in the coastal belt of the country, where mobile towers are often damaged. If even one mobile network is live, then mobile phone users can use that for the calls, said a senior member of the armed forces division.

He said in some developed countries these kind of channels already have been introduced.

"We have done our part; now the government needs to formulate a policy for it, which will be a milestone of our resistance against natural disaster."

To make this initiative successful, the joint team will bring all mobile operators under a single network and take support from Chinese network vendor Huawei, they said.

BTRC officials said mobile operators would be directed to facilitate the emergency services.

The trial for the initiative was held in Purbachal, Dhaka and Rangpur. Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tazul Islam and State minister for disaster management and relief Md Enamur Rahman were present.

86-yr-old

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April 29 this year issued a rule asking the government to explain why the trial proceeding against Rabeya Khatun should not be quashed.

After hearing the rule, the HC bench yesterday scraped the trial proceedings of the case against Rabeya and acquitted her of the charges in the case.

The police allegedly arrested Rabeya Khatun with a firearm and six bullets from a residence of Garden Road area under Tejgaon Police Station on June 2, 2002.

Police filed a case against Rabeya and two others with Tejgaon Police Station on the same day.

On September 19, the same year, police submitted a charge sheet against Rabeya and another accused Zulhas before a trial court.

The trial court, on March 24 in 2003, framed charges against Rabeya and Zulhas but there was no progress of trial proceeding of the case. Detailed information about Zulhas could not be known.

After suffering in jail for six months, Rabeya was released from jail on bail.

Advocate Ashraful Alam Nobel himself moved the petition while Deputy Attorney General Harunur Rashid represented the state.

Separatists

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a press conference in London said that he was speaking on behalf of 'Maharaja of Manipur' Leishemba Sanajaoba.

Confirming the developments, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh stated that a case has already been registered against the duo for "waging a war against the state".

Meanwhile, King Leishemba rejected that he had 'authorised' the two men to form a government-in-exile, reported NDTV.

Manipur, one of India's smallest states with a population of around just 2.8 million people, is one of the so-called "Seven Sisters" -- a group of restive northeastern states.

The region, encircled by five other countries and connected to the rest of India by a sliver of land arching over Bangladesh, has been wracked by armed conflict and instability.

It has spawned more than 100 militant groups over the decades whose demands range from autonomy to secession.

Violence has been part of daily life for decades in Manipur, which borders Myanmar, with a strong presence of the Indian military.

The state has a strong ethnic mix, and its Meitei, Naga, Kuki and Pangal communities are all deeply committed to preserving their own cultural autonomy.

Its people have also always tended to look eastwards in their search for cultural links.

Samarjit said he hoped the world would support its independence cause.

"We are not free there and our history is going to be destroyed, our culture is going to be extinct," he warned.

"So the UN should listen... we raise our voice to the whole world that the people living in Manipur are human beings."

The High Commission of India did not respond to a request for comment.

JU assistant proctor assaults

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Joy alleged.

The Daily Star obtained a video clip of the incident that showed Shaibal dragged Joy to the ground and took him away from the protesters.

In the footage, Shaibal was saying, "Let's go. Let's move."

Joy submitted a written complaint to the proctor in this regard.

Meanwhile, a second-year student of drama and dramatics department -- Chamelia Sharmin Chura -- submitted a written complaint demanding punishment of some students for assaulting her during the protest.

"Assistant Proctor Shaibal instigated some students and carried out an attack on us," she said in her complaint.

Contacted, Shaibal denied the allegations and said, "Rather, I suffered injuries".

He said, "I did not grab Joy by his collar. I rather held him by the shoulders and moved him from the spot."

"Someone kicked me eight to ten times at that time."

However, the footage that this newspaper obtained did not show anything of that sort happened to Shaibal.

The assistant proctor further said that he suffered injuries near his urethra (urinary passage) and was being treated at Enam Medical College and Hospital in Savar.

Bangabandhur Adarsher Shikhakh, a teachers' platform backed by the VC, also issued a statement in this regard, saying Shaibal was "seriously wounded" by the protesters.

FRESH PROTEST FLARES UP
Soon after the news spread among the students, they broke off into separate groups and started chanting slogans against Shaibal.

Professor Rayhan Rhyne of Philosophy department, also a spokesperson of Jahangirnagar Against Corruption, condemned the attack.

He said that it was "tragic" that a teacher could do this to a protesting student.

At a press briefing, he said, "VC's removal is the only solution to reduce the crisis. So, we will continue our protest until the VC is removed."

In the evening, a concert was also held in the university's transport area in solidarity with the protest. It was the third day of all-out strike on the campus.

A section of teachers and students

have been staging demonstration on the campus demanding VC's removal since September 18 over corruption.

On the other hand, JU unit Chhatra League yesterday brought out a procession demanding "free environment for classes and examinations".

Syrian and Turkish armies in deadly border clash

AFP, Beirut

The armies of Syria and Turkey traded deadly fire Tuesday for the first time since Ankara launched an anti-Kurdish offensive in early October, as Russia announced Kurdish forces had withdrawn from the key border area.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said Kurdish forces had pulled back from the entire Turkish-Syrian border in accordance with a deal struck between Ankara and regime backer Moscow in Sochi earlier this month.

"The withdrawal of armed units from territory where a security corridor should be created has been completed ahead of time," Shoigu said, as quoted by Russian news agencies.

PM assures incentives for 5 years

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of the show.

The PM said as part of export diversification, the leather and leather goods sector has been defined as a priority sector in Bangladesh's economy and national industrial development strategy. "For this, various initiatives have been taken to develop the leather and leather footwear industries."

Barely a decade ago, most of the country's export earnings in this sector came mainly from exports of leather as a raw material, she mentioned.

Hasina said footwear and leather goods factories have expanded during the last 10 years of successive Awami League governments as they provided incentives and laid out business-friendly policies.

She assured the businessmen of extending all-out cooperation to them in producing diversified products and exporting those to new markets across the world.

"Our government is always active in producing new products and exploring new markets across the

world for expanding the export basket. You'll get all-out support from us in this connection. We can give you this assurance."

The PM said Awami League, as a government, is not involved in business. It rather creates scope for the businesspeople to do business.

"We've given importance to economic diplomacy to introduce importers of the outside world to our leather goods producers. As a result, leather goods have become the second largest export item in the country overtaking the jute items over the last decade."

Hasina said equal opportunities and policy support would be ensured for all the export sectors. Any prevailing discriminatory barriers would be removed, she added.

She said the government has taken effective steps to resolve the environmental hazards of Hazaribagh and has shifted the tanneries to a modern tannery estate in Savar.

The premier urged foreign buyers and investors to invest in various industries in Bangladesh, especially

the leather and leather goods sector.

"At least 150 acres of land will be allocated for the extended project of leather industry city in Savar for setting up composite leather products and footwear factories following international standards and Leather Working Group certification."

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce Ministry Tofail Ahmed, PM's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman Fazlur Rahman, and Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh President Saiful Islam also spoke on the occasion.

A video presentation was screened at the programme, describing the expansion of the country's leather industry.

Over 300 exhibitors from nearly 20 countries, including India, China and Pakistan, will exhibit their products at the event, to be held from October 31-November 2 at the International Convention City, Bashundhara.

Hubble spots spooky face

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can crash into each other -- or one can cannibalize parts of another that comes too close.

But this system was formed by a relatively rare, head-on collision. That means the ring we see that makes up the face is ephemeral, only lasting about 100 million years -- a short time on the universal time scale. The ring formed when each galaxy's disk, which is filled with gas, dust and stars, was pulled and stretched out by the collision.

This is the Arp-Madore 2026-424 system 704 million light-

years from Earth, as noted in the "Catalogue of Southern Peculiar Galaxies and Associations." The Arp-Madore catalogue is the result of work published by astronomers Halton Arp and Barry Madore, who both searched for unique galactic interactions. Their combined work detailing thousands of galaxies was released in 1987.

Rings are rare because there are only a few hundred of them known in our corner of the universe. The circumstances that create them have to happen in a certain way for the ring to form.

And because the galactic centres of each one seen in the image appear to be the same size, that means the galaxies were equal in proportion before they collided. Usually, larger galaxies cannibalize smaller galaxies.

Hubble's growing collection of images, those of including unusually interacting galaxies, can provide astronomers with information about how galaxies evolve. Hubble's observations can also help determine targets for future space telescopes, like the James Webb Space Telescope launching in 2021.

SC to deliver verdict today

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the Liberation War in 1971.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, would pronounce the verdict at 9:00am. Yesterday, the case was seen at the top of today's cause-list of the court.

Rest of the three judges of the apex court bench are Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, Justice Zinat Ara and Justice Md Nuruzzaman.

Shishir Manir, a defence lawyer, told The Daily Star yesterday that this would be the eighth time the Supreme Court would be delivering its verdict on an appeal in the case related to war crimes.

On July 10 this year, the apex court bench kept the appeal of Azharul as CAV (Curia Advisari Vult) which means it would announce the verdict on any

day after concluding its hearing. The court heard the appeal between July 5 and July 10.

During the hearing, Azharul's lawyer Khandaker Mahbub Hossain prayed to the court to acquit his client of the charges, saying his client was innocent and was not involved in any crimes against humanity or war crimes.

Advocate Mahbub Hossain said the government implicated his client after 43 years of the country's independence out of political intention, which was unethical.

Neither any case nor a general diary was filed against Azharul before 2008 on the charges brought in the case, Mahbub said, adding that Azharul was 18-year-old during the Liberation War of the country.

Documents and evidence produced

against Azharul in connection with the case are not believable, the defence lawyer argued.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam prayed to the apex court to uphold the International Crimes Tribunal's verdict that sentenced Azharul to death. He told the Supreme Court that there was no reason for interfering into the ICT's verdict on the case against Azharul.

On December 30, 2014, ICT-1 sentenced Azharul, assistant secretary general of Jamaat, with death penalty for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

Azharul later filed an appeal with the Supreme Court challenging the verdict where he claimed innocence and prayed to the Appellate Division to acquit him of the charges.

Govt dropped

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committee.

"The ministry should have done an analysis on production and demand of onions. How much will we need to import? So we asked the ministry to remain alert in the future and take advance measures to avert such crisis," he told The Daily Star.

Meeting at the parliament building, the committee also urged proper functioning of TCB and the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection in dealing with the crisis.

A member of the committee, Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury, said the committee blamed a section of businessmen for the price hike as they stocked the daily kitchen essential after import. "The committee asked the ministry concerned to take action against these businessmen with the help of law enforcers."

Around 7-8 lakh tonnes of onions

are imported every year to meet the country's demand of 24 lakh tonnes. Bangladesh can produce 23 lakh tonnes of onions annually but a portion of it get damaged.

On the same day, Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque admitted that there was a failure on the part of the government in facing the crisis.

"We could have taken steps regarding onion crisis much earlier. However, we have not done that. This is our mistake," he told a press briefing at the ministry.

Onion production was enough but floods ravaged the crop, resulting in the present crisis, while India's ban on export aggravated it, the minister said. "In the future, we will take necessary measures to import onions in due time."

Razzaque said the government would provide free seeds and fertilisers worth Tk 80 crore to small and

UK starts election

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re-nationalisation programme and "continually to flip-flop one way or the other" on Brexit.

Corbyn shot back by claiming that the Conservative prime minister's post-Brexit trade proposals were selling out British interests to US President Donald Trump.

"Despite his denials, (the National Health Service) is up for grabs by US corporations in a Trump-style trade deal," Corbyn said.

Corbyn's attack line underscores Labour's desire to shift the campaign's focus to traditional social issues and away from its past difficulties with the defining issue of UK politics.

Britain's first December vote in nearly 100 years and third general election in four years finds his party splintered by bitter infighting.

Pro-EU supporters from big cities have been at loggerheads with Brexit-backing groups such as the powerful trade unions.

Some of Corbyn's chief lieutenants have further suggested the party should pick a new leader should it flounder at the polls.

But the 70-year-old Corbyn, a veteran socialist, is an energetic campaigner who nearly managed to score an upset victory in the last general

election in 2017.

"The choice at this election couldn't be clearer," he said yesterday.

"People have a chance to vote for real change after years of Conservative and Liberal Democrat cuts."

Labour's Brexit promise is to seize power and then strike a more European-friendly agreement with Brussels that preserves many of the existing trade ties.

It would then let voters choose between that deal and the option of simply staying in the EU.

Government figures indicated there had been a spike in voter registration since Tuesday, with people aged 18 to 34 leading the way, although their intentions are difficult to predict.

Announcements by dozens of sitting MPs that they would not be seeking re-election have also complicated forecasts.

The two other main players -- the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party -- are adopting much firmer Brexit stances.

The SNP also sees the vote as another chance to bolster support for independence.

The fast-rising Lib Dems are going into the vote on a simple promise of stopping the EU-UK divorce by any means.

Talks on for purchase

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"We need to keep pace with the new era," Abdullah Ibn Zaid, director of the Inter Service Public Relations Directorate, an arm of the Bangladesh Army, told Nikkei.

"Professionalism won't develop unless we modernise the military," Zaid said.

Since Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971, China, Russia, the US, the UK and South Korea have been the country's main suppliers of arms and ammunition.

While China remains Bangladesh's largest defense equipment provider, purchases from the US have grown steadily since the 1990s, reaching \$110 million for the nine years since 2010. The figure is dwarfed by its "\$1.92 billion in defense purchases from China in the 2010s", Nikkei reported, quoting the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Asked whether procurement from the US would antagonise China, Abdullah Ibn Zaid told Nikkei, "It's not an issue of making one happy while [the] other [is] unhappy."

"We have bought from the US before. We have a pact with China as well."

US officials in Dhaka earlier on October 17 told a group of journalists that US wants to sign two agreements -- the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) -- as Bangladesh last year sought to buy sophisticated military equipment.

According to them, GSOMIA is a foundational government-to-government legally-binding agreement that permits greater collaboration, and ensures that governments understand and commit to protecting classified military information.

The GSOMIA does not obligate governments to share classified

information or material. It ensures protection of the information shared by partner governments, the officials said.

Meanwhile, ACSA allows US and partner nations' forces to procure and pay for common types of supplies and services, including food, water, clothing, transportation, training, petroleum, ammunition, maintenance and medical services.

"The agreement does not, in anyway, commit a partner nation to military action nor does it authorise stationing of ships, aircraft or military personnel in foreign countries," an official added.

A US official told Nikkei one benefit would be "to significantly ease our ability to transfer major defense equipment that will help safeguard Bangladesh's sovereignty and our mutual interests in the region."

"These agreements are also consistent with our interest in expanding our partnership with Bangladesh in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping, defense trade, military cooperation and counterterrorism, as well as maritime security and regional issues," he told Nikkei.

Analysts told Nikkei that Bangladesh's booming economy and strategic location make a compelling case for Bangladesh to bolster its military strength.

Delwar Hossain, professor of international relations at Dhaka University, said it was imperative for Bangladesh to acquire sophisticated military gear because the importance of the Bay of Bengal has risen "all of a sudden", while China's Belt and Road Initiative has raised the profile of the region globally.

"It's a pragmatic decision," Hossain told Nikkei. "It's a new area of building strategic relations with the United States."

Eight arrested

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in-charge (OC) of Ramgati police station.

In Narayananj's Bandar upazila, police yesterday arrested a father on charge of raping his daughter.

Police said the victim was raped by her father, when the mother was at work. He had allegedly raped the 18-year-old girl multiple times over the last one year.

Around three months ago, the victim shared the incident with her mother. Then, the mother and the victim left the house and started living elsewhere, said Raifqul Islam, OC of Bandar police station.

But the father would often visit and threaten them. Later, the victim and her mother informed the matter to locals who helped the victim file a case against her father yesterday, said the OC.

Following filing of the case, police arrested the father, who was later sent to jail by a court, added the police officer.

In a separate incident in Sonargaon upazila, police yesterday arrested two men on charge of gang-raping a domestic help.

The arrestees are Habibur Rahman, 40, and Shahinur Islam, 30.

Police said the 27-year victim used to live in a rented house owned by Habibur in Baghbari area of the same upazila. But recently, the woman left the house and started living elsewhere.

On Monday night, the woman came to Habibur's residence for some discussion over payment of house rent. Then, Habibur along with three of his accomplices, gang-raped her.

On Tuesday, the victim filed a case against the four. Police yesterday arrested the two, while the others accused were on the run, said

Moniruzzaman, OC of Sonargaon police station.

In Chattogram, police arrested a man for raping a minor girl at Banskhali upazila yesterday morning.

The arrestee was identified as Mohammad Ismail, 32, hailing from Chambal village of the upazila.

Police said the nine-year-old victim and the accused were related to each other. The accused raped the girl on Tuesday night around 9:00pm, said police.

Afterwards, the victim's mother filed a case yesterday. Police arrested the accused, said Kamal Uddin, inspector (Investigation) of Banskhali police.

In Jashore, a man was sued yesterday in Chowgacha upazila on charge of raping his neighbour.

The accused was identified as Korban Ali, 50, of Balidapara village under the same upazila.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said she used to work as a domestic help at Korban's house. But the girl with a learning disability quit as Korban often sexually harassed her.

On October 24, the victim was going to a nearby shop, when she was intercepted by Korban, who forcibly took her to a nearby banana garden and raped her. Korban then beat her with iron rod and threatened to kill her, if she disclosed the matter.

Yesterday, the victim's father filed a rape case against Korban. Police was conducting raid to arrest the accused, said Rajib Khan, OC of Chowgacha police station.

(Our Noakhali, Narayanagnj, Chattogram and Jhenaidah correspondents contributed to the report.)