

Biranganas caught in bureaucratic tangles

Says TIB report on their identification, certification as freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The absence of a timeline in the process of gazette notification subjects Biranganas to waiting for more than three years to be gazetted as freedom fighters, says a new report by Transparency International Bangladesh.

After being gazetted as freedom fighters, Biranganas have to wait for at least three to six months to start getting an allowance, the report says.

Besides, they have to wait for more than six years to get a house under the government's "Bir Nibash" project aimed at providing accommodation to freedom fighters who are not financially solvent, it adds.

TIB disclosed the findings of the report titled "State Recognition and Rights of Birangana Freedom Fighters: Governance Challenges and Way-out" during a virtual press conference yesterday.

The government started to issue gazettes declaring Biranganas as freedom fighters in September 2015.

Till May 24 this year, the number of gazetted Birangana freedom fighters is

448 in the country.

As per government estimates, members of Pakistani occupation forces raped and tortured 200,000 women during the Liberation War.

The report says in the Liberation War Affairs Ministry's management information system (MIS), there are various types of "mistakes" in the names of 89 Biranganas and in case of father or husband's name of 207 Biranganas.

Such misinformation leads to complications in getting further benefits.

Data for the research was collected between January and March this year.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the existing process to identify Biranganas and provide them with state recognition as freedom fighters and other benefits is "very complicated".

"Not prioritising state recognition and negative socio-cultural mindset has left Birangana freedom fighters marginalised so far. Our research has also been found to be lacking proper planning and institutional capacities," he added.

Iftekharuzzaman also said this process

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Unable to find shelter, a banana-seller sits in yesterday's sudden rain, patiently waiting for it to end. This photo was taken from Baitul Mukarram National Mosque area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER Major challenges ahead: speakers

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As the world order is changing with the global powers being more polarised, Bangladesh will be facing more challenges in maintaining balance and securing its national interests in the coming days.

When the US-China rivalries were already in place in the last several years, it has intensified since the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Bangladesh, a rising economic power in South Asia, is also under pressure for joining this or that alliance.

Apart from this, another major challenge for Bangladesh is that it is going to graduate from LDC status by 2026 and many of the trade privileges that the country has been enjoying will be gone.

Under these circumstances, it is important to gain its core strengths -- the soft power of peace, humanitarian diplomacy, climate diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, improve educational standards, export diversification, improving domestic market and having the finest diplomacy.

These observations came at a seminar on "Changing Global Order: Securing Bangladesh's National Interests" organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium yesterday.

Former foreign secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Polarised global powers	Enhancing domestic capacity
Russian invasion of Ukraine	Diversification of export basket
Pressure of joining alliance	Smooth LDC transition strategy
Losing trade privileges	Improving educational standards

said enhancing Bangladesh's domestic capacity is one of the major ways to address external threats. Therefore, attracting foreign investment is a very important task, which will improve resilience of the economy.

BISS research fellow ASM Tarek Hassan Semul stressed on diversification of export basket of the country.

UNDP country economist Dr Nazneen Ahmed said as Bangladesh graduates by 2026, it will face a number of challenges, especially in terms of trade privileges that the country has been enjoying from the EU.

Also, interest rate for borrowing money will also be higher, she said. "We will have to have a smooth transition strategy that we are already working on."

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Islami Andolan protests remarks on prophet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolan brought out a procession in Dhaka yesterday, protesting the remarks by suspended BJP leaders on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

They started marching towards the Indian High Commission from the north gate of Baitul Mukarram, to submit a memorandum. Police barred the procession at Shantinagar, said Motijheel DC Commissioner Abdul Ahad. Few minutes later, the protesters left the area.

DMP Gulshan Division DC Asaduzzaman said a team from Islami Andolan went to his office and gave them the memorandum.

"We then handed it over to the Indian High Commission."



A woman and child carefully cross a part of Kazi Alauddin Road, which is littered with garbage, while a man nonchalantly dumps more waste. This narrow road in Old Dhaka has been further constricted as locals keep mindlessly dumping waste there. When asked, they said as the city corporation is yet to collect garbage from the nearby dumping spot, they have no other option. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

EVOLUTION OF CYBERCRIME (PART 4) Faces behind the crimes

Most are non-professionals, with minimum education

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Twenty-two-year-old Ratul Sheikh is a farm labourer.

On March 10, police's Detective Branch (DB) arrested Ratul from Faridpur's Dumain village for money embezzlement by hacking a mobile financial service (MFS) account.

This correspondent talked to Ratul while he was being produced before the court.

He revealed that he did not even complete primary education.

"After working in the land, I would sit in a shop. That's where I learned hacking techniques from," said Ratul.

“After the legal procedure ends, they should be offered rehabilitation. But it has to be a concerted effort of different private institutions and volunteer organisations.”

BANAJ KUMAR MAJUMDER
PBI Chief

DB made two more arrests from the same village for the same offence. Arrestee Motaleb Sheikh (24) is a farmer by profession, while another arrestee Nasir Biswas alias Tota (26) works at a drug store.

Interestingly, none of them studied up to the SSC level.

On October 2 last year, DB's Cyber and Special Crime Division arrested Obaidur Rahman Nobel (20), Shamim Sarder (21) and Sajib Khalifa (21) for extorting money by hacking Facebook accounts with "phishing links".

The arrestees hacked over 2,000 Facebook accounts over two years, said detectives.

Nobel has been found to have studied up to SSC, Shamim up to the fourth grade and Sajib up to the third grade.

They learned hacking techniques from various online platforms.

This pattern of non-professionals being involved in cybercrimes is not an isolated one, according to investigators.

Junaed Alam Sharker, additional deputy commissioner of DB's cyber and special crime division, said around 80 percent of the criminals

- 80pc arrestees from non-technical background
- 70-80pc didn't study up to SSC
- 90pc arrestees below 28
- Mostly involved in hacking, cyber bullying, pornography
- Criminals learned techniques from online platforms
- Rehabilitation a major challenge

-- arrested on charges of hacking Imo, Facebook and MFS accounts -- are from non-technical backgrounds.

Around 90 percent of them are below the age of 28.

According to the DB official, the reason behind their involvement in such crimes is the easy availability of devices.

Most people in the country lack digital literacy and this is something such criminals cash in on, added Junaed.

MEDIUM OF EDU FOR LAW ENFORCERS

When it comes to ATM extortion, the criminals -- with no background in technical or engineering fields and minimum education -- gained experience in booth maintenance while working as cash attendants.

They looted around Tk 2.42 crore from around 231 ATM booths of several private banks from October last year to February this year.

The bank authorities noticed that money have been going missing regularly, after about six months of the initiation. Such is the expertise of the group.

PBI arrested 11 members of the syndicate behind the ATM scam following a case filed on March 6. Md Idris Ali, PBI sub-inspector and investigation officer of the case, described the methods of the crime.

Syndicate members would first load the money in bundles on the ATM, after which the machine issues a deposit report automatically. The trick was in folding some notes in a bundle of Tk 20,000.

The time window between the cash load and

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How one instt helped PK Halder embezzle Tk 70cr

MAHIBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Investigators have unearthed how the top brass of International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL) helped Prashanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, embezzle and launder about Tk 70 crore from the institution.

Besides Halder, 21 people -- including ILFSL's former board of directors, managing director (MD) and officials -- were involved in the scam, according to the probe report of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which is awaiting approval.

ACC sources said Amitav Adhikary, MD of Anan Chemical and Halder's cousin, applied for a loan of Tk 29 crore on October 14, 2015.

ILFSL's head of business Nahida Runai recommended the loan proposal, and former MD Rashedul Haque presented it without any memo before the board on October 25, 2015.

The board sanctioned the loan.

The probe report of Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit and other documents, however, showed that the money was not used for the purpose mentioned in the application, rather it was transferred to accounts of different companies and persons.

Of the money, about Tk 18 crore was transferred to Anan Chemical's account.

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PRAYER
TIMING
JUNE 17

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-05	12-30	5-00	6-50	8-15
Jamaat	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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سیدتنا خدیجہ

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Soliciting Blessings

Nukrat Jannatan Nowaz has graduated with a BSc in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from UMass, Amherst, MA, USA in May 2022 with enlistment in the Dean's list and scored a GPA of 3.86. Before the graduation results were announced, Nukrat was awarded a job as a scientist at the renowned Biomedicine Design (BMD) Lab in Cambridge, MA of Pfizer USA, a world-renowned pharmaceutical manufacturer and research firm.

At present Nukrat Nowaz has started working in BMD Lab as a Bench Scientist with a team of world-renowned Scientists on LNP formulations to support the Emerging LNP programs. Prior to joining Pfizer, Nukrat worked as a Research Assistant in the Cognitive Neuroscience Department (ranked as the best programs for child development in USA) at Boston Children's Hospital (ranked the best pediatric hospital in USA) And as an Undergraduate Research Assistant at UMass's Sommeiro Lab. Nukrat Nowaz completed "O" Level and "A" Level with distinction from Aga Khan school and primary education at Play Pen school, Dhaka. She is the granddaughter of Razoran-Sultampur's famous scholar and philanthropist late Md. Solaiman Miah and Khadim Khanam and the granddaughter of late Lt. Col. Khondokar Nurul Haque (Rtd.) and Rowshan Ara Noor of Tangail. The only daughter of Mohammed Towheed Nowaz, Managing Director of the Multinational Consultancy Firm Chemico Technique Int'l Ltd. and Nasir Noor Nowaz and the elder sister of Nurair Muhammad Solaiman Nowaz. Nukrat's parents humbly solicit blessings for Nukrat's prosperity and successive success from all well-wishers.

Khaleda gets permanent bail in two more cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday got permanent bail in two more cases, filed on charges of hurting religious sentiment and making derogatory comments on Bangabandhu in 2014 and 2017 respectively.

The court granted the bail as she has not misused the ad-interim bail granted by it earlier in the cases.

The HC bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain and Justice Shahed Nuruddin delivered the verdicts after hearing two separate rules.

Following yesterday's verdict, the BNP chief has got permanent bail in four out of 37 cases in total, her lawyer Kayser Kamal told The Daily Star.