

ROE VS WADE

# The US' descent to the 'Dark Ages'



SHARBARI AHMED

Sharbari Ahmed is an author, a screenwriter, playwright, and an educator.

WHEN I was seven, I was visiting a much older sister in Boston, Massachusetts. I was given the run of her small, airy apartment, and in her bedroom, I found a book discreetly tucked away between other inconspicuous titles. It was a large white paperback with a glossy cover and the words "Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women" in bright green over a black and white photo of women demonstrating in the street with the sign "Women Unite." Even though I was an incredibly precocious second grader, I had no idea what this book was about – the title gave me no clue because, at age seven, I was wholly comfortable in my skinny little brown body. And I didn't know that, as a female, it was already a battle zone, with various men – and ill-advised women – wanting to legislate control over it.

I naturally didn't understand everything in the landmark book, first published in 1970 two years before Roe vs Wade was passed. It was about women understanding and taking ownership over their bodies, sexualities, and spirits – though that is probably too simplistic a summary. One photo will be forever emblazoned on my psyche and that I would return to several times until I could not anymore. It was a grainy black and white crime scene photo of a young woman named Gerri Santoro, who had died in the process of getting an illegal abortion at the hands of her lover. Her husband was a violent, abusive man and Gerri found refuge in the arms of another. When she found out she was pregnant, she feared her husband would harm her and her daughters. She felt

she had no choice but to terminate the pregnancy. Gerri's naked body was photographed, with her collapsed torso over her kneeling legs, and blood-soaked sheets behind her. She died like that, bleeding out from the catheter that was used to attempt the abortion of her baby. Her lover panicked and left her lying



PHOTO: REUTERS

there. She was discovered the next day by a hotel maid. My seven-year-old brain froze on that image of this girl. I stared at it for several minutes, unable to look away. As I got older, I would always go back to the book to learn more. Eventually, I started skipping that image. It caused me inexplicable psychic pain. The raw vulnerability, the nudity, the collapsed torso, the aloneness, the blood seeping into the sheets and carpet underneath Gerri haunts me to this day.

**The moment Roe vs Wade was overturned, clinics in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Ohio were immediately shut down.** unsanitary scalpels were well and truly over (Vice, 2016). Roe vs Wade allowed American women to exhale and cautiously hope that a war against us was not going to be waged any longer. Yesterday, a month after a draft Supreme Court ruling had been leaked concerning the overturning of Roe vs Wade – an unsettling harbinger of how the machinery of justice in the US is failing – the ruling was overturned. My friends and family and, naturally, people

on social media, are aghast, enraged, devastated, and terrified because this is about so much more than one law. This means that any law that governs human self-determination is vulnerable. That gay marriage could be overturned, that naturalised citizens could be stripped of their citizenship and deported, that Muslims can be sent to internment camps. Nothing – except, it seems the rights of gun owners – is off limits. This is a precursor to the fall of the empire. I was not surprised. I am still processing. I will resist. However, at this moment, I am also grieving because this particular situation is deeply personal. For private reasons, I had to terminate a pregnancy, and I did so safely with care. Pro-lifers like to frame pro-choicers as morally bankrupt people who use abortion as a means of birth control. That we end lives with no afterthought. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not a month goes by that I don't think of that baby and what might have been. I would go on to raise a healthy son with my partner and I am deeply grateful that I was given a choice, even though it still hurts that I had to make it. As I type this, the horror of this ruling is unfolding. The moment Roe vs Wade was overturned, clinics in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Ohio – among others – were immediately shut down. Almost the moment the ruling was announced, appointments were cancelled, leaving scores of women without recourse – except now maybe the only choice Gerri Santoro felt she had. States are vowing to defy the ruling – while others are gleefully showing this nation back into the dark ages. The Attorney General of Texas, Ken Paxton, closed his office and is making this dark day an annual holiday while Beto O'Rourke urges Texans to fight it at the polls. In a country that has known a cataclysmic civil war that was in part also about freedom over one's body, we are once again at civil odds, and will continue to be, it seems, for at least my son's lifetime.

## Mental health: A mother's role

MANSURA KABIR

Mansura Kabir is not the author's real name.

DAWK circles, puffy eyes, and sleepless nights are riddled with anxiety – the mother thinks she cannot survive this episode, yet she lives to see another day. The mother of a child with mental health issues dies every day and somehow manages to find the strength to live every day – if not for her sake, for the sake of the child. Such mothers are made of steel nerves; they

shortcomings. She most probably will be blamed for everything bad and ugly in his life; she will hardly be spoken to; she, in fact, will be treated like a ghost and only summoned when housekeeping needs to be done. Yet, the mother knows that this is not his normal behaviour. She adjusts herself to his whims. Yes, of course, such misdemeanour takes its toll on the mother and she too needs to decompress and talk to counsellors. Caregiving for such children is not an easy matter; it takes a lot of courage to accept fate and

Persons with mental health issues can live perfectly normal lives with medicinal adjustments and therapy. True, there are often side effects, but one must try to seek help and not take matters into their own hands, because every case is different and every diagnosis and prognosis varies. But we should also address the misconception and stigma associated with mental illnesses through general education, through orientation of general doctors. For mental health

patients, family support is a key part of their support system. Mental health awareness does not only deal with the illness of the mind, but also acknowledges the process of taking care of it. "Life cannot be as bad as you think, you are almost there. Trust yourself, you can do this." This is always the prayer of a panic-stricken mother who silently sobs hoping that her son is safe and that the demons in his head are not torturing him to the edge again.



For the mother, the child's chemical imbalances, the dilemmas of whether he will find his footing through the dark tunnel, or whether he will be able to fight his demons, is an everyday worry. VISUAL: STAR

would go to incredible lengths to ensure their children are getting treatment, being socially accepted, and being able to live the life they deserve. Mental illness is such that the capacity of the affected person to analyse or justify social and emotional matters is not like that of others. For the mother, the child's chemical imbalances, the dilemmas of whether he will find his footing through the dark tunnel, or whether he will be able to fight his demons, is an everyday worry. What is a mother to do when her picture-perfect child stumbles at every course of his life? His demons are a reality for him that no one will ever be able to grasp. Why does he not feel right in his head, why does his heart skip a beat, why does he let go and fall every time he wants to leap? Somehow the mother has to live through all the dark chapters of his life and come out a winner. For we assume a mother can never fail, that she needs to stick to it till the end and help her child up on his legs again and again. There will be times when the child cannot see past the mother's

then act on it positively. There will be times when all his anger issues will be directed at her. The little misunderstandings of the past, that he holds dear, will build up and escalate every time there is a manic episode, and this is repeated in each phase. It is like living in a time warp – only the trajectory of the bout gets lengthier. It is another struggle altogether. The mother knows deep inside her that, like any other mother, she is loved if not cherished, she is sought out if not sought after. But the blame game becomes intense with time, the bullying gets tougher, the helplessness becomes heavier. Her self-confidence erodes and she finds herself inside a shell only to come out and hold the child's hand during his dark times. Society has a longstanding misinterpretation and superstition regarding mental health. Mental health is a real problem. It is not a figment of anyone's imagination. Doctors, counsellors, therapists, and medicines are there to help, and one must try to avail these interventions just like they seek assistance for physical ailments.

বাংলাদেশ সড়ক পরিবহন কর্পোরেশন  
সম্বন্ধিত কেন্দ্রীয় মেরামত কারখানা (আইসিডব্লিউএস)  
পাঞ্জীপুর-১৭০২  
E-mail: icwsgazipur@brtc.gov.bd

**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

শর্তসাপেক্ষে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের জন্য উন্মুক্ত দরদাতার নিকট থেকে পিল বোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়	সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়
২।	প্রতিষ্ঠান	বিআরটিসি সম্বন্ধিত কেন্দ্রীয় মেরামত কারখানা (আইসিডব্লিউএস), পাঞ্জীপুর
৩।	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা	ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (ট্রেনিং), বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, পাঞ্জীপুর
৪।	কাজের বিবরণী/ধরণ	বিআরটিসি'র অশোক মিল্যান্ড-ব্রিডল-জাটিকুলেটেড-এসি ও দাইনামি এন্সি, নাইনটু নন এন্সি, টাটা একতলা ননএসি, চায়না সিএনজি বাস এর যন্ত্রাংশ এবং লুরিকেন্টস সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে ১২ মাস বা এক বছরের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান।
৫।	দরপত্রের স্মারক নং	৩৫.০৪.০০০০.০৩৭.০১.০৩০.২২/২৮৫, তাং-২৩/০৬/২০২২ খ্রিঃ
৬।	দরপত্রের মেয়াদকাল	২১ (একুশ) দিন
৭।	নিয়োগ পদ্ধতি	একশাস বিশিষ্ট উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক)
৮।	অর্থের উৎস	বিআরটিসি
৯।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	৩০/০৬/২০২২ খ্রিঃ
১০।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২১/০৭/২০২২ খ্রিঃ
১১।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৭/২০২২ খ্রিঃ, সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা
১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৭/২০২২ খ্রিঃ, সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা
১৩।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি স্থান	বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, হিলাব শাখা, পাঞ্জীপুর (এক্সি চলাকালীন সময়)
১৪।	দরপত্র খোলার দপ্তর	বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, পাঞ্জীপুর। এ সময় দরদাতা বা তাদের প্রতিনিধি উপস্থিত থাকতে পারবেন।
১৫।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	স্পেশ্যাল পার্টস/লুরিকেন্টস আমদানীকারক, সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা প্রতিক্রিয়াকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে যুক্তরাষ্ট্র যন্ত্রাংশ/লুরিকেন্টস বিক্রয়কারী দরপত্রের অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
১৬।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা মাত্র (অফেরৎযোগ্য)।
১৭।	জামানত (আনেষ্টিম্যানি)	উক্ত মোট মূল্যের ৩% জিএম বিআরটিসি আইসিডব্লিউএস এর অনুকূলে যে কোন রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব/সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে প্রদত্ত ডিডি/শে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে দরপত্রের সাথে জমা করতে হবে।
১৮।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	প্রকৌশলী ক্ষেত্রমা বেপম, ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (ট্রেনিং), আইসিডব্লিউএস, অয়দেবপুর, পাঞ্জীপুর।
১৯।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগ ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর	বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, অয়দেবপুর, পাঞ্জীপুর, ফোন নম্বর-০২-২২৪৪২৩০৭১।
২০।	নির্দেশনা	অসম্পূর্ণ, ভুলভুলক ও জামানত বিহীন (আনেষ্টিম্যানি) দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
২১।	আলোচ্য দরপত্র পিপিআর-২০০৮ এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত গুণেন টেন্ডার পদ্ধতি অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে। বিআরটিসি'র কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র সম্পূর্ণ বা আংশিক গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।	

ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (ট্রেনিং)  
বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস  
অয়দেবপুর, পাঞ্জীপুর।