



The government on Monday admitted that taking a 17-year-old college student on remand, and tying him with ropes, was a mistake.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ARREST OF 17-YEAR-OLD

Juvenile justice must prevail



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Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz, an eleventh-grade student at Dhaka College, was put on a seven-day remand in a case filed with Jatrabari Police Station, accusing him of killing a police constable on July 19 amid the violent clashes that erupted throughout the country. He was made the 16th accused among 17 in the case file, which erroneously listed his age as 19 years old. But since then, Faiyaz's remand has been cancelled, and he has been sent to a Child Development Centre in Gazipur. This is despite the High Court saying the government can consider keeping Faiyaz in his parents' custody. However, the government on Monday admitted that taking a 17-year-old college student on remand, and tying him with ropes, was a mistake, and that it will take steps so that such mistakes are not repeated.

However, the court proceedings that preceded these remedial steps had shockingly disregarded the legal and constitutional obligations meant to protect a minor, who is clearly 17 years old, as evidenced by his birth registration and SSC certificates. He had been treated as an adult, resulting in a series of legal errors

just like other adult accused, when he was brought into the court. This conduct plainly violated the dignity, care, and respect that juveniles are entitled to get under the act, which prohibits such mistreatment. It also stipulates that juveniles should not be handcuffed or presented to court in such a disgraceful manner. There is no doubt about the fact that a minor, who is barely out of adolescence, being treated as an adult offender is a serious violation.

According to media reports, outside the courthouse on Saturday, Faiyaz's family members stated that

the determination of the minority status of any accused at the very first instance. The current system appears to rely substantially on the court's discretion, especially where the age is contested and before forensic assessments are directed. However, as Faiyaz's case shows, this procedure is not beyond the possibility of legal error. Therefore, a mechanism should be in place to order an initial age verification procedure before appearing in court, which involves reviewing birth certificates, academic records, and any other relevant documents. This should uphold a propositional burden on relevant stakeholders for securing justice for a certain juvenile group vulnerable to judicial proceedings. While writ petitions can protect against legal errors that result in violations of fundamental rights, there should also be direct avenues for appealing remand decisions in higher courts specifically designed to handle juvenile justice issues.

**The court proceedings that preceded these remedial steps had shockingly disregarded the legal and constitutional obligations meant to protect a minor, who is clearly 17 years old, as evidenced by his birth registration and SSC certificates. He had been treated as an adult, resulting in a series of legal errors and violations of his rights. This mistreatment of a minor was not only a gross violation of human rights; it also demonstrated a disregard for the legal protections afforded to juveniles in Bangladesh.**

he had been missing for four days and alleged, quoting Faiyaz, that he had been subjected to severe physical and mental torture during the days prior.

Despite some loopholes, Bangladesh has a moderate regime for birth registration, which is the cornerstone of the traditional age verification procedure in judicial proceedings. In cases where official documentation is unavailable or contested, courts frequently depend on the subjective standard of physical maturity, which is often unreliable but widely practiced. Even with adequate documentation of his age, Faiyaz's appearance—such as his lack of facial hair and overall childlike looks—should have been a strong indicator of his minority. In the past, courts have exercised discretion based on such visible signs of youthfulness.

While costly and time-consuming, forensic age assessment methods like dental analysis or bone ossification are more reliable and have been applied in past cases, such as the Oishi Rahman case (2013), where courts have ordered forensic assessments to resolve age disputes. The lower court's unwillingness to verify Faiyaz's age using such methods, despite these precedents, was a significant oversight. Moreover, ignoring the legal protections afforded to juveniles by failing to verify his age using reliable forensic methods or any other means represents a major weakness in the judicial process, as accurate age verification procedures are required to avoid such grave errors and ensure the lawful treatment of minors.

The question inevitably arises regarding the uniform manner in which the court should handle

The Children Act offers children under the age of 18 particular safeguards. According to the act, a minor shall not be held in police custody or jail unless it is absolutely required, and a child arrested must appear before a Children's Court within 24 hours. The Constitution of Bangladesh, on the other hand, forbids torture and cruel, inhuman, or humiliating punishment, according to Article 35(5). The claims of extreme mental and physical suffering that Fayaz endured while in police custody constitute a clear violation of his constitutional rights. Bangladesh is a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), where Article 37 states that detention or imprisonment of children can be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest amount of time that is appropriate. This convention also forbids torture and other cruel treatment.

In the country's current context when law enforcement is in overdrive, there may be attempts to disregard such principles and prohibitions, but it is absolutely essential that nothing of this sort is allowed to happen in the name of ensuring security or rule of law. The protection of juvenile rights should remain a non-negotiable aspect of maintaining the integrity of the legal system in Bangladesh. Ensuring that juvenile rights are upheld at all costs is not just a legal obligation but a moral imperative as well. The legal system must ensure that the age of the accused is accurately determined, and that their rights are fully served, regardless of the circumstances.

How news consumers were deprived during the internet blackout



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AZMIN AZRAN

When internet connections went cold on the evening of Thursday, July 18, Bangladesh was suddenly and forcefully hurled back in time to an era when instant communication was not the norm. Without the internet, in the early 2000s and before that, the only notable and reliable sources of news were TV channels and print newspapers. As a consumer, you got the roundup of the daily news in the evening broadcast on TV along with hourly updates if something important was unfolding, followed by details on print newspapers the morning after. The media machine back then worked fine, and the public was used to this meandering speed of the news cycle.

The problem with being hurled back in time like this was that not everyone was prepared for time travel. Many people have stopped subscribing to print newspapers at their doorstep every morning, and cable connections at home have become increasingly rare. However, without the internet, these sources suddenly became the only place to get reliable information, especially TV channels as they have the ability to broadcast all day and all night.

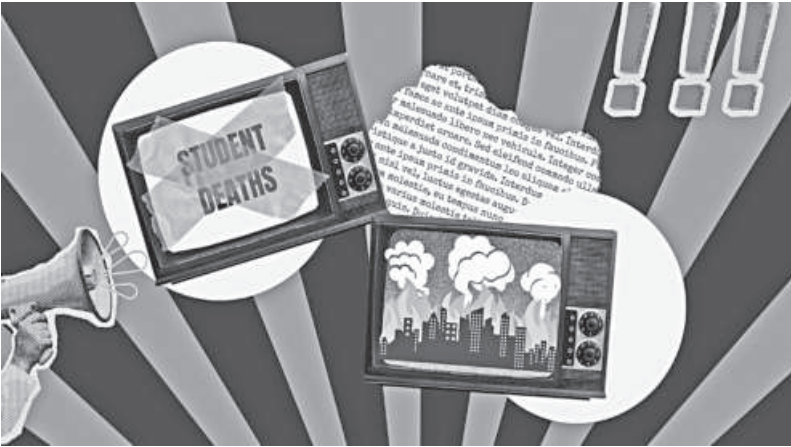
In fact, given that the country had been embroiled in a remarkable level of violence at the time of the internet blackout, it could be argued that it was the responsibility of electronic media to make full use of the technology at their disposal, and keep people as up-to-date as possible. Lack of information, especially in a society that up until a minute ago was drowning in information, is a real crisis. It can lead to panic, bad decision-making, and suffering that is avoidable.

Throughout this terrible previous weekend, as people's phones kept ringing off the hook delivering devastating news, an unknown percentage of which were rumours, those with cable connections at home might have looked at TV news channels to corroborate or dispel what they were hearing. After getting home from work on Thursday evening having witnessed a city in turmoil, I found myself flipping through the channels on my TV to see if anyone had anything reliable to say about what I had just seen or the gunshots my friends were telling me they heard in their neighbourhood, but to no avail.

Of course, they did not fail to report on the cases of arson and vandalism at government establishments across the city. The comprehensive coverage provided to the data centre in a building adjacent to the Department of Disaster Management in Mohakhali

deserves plaudits, as does the coverage of the devastating fires at BTV, Setu Bhaban, and toll plazas of Dhaka Elevated Expressway and Mayor Hanif Flyover. Yet, the dangerous events taking place across Dhaka that were killing and maiming people in scores did not seem to get the same spotlight.

The sudden disappearance of internet connectivity definitely hampered TV networks, and Thursday evening might have gone by with them simply trying to get a hang of the problem. It's understandable if they decided to divert resources from dangerous spots in the city from where it was getting increasingly difficult to collect reliable accounts, but during the day on Friday, by which time many newspapers had reported on the death toll and violence already, TV channels did not change their tune.



VISUAL: STAR

Friday saw the most violence in this whole sequence of events, and as terrified citizens were stuck at home, hearing the most bone-chilling accounts of what befell those unlucky enough to be on the streets, the lack of information put a final nail in the coffin in that day's dystopian reality. On TV, news scrolls appeared in some channels saying that clashes were going on in certain parts of Dhaka and the rest of the country, but the scale of it remained unuttered. This paper reported 66 deaths on Friday that it could independently confirm, taking place throughout the day at various locations. On TV, the death counts did not appear in scheduled broadcasts. The destruction that either precipitated or followed the deaths was given its due coverage, but for most people, it took until Saturday morning's papers to realise the extent of the horrors that people experienced. Those who didn't get newspapers on the first day of the curfew had to rely on whatever information they could gather from phone calls and text

of others in fear of ensuing violence. By midday, violence ensued in the area I had assumed was safe in the morning.

If internet services had not been disrupted, hardly anyone would have looked to electronic media to get information about the safety conditions of the roads before going out during this weekend. As a society, we have learned to trust collective information gathering via the internet, and many of us have learned the skills to be able to differentiate between reliable accounts and rumours. These five days without the internet shows why people have made that decision. Traditional news sources like TV networks had the opportunity to step up to the plate and properly help the public at a time when they desperately needed it. The fact that they could not provide this service even at this desperate hour proves that it was futile to have this expectation in the first place. It is either a lack of ability or a lack of will that is at play here, and whatever the reason behind it, TV channels do not serve its viewers.

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and violations of his rights. This mistreatment of a minor was not only a gross violation of human rights; it also demonstrated a disregard for the legal protections afforded to juveniles in Bangladesh.

The Children Act 2013 explicitly mandates that minors should be tried in juvenile courts, which are designed to consider their best interests and focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. In Faiyaz's case, a petition had been filed for the transfer of the hearing to a juvenile court, but the lower court didn't respond to the plea and placed him on remand.

Furthermore, Faiyaz had been tied with a rope around his waist,

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LTM-Tender Notice

LTM-Tender are invited in The National e-Gp system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj for the procurement of

SL No	Tender ID # & Package No	e-Tender Description	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	1005262, 01-LTM/e-GP/Mundiv/2024-2025	Emergency Repair byBase Type-II, DBS-Wearing Course, Clearing and Grubbing, Sand Filling, Banner Placing at “ Jatir Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Mohasarak” (N-8) (Mawa End Service Road) for VVIP Movement under Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj During the year of 2024-2025.	11-08-2024 16:00	12-08-2024 09:00	12-08-2024 09:00
2	1005263, 02-LTM/e-GP/Mundiv/2024-2025	Earth Filling for Munshiganj Division Office Compound under Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj During the year of 2024-2025.	11-08-2024 16:00	12-08-2024 09:05	12-08-2024 09:05

1. The above tenders are online Tenders. Where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-Gp portal and no Offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-Gp system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

2. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National E-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branch.

3. Further information and guidelines are available in the National E-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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