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ENSURING WOMEN'S SAFETY

Govt to form response cells in 64 districts

Adviser Sharmeen Murshid tells event marking Girl Child Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an effort to address abuse and discrimination against women and children, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs will establish rapid response cells across all 64 districts of Bangladesh, according to Sharmeen S Murshid, adviser to the ministry.

Speaking as the chief guest at an event held at Bangladesh Shishu Academy on National Girl Child Day yesterday, Murshid announced this initiative, aimed at creating a safer environment for girls and women nationwide.

The event was jointly organised by the ministry and the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum.

"These cells will include government officials, public representatives, and children, and are designed to provide a swift and coordinated response to any form of abuse or violence, ensuring accountability," Murshid said.

She also emphasised the government's commitment to doing everything possible to prevent child abuse.

She called for a safer future for women and girls across Bangladesh, stating, "We must build the future of Bangladesh based on the dreams of our girl children. In that future, there will be playgrounds, schools near their homes, and they will sing, dance, and move freely."

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SHARMEEN S MURSHID

Nazma Mobarek, secretary of the ministry, reiterated the importance of educating and protecting girls. Citing Napoleon Bonaparte's famous words - "Give me an educated mother, and I will give you an educated nation" - she highlighted the need to ensure that girls receive proper education, nutrition, and protection to secure their future.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, president of the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, said the August 5 uprising had opened new possibilities for the country, stressing the need to create a safer Bangladesh for girls.

He urged everyone to contribute, stating that while girls should focus on acquiring knowledge and developing skills, it is the responsibility of government bodies, NGOs, and parents to provide an environment that supports their full potential.

Keya Khan, director general of the Department of Women Affairs, emphasised the need for both society and the state to fully support girls in realising their dreams.

Khan called for a change in societal attitudes to ensure respect and dignity for women and girls.

Shishu Academy Director General Tania Khan stressed the importance of raising awareness about discrimination against girls and ensuring their safety and opportunities for growth. Save the Children Acting Country Director Reefat Bin Sattar highlighted child marriage as a major barrier to girls' progress.

As part of the celebration, a cultural programme featuring performances by children followed the discussion.



Dipty Rani, a nurse from the National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital, visits her son who is admitted at the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital after contracting dengue. While there, she helps the on-duty doctor as he is examining her son. She even helped other patients with their tests. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Media reform commission soon: Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Adviser Nahid Islam has said they have taken the initiative to form a reform commission to address various regulatory issues concerning print and electronic media, along with social media.

He made the remarks at a virtual seminar on "media and communication policy reform in the new Bangladesh," organised by Bangladeshi Communication Scholars in North America on Sunday night, said a media release of the platform.

Nahid mentioned discussions are ongoing with various media-related groups, which have differing opinions on the commission's establishment.

While some support it, citing the need to

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44 deaths in mob violence in 2 months

Says MSF report; 506 cases filed against AL members in Aug-Sep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 506 cases have been filed against Awami League leaders, activists, government officials, and ministers in the two months following the fall of the AL-led government on August 5, according to a report by rights organisation Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation.

Of these, more than 200 cases were filed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The 506 cases name at least 45,547 individuals, with a further 1,98,790 unnamed accused, according to the MSF report, signed by the organisation's founder, Sultana Kamal.

In September alone, at least 238 cases were filed against Awami League members, 111 of which were against Hasina. So far, 90 people have been arrested in connection with these cases.

The report, based on news from

18 media outlets and verified by rights activists, also highlighted a sharp rise in political violence, with at least 71 incidents in the past two months, including 48 in September.

- » 200+ cases against Hasina
- » 5 killed in political violence in September
- » 53 incidents of mob lynching
- » 12 shrine attack incidents
- » At least 6 extrajudicial killings in September

In September, five people were killed and 619 injured in political violence. Of the 48 incidents, 30 involved internal BNP conflicts, 13 were clashes between the BNP and Awami League, three were internal

Awami League disputes, one involved BNP-Jamaat, and another featured confrontations between the Awami League, BNP, and Jamaat.

Among those killed, four were BNP members, and one was a trolley driver. Additionally, four Awami League members were beaten to death by unidentified assailants.

The report also noted an alarming increase in mob attacks, with 53 incidents over the last two months, including 33 in September. These attacks have led to the deaths of at least 44 people.

"The rise in mob lynching has raised serious concerns, shaking the public's sense of security," said the MSF, adding that mob violence resulting in death is a blatant criminal offence and must be addressed by law enforcement.

MSF criticised law enforcement agencies for failing to fully commit to taking legal action against those

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SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Transfer probe from Rab to special taskforce

HC asks home ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The High Court expressed grave concern over the Rapid Action Battalion's failure to resolve the murder case of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi, which has remained unresolved for 12 years.

"The prolonged investigation delay is both unfortunate and shocking, affecting not only their family but the nation as a whole," remarked the bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam during a recent hearing.

In response to a petition, the court mandated the home ministry to transfer the case from Rab to a high-powered task force comprising experienced personnel from various agencies.

This task force is to complete the investigation and submit a report to the HC within six months.

The court set April 6, 2025, for further hearings on the matter. This directive followed a petition

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MURDER CASE

Ex-MP Sultan Monsur held, put on remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday put former lawmaker Sultan Mohammad Monsur Ahmed on a five-day remand in a case filed over the murder of Jubo Dal leader Shamim Mia in the capital's Paltan area on October 28 last year.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ragib Noor passed the order after Investigation Officer Tonmoy Kumar Biswas, a sub-inspector of Paltan Model Police Station, produced him with a 10-day remand prayer.

Earlier, Monsur was shown arrested in the case after he was detained at Dhaka airport yesterday morning as he returned home from abroad.

The arrest came even though his name was not included in the first information report of the case.

In the remand prayer, SI

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It's all fun and games until something goes wrong. As these children climb to the apex of the bridge at Crescent Lake in Chandrima Uddyan, a slight misstep could lead to a dangerous fall. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

India returns 20,000 Bangladeshi passports

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Indian High Commission in Bangladesh has returned nearly 20,000 passports of Bangladeshi visa applicants due to protests and security concerns, according to reports from Indian media.

A diplomatic source at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka said, "The passports were returned to the applicants in the last one and a half months because we had to run the visa section with a very small number of staff."

The source clarified that the inability to process visas was not a policy decision but rather a result of the majority of visa officials not attending the office because of safety issues.

Emergency cases, such as medical patients requiring urgent attention, student visas for those joining courses in India, and double-entry visas for individuals needing to apply for a third-country visa, are still being processed.

Following the protests that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, Indian visa application centres in Bangladesh have largely remained shut.

Frustrated applicants have sent multiple emails to the High Commission, with some threatening vandalism. Staff at the Indian visa application centres have faced heckling, and protests have

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