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## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Govt promises speedy probe and trial

### Vows instant arrests in incidents of mob violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid vigorous protests by different quarters demanding women's safety and the administration's accountability in handling incidents of sexual assault, the government has promised steps to speed up judicial processes in such cases.

It has also vowed increased vigilance against mob violence in the wake of concerns over a rise in incidents related to angry crowds.

The government is set to amend the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act to mandate that rape case investigations be completed within 15 days instead of 30, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said at a press briefing yesterday.

Flanked by Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury and Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam, Asif told reporters at the Secretariat that the trial duration for rape cases would also be halved, requiring completion within 90 days.

Under the existing law, rape suspects' bail is possible if the trial is not completed within 180 days, but delays in



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Dhaka University students hold a rally in front of the Raju sculpture, demanding maximum punishment for rapists. Last night's demonstration was one of many across the country against the spate of rape incidents and violence against women.

## Four girls, two women raped

STAR REPORT

Reports of rapes and other types of sexual violence against women and girls continued to come yesterday after a barrage of similar incidents were reported on International Women's Day on Saturday.

The latest rape victims included two pregnant women and four girls aged between five and 14, police said, as protests spread across the country, especially on university campuses, against violence against women and girls. Another girl was sexually assaulted.

In a shocking turn of events, two of the accused were fathers of the girls while another was a foster father. Two other accused are elderly, aged 60 and 70.

One of the pregnant women, a homemaker from Chandpur's Matlab upazila, was allegedly gang raped in South Keraniganj of Dhaka on Saturday night after he came to Sadarghat from Chandpur by launch following a quarrel with her husband.

She was admitted to the One-Stop Crisis Center of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and a case was filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Mazharul Islam, officer-in-charge of

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**Govt to amend Women and Children Repression Prevention Act to fix 15 days for completing rape case probes and 90 days for finishing trials.**

completing the trial within the 90-day period would not be grounds for granting bail under the amended law, the law adviser said.

The government has also directed law enforcement agencies to make a list of all incidents of violence against women that occurred during the tenure of the interim government. They will have to submit the list to the court. They have also been instructed to speed up the investigation of these cases, according to Asif.

"Women must be able to work at home and outdoors without any fear. Those who attempt to obstruct this with violence will be brought under the law. No leniency will be shown in this regard," he said.

The law adviser said the government planned several measures to prevent rape and violence against women. "These will soon be finalised, and necessary legal changes will be introduced."

Regarding the possible legal changes, Asif said, "Previously, if the investigating officer in a case of violence against women failed to complete the investigation within 30 days, they would be replaced. This practice will be changed. The designated investigating officer must complete the investigation within the stipulated time."

Condemning the rape of an eight-year-old girl, Asif said that rapists have no place in Bangladesh. "All those accused in the Magura incident have already been arrested. The government is working to ensure the maximum punishment for them through the legal process."

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## RAPE OF 8-YR-OLD This is the highest level of injustice: HC

STAR REPORT

The High Court yesterday expressed its outrage over the rape of an eight-year-old child in Magura, stating that the incident represented the highest level of injustice.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury made the remarks after hearing a writ petition in connection to the case.

The judges said they were at a loss for words. They emphasised the need for collective steps to prevent brutal incidents like rapes from ever happening again.

In response to the writ petition, the HC directed the police to complete the case investigation in 30 days and ordered the Magura's Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal to dispose of the case within 180 days of accepting the chargesheet.

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## 'We can't stay silent anymore'

### Students erupt in protest nationwide, demand justice for violence against women, children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women took to the streets across the country with demands for justice for rape, stricter punishment for offenders, and resignation of the home affairs adviser.

There has been a recent spate of sexual violence across the country, and the rape of an 8-year-old girl — now fighting for life — by a middle-aged man particularly incensed the nation, triggering protests that began on Saturday night.

In the capital, students of seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University marched with lit torches in the Nilkhet area around 7:00pm yesterday. They later held a candlelit vigil.

Protests rocked the DU campus throughout the day. Resident women students marched and held a rally calling for an end to sexual violence and demanding exemplary punishment for the offenders last night.

Umama Fatema, spokesperson of Students Against Discrimination, announced the

formation of the Anti-Rape Platform and said the main demands are immediate establishment of a special tribunal to expedite the trial proceedings and the punishment of the man accused of raping the 8-year-old girl from Magura.

**"As women, we suffer every single day. We are not safe, even in our own homes. The interim government must ensure our safety."**

SAMARITA NAG, a student of Rajshahi University

harassing her.

The man she accused is Mostafa Asif Arnob, a bookbinder, who has now been suspended.

Police must also be held accountable for not taking action when Arnob spread sexually abusive remarks about the victim, the teachers said.

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## Cop uses police car for robbery

### Current, former law enforcers among 5 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanjanj

Five individuals, including current and former members of the police and navy, have been arrested for allegedly committing robbery using a Bangladesh Police vehicle.

The arrests were made during a joint operation by Rab and the police on Saturday in Narayanjanj's Rugganj and Dhaka's Mirpur, said Liakat Ali, officer-in-charge of Rugganj Police Station.

The arrestees are Constable Md Rubel, currently serving at the police headquarters; dismissed constable Rajol Islam; dismissed navy member Riayul Jannat; and two civilians — Siyadat Raj and Rahmat Ali.

"The gang used an official police headquarters vehicle to rob an expatriate in Dhaka's New Market area on Saturday," the OC said.

Later, the victim and his associates, with the help of locals, intercepted the vehicle in Rugganj's Purbachal area, he added.

Upon receiving information, a team of police and Rab arrived at the scene and arrested two individuals. Three more suspects were later apprehended in Rugganj and Mirpur, according to the OC.

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## India clinch another global silverware

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Dubai

In less than nine months, India once again found themselves on the champions' podium — this time in the ICC Champions Trophy — after defeating New Zealand by four wickets in the final in Dubai yesterday. The victory also saw India become the first team to win the prestigious title three times, in 2013 and when they were named joint-champions with hosts Sri Lanka in 2002.

Despite a few hiccups, India rarely looked in trouble as they chased down the 252-run target set by New Zealand with an over to spare, backed by a passionate Indian crowd at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

In stark contrast to their 11-year drought in ICC events following their second Champions Trophy title in 2013, the

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Skipper Rohit Sharma holds aloft the trophy alongside his teammates after India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the ICC Champions Trophy final in Dubai yesterday to become the first team to win the major ICC event three times.

PHOTO: AFP

## AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE DMP appoints 500 security guards

### Experts emphasise supervision

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has appointed around 500 security personnel working in various residential areas, markets, and shopping centres across the capital as members of the "Auxiliary Police Force".

The appointments were given under Section 10 of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, 1976, by DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali.

The ordinance, under its "Constitution and Organisation of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police" section, empowers the police commissioner to appoint auxiliary officers to assist law enforcement when additional support is required.

Subsection (2)(b) of Section 10 further stipulates that auxiliary officers, upon appointment, shall have the same powers, immunities, duties, and authority as regular police officers.

The designated auxiliary members will be legally protected, similar to regular police officers.

"If anyone obstructs an auxiliary member from performing their duties or attacks them, legal action will be taken against the offender," SN Nazrul Islam, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of DMP, told The Daily Star.

The auxiliary members will be able to make arrests: they will hand over detainees to the designated police patrol team or the nearest police station, and the police will then

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# Tales of female martyrs of the July uprising

FARID UDDIN RONY

**Women played a significant role in the July uprising. In the past decade, no other movement saw such a spontaneous presence of women on the streets. From actively participating in protests to strategising and coordinating activities, women contributed at every level. They not only led and organised the student movement but also provided support in various ways—medical professionals treated the wounded, while working mothers and homemakers supplied water to protesters on the streets. A report from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in December last year mentioned 11 female martyrs. Today we are telling the stories of five of them. We will tell the stories of five more tomorrow.**

## NAFISA HOSSAIN MARWA



Nafisa Hossain Marwa was 17 years old, a Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinee studying at Sahazuddin Sarkar Higher Secondary School in Tongi. As the quota protest spread in educational institutions across the country, Nafisa and her friends created a Messenger group to discuss plans and took to the streets daily. On the streets, she was a leader.

Her father ran a small tea stall. Their family lived in a tiny one-room rented house in Tongi. Her father would leave early in the morning and return home around 10 or 11 at night. Before he came home, Nafisa would already be back, so he never knew she was out protesting. Her mother had been working in Kuwait for the past two years. Her only younger sister lived with their grandmother in Savar.

One day, her father heard from a neighbour that Nafisa had been attending protests. That night, he scolded her. Then, on July 28, 2024, Nafisa told him she was going to her uncle's house in Savar. Since the protests had already caused HSC exams to be postponed, her father did not object. He figured that her uncles would likely prevent her from joining the movement.

But even there, she stayed in touch with her friends over the phone and went out to protest daily. Her uncles forbade her, but she refused to listen.

On August 3, in the afternoon, she sent her father a selfie from a protest. Seeing the photo, he was furious and called her immediately. He scolded her:

"I sent you there to be safe, and you're out on the streets?"

On the morning of August 5, she got ready to go out again. This time, her younger uncle tried to stop her, but she was determined. She managed to slip out unnoticed and joined the long march alongside Jahangirnagar University students in Savar.

At 2:30pm, Nafisa called her father and said, "Abbu, Hasina has fled."

Her father, irritated, retorted, "What does it matter to your father if Hasina has fled? Your father is just a tea seller. If something happens to you, who will take care of you?"

Nafisa reassured him, "Nothing

else will happen, Abbu. Hasina has fled. I'm with the senior brothers and sisters from the university."

Her father ordered her to return home immediately.

But Nafisa replied, "There's no time to turn back now, Abbu. Whatever Allah has in store for me will happen."

Just minutes after her call with her father, as their group moved past the Savar Model Mosque area, the police, along with Chhatra League and Jubo League activists, launched a coordinated attack. Police fired shots to disperse the protesters. Nafisa, who was at the front of the march, was struck by a bullet. She was rushed to LabZone Hospital.

Meanwhile, her father called to check if she was on her way home. But no one answered. Moments later, his phone rang. When he picked up, a young male voice on the other end asked, "Are you related to her?"

"I'm her father."

"Come to LabZone Hospital immediately. She has been shot."

From there, she was taken to Enam Medical College Hospital. On the way, due to excessive blood loss, Nafisa succumbed to her injuries.

She was laid to rest in her ancestral home in Ishadnagar.

## NAIMA SULTANA



Naima Sultana was 16 years old, a tenth-grade science student at Milestone School. She had a passion for art, spending her free time sketching. During the early days of the quota reform movement, she drew protest posters and slogans at home.

On July 18, 2024, the day before her death, several students and civilians were killed by police gunfire in Uttara. That night, as she was designing posters and chatting with her mother, she suddenly told her mother that if she got killed, she should tell people that her daughter became a martyr. Her mother scolded her.

The family lived in a rented apartment in Sector 7, Uttara. Naima lived with her mother and two siblings, while her father, a rural physician, frequently travelled between their village and the city.

On July 19, 2024, around 4:00pm, violence erupted near Uttara Adhunik Medical College as police and Awami League affiliates clashed

with protesters. Armed members of the student and youth wings of the then ruling party, alongside some police officers, stormed nearby alleys and opened fire indiscriminately.

Naima was in her room painting protest posters with slogans like "Boycott Chhatra League" and "We Demand Quota Reform." Drawn by the commotion outside, she stepped out of the room and went to their balcony, and turned on her phone's camera to capture the events below. The police fired at her almost immediately. A bullet pierced her head, entering from one side and exiting through the other. She collapsed instantly, her brain scattering across the floor. She could utter only one word: "Ma..."

Hearing the sound, her mother and elder sister rushed to the balcony and found her lying in a pool of blood. Her mother fainted at the sight, while her sister's screams alerted neighbours and protesters below. She had died before she was taken to the hospital.

She was buried in her ancestral home in Amuakanda village, Matlab Uttar, Chandpur, on July 20.

"She was excellent in her studies and wanted to become a doctor. When her mother forbade her from joining the protests, she protested in her own way—by making artwork and sharing them on Facebook. When the internet was shut down, she called her friends and teachers to learn where the protests would be the next day so she could plan to join them," said her father.

## SUMAIYA AKTER



Sumaiya Akter was 20 years old. She lived with her mother in Chittagong Road, along with her two-and-a-half-month-old baby. The protest site was right next to their home. They could see everything from their house.

It was Saturday, July 20, 2024. The afternoon was tense. Her mother was preparing for the Asr prayer. Sumaiya had just put her baby to sleep. Suddenly, shouts, screams, and the sound of gunfire erupted from the protest site. Sumaiya turned to her mother and said, "Everyone's watching. I'll go and take a look too."

She stepped onto the balcony to see what was happening outside. Moments later, her mother heard a faint scream.

"I looked around in all directions.

When I looked forward, I saw my daughter collapsing, tilting forward. I wondered if it was just fear. I rushed to hold her. Then I saw—just like water spills when you press a tap—blood was pouring from her head. I screamed for help."

A bullet had pierced through the balcony railing and struck Sumaiya's head. Family members and neighbours carried her downstairs, but they couldn't find a vehicle to take her to the hospital. No one was willing to drive through the protest site to get to a medical facility.

Eventually, they managed to take her to a hospital in an auto-rickshaw, but she died on her way.

When the family attempted to take her body to their ancestral home in Mehendiganj, Barishal, they faced obstacles along the way. Ultimately, she was buried in Siddhirganj Pul area.

## SHAHINUR BEGUM



Shahinur Begum, 57, went out for a walk towards Kajla Bridge after offering Fajr prayers on July 22, 2024. She was accompanied by two or three other women.

Around 8:30am, she was shot in Kajla. She lay on the road for nearly an hour before her daughters came to know about it. She was first taken to a hospital in Shanir Akhra, and then to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The person who rescued her transported her on a van. She needed an immediate surgery, and her family was called from her phone.

"When I arrived, my mother was lying in the hospital. The man who brought her in must have been sent by Allah like an angel. Otherwise, she would have remained on the street for an hour with no one to help. I heard she was writhing in pain the entire time."

Doctors insisted on immediate surgery and an ICU admission, but the daughter struggled to secure an ICU bed. "I can't even describe it. Just thinking about it makes my chest feel like it's going to explode. I begged everyone for an ICU bed for my mother, but nothing worked. We only got an ICU bed three days later. She remained in Dhaka Medical College Hospital for one month and nine days. But she never spoke a single word. Only her arms and legs moved."

The daughter broke down in tears but then continued, "If we had gotten an ICU bed on the first day, maybe we could have heard her last words. My mother always prepared iftar for us during Ramadan. This year, she's gone."

Shahinur Begum lived in Shanir Akhra with her five children. Her husband was paralysed and bedridden. She ran a fish business to support her family. After her death, the family lost everything and was forced to leave the city, returning to their village in Cumilla.

## RIYA GOPE



Riya Gope was just six and a half years old. She had only recently started school and would have turned seven this year. The family lived in a top floor apartment of a five storey building in Nayamati, Narayanganj Sadar.

On July 19, 2024, Bangladesh was in turmoil. Protests erupted nationwide over the killing of students. That morning, protesters clashed repeatedly with police near the DIT area in front of Riya's home. The family watched the events unfold from their rooftop. By noon, they came downstairs for lunch. After eating, Riya went back up to play with other children.

Around midday, another wave of clashes broke out, with police using helicopters to fire tear gas and live rounds at protesters. Alarmed by the noise, Riya's father ran upstairs to bring her back inside. As he reached the rooftop, he saw the helicopter firing at the crowd below. As soon as he lifted Riya in his arms to take her inside, a bullet struck her head. She went limp instantly.

"There are no words to describe that moment. I don't want to relive it. She was our only daughter," her father, Dipak Kumar Gope, said.

Riya succumbed to her injuries on July 24, after battling for life for five days at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Her father, Dipak, worked as a manager at a local construction materials store. Her mother was a homemaker. After five years of marriage, Riya had been born, bringing immense joy to the family. "She was always cheerful and mischievous, lighting up our home. Everyone adored her," her father said.

## IAEA team visits Rooppur nuclear plant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A team of experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) started observing and monitoring the preparation work of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant yesterday before the plant starts operation.

This is a pre-visit of the IAEA experts at the country's first nuclear power plant in Pabna, said Zahedul Hasan, project director of the Rooppur plant.

The 12-member team headed by Yury Martynenko reached the project site Saturday night and began their inspection the next morning and will continue until March 13 to observe all the preparation work, officials said.

IAEA experts and project officials held a meeting yesterday.

Project Director Zahedul Hasan said that there are a series of steps that need to be taken before starting operation at the power plant.

He said, "We have almost completed necessary structural and equipment work at Unit-1. The IAEA team will monitor the entire preparation before it goes into operation."

"During their five day visit, the experts will observe and monitor the structural, technical, and equipment-related preparation and documentation. Following their reports, we will go for the next step," he added.

The construction and installation work at Unit-1 of the plant has almost been completed, but generating power from the nuclear plant is still far away, he added.

"Before starting power generation through machinery, we have to check the power transmission facility and perform other necessary tests. We need two months to finish the series of tests," the official said.

He added, "After completing the series of tests, we will go ahead with loading fuel and process the assembled fuel in the reactor building, which needs another three months."

## Four get life for gang rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A Bandarban court yesterday sentenced four men to life imprisonment for raping a teenage girl in 2021.

The convicted Md Rashed, 23, Md Kayser, 22, Omar Faruq, 18, and Md Hanif, 24, have each been fined Tk 1 lakh, in default of which they will have to serve an additional six months in jail.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Mohammad Ismail said Md Kayser, who was in police custody, has been sent to jail, while the other three convicts are absconding. "Action will be taken to apprehend them."

Judge Zebunnahar Ayesha of the Bandarban Women and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal delivered the verdict in the morning.

According to the case details, the incident occurred in a remote hilly area of Bhaggyakul in Bandarban on the night of February 2, 2021.

Hearing the victim's screams, locals rushed to the spot, rescued the girl, caught three of the rapists—Rashed, Kayser, and Omar Faruq—and handed them over to the police.

The girl later filed a rape case against them at the Bandarban Police Station.

Rashed and Omar Faruq were later released on bail.

## Govt promises speedy probe and trial

FROM PAGE 1

Regarding recent incidents of mob violence, the law adviser said the government took measures to tackle such acts of vigilantism and moral policing. Arrests have been made, and further actions are ongoing, according to him.

The advisers spoke about the procession brought out by banned outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir on Friday in the Baitul Mukarram area. The government would take a "zero tolerance" stance against such groups, they said.

"There is no way a banned organisation can conduct such political activities. Our law enforcers are alert about this," said Home Adviser Jahangir.

He also said the government was committed to ensuring law and order during Ramadan.

The law enforcement agencies set up nearly 50 search and frisk checkpoints at key places in the capital, and increased patrol teams in crime-prone areas, according to him.

A joint force comprised of the army, police, and the Border Guard Bangladesh was conducting operations in those areas while home ministry officials were tasked with monitoring the increased patrolling,

said Jahangir.

**ARREST MOBS INSTANTLY**  
Speaking at the briefing, Adviser Mahfuj said that from now on, anyone involved in whipping up mobs or creating any kind of disorder will be arrested directly from the spot, reports UNB.

He mentioned that discussions had taken place in the Chief Adviser's Office regarding incidents of violence and harassment against women in various locations.

He added, "The law is blind; it will not consider the criminal's caste, ethnicity, or gender, whether they are male or female. Whoever conducts mob justice—whether religious or non-religious—they will be brought under the law from today onwards."

He also said, "Any place where 'mob justice' incidents have occurred, we will take necessary legal actions or handle matters from our side through proper legal procedures.

"Mob justice, robberies, property seizures, and other social issues that have caused instability and anarchy in society will now be met with a zero-tolerance approach."

"Our intelligence agencies are active in monitoring any disturbances or incidents of mob justice from

the past seven to eight months. We have instructed them to take a more proactive approach in keeping everything under surveillance.

"From today onwards, we will collect all the information collectively, and any criminal will be arrested on the spot. We will not wait for one more day," the adviser added.

Mahfuj further said programmes will be organised in collaboration with the cultural affairs ministry to raise awareness against violence and harassment of women and children.

"Additionally, we are considering monitoring media coverage of issues related to law and order, mob justice, militancy, and other potential issues to ensure they are presented properly in the media," he said.

"We will sit with the media outlets to discuss how they will focus on these issues. Our ministry will try to reorganise this establishment to ensure the public gets accurate information."

The adviser added, "For the past 6-7 months, there has been a communication war against this government, both within Bangladesh and from India. From now on, we will enter into a counter-communication war."

## This is the highest level of injustice: HC

FROM PAGE 1

The HC also ordered the authorities concerned to ensure the health care, security, and welfare of the eight-year-old child and her elder sister.

The HC further directed the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, inspector general of police, and Dhaka metropolitan police commissioner to remove the name, photos, and videos of the child from all news and social media outlets in 24 hours and to take legal action against those who are responsible for circulating those in three days.

The officials concerned have been ordered to submit reports after complying with the directives to the HC by March 17, Deputy Attorney General Tamim Khan told The Daily Star.

The HC bench issued the directives following a writ petition moved by Supreme Court lawyers Hamidul Misbah and Syed Mahsib Hossain seeking necessary directives to this effect.

The third grader was visiting her elder sister's house in Magura town as her school was closed for Ramadan when she was raped there early Wednesday.

Police arrested her sister's husband, father-in-law, brother-in-law, and

mother-in-law following the incident. They were later sent to jail.

Three of them were accused in the rape case, and the father-in-law, the prime accused, was shown arrested under Section 54 as he was detained before filing the rape case.

Meanwhile, Magura police were unable to bring the arrested to court for a scheduled remand hearing due to security concerns arising from protesters blocking the court's main gate.

Md Alauddin, inspector (investigation) of Magura Sadar Police Station, said, "Investigators have submitted an application seeking a seven-day remand for the accused. The remand hearing has been postponed."

"Once the situation calms down, the accused will be taken to court under strict security," added Alauddin, also the case investigating officer.

Earlier, students took out a procession from the Magura Government Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy College campus around 11:00am, demanding the highest punishment of the rapists.

Subsequently, they reached the main gate of the Magura Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court and continued their protest.

Later, on the assurance of the army, they left around 2:30pm and blocked

the Dhaka-Khulna highway at the Bhaynar intersection.

The girl is currently undergoing treatment at the ICU of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

Citing doctors, her mother told this newspaper yesterday that the child was still in critical condition and that she has yet to regain consciousness.

"The doctors here are trying to improve her condition. They pumped water out of her lungs and gave her blood today. They have found a blockage in one of the arteries in her neck and found internal injuries to her brain. They say she might need surgery."

## Cop uses police car for robbery

FROM PAGE 1

Authorities recovered 16 bhoori (tola) of gold jewellery, seven laptops, 28 mobile phones, 53 cartons of cigarettes, a large quantity of cosmetics, cans of powdered milk, and clothing from the suspects.

Additionally, a private car, a pair of handcuffs, and a walkie-talkie were seized.

The victim, Jashim Uddin, a resident of the New Market area, filed a case with Ruggan Police Station today, the OC added.

জনসংস্কৃতিতে রেমিট্যান্স পাঠান  
প্রিয়জনকে প্রসোজনে...

যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রেমিট্যান্স গ্রহণ করলেই  
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রসোদনা

সাপ্তে আয়ও আশ্রয়ে নিশ্চিত আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



Women activists marched in a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, protesting against the recent surge of violence against women, including rape, across the country.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## CHILD MARRIAGE RATE

# Bangladesh ranks top in Asia, 8th globally

Says Unicef report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has the highest child marriage rate in Asia and ranks 8th globally, with 51.4 percent of women aged 20-24 married before they turned 18, according to a Unicef report released on International Women's Day.

The report, titled "Girl Goals: What Has Changed for Girls? Adolescent Girls' Rights Over 30 Years," was jointly published by Unicef, UN Women, and Plan International. It highlights the challenges faced by adolescent girls in Bangladesh, including child marriage, early childbirth, and gender-based violence.

The findings show a strong link between early marriage and early childbirth, with 24 percent of young women giving birth before 18, putting their health and lives at risk.

Additionally, 28 percent of adolescent girls aged 15-19 have suffered physical or sexual violence from partners in the past year.

Moreover, only 47 percent of married teenage girls have autonomy over reproductive health decisions, while Bangladesh is among seven countries with less than 2 percent of adolescent girls having digital literacy, limiting their education and job prospects.

Despite progress in healthcare, life expectancy, and education, gender inequalities continue to restrict opportunities for adolescent girls.

Girls aged 15-24 are twice as likely as boys to be out of education, employment, or training, making them more vulnerable to poverty and

exploitation, the report further said.

"Adolescent girls in Bangladesh want to contribute to a thriving nation, but barriers and discrimination continue to hold them and the country back. Access to life skills and digital literacy is crucial, but so is addressing the extremely high



### AT A GLANCE

- 51.4pc of women aged 20-24 married off before 18
- 24pc give birth before 18
- 28pc adolescent girls face partner violence
- 47pc married teen girls control their reproductive health
- Less than 2pc adolescent girls have digital literacy
- Girls (15-24) twice as likely as boys to be out of education

rates of child marriage and violence, which in turn leads to early and unsafe childbearing - often leading to the loss of both the young mother and her baby," said Rana Flowers, Unicef representative in Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

## Indo-Bangla relations may shift with govt change

Says Indian army chief

STAR REPORT

Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi has said change in government in Bangladesh may bring about a change in its relationship with India.

However, it was too early to take a call on the role of Bangladesh, he said during an interactive session at the India Today Conclave in New Delhi on Saturday.

He said there is a very good military to military relationship between Bangladesh and India.

"I am very clear, the present military to military relationship is very strong. And, we exchanging note on regular basis, to avoid any kind of a misgiving," he added.

In response to a question on the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh, he said, "As far as I am concerned, since I have said that the epicentre of terrorism is in a particular country, they have a relationship with any of my neighbouring country, I should be looking worried, because as far as I am concerned, the terrorism route can be used from

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Ensure child protection system at grassroots level

Organisations condemn surge in violence against women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Various rights, social, and other organisations, including the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Save the Children, and Hefazat-e-Islam, have strongly condemned the recent rise in rape and violence against women and children across Bangladesh.

In separate statements issued yesterday, they expressed alarm at the increasing number of such crimes and the apparent lack of accountability, which they say is worsening the situation. They called for urgent government action to ensure justice and protection for victims.

Save the Children urged authorities to expedite the trial of those responsible for the recent child rape case in Magura. The organisation highlighted that many such crimes occur within families and communities and called for a comprehensive child protection system at the grassroots level.

Shuman Sengupta, country director of Save the Children, said, "We demand justice for the child victim of this horrific crime. The government must act swiftly to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice." He also stressed the need for a shift in societal attitudes, particularly towards protecting children, especially girls.

The Manusher Jonno Foundation echoed these

**We demand justice for the child victim of this horrific crime. The government must act swiftly to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice.**

**Shuman Sengupta**  
Country director of  
Save the Children

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## NEW PARTY REGISTRATION EC issues circular tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will issue a public notice tomorrow, inviting applications for registration from new political parties ahead of the 13th National Parliamentary Election.

EC Additional Secretary KM Ali Nawaz confirmed the matter to journalists yesterday, adding that applications can be submitted until April 20.

Election Commissioner Anwarul Islam Sarkar said applications would be accepted under the existing law. However, if the Reform Commission's recommendations are implemented in the meantime, necessary measures will be taken accordingly.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

## Jamuna Rail Bridge to cost passengers extra

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With Bangladesh Railway (BR) set to fully open the newly constructed Jamuna Railway Bridge on March 18, train fares for routes using the bridge will increase from the following day.

The fare hike is due to a rise in the pontage charge, a toll levied for the construction and maintenance of a bridge.

As a result, fares will increase for over 30 trains operating between Dhaka and the western region via the 4.8km bridge.

For instance, the fare on the Dhaka-Rajshahi route will rise for a non-AC chair seat by Tk 45, an AC chair by Tk 80, an AC seat by Tk 95, and an AC

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A makeshift clothing market, which shifts locations daily across Mohammadpur in the capital, was set up at Safimullah playground near Town Hall yesterday. Operating throughout Ramadan ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the market offers a variety of garments to shoppers preparing for the festivities.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

**The Daily Star**  
**STELLAR WOMEN SEASON 2**

**CALL FOR REGISTRATIONS / NOMINATIONS**

The Stellar Women initiative aims to recognise twelve (12) extraordinary women throughout the year (From September '24 to August '25) for playing a remarkable role in their distinguished fields. Their work must have made positive contributions towards the development of society & the nation.

Inviting nominations/ registrations in the following categories:

Art & Culture	Engineering (Construction, Structure, Water Resource & MEP)	Bank & Financial Institute
(31 <sup>st</sup> March '25)	30 <sup>th</sup> April '25	(31 <sup>st</sup> May '25)

SCAN HERE TO VISIT  For Queries  
01322890097  
Register/ Nominate via:  
[www.btistellarwomen.thedailystar.net](http://www.btistellarwomen.thedailystar.net)

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## Ensure child

FROM PAGE 3  
 concerns, criticising the government's failure to protect women and children.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "Our justice system and protective measures have failed. This is utterly unacceptable."

She pointed out that sexual violence, particularly incest, often goes unreported due to stigma and misplaced notions of family honour. "If we remain silent, predators will continue to act with impunity," she warned.

MJF called for the establishment of a National Commission for Children's Affairs and urged better coordination between authorities to enforce stronger child protection measures.

The National Girl Child Advocacy Forum also condemned the culture of impunity, citing social stigma, intimidation, and pressure from offenders as key barriers to justice.

The forum President Badiul Alam Majumdar called for high quality state-sponsored medical care for the Magura rape victim, protection for her family, and swift punishment for the offenders. The forum also urged the immediate passage of the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Remedy Act.

Sada Dal, a teachers' organisation affiliated with the BNP Jamaat alliance, attributed the rise in sexual violence to social decay.

Convenor Prof Morshed Hasan Khan and other leaders urged the interim government to take stricter action.

Hefazat-e-Islam condemned the rape of an eight-year-old girl in Magura, calling the crime "worse than any cruelty seen during the age of ignorance." It demanded public punishment under Islamic law.

Hefazat-e-Islam Amir

Muhibullah Babunagari and Secretary General Maulana Sayedur Rahman blamed impunity under the previous government for the rise in such crimes and called for reforms to colonial-era laws.

The Nirapod Bangladesh Chai platform also condemned the Magura incident, warning of a deteriorating law and order situation. Spokesperson Raihan Uddin described the crime as morally reprehensible and called for immediate government and law enforcement action.

The "Amrai Pari" alliance criticised the government's leniency towards convicted rapists and murderers, noting that some have been granted bail despite rising violence. The alliance accused the authorities of using such incidents to intimidate women and restrict their freedom.

It further condemned the interim government's lack of action and urged it to take decisive steps to address the crisis.

## Indo-Bangla

FROM PAGE 3  
 that country also, which is my major concern as of today."

In a veiled reference to China and Pakistan, Dwivedi said there is a "high degree of collusivity," which must be accepted.

"What it means, as far as I am concerned, the two-front threat is a reality," he said in response to a question on proximity between China and Pakistan.

During the session, he fielded a broad range of questions about the army's preparedness for the future, lessons from ongoing conflicts, the situation in Bangladesh, and at the Line of Actual Control and the Line of Control.

## Habiganj sluice gate damage threatens crops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moubibazar

The Koyiar Dhala sluice gate and its connecting road in Ajmiriganj upazila of Habiganj remain without repairs even eight months after floods last year caused considerable damages to the structures.

As such, farmers of three upazilas of Habiganj are worried of potential flood damages to Boro paddy cultivation across thousands of hectares of croplands along the Kushiara river in the haor areas.

Severe erosion left the sluice gate and connecting road damaged after Kushiara overflowed and flooded the area along Ajmiriganj-Badalpur road on June 4 last year.

"We rely heavily on Boro cultivation for our livelihood. The cultivation is set to begin in just over a month. Without repairs to the sluice gate, our crop is at significant risk of flood damage during monsoon," said Shaddek Hosain, a local farmer.

Ashiq Mia, a farmer from Jalsukha village in Ajmiriganj, echoed him.

"If the sluice gate is not repaired within the next one month, we will face catastrophic losses, as water from the

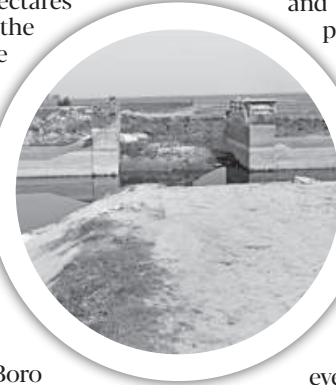
Kushiara river will inundate the area and wash away our crops," he said.

Moreover, if flood water breaches the sluice gate, croplands in Baniachong and Nabiganj upazilas will also face significant damage as the areas share the same river system.

Yusuf Ali and Sabuj Mia, farmers from Noagaon and Jalsukha villages, urged authorities concerned for urgent measures to repair the sluice gate and connecting road to prevent losses to the local farmers in the three upazilas.

The sluice gate was also previously damaged during floods in 2022, followed by poorly executed repairs, including removal of sand from riverbed instead of reinforcing the structure, which eventually led to further damages last year.

Contacted, Faridul Islam, executive engineer of Local Government Engineering Department in Habiganj, said, "I am not aware of the specifics of previous repair work, but this time the sluice gate's structures will be reinforced. The contractor has been given strict instructions in this regard and also to complete the repair work promptly."



## Robbery attempt foiled in Jhalakathi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ploipur

An attempted robbery in Jhalakathi town yesterday evening, involving the detonation of crude bombs, was foiled by locals.

Around 6:30pm, while most people were busy having iftar, a group of 3-4 masked robbers arrived in Doctor Potti, also known as Swarnokar Potti, in a pickup truck, witnesses said.

Hearing the sound of explosions, locals rushed out of their homes and shops and began pelting the robbers with pieces of bricks.

The robbers then fled the scene, they said.

## EC issues circular

FROM PAGE 3

Asked why the EC is proceeding under the current law before a decision on reforms, Anwarul Islam said party registration is a lengthy process involving scrutiny and verification. "Political parties also need time to prepare," he said.

NPP Factions Battle Over 'Mango' Symbol

A dispute between two factions of the National People's Party (NPP) over the 'mango' electoral symbol remains unresolved, despite EC hearings over the past three days.

Fariduzzaman Farhad, chairman of one faction, attended a hearing yesterday at the EC building in Agargaon, Dhaka.

He claimed the NPP, founded in 2007 and registered with the 'mango' symbol in 2008, had wrongfully lost it to former chairman Shawkat Hossain Nilu, who was later expelled.

"We applied to reclaim our symbol and filed a court petition directing the

EC to ensure justice," he told reporters.

On March 6, Sheikh Salauddin Salu, chairman of the rival faction, also attended a hearing, stating that his name remains listed as chairman on the EC's website and that he was asked to counter the other faction's claim.

The NPP, founded by ex-Jatiya Party leader Nilu, split into two factions — one aligned with the BNP-led 20-Party Alliance and the other leading the NDF coalition.

In 2014, the party expelled Fariduzzaman as secretary-general, sparking a leadership dispute. He first sought the "mango" symbol in 2015, but the EC ruled in 2016 to keep it with Nilu.

Fariduzzaman dismissed claims of his expulsion, asserting he had instead removed Nilu with party approval.

EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said a decision will be announced later.

## Eight military establishments

FROM PAGE 5  
 other military institutions and facilities under the Bangladesh Army.

A directive issued by the Ministry of Defense yesterday said that the Chief Adviser, who holds executive authority over the ministry, has approved the proposal and finalised new names for these institutions and facilities.

The eight renamed institutions and establishments are: BNS Khalid Bin Walid (previously BNS Bangabandhu) in Chattogram's New Mooring; BNS Dhaka (previously BNS Sheikh Mujib) in Dhaka's Khilkhet; BNS Pekua (previously BNS Sheikh Hasina) in Pekua, Cox's Bazar; Bir Uttam AK Khandaker Air Base (previously Bangabandhu Air Base), and Bangladesh Aeronautical Centre (previously Bangabandhu Aeronautical Centre) in Dhaka's Kurmitola; BAFA Complex (previously BAFA

Bangabandhu Complex) in the BAF Academy, Jashore; DSCSC Complex (previously Sheikh Hasina Complex) at the Defense Services Command and Staff College in Mirpur Cantonment,

Dhaka; and Defense Museum (previously Bangabandhu Memorial Museum) at the defense ministry's Ganabhaban Complex in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.

## Bangladesh ranks

FROM PAGE 3

"We need to amplify girls' voices and ensure their participation in decision-making. We urge the government to invest in adolescent health services, a strong social work workforce, education, nutrition, ensuring life skills, and digital literacy for all girls," she added.

Gitanjali Singh, UN Women representative in Bangladesh, said, "Many young girls remain out of school and vulnerable to violence and harmful practices. A collective effort is needed to protect their rights."

Despite the challenges,

Bangladesh has made progress in health, including a successful HPV vaccination campaign that covered 93 percent of eligible girls, protecting them from cervical cancer.

The report called for immediate policy changes to close gaps in education, skills development, and digital literacy. It also urged greater investment in adolescent girls and data-driven interventions to empower them economically and socially to be able to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the country's future.

## ICT extends probe deadline

FROM PAGE 5  
 investigation agency needs two more months to submit the probe report as they are getting new evidence regarding the atrocities in Uttara.

Yesterday was the deadline for submission of the probe report.

The three-member tribunal bench, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, granted the request.

The prosecution also sought permission to interrogate former assistant commissioner of DB Javed Iqbal and former Uttara East Police Station OC Muzibur Rahman.

The tribunal approved the petition, scheduling their interrogations for March 16 and 18 at safe homes.

Additionally, an arrest warrant was issued for three police officers allegedly involved in the killings at Rampura during the uprising. However,

their names were withheld for security reasons.

Nine accused, including Atiqul Islam, were brought to court around 12:15pm yesterday.

After the court proceedings, they were later taken away in a police van at 1:50pm, handcuffed and wearing helmets. As they were being taken to the police van, a police member pointing to journalists said, "Please do not talk to the accused. You people are responsible for their today's sufferings."

Generally, accused are not taken to the tribunal in handcuffs and helmets.

Asked about this, ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monwar Hossain Tamim suggested it may have been a jail authority directive to prevent them from speaking to the media.

Meanwhile, former diplomat M Maroof Zaman, who was held in secret detention for 15 months,

lodged a complaint with the ICT's chief prosecutor, accusing ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and several others. Zaman disappeared in December 2017 on his way to Dhaka airport and returned home in March 2019.

## Marriage tax

FROM PAGE 5  
 which the DSCC functions, sent a letter to the organisation's revenue department requesting that it stop collecting the marriage tax.

In this regard, Md Muniruzzaman, chief revenue officer of Dhaka South City Corporation, told The Daily Star, "We received the letter recently. We will do what the ministry says."

However, the Dhaka North City Corporation did not impose this tax on people under its jurisdiction.

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
 HIGH COURT DIVISION  
 (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
 COMPANY MATTER NO. 304 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF:  
 Dianic Prubavash Media and Publications Ltd.  
 Changed from Prubavash Media and Publications Ltd, Incorporation No.C-6197,  
 represented by its Managing Director Mohammad Hafizur Rahman Khan, Registered  
 address: House#43, Road#1 Section #13, Uttara, Dhaka-1230. — Petitioner.

—VERSUS—  
 The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, TCB Bhaban, 01, Kawran  
 Bazar, Dhaka. — Respondent.

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 81(2) and Section 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the Petitioner Company for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 has been admitted on 24.02.2025 for hearing by his Lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel. The Hon'ble Court has fixed the matter for filing an Affidavit-in-Compliance on or before 20.04.2025.

Any person interested in the said application may appear either in person or through his duly authorised Advocate. A copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of the prescribed charge.

S.M. Shakhawat Hossain  
 Advocate for the Petitioner  
 LEGAL ARENA  
 Suite#3/4, Eastern Arzoo, 61, Bijoynagar, Dhaka-1000.  
 Mobile : 0174164511.

**Notice**  
 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
 HIGH COURT DIVISION  
 (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
 Company Matter No. 147 of 2025.

In the Matter of:  
 An Application under section 81 (2) read with section 85(3) of the Companies Act, 1994.

—A n d—  
 In the matter of:  
 Md. Shariful Islam —Petitioner

—Versus—  
 Arif Agro Industries Limited and Another — Respondents.

Notice is hereby given that the Petitioner above-named filed and moved an application under section 81(2) read with section 85(3) of the Companies Act, 1994 regarding holding of the Annual general Meetings of Arif Agro Industries Limited for the year ended 30.06.2019, 30.06.2020, 30.06.2021, 30.06.2022 and 30.06.2023 whereupon the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division presided over by His Lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the matter by order dated 11.02.2025. His Lordship has ordered that the matter be posted in the cause list on 10.03.2025 under the column 'for compliance'. If anybody is interested to oppose that said application he may do so by an Advocate or in person. Copy of the application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned upon payment of prescribed fees.

Md. Ataur Rahman  
 Advocate,  
 Supreme Court of Bangladesh,  
 Room No-405, 3rd Floor, Supreme Court  
 Bar Association Annex Extension Building, Dhaka-1000.

**কমার্শিয়াল ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়**  
 ধানমন্ডি মিরপুর রোডে ২৩০০  
 ক্যারাক্টারিস্টিক কমার্শিয়াল ফ্ল্যাট ও  
 পাছপাথে ২১,০০০ ক্যারাক্টারিস্টিক  
 কমার্শিয়াল ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় হইবে।  
 ০১৭৫৭-০৬৯৫৯৪, ০১৯১২-৮১৯৩৭৮

**বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিমিটেড (বিআরপিএল)**  
 আইইবি ভবন (৯ম তলা), ৮/৭, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০  
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**গাড়ি নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল প্রসঙ্গে**

বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ এর স্মারক নং-২৭.০১.০০০০.০০৫.৫১.০০৮.২৫.৫০, তারিখঃ ২৩/০২/২০২৫ মোতাবেক ০১ (একটি) পুরাতন ও কনডেম যোষিত টয়োটা মাইক্রোবাস (অফ হোয়াইট) নিলামে বিক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে গত ২৫/০২/২০২৫ তারিখে বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ করা হয়। অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করা হলো।

মোঃ ওয়াহিদুর রহমান  
 জিএম (এইচআর ও এডমিন)  
 মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১১৯০৮০৩৭

## Jamuna Rail

FROM PAGE 3  
 berth by Tk 140, officials said.

Bangladesh Railway Director General Alzal Hossain told The Daily Star the new fare will come into force from March 19, a day after the bridge will be formally inaugurated.

On February 12, BR started operating passenger trains through the newly built Jamuna Railway Bridge on a trial basis, using one of the two lanes of the bridge.

The Jamuna Railway Bridge, which is the longest dedicated railway bridge of the country, was built under a Tk 16,781 crore project with Japanese loan. The 4.8km double-line dual gauge bridge over Jamuna River will boost rail connectivity between Dhaka and the northwestern districts.

**সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি**  
**Sonali Bank PLC.**  
 বিশ্বস্ত ও "স্মার্ট"  
 লিগ্যাল মার্টার্স ডিভিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা  
 ফোনঃ ০২-৪১০৫১৪০০ (ডিজিএম), ০২-২২৩৩৫৮৬৭৫ (এজিএম)  
 ই-মেইলঃ dgmlmd@sonalibank.com.bd

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র আইন উপদেষ্টা হিসেবে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি'তে ২ (দুই) বছরের জন্য আইন উপদেষ্টা হিসেবে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী আইনজীবীদের নিকট হতে (শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও পেশাগত অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্রসহ) নির্ধারিত ছকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

১) আবেদনকারীকে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক হতে হবে।  
 ২) আবেদনকারীকে মহামান্য বাংলাদেশ সূত্রিম কোর্ট, হাইকোর্ট ডিভিশনে ন্যূনতম ১২ (বার) বছরের মামলা পরিচালনার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে; তবে মহামান্য বাংলাদেশ সূত্রিম কোর্ট, আপিলেট ডিভিশনে মামলা পরিচালনার অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন আইনজীবীকে আধিকার দেয়া হবে।  
 ৩) প্রার্থীসহ শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা/পেশাগত অভিজ্ঞতা যাচাইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে আইন বিষয়ে উচ্চতর ডিগ্রি, বাংলাদেশ সূত্রিম কোর্ট, আপিলেট ডিভিশনে সিনিয়র আইনজীবী হিসেবে পেশাগত অভিজ্ঞতা অতিরিক্ত যোগ্যতা হিসেবে বিবেচিত হবে।  
 ৪) অকসত্রান্ত সিনিয়র জেলা জজ/জেলা জজগণ বাংলাদেশ সূত্রিম কোর্ট, হাইকোর্ট ডিভিশনে আইন পেশায় নিয়োজিত থাকলে আইন উপদেষ্টা হিসেবে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন।  
 ৫) বিদ্যমান আইন উপদেষ্টাগণ এর পুনরায় তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য আবেদন এর ক্ষেত্রে, ব্যাক কন্ট্রোল প্রণীত Key Performance Indicator (KPI) অনুযায়ী পারফরমেন্স সন্তোষজনক বিবেচিত হলে পুনরায় তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য তাঁদেরকে আধিকার দেয়া হবে।  
 ৬) আর্হাই প্রার্থীপদের ব্যাকের আইন উপদেষ্টা তালিকাভুক্তি সক্রমে সাফল্যকার কন্ট্রোল সমূহে ব্যক্তিগত সাফল্যের দিতে হবে।  
 ৭) আইন উপদেষ্টাগণকে প্রতি মাসে ৫০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা হারে রিটেনিয়ার ফি প্রদান করা হবে। এছাড়া মামলা পরিচালনা ও অন্যান্য আইনগত মতামত প্রদানের জন্য ব্যাকের অনুমোদিত হারে ফি প্রাপ্ত হবেন।  
 ৮) আইন উপদেষ্টা হিসেবে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য আর্হাই প্রার্থীপদ সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, লিগ্যাল মার্টার্স ডিভিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা হতে অথবা সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র ওয়েবসাইট (www.sonalibank.com.bd) থেকে নির্ধারিত ফরম (ফক-৯) সহায়পূর্ণক আবেদন করতে পারবেন। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে বর্ণিত তথ্যাদি/ডকুমেন্টসসমূহের সত্যায়িত কপি দাখিল করতে হবে (ক) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (খ) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (গ) পেশাগত অভিজ্ঞতা (ঘ) বাংলাদেশ বার কাউন্সিলে তালিকাভুক্তি, জেলা আইনজীবী সমিতি/সূত্রিম কোর্ট বার এসোসিয়েশনের সনদপত্র (ঙ) বাংলাদেশ সূত্রিম কোর্ট, হাইকোর্ট ডিভিশন/আপিলেট ডিভিশনে তালিকাভুক্তির সনদপত্র এর কপি ও (চ) সাম্প্রতিককালে তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের দুই কপি ছবি সংযুক্ত করে আপামি ২৫/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে সরাসরি ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, লিগ্যাল মার্টার্স ডিভিশন, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকায়ে প্রেরণ করতে হবে।  
 ৯) ব্যাক কন্ট্রোল ফি কোন আবেদনপত্র কোন কারণে প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।  
 ১০) অসম্পূর্ণ/ত্রুটিপূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল গণ্য হবে।

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
 Local Government Engineering Department  
 Office of the Upazila Engineer  
 Upazila: Daulatpur, District: Manikganj.  
 www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No.46.02.5610.000.14.010.25-164 Date:06.03.2025

**Invitation for e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-25**

e-Tender are invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works as stated below.

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Tender Last selling (Date & Time)	Last Date & Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing & Opening (Date & Time)
01.	ADP 1080923, 1080924, 1082410, 1082412, 1082413	24-03-2025 16.00 PM	25-03-2025 11.30 AM	25-03-2025 12.00 PM

These are online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

(Muhammad Taw Uddin Dewan)  
 Upazila Engineer  
 L.G.E.D, Daulatpur  
 Phone : 02-996615017  
 e-mail: [ue.daulatpur.man@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.daulatpur.man@lged.gov.bd)

**Bangladesh Krishi Bank**  
 Divisional Office  
 CDA Avenue, Sholoshohor, Chattogram-4203  
 www.krishibank.org.bd  
 Phone: 02-334452205; Email: [gmchittagong@krishibank.org.bd](mailto:gmchittagong@krishibank.org.bd)

Reference: BKB/Admin-1(Part-1)/2024-2025/2580 Date: 09-03-2025

**e-Tender Notice (OTM)**

This is to notify all concern that the following tenders have been published through National e-Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

SL	Tender ID	T. Pack	Identification of lot	Scheduled tender/ proposal publication date and time	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing and opening date and time	Tender method
1	1056800	BKB/DOC/ Civil Work/ 2024-2025	Repair, Renovation and Painting works of own 04 (Four) storied building of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Divisional Office, Chattogram	09-Mar-2025, 18:00	06-April-2025, 10:00	06-April-2025, 12:00	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-Government Procurement Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) and you can also ask help from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Ahmed Shamsul Arefin Siddiqui  
 Deputy/General Manager

# Potato farmers struggling for cold storage space

**KONGKON KARMAKAR, Dinajpur**  
Potato farmers in the country's northern districts are struggling to manage space in cold storages for storing their produce.  
The sluggish operations of the cold storages due to manpower shortage, and escalating transport costs further exacerbated the situation, leading to frustrations among farmers and traders.  
Transport costs have allegedly been hiked by double the usual rate.  
"Due to the unusual delay in cold storage operations, transporters have hiked the cost from Tk 35 to Tk 65 per sack of potatoes," said Abdur Razzak, a farmer of Chirirbandar upazila.

Himadri Limited in Joypurhat, denied allegations of favoritism towards traders.  
"Both farmers and traders use our facilities. Due to higher profits from stored potatoes in recent years, farmers are now storing both seed and consumable potatoes, increasing pressure on storage units. Despite the government's 60:40 ratio favouring farmers, nearly 80 percent of our storage capacity is currently allocated to them," he claimed.  
The storage crisis has led to massive congestion outside the facilities, most located on Dinajpur-Rangpur, Panchagarh-Rangpur and Dinajpur-Kamarpukur Bazar to Chikli Bazar has been blocked because of the tailback of potato-laden trucks.  
Local authorities have deployed police and Ansar-VDP personnel to manage the situation.  
"Encouraged by high prices last year, many farmers cultivated potatoes this year. However, the storage shortage has led to massive congestion, alongside a hike in transportation costs, while the market price of potatoes has fallen below Tk 20 per kg," said Dhiman Bhushan, upazila agriculture officer in Saidpur.  
"Farmers are facing significant financial losses for such a volatile

market condition," he added.  
Meanwhile, potato growers in Kurigram yesterday brought out a rally protesting a hike in the rent of cold storages in the district, our correspondent from Lalmonirhat reports. The rally was held in front of the Kurigram Deputy Commissioner's Office at noon, and later submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Commerce and the Department of Agricultural Marketing to reduce cold storage rent from Tk 6.75 per kg and fixing it at Tk 5 per kg.



As both farmers and traders flock to cold storage facilities following a government-imposed fee cap of Tk 6.75 per kilogramme, many farmers alleged that cold storage operators are prioritising traders over them, despite government regulations intended to ensure fair access.  
According to the Department of Agricultural Extension in Rangpur, there are 101 cold storage facilities in the division, with a total storage capacity of 1.1 million tonnes, which is insufficient against the high demand.  
Farmers reported waiting for days outside storage facilities, only to witness traders' trucks being granted entry at night.  
"I have been trying to get a storage permit for two days, but I am still waiting. Meanwhile, traders are storing thousands of sacks of potatoes every night," said Jahangir Hossain, a farmer from Kalai upazila of Joypurhat.  
Anwar Hossain, a farmer from Khetlal upazila, echoed similar frustration.  
Storage facility operators attributed the delay to overwhelming demand for storage space.  
Abdul Quddus, manager of Botalti

Gobindaganj highways, particularly in Dinajpur and Syedpur. Hundreds of potato-laden trucks remain stuck for days, causing traffic disruptions and driving up transportation costs.  
In Dinajpur, over 700 vehicles have been seen queued outside cold storage facilities recently, struggling to secure storage slots.  
The situation at three major cold storages in Saidpur is even more dire. All the facilities are struggling to store potatoes brought by farmers from neighboring Taraganj, Badarganj, Khansama, and Chirirbandar areas.  
Abdul Mannan, a resident near Ismail Seed Cold Storage, said a three-kilometre stretch from

# Marriage tax: a short-lived revenue initiative by DSCC

**DIPAN NANDY**  
The marriage tax imposed by the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) was officially repealed on January 21, 2025, after being in effect for just over a year.  
The tax, introduced on January 1, 2024, was implemented as part of DSCC's revenue collection strategy.  
**A YEAR OF TAXATION: HOW MUCH WAS COLLECTED?**  
Under this tax, DSCC charged Tk 100 for every marriage registered within its jurisdiction. By January 15, 2025, the collected revenue had reached Tk 3,23,500.  
However, on January 21, this year, the Ministry of Law ordered the suspension of the tax collection process.  
Law Adviser Asif Nazrul then said, "Tax was imposed on marriage registration. The ministry has cancelled this illogical tax."  
The tax was implemented under the Municipal Corporation (Taxation) Act of 1986, which granted DSCC the authority to impose levies on various civic matters.  
The City Corporation Ideal Tax Schedule 2016 outlined a structured taxation system for marriages – Tk 100 for the first marriage or remarriage after the spouse's death; Tk 5,000 for a second marriage while the first wife is still alive; Tk 20,000 for a third marriage with the first two wives still living; and Tk 50,000 for a fourth marriage under the same conditions.  
Additionally, DSCC would charge Tk 200 for a remarriage if the existing wife was mentally unstable or unable to bear children.  
Recently, the Local Government Division, under

# JULY UPRISING ICT extends probe deadline over deaths in Uttara

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has extended the deadline by two months for submitting the investigation report on crimes against humanity involving former DNCC mayor Atiqul Islam and others in the July uprising, which led to the deaths of 200 students and civilians in Uttara.  
ICT Chief Prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam filed a petition for the extension, stating that the

# Eight military establishments renamed

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Eight military institutions, agencies, and establishments previously named after ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her family members, or individuals associated with her government, have been renamed.  
These include three naval establishments, three air force facilities, one military institution, and one under the Ministry of Defense.  
Additionally, the Ministry of Defense has submitted a summary to the Chief Adviser of the interim government proposing to rename 16

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Adiltmari Lalmonirhat  
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No.: 46.02.5202.000.18.002.24 Date: 09.02.2025

**Corrigendum Notice for Invitation e-Tender Notice No: 04/2024-2025**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works:

Sl. No	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of Work	Last Selling Date and Time		Closing & Opening Date and Time		Tendering Methode
				Old Value	New Value	Old Value	New Value	
1	1081605	Tender/PEDP4/LMN/ADI/2024-25/W20.654	Repair and Renovation work of Adiltmari URC.	18/03/2025 Up to 15.30 PM	24/03/2025 Up to 15.30 PM	19/03/2025 Up to 15.00 PM	25/03/2025 Up to 15.00 PM	NOTM

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

(Khadaker Enamus Shalehin)  
Upazila Engineer  
LGED, Adiltmari, Lalmonirhat  
Mobile No: 01708-161646  
Email: ue.adiltmari@lged.gov.bd

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
**Bangladesh Police**  
Police Telecommunication Organization  
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbag, Dhaka.  
web: [telecom.police.gov.bd](http://telecom.police.gov.bd)

**Invitation for International Tender**

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Radio Link (DMR Trunking Tier-3) System for Rangamati & Bandarban Hill Area on Turnkey Basis in FY 2024-2025.

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs
2. Agency	Bangladesh Police
3. Procuring Entity Name	SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization
4. Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Radio Link (DMR Trunking Tier-3) System for Rangamati & Bandarban Hill Area on Turnkey Basis in FY 2024-2025.
5. Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.057.11.046.24/737/Betar
6. Date	09-03-2025

**Key Information**

7. Procurement Method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) - (International)
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**Funding Information**

8. Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB)
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**Particular Information**

9. Tender Publication date	10 March 2025
10. Tender last selling date	23 April 2025.
11. Tender closing date and time	24 April 2025 at 12:00 hrs.
12. Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	24 April 2025 at 12:30 hrs.

**Name & address of the office**

13. Name & address of the office	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Selling tender document	ASP (Procurement), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Receiving tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Opening tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.

14. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)  
19 March 2025, at 12:00 hrs. at Police Telecom Conference Room (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.

**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

15. Eligibility of Tenderer	1) Up to date Export license 2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal 3) confirming the legal capacity and financial capability 4) Original full Brochure of products of the Principal 5) Other requirements described in the tender document.
16. Brief description of goods:	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Radio Link (DMR Trunking Tier-3) System for Rangamati & Bandarban Hill Area on Turnkey Basis in FY 2024-2025.

Sl. No.	Description of Good	Price of tender document (Non-refundable)	Tender security	Completion time
1.	Radio Link (DMR Trunking Tier-3) System for Rangamati & Bandarban Hill Area on Turnkey Basis.	10,000/- (Ten Thousand) Taka.	TK-22,50,000/- or US\$-18,450.00	150 days from the Date of Opening L/C.

**Procuring Entity Details**

17. Name of official inviting tender	Shahriar Bin Saleh
18. Designation of the official inviting tender	SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
19. Address of official inviting tender	Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
20. Contact details of official inviting the tender	Phone: +880 2-8301253 FAX: +880 2-8301404, Mobile: + 88 01320-020041 e-mail: <a href="mailto:splog_telecom@police.gov.bd">splog_telecom@police.gov.bd</a>

21. The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.

**Special instructions**

22. a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.  
b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.  
c) The procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.  
d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.  
e) Evaluation will be done by Lot by Lot basis.  
f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.  
g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.  
h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.  
i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2008.

(Shahriar Bin Saleh)  
BP 7810126915  
SP (Logistics)  
Police Telecommunication Organization  
Rajarbag, Dhaka.  
Mobile: 01320020041  
E-mail: [splog\\_telecom@police.gov.bd](mailto:splog_telecom@police.gov.bd)

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক  
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)  
প্রধান কার্যালয়  
মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০  
বাংলাদেশ  
Website: [www.bb.org.bd](http://www.bb.org.bd)

**অচল ঘোষিত যানবাহন বিক্রয়ের নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

০১. প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	: বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
০২. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী	: পরিচালক
০৩. নিলামযোগ্য গাড়ীর বিবরণ (যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে)	: গাড়ীর রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-১৭-৮৭২৬ ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-১৭-৮৭২৮ ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-১৭-৮৭২৯ ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-১৭-৮৭৩০ ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-১৭-৮৭৩১ ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-২৩-১০২৩ ঢাকা মেট্রো-গ-২৩-১৫৭৮ ঢাকা মেট্রো-৫-৫১-৪৫৪৬ গাড়ীর ধরণ নিশান সানি কার নিশান সানি কার নিশান সানি কার নিশান সানি কার নিশান সানি কার মিটসুবিশি ল্যান্সার কার মিটসুবিশি ল্যান্সার কার নি. আরভান মাইক্রোবাস
০৪. নিলামের স্মারক নম্বর	: ০১/২০২৫
০৫. তারিখ	: ০৯/০৩/২০২৫
০৬. দরপত্র সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	: উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র
০৭. নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	: ০৯/০৩/২০২৫
০৮. দরপত্র জমাদানের পদ্ধতি	: নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের মধ্যে সিলবালা অবস্থায় জমা দিতে হবে।
০৯. নিলাম দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	: ২৪/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১ এর পরিচালক মহোদয়ের কক্ষ (৩০ তলা ভবনের ৭ম তলা)।
১০. দরপত্র ঘোষণার তারিখ ও সময়	: ২৪/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখ বেলা ২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১১. দরদাতা ব্যক্তি/ প্রতিষ্ঠানের যোগ্যতা	: আশ্রয়ী যে কোন ব্যক্তি সাদা কাপজে এবং প্রতিষ্ঠানের ক্ষেত্রে নিজস্ব প্যাডে পূর্ণ ঠিকানা ও টেলিফোন/ মোবাইল নম্বরসহ দাবিলকৃত প্রতিটি কাপজ পত্র পূর্ণ স্বাক্ষরসহ দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে (বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্মরত কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারী ব্যতীত)।
১২. জামানত	: প্রতিটি গাড়ীর জন্য ৬২৫,০০০.০০ (টাকা পঁচিশ হাজার মাত্র) করে পে-অর্ডার, ব্যাংক ড্রাফট (ফেরৎযোগ্য) পরিচালক, কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা বরাবরে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৩. নিলাম সংশ্লিষ্ট তথ্য/ শর্তাবলী	: ক. পে-অর্ডার/ ব্যাংক ড্রাফট ব্যতিরিক্ত ব্যক্তিগত ব্যক্তিগত পণ্য হবে। খ. অসম্পূর্ণ, ঘষামাজা ও ত্রুটিপূর্ণ দরপত্র ব্যক্তিগত পণ্য হবে। গ. সর্বোচ্চ দরদাতাকে উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের উপর সরকারী বিধি অনুযায়ী নির্ধারিত হারে ডাউট ও আয়করসহ মূল্য পরিশোধ করে গাড়ী জেলিভারী গ্রহণের পত্র প্রাপ্তির তারিখ হতে ০৭ (সাত) কর্ম দিবসের মধ্যে গাড়ী হুখে নিতে হবে। অন্যথায় জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত করা হবে।
১৪. দরপত্রের মেয়াদ	: ৯০ (নব্বই দিন)
১৫. কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরিক্ত যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/ ব্যক্তিগত/ প্রত্যাখ্যারের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

সূত্র : সিএসডি-১(ডিএস)১/১৪(২)/২০২৫-২০৪৫  
সূত্র নং ডিসিপি : ৪৮/২০২৫-৬৯১  
তারিখ : ০৯/০৩/২০২৫

(শপন কুমার গোস্বামী)  
পরিচালক  
কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১  
ফোন : ৯৫৩০১৪৮

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

# ‘Ensure our safety’ SHOWBIZ STARS SPEAK OUT

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Questions surrounding the safety and security of women in Bangladesh have long been a matter of concern. However, the recent onslaught of gender-based violence (GBV) incidents has once again highlighted the alarming rise in brutality against women and, by extension, children. Cases of sexual violence, including those against children, have left society outraged.

The recent incident of the rape of eight-year-old Asiya, being abused by her relatives, has left the entire country shocked. Some of the prominent Bangladeshi artistes have shared their deep concern over these horrifying incidents, calling for justice, stricter punishments, and a fundamental shift in societal attitudes.

**Fahmida Nabi**

“Women are being subjected to rape in various places, including the case of little Asiya. I firmly believe such heinous crimes must be punished with exemplary punishment—strict and unavoidable. The fact



Fahmida Nabi

that perpetrators often escape justice only emboldens them to commit more crimes. Our primary focus should be ensuring that criminals are punished completely.

The eight-year-old child was visiting her sister's home, yet she was not safe. Similar incidents are happening almost everywhere. Where is the safety for women and girls? Why are we so helpless? When will this end? In 2025, what will we tell the world about our progress? We demand safety for all women.”

**Mousumi Hamid**

“Can you imagine an eight-year-old child being raped? I can't even bear to log into social media nowadays—whenever I do, I come across news of murder and rape, which makes me feel ill. We talk so much about women's empowerment, yet monsters swoop in and attack women whenever they get the chance.

What causes this mentality? Where are we headed as a society? Have we deteriorated this much? Why can't we be more humane, more compassionate? If a woman isn't even

safe inside a car in the city, then where can she feel secure? This is a reflection of our society's decay.

Even children are not spared from these predators. How do we accept this? These criminals are worse than animals, and wild animals are not capable of this viciousness. I don't believe that our society was always like this! What has happened now? There has been a severe psychological degradation in people. We all want to live in a safe society. We don't want to hear ‘someone has been raped’ anymore.”

**Apu Biswas**

“A woman should be seen first and foremost as a human being—a mother, a sister, a wife. Even rapists are born to mothers—do they not have even this basic sense? The little girl Asiya is not even old enough to be considered a woman. I am at a loss for words on how to acknowledge this horror. We demand safety for all women. The incident is extremely disturbing. However, she is just one example—there are many more like her. The fact that we even have to talk about this is heartbreaking.



Deepa Khandakar

Why should such incidents happen at all? We want to see and hear about positive societal changes, not horrific tragedies.”

**Tanzika Amin**

“I recently received an award during an event on the occasion of International Women's Day, and there I mentioned that celebrating Women's Day feels pointless in a country where eight-year-old girls are raped, and where women's bodies are openly discussed and criticised. What could be more painful than this? Previously, I never heard people openly commenting on women's physical attributes. Now, it happens in the streets. Who knows when someone will physically harass us? Why has the situation deteriorated to this extent? We, as women, are terrified. When will we be free from this fear?

Those in positions of power who make big statements should take a hard look at our current situation. The degradation of morality and humanity has hit rock bottom. They need to find a solution—urgently! If we respect and uphold women's dignity, our

society and country will flourish.”

**Deepa Khandakar**

“Above all, I am a human being—only then comes my gender. What is happening to women today is unacceptable. This applies to little girl Asiya alongside all other women who have faced such horrors.

Some people say, ‘Let Asiya survive.’ I say—she is already dead. Even if she survives, she would still be branded as a victim, stripped of her innocence through no fault of her own.

Another thing—why should anyone dictate what a woman should wear? Who gave them that right? A woman can wear jeans, a tee-shirt, Western clothes, or a saree, she will wear whatever she chooses to wear. Have women ever questioned men about wearing *lungis*? Has any woman ever dictated a man's clothing choices? Then why do men feel entitled to control women's attire?

It is time to change this mindset. We need to move beyond these toxic attitudes and work towards a society where women are respected, valued, and, most importantly, safe.”



Apu Biswas



Tanzika Amin



Mousumi Hamid PHOTOS: STAR & COLLECTED

## NEWS

### Seize assets of ex-land minister Saifuzzaman

FROM PAGE 12

In the application, the commission said that a seven-member investigation team has been formed to probe the allegations of money laundering against Chowdhury, individuals and organisations connected with him.

Information on the company's shares was found from the Directorate of Joint Stock Companies and their firms. In this situation, it is necessary to pass an order for freezing the shares in question.

Attempts are being made to transfer their immovable properties, so an order is needed to prevent them from transferring the properties, the application said.

Therefore, it is necessary to attach the said immovable properties per Section 14 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2012.

In March, the court ordered the ACC to freeze 39 bank accounts of Saifuzzaman in connection with corruption allegations against him.

Also yesterday, Judge Zakir ordered the freezing of 191 bank accounts of Muhammad Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group, and his family members in connection with corruption allegations following an

ACC application.

Aziz Khan, also the brother of former Awami League lawmaker Faruk Khan, and his family members deposited Tk 41.74 crore in the accounts.

Information about savings, fixed deposit receipts and other accounts in their names was found during the investigation, the official said in the application.

There is a huge amount of money deposited in the accounts, the application said, adding that the amount is unusual and suspicious.

On October 7 last year, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit instructed banks to freeze the accounts of Aziz Khan, his brothers and other family members.

Aziz Khan's wealth stood at \$1.1 billion last year, according to Forbes.

Summit, however, dismissed reports of closure or freezing of company accounts.

“Summit's power generation, LNG terminal operations and all other businesses, payments from their customers as well as bank accounts are functioning as usual,” Mohsena Hassan, Summit's head of public relations, told The Daily Star.

However, the Khan family's

accounts have been frozen for about five months and remain frozen without any charge, the statement added.

Meanwhile, the court yesterday ordered the freezing of 42 BO (Beneficiary Owner) accounts of the former chairman of National Bank and Sikder Group founder late Zainul Haque Sikder and his family members in connection with corruption allegations after the ACC filed an application in this regard.

In addition, the court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate five properties in the UK and two properties in the Isle of Man owned by former chairman of EXIM Bank Nazrul Islam Mazumder, also chairman of Nassa Group, and his family members in connection with corruption allegations.

ACC deputy director Md Rauful Islam filed a petition before the court yesterday seeking confiscation of the properties.

On March 6, the same court ordered the confiscation of six houses and eight flats, situated at Dhaka and Purbachal, owned by them in connection with a graft case. It also ordered the seizure of 56.6 crore shares of 55 companies.

### ‘We can't stay silent anymore’

FROM PAGE 1

They also demanded identifying and bringing to justice those who bullied the student and threatened her with rape and murder.

A thorough investigation should be launched to identify and sue the men in the mob that glorified the accused and the crime he was accused of, said the teachers.

The teachers' network also denounced Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.

“For the last four months, we have been demanding the resignation of the home affairs adviser. Now, I want his dismissal... Why don't we have an accountable government?” DU teacher Tasneem Siraj Mahboob said.

Prof Geeti Ara Nasreen and Prof Samina Luthfa also addressed the rally. **PROTESTS ON OTHER CAMPUSES**

Students of Jagannath University (JNU) marched and held a rally in the evening. The protesters marched to Tantibazar intersection and kept the road blocked for almost 30 minutes. They later demonstrated in front of the gate of their campus.

Evan Tahsib, a student leader, said, “The culture of impunity surrounding sexual violence has allowed such crimes

to continue unchecked.”

Sifat Hasan Sakib, another activist, said, “Time and again, we see officers delaying rape investigations. It continues even after the mass uprising. It's a shame for our nation. We can no longer stay silent! We demand the highest punishment for rapists.”

Tania, a student of literature, said, “People often blame women's outfits. But if that were true, why do women in burqas and even innocent eight-year-old children fall victim to such heinous crimes? The real problem is the deeply rooted perversion of some men.”

Hundreds of Rajshahi University students, mostly women, kept the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway blocked for 30 minutes, declaring a boycott of classes and exams. “As women, we suffer every single day. We are not safe, even in our own homes. The interim government must ensure our safety,” said Samarita Nag.

At Jahangirnagar University, students and teachers demonstrated throughout the day. Faculty members formed a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar, demanding fair investigations and maximum punishment for rapists.

JU Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan said, “The ongoing

violence against women reflects the moral decay of society. The students are protesting rightly. We urge the government to take immediate action.”

Students of journalism boycotted classes and exams. A student-led platform, Dhorshon Birodhi Mancha, was formed.

Late at night, JU students blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway, disrupting traffic for 30 minutes.

Students of North South University, Independent University Bangladesh, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet, and Comilla Victoria Government College also held rallies.

In the early hours today, students of DU, RU, JU, and Khulna University took to the streets.

At DU, Ashrefa Khatun, spokesperson of Bangladesh Democratic Students' Council, and Umama Fatema spoke. They demanded that the home adviser, law adviser, and women and children affairs advisor be held accountable for their failure to ensure the safety of women and children.

In Magura, hundreds of students gathered at Bhaina Bus Stand, blocking the Dhaka-Khulna highway.

They also laid siege to Magura District Court.

### India clinch another global silverware

FROM PAGE 1

Men in Blue have turned their fortunes around in recent times. They ended their trophyless run in June last year by clinching the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the USA, securing a dramatic win against South Africa in the final.

India seemed to have finally acquired the winning edge needed to overcome their struggles in global tournaments, having spent over a decade falling short in the knockout stages. Their most painful setback came in the 2023 ODI World Cup, where they suffered a heartbreaking defeat to Australia in the final on home soil.

The fact that India advanced to the knockout stages in six of the last seven ICC events speaks volumes about their cricketing prowess. Now, having won two major ICC titles in such a short span, they have reaffirmed their authority on the global stage.

However, India's latest Champions Trophy triumph did not come without controversy. Having refused to travel to Pakistan, the hosts of the event, India played all their matches in Dubai. While other teams, including Pakistan, had to travel between cities and even visit the UAE for matches against India, Rohit Sharma's side enjoyed the advantage of being acclimated to Dubai's conditions.

Rohit, however, emphasised that his team's success was built on their performance throughout the tournament.

“We played some really good cricket throughout the tournament. To come out and have the result go our way is a great feeling. Very happy with how we played this game,” said Rohit, who set the tone for the chase with a match-winning 76 off 83 balls.

Meanwhile, New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner praised India's spinners and acknowledged Rohit's impact on the game while also lamenting that his team were about 25 runs short in the crucial contest.

“We lost a couple of wickets after the Powerplay. Credit to the way their spinners bowled— all four of them, world-class. We were 25 runs short, but we had a total and tried to fight,” said Santner.

“The Powerplay was the best time to bat. Rohit and [Shubman] Gill cashed in, and Rohit's innings was outstanding, putting us on the back foot,” he added.

With this loss, New Zealand have now suffered five defeats in ICC white-ball event finals since their ICC Knockout Trophy win in 2000. Meanwhile, India, after years of near misses, may have ushered in a new era of dominance on the world stage.

### Cancel passports of 10 Rab, seven police officials

FROM PAGE 12

superintendent of police Shyamal Chowdhury.

Members of the commission at a recent press conference said they found a secret detention centre inside Bogura police lines.

The commission's list contained the names of Ali Ashraf Bhuiyan, former superintendent of police in Bogura and current deputy commissioner of Barishal (south) range; Arifur Rahman Mondal, former ASP of Bogura and current a deputy inspector general in Barishal; Nur e Alam, former officer-in-charge

of Detective Branch in Bogura and current inspector of Bogura Police Hospital; and Zulhas Uddin, former sub-inspector and current OC of Armed Police Battalion-7.

The Commission's letter also included the names of two additional deputy commissioners of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of police, Ahmedul Islam and Zahidul Haque Talukder.

“The commission has evidence of their involvement with enforced disappearance, and the commission will need to interview them further,” said the letter.

### Eid train tickets go on sale

FROM PAGE 12

on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway, 43 on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway and eight on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway.

After the meeting, Fouzul Kabir said the authorities would closely monitor these locations to ensure smooth traffic flow.

Additionally, four major bus terminals—Mohakhali, Phulbaria, Sayedabad, and Gabtoli; Sadarghat Launch Terminal; and Kamalapur Railway Station, would be brought under CCTV surveillance, with actions taken based on the footage.

He said the authorities concerned have been directed to complete road repairs within 15th Ramadan.

The authority will take prompt action once it notices ticket black marketing and overcharging of fare, he added.

He said bikes and pillions both have to wear helmets while using highways. Illegal three-wheelers will not be allowed on the highways, he added.

### Implementation delay irks Yunus

FROM PAGE 12

groundwater levels to drop by 2–3 metres annually—posing a severe sustainability risk. The Meghna River Protection Master Plan aims to address this by providing an eco-friendly water supply system through the Sayedabad treatment plant.

Germany, France, Denmark, and the European Union have pledged support for the project and may increase funding if necessary. However, despite preparations beginning a decade ago, implementation has yet to start.

With the Buriganga and Shitalakkhya rivers heavily polluted and unusable, the government is prioritising the protection of the Meghna river as a key water source.

“There is great concern over the Meghna river. We must act swiftly to save it. Ensuring Bangladesh's rivers are pollution-free should be a top government priority, or we risk making the region uninhabitable,” Yunus said.

He directed the authorities to complete all administrative procedures and begin project implementation within the current fiscal year.

## Israel carries out strike on Hamas in northern Gaza

Hamas pushes for phase two of Gaza truce, stresses urgent need for aid to re-enter enclave

AFP, Gaza City

Israel carried out an air strike on Hamas members in northern Gaza yesterday, rattling an already fragile ceasefire as it prepared for fresh talks in Doha on the future of its truce with Hamas.

Hamas called for an immediate start to negotiations on the ceasefire's second phase, which it hopes will lead to a permanent end to the war.

Representatives of the Palestinian group met with mediators in Cairo over the weekend, stressing the urgent need for humanitarian aid to re-enter the besieged territory "without restrictions or conditions", according to a Hamas statement.

- ➔ Hamas's key demands for 2nd phase include a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza
- ➔ Israel wants an extension of truce's first phase until mid-April

"Hamas stresses the urgency of forcing the occupation to immediately begin second-phase negotiations under the agreed parameters," senior Hamas leader Mahmoud Mardawi told AFP, adding that this would pave the way for a permanent end to the war.

Hamas's key demands for the second phase include a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, an end to the Israeli blockade, the reconstruction of the Palestinian territory and financial support, Mardawi said. Following talks with mediators, Hamas spokesperson Abdel Latif Al-Qanoua said indicators were so far "positive".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it would send delegates to Doha today, while the Israeli media reported that the government's security cabinet was due to discuss the matter later yesterday.

Israel says that it wants an extension of the truce's first phase until mid-April.

The initial period of truce ended on March 1 after six weeks of relative calm that included the exchange of 25 living hostages and eight bodies for the release of about 1,800 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

The truce largely halted more than 15 months of fighting in Gaza, where virtually the entire population was displaced by Israel's relentless military campaign.

It also enabled the flow of vital food and medical assistance into Gaza. After Israel cut off that flow again, UN rights experts accused the government of "weaponising starvation".



A truck and ambulances transport the coffins of Hezbollah fighters and civilians killed in the recent war with Israel, during their funeral procession, along a war-devastated road in the southern Lebanese border village of Kfar Kila yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## Iran won't negotiate under US 'bullying'

Says Supreme Leader Khamenei

REUTERS, Dubai

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said later on Saturday that Iran will not be bullied into negotiations, a day after US President Donald Trump said he had sent a letter to the country's top authority urging Tehran to negotiate a nuclear deal.

In an interview with Fox Business, Trump said, "There are two ways Iran can be handled: militarily, or you make a deal" to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

At a meeting with senior Iranian officials, Khamenei said Washington's aim was to "impose their own expectations," Iranian state media reported.

"The insistence of some bullying governments on negotiations is not to resolve issues. ... Talks for them is

a pathway to have new demands, it is not only about Iran's nuclear issue. ... Iran will definitely not accept their expectations," Khamenei was quoted as saying, without directly mentioning Trump.

In response to Khamenei's comments, White House National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes reiterated almost word for word the choice of negotiations or military action that Trump said he had presented to Iran.

"We hope the Iran Regime puts its people and best interests ahead of terror," Hughes said in a statement.

While expressing openness to a deal with Tehran, Trump has reinstated a "maximum pressure" campaign that was applied during his first term as president to isolate Iran from the global economy and drive its oil exports to zero.

## Pak Taliban attack kills 4 paramilitary troops: police

AFP, Peshawar

At least four Pakistani paramilitary troops were killed when local Taliban fighters attacked a security checkpoint in a northwestern border region, a police official said yesterday.

The attack occurred in Kurram district, located on border with Afghanistan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where there has been a rise in violence in recent years. "Heavily armed militants" launched the attack yesterday morning, the official said.

"At least four security personnel were martyred, and seven others were injured," he said.

## US Secret Service shoots armed man near White House

AFP, Washington

US Secret Service agents shot an armed man near the White House during the night, an agency spokesman said early yesterday, while President Donald Trump was spending the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida.

The man had been hospitalised and his condition was "unknown," the spokesman said in a statement that did not specify whether the White House or Trump may have been the intended target.

No injuries to Secret Service agents were reported, according to the statement posted by spokesman Anthony Guglielmi on social media platform X.

The agents had been warned by local police of a "suicidal" man travelling to Washington from Indiana and around midnight found his parked vehicle near 17th and F Streets, the statement said - very near the White House. They then spotted an individual nearby who matched the description they had been given, the statement said.

## COMMUNAL CLASHES Syria leader issues plea for national unity, peace

AFP, Damascus



Syrian leader Ahmed al-Sharaa yesterday called for peace and national unity after days of clashes between security forces and loyalists of the former government that have killed more than 1,000 people, most of them Alawite civilians.

"We must preserve national unity (and) civil peace as much as possible and, God willing, we will be able to live together in this country," Sharaa said in a speech delivered from a mosque in Damascus where he spent part of his childhood. He added that as long "the mosques have taught their children morality... and fairness and justice among the people, there is no fear for Syria, God willing".

## Four girls, two women raped

FROM PAGE 1

South Keraniganj Police Station, said two young men promised her shelter and took her to an abandoned house in the Panchgaon Rishipara Nayabari area where their two other accomplices were already present.

Three of them raped her and as another one attempted to rape her, locals rescued her, hearing her screams, the OC said. They caught two of them and handed them over to the police while the two others managed to escape.

The other case against five people over the alleged rape of a seven-month pregnant woman was recorded at Madhabdi Police Station yesterday, according to the UNB.

The station's Officer-in-Charge Md Nazrul Islam said the 23-year-old victim's husband was in jail in a case, the UNB reported.

Citing the victim, Additional Superintendent of Police Md Anwar Hossain said the main suspect Iqbal

Hossain, 43, of Asmandirchar in Pachdona union, promised to help secure her husband's release by posing as a lawyer.

Later, four people allegedly drugged her, confined her to a building, and sexually assaulted her in turns from February 19 to 21, according to the police. The victim named another person, Pappu Mia, 29, as accused.

One of the accused was arrested and a drive was underway to arrest the other suspects, said OC Nazrul.

In Sherpur's Nokla upazila, police arrested a 60-year-old day labourer named Chand Mia alias Locha Mia for allegedly raping a five-year-old girl on Saturday by luring the child with a chocolate into a corn field.

The victim's father lodged a case with Nokla Police Station that evening, and the police arrested the suspect that night. The victim was sent to Sherpur General Hospital for medical tests.

The accused was produced before a court that sent him to jail yesterday, said Md Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nokla Police Station.

Another elderly man, Abad Ullah, 70, was arrested in Belghar Uttar Union of Cumilla's Lalmai upazila for allegedly raping a 7-year-old girl several times over a span of 10 days before her mother learnt about the incidents.

Villagers held an arbitration and fined the accused Tk 50,000, but a team of army and police raided the venue of the arbitration and arrested the accused.

Shah Alam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Lalmai Police Station, said the accused was sent to jail through the court yesterday after the victim's mother filed a rape case on Saturday.

At West Hajipara in Dhaka's Rampura, a 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her own father, a rickshawpuller. He was sent to jail yesterday, said Aatur Rahman,

officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station.

Police filed a case on the victim's victim as her mother died last month. She was sent to DMCH's One-Stop-Crisis Centre for medical attention.

In Chattogram, police arrested a 52-year-old security guard was held on charges of raping his 10-year-old daughter after she called the law enforcers through the 999 helpline.

Abdul Karim, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said the culprit had previously raped the victim in the Baluar Dighirpar area. She recorded the incident with a mobile phone and called the police following the advice of her mother, a garment factory worker.

A case will be filed in this connection, the OC said, adding that the girl was sent to Chattogram Medical College Hospital's One Stop Crisis Centre.

In Narayanganj's Bandar upazila, police arrested the foster father

of a 14-year-old madrasa student for allegedly undressing her and recording her nude video on his mobile phone when she was asleep in the early hours of February 28. The same night, he also allegedly harassed her sexually.

The following day, the accused showed the girl the video and threatened her so that she would not reveal the matter to anyone. However, the girl told her foster mother everything upon her return from work on March 2, said Tariqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bandar Police Station.

The foster mother refrained from pursuing legal action at first, but enraged locals assaulted the accused, and handed him over to the police on Saturday night after the girl told a neighbour about the incident, OC Tariqul added.

The accused was sent to jail through the court yesterday after the foster mother filed a case under

the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act and the Pornography Control Act.

In Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, the teacher of a government primary school, arrested on charges of attempting to rape a 12-year-old fifth grader in the institution, was beaten by an angry crowd at the court premises yesterday.

Witnesses said that a group of enraged people attacked the teacher and punched him as soon as he was brought to the court compound.

Police then beefed up security in the area. Later, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Md Shariful Islam ordered to send him to jail, said Court Police's Inspector Md Belal Hossain.

[Our correspondents in Sherpur, Narayanganj and Thakurgaon contributed to this report]

## DMP appoints 500 security guards

FROM PAGE 1

investigate the complaint, and after a preliminary inquiry, lawful action will be taken based on the findings.

Asked about the selection process, Nazrul said the DMP has identified malls and markets that already have private security guards.

"We appointed the team leaders of these security guards as auxiliary force members," he said.

In residential areas, the DMP focused on localities and alleys where security guards lock the gates after a specific time. "We have chosen these guards as members of the auxiliary police force."

When asked whether the auxiliary officers would receive training, Nazrul said the initiative is temporary.

"We will not provide any training. They will only wear a band labelled 'Auxiliary Police Force' on their arms."

Addressing concerns of misuse of power, Nazrul assured that strict monitoring mechanisms are in place.

"Our patrol teams and local police stations will supervise the activities of auxiliary members round the clock. If any member is found abusing their authority, their appointment will be terminated immediately."

Nazrul said the move aims to bring a large number of security guards working in malls and residential areas under greater accountability.

"We want to boost their confidence as they act as associates of the police in ensuring security. Once their work receives legal protection, petty crimes in alleys and marketplaces are expected to decrease, enhancing overall security," he said.

Earlier on Saturday, DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali said that the initiative was introduced to enhance security during Ramadan and Eid shopping, as many shopping centres will remain open late into the night.

Experts have welcomed the move but emphasised the importance of supervision, background verification, and training to ensure its effectiveness.

Many private security organisations employ retired armed forces personnel and former police officers, according to Nurul Huda, a former inspector general of police.

"A significant number of these individuals have experience in firearm handling and minor investigations. This makes them a ready force, whereas recruiting and training new personnel properly would take at least six to nine months."

Supervision is essential to ensure that those appointed are properly vetted, Huda said.

Verification must be done to confirm their background, and if there are any training gaps, they can be addressed in seven to ten days.

He acknowledged that there is added pressure due to Ramadan as security duties increase during this time.

"Shopping malls remain open late and ensuring security with standard eight-hour shifts requires three shifts per day to meet international standards."

Besides, many key police positions in the DMP are now occupied by newly appointed officers.

"Handling law enforcement in a metropolitan city like Dhaka requires extensive local knowledge and a well-

established information network, which some new officials may still be developing," he said.

He remains optimistic about this initiative.

"Rather than dismissing this as a failure, it should be seen as an experiment. If it proves effective, it could be a model for future security arrangements."

## China army vows to tighten its 'noose' around Taiwan

AFP, Beijing

China's military yesterday vowed to tighten its "noose" around Taiwan if separatism on the island escalated, warning independence proponents to step back from the "precipice".

Beijing considers the self-ruled island of Taiwan to be part of its territory and has not ruled out using military force to claim it.

China has increased pressure on Taiwan's authorities in recent years with military drills and frequent dispatches of fighter jets and naval vessels around the island.

"The more rampant 'Taiwan independence' separatists become, the tighter the noose around their necks and the sharper the sword hanging over their heads will be," army spokesman Wu Qian said in an interview published by state broadcaster CCTV.

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## A questionable move by DMP

### Giving security guards police power raises concerns

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police's (DMP) decision to empower private security personnel with the power to detain individuals suspected of crimes has raised concerns. While its objective—to bolster security during Ramadan and Eid—seems reasonable, the delegation of such powers to untrained private guards risks creating more problems than it solves. Under this initiative, as revealed by the DMP commissioner recently, guards deployed in shopping malls, residential areas, and markets—potential crime hotspots during festival/holiday seasons—will serve as members of an “auxiliary police force,” wearing official bands and having the power to make arrests if necessary. The process of appointing 500 such police assistants is said to be underway at present.

The question here is not about the legality of the move—which is being taken under the DMP Ordinance, 1976—but rather its security and accountability risks. First of all, the move blurs the line between trained law enforcement officers and private security guards, whose primary role is to monitor and report incidents, not to enforce the law. Unlike police officers, private guards do not undergo the same rigorous training, ethical scrutiny or legal oversight. Granting them the authority to arrest people without proper training invites the possibility of abuse. The question is: how will the DMP prevent this scenario, especially when those will be unaccompanied by police?

The DMP commissioner has stated that auxiliary officers will be “legally protected” like police officers, but does that mean they will also be held to the same accountability standards? If an auxiliary officer makes an unjust arrest or uses excessive force, will they face the same consequences as a regular officer? There's a potential legal grey area that could lead to chaos and further insecurity. We must say that this decision reflects poorly on the DMP's capacity to do its job. The commissioner has cited the limited number of police personnel and the need to grant officers leave for Eid as justifications for the move. While we acknowledge the resource constraints amid increasing street crimes, the answer is not to outsource policing, however temporarily, to private security personnel.

The DMP should be credited for boosting security measures in the capital in recent days. According to its media wing, 667 patrol teams have been deployed and 71 checkpoints have been set up to tackle crimes. While this has likely stretched the force thin, the decision to delegate police powers to private guards is as troubling as the Awami League government's move to grant similar powers to Ansar shortly before the 2024 election. Instead of hastily delegating arrest powers, what the DMP should do is focus on strengthening its own capacity.

## Arresting rapists is not enough

### More must be done to prevent violence against women and children

Everything that is wrong with our society's approach to women is reflected in the recent rape of an eight-year-old in Magura. As revealed by reports, the alleged perpetrators and abettors of this abominable crime are the child's relatives—her sister-in-laws. They not only tried to cover it up by denying the victim immediate medical attention, but the sister was also physically assaulted by her husband to prevent her from speaking out. Even the sister's mother-in-law tried to mislead doctors about the child's injuries after taking her to hospital. Meanwhile, the sister herself previously faced sexual violence threats from the alleged rapist—she had returned to her parents' home in fear of being attacked only to be sent back to her in-laws, this time with her younger sister. Every aspect of this crime or its subsequent reeks of the toxic patriarchy entrenched in our society.

Even on International Women's Day, as protests swept across the country demanding punishment for the perpetrators of the above case, five more rape allegations involving girls aged between 4 and 10 emerged from four districts. It is deeply alarming and shameful that not a single day passes without the fear that a girl/woman, regardless of how young or old, will fall victim to sexual and physical violence in this country. According to the Human Rights Support Society, at least 6,305 women and girls were raped in the past five years—an average of more than three rapes per day. A separate analysis by this newspaper, based on Ain o Salish Kendra's data, found that one woman is raped every nine hours, and three out of every five victims of sexual violence are children or adolescents. Even the most recent Violence Against Women Survey Bangladesh 2024 has revealed that adolescent girls are more vulnerable to both intimate and non-intimate partner violence than older age groups.

Against this backdrop, simply arresting perpetrators is not enough—they must be punished, too. As per a report by this daily, convictions occurred in only 1.48 percent of the 20,914 violence against women and children cases filed through 14 One-Stop Crisis Centres between 2001 and July 2024. Clearly, without overhauling the judicial process, perpetrators will continue to commit crimes with impunity. Moreover, there must be robust education and awareness programmes to teach boys and men about respect and proper behaviour towards women. The government's initiative to set up 130 camps across the country to ensure women's and children's safety sounds promising, but it must not become just another underutilised programme like the helplines. It must deliver results.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Mukti Songram Somonnoy Committee formed

On this day in 1971, leftist forces in exile formed the Bangladesh Jatiyo Mukti Songram Somonnoy Committee (Bangladesh National Freedom Struggle Organising Committee) in West Bengal, India. Meetings were held at army headquarters in Rawalpindi in West Pakistan to apparently figure out how to tackle the Non-Cooperation Movement that was taking place in then East Pakistan.

# What the Democracy Index tells us about Bangladesh



Selim Jahan  
is former director of the Human Development  
Report Office under the United Nations  
Development Programme (UNDP) and lead  
author of the Human Development Report.

SELIM JAHAN

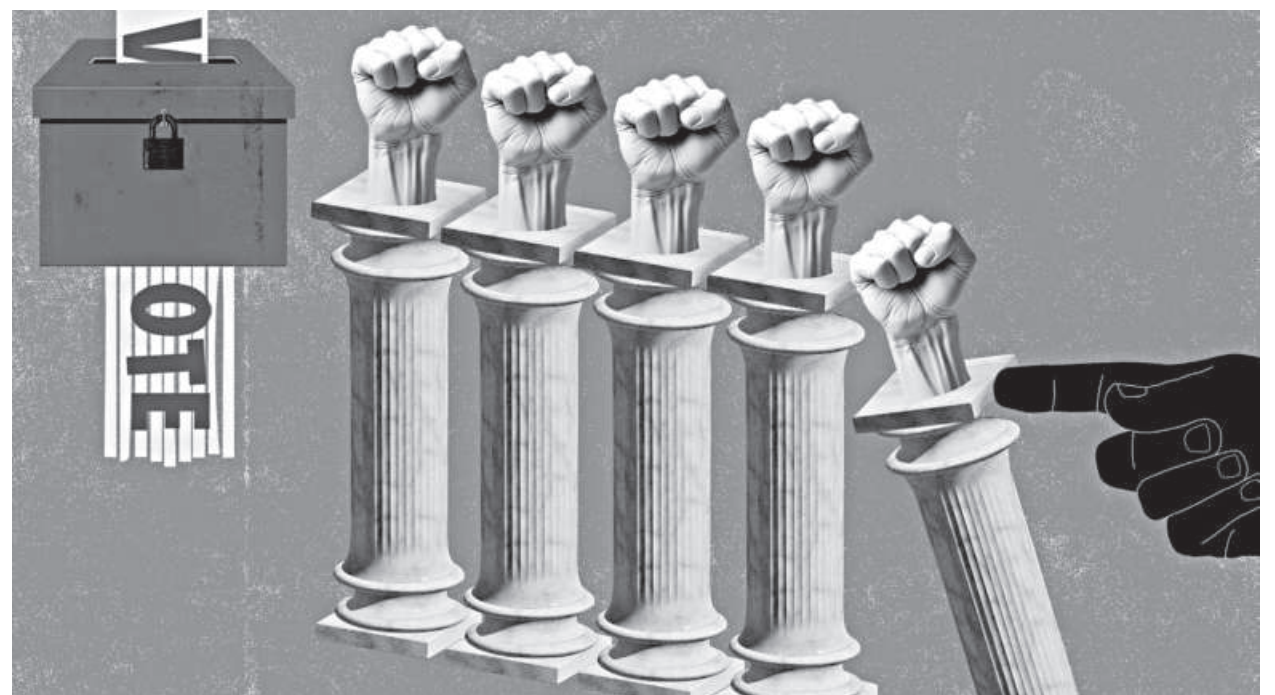
The Democracy Index by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) is out. Out of 167 countries—165 countries and two territories included in the index—Bangladesh now ranks 100th, closer to the lower end of the classification. Bangladesh's ranking has also seen the steepest decline globally. The country lags behind India (41st) but is well ahead of Pakistan (124th). In fact, Bangladesh shares the 100th position in the Democracy Index with Benin, one of the poorest countries in Africa. Assessing the overall results of the index, it seems that the world's democracies are struggling.

This year, Norway tops the Democracy Index ranking. Nine of the top 10 countries in the ranking are in Europe, with New Zealand, placed second, being the only exception. Among the worst performers in the ranking are Pakistan, South Korea, Kuwait, Georgia, Qatar, Romania, and Guinea-Bissau. Bangladesh, which ranked 73rd in 2023, dropped to 75th in 2024 and slid down to 100th this year. One insightful exercise would be to compare the Democracy Index of these countries with their Human Development Index (HDI), which is a composite index of people's physical well-being in terms of longevity, knowledge, and standard of living. Even though countries like South Korea, Qatar, Kuwait, and Georgia belong to the very high human development category—implying that they have ensured the physical well-being of their people—their low rankings in the Democracy Index indicate that the voice and autonomy of their people are restricted.

Democracy is not a perfect political system, but it is the best we have. Democracy is intrinsically valuable, like human rights, and given that, it is a moot question to ask whether democracy fosters economic growth. If it facilitates economic growth, well and good. But even if it does not, it is invaluable for its own sake. Democracy has been found to solidify human rights, provide people with voice and autonomy, and facilitate equity. History tells us that famines have never

occurred in countries where democracy prevails. The struggle for democracy embodies the spirit of democracy.

Given this broader context, a relevant question is: how critical is the Democracy Index? Should we take it too seriously or should we take it with a grain of salt? Is the Democracy Index a true measure of democracy or is it a statistical gimmick? Regarding the first issue, yes, we should take note of it as it serves as an indication—



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

however imperfect—of the democratic environment of a society. Furthermore, by ranking countries, the Democracy Index encourages healthy competition among nations. At the same time, however, we should take it with a grain of salt, as it has many nuances. Regarding the second issue, it is part of a contemporary, thriving index business that is mushrooming globally. It may not always represent what it claims to measure. In a strict sense, it is not a definitive measure of democracy.

A concept is always broader than its measures. Any measure, however

a grain of salt.

Based on this index, countries have been categorised into four groups: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes. Bangladesh has never been in the “full democracy” category. In 2006, it was in the “flawed democracy” category. Between 2008 and 2024, the country moved to the “hybrid regime” category. A hybrid regime is defined as a system where free and fair elections are often obstructed. In this regime, the ruling party puts opposition parties under pressure, and the judiciary is

and democracy in Bangladesh are government functioning and citizens' freedom. Since Bangladesh is undergoing a series of reform processes, these issues should be prominent in those reforms.

In the context of Bangladesh, the EIU report concluded that, on the one hand, the interim government is under pressure to hold the national election quickly, but on the other, it is prioritising reforms to restore democratic institutions. This tension could delay the most anticipated election in Bangladesh.

# Let's aim for a future built on equality, inclusion



Runa Khan  
is founder and executive director of Friendship.

RUNA KHAN

Envision a world where equality is not a hope but a reality, where every individual, regardless of gender, has the freedom and opportunity to shape their future. A world where leadership is defined by vision, not bias, and where inclusivity is the foundation for progress. Imagine!

Leadership is not a privilege bestowed upon a select few; it is a responsibility, a force that shapes the course of history. And yet, for centuries, half of humanity—women—have been systematically denied their rightful place at decision-making tables. If we are to build a future that is sustainable, where prosperity is shared, and development is a right and not a luxury, we must confront this imbalance with urgency.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) speak of equality, justice, and a world where no one is left behind. But how can we claim progress when women remain underrepresented in leadership across sectors—political, corporate, and social? The percentage of women in legislatures globally was just over 27 percent in 2024, while just 6.6 percent of CEO positions in Fortune 500 companies are occupied by women. Even in countries that pride themselves on progressiveness, representation remains dismal. The United States, despite its global

influence, has never had a female president.

It is not a question of whether women are capable. They are. Yet, systems are not designed to include them. Women receive much less mentorship than men in professional settings. Women have been told, generation after generation, to wait, to prove themselves, to work harder. And even when they do, the doors remain closed. The issue is not the lack of talent; it is the lack of access.

History has repeatedly demonstrated that women are not just participants in change—they are its drivers. In Bangladesh, during the July uprising, women fought alongside men. In times of crisis, in movements for justice, and in community-building, women lead. But when the dust settles, they are pushed back to the margins. The same world that benefits from their strength refuses to acknowledge their leadership.

This contradiction is global. We are told to be patient, to celebrate token inclusions, to be satisfied with incremental progress. But progress is not real until leadership by women is expected instead of being considered an anomaly.

Our understanding of leadership, strength, and power itself needs to evolve. For too long have these concepts been framed through a predominantly male lens, rooted in

dominance, control, and hierarchical authority. True leadership, however, must be redefined beyond these narrow constructs. Strength is not about exerting power over others; it is about resilience, collaboration, and the ability to nurture and uplift. As Vandana Shiva and other thinkers have argued, the dominant global paradigms often impose external values on women, rather than recognising and amplifying the strength inherent in their own cultures, traditions, and ways of knowing. We need to move away from seeing leadership as a contest of supremacy, and instead embrace a more holistic, inclusive, and humane vision of power.

Girls from the most unaddressed communities, from the chars of the Brahmaputra, once lacking even basic services, are now leading and representing their people on global platforms. This transformation—from survival to ambition—has taken over two decades of our role in nurturing their leadership within communities. Their success proves that true empowerment lies in confidence, dignity, and the ability to change mindsets. Friendship has supported young women in accessing higher education, amplifying their voices in global climate forums and policymaking. These women are not just beneficiaries of change; they are its architects, shaping policies and proving that leadership flourishes when women are given the chance to rise.

However, empowerment must also be about enabling women to lead on their own terms, not forcing them into predefined roles dictated by external perspectives. Real empowerment means allowing women to build leadership based on their own belief systems, cultural identities, and lived experiences. It is not about making

them fit into an existing mould, but about giving them the tools and space to create their own.

Some argue that leadership should be about competence, not gender. And I agree. But the reality is, women are not given the same opportunities to become competent in the first place. Leadership is not just about raw talent; it is also about training, mentorship, networks, and experience. And for generations, women have been systematically excluded from these channels of growth. We do not seek special treatment; we seek the same opportunities that men have always had.

To balance eons of imbalance, we still need quotas, reserved seats, and deliberate interventions. The goal is not to keep these interventions forever, as we see that companies with at least 30 percent women in leadership roles are on average 15 percent more profitable. The goal is to create a world where they are no longer needed. When we fail to include women in leadership, the world loses more than just numbers. It loses vision, perspective, and a different way of thinking. Studies have shown that women in leadership prioritise long-term stability over short-term wins, and that they are more collaborative, more inclusive in decision-making.

This is not about replacing men; it is about completing the circle of requirements, especially in leadership. We cannot continue with a world where decisions are made by only one half of humanity. Structural change is needed, with more investment in women's leadership, mentorship, and access to power. Young girls must grow up seeing women in leadership as a norm, not an exception. Because leadership does not happen by accident; it happens by preparation.

# Hasina's regime and the systematic use of enforced disappearance



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CAF DOWLAH

Enforced disappearance, the clandestine abduction or detention of individuals by state agents or their affiliates, stands among the most egregious violations of human rights and constitutes a crime against humanity. Under international law, crimes against humanity encompass systematic attacks against civilian populations, including murder, torture, and enforced disappearances. Unlike war crimes, these atrocities are not confined to periods of armed conflict and can be perpetrated even in times of peace.

It is now irrefutably evident that Sheikh Hasina's despotic regime (2009-2024) systematically weaponised enforced disappearance as a ruthless tool of political repression. Over the course of her 15 and a half-year rule, thousands of opposition activists, dissidents, and government critics were forcibly taken, leaving their families in perpetual anguish and uncertainty regarding their fate. The sheer brutality of these crimes not only inflicted profound sufferings upon the victims and their families, but also undermined the legal and constitutional bedrock of Bangladesh's already fragile

Transnational Crimes (CTTC) unit of police—abducted political dissidents, confined them in undisclosed detention facilities, and subjected them to torture, often spanning months or even years.

International human rights bodies, including Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, have corroborated these harrowing accounts. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has persistently called upon the Hasina regime to cease these egregious violations.

The US, in December 2021, imposed targeted sanctions on Rab and seven of its senior officials for their involvement in grave human rights violations. The sanctions cited over 600 enforced disappearances since 2009 and nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018, underscoring the alarming extent of government-sponsored repression.

The crisis of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh transcends the realm of political oppression; it constitutes an unequivocal legal and moral indictment of the state's abject failure to uphold the most fundamental

command structure, with responsibilities carefully distributed among multiple security agencies. One agency carried out abductions, another detained the victims, and a third was tasked with either executing or releasing them.

2) Sheikh Hasina was personally involved in sanctioning enforced disappearances. In one documented

7) Those who survived their ordeal were often implicated in false legal cases, entrapping them in prolonged legal battles designed to perpetuate their suffering and cripple them socially and financially.

8) High-level coordination occurred between Bangladeshi and Indian security forces in orchestrating disappearances.

(Section 362) and unlawful confinement (Section 340), and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 and the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013 explicitly prohibit torture and illegal detention, these legal provisions have proven to be largely ineffectual due to judicial inertia, systemic political interference, and a culture of impunity.

a robust framework aligned with the ICPPED. The framework requires:

1) Crafting laws explicitly defining and penalising enforced disappearances, and holding superior officers and public officials accountable for ordering, authorising or failing to prevent such crimes.

2) Maintaining official detainee records, disclosing detention locations, ensuring legal representation and family access, and permitting independent facility monitoring.

3) Guaranteeing truth, justice, and full reparations, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and non-recurrence safeguards.

4) Conducting thorough investigations, prosecuting offenders, and implementing systemic reforms to prevent future violations.

5) Facilitating cross-border investigations, extraditions, and prosecutions to ensure that perpetrators find no safe haven.

## The path forward

To bring the perpetrators of enforced disappearance to justice, the first and most urgent step for Bangladesh is to immediately criminalise it under domestic law, fully aligning with the provisions of the ICPPED.

Second, justice demands that all those complicit—ranging from the highest political figures to security personnel, and those who facilitated these crimes—be held to account. The security agencies involved—the primary instruments of repression—must either be dismantled entirely or subjected to a thorough purge, ensuring the removal of all individuals implicated in these grave human rights violations.

Third, the destruction and tampering of evidence related to these heinous crimes must be halted immediately. It must be recognised that the torture centres constitute crime scenes, and any interference with evidence—whether through alteration, destruction, concealment or fabrication—is a criminal act. Such actions obstruct justice, distort investigations, and shield perpetrators from accountability.

Fourth, Bangladesh must establish a special tribunal dedicated to prosecuting those responsible for enforced disappearances, drawing upon international precedents, such as Argentina's prosecution of military officials involved in enforced disappearances during the Dirty War (1976-1983).

Finally, the horrors perpetrated under Sheikh Hasina's regime cannot be erased from historical memory. The truth has emerged, and with it the moral and legal imperative to deliver justice. A powerful example must be set so that it becomes inconceivable for any future government to wield terror as an instrument of governance. Those silenced by enforced disappearance can no longer speak; it is the duty of the living to demand justice in their name.



A victim of enforced disappearance narrates his ordeal to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at a detention centre in Uttara, Dhaka on February 12, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

**A fundamental flaw in Bangladesh's legal framework is that while the Penal Code criminalises abduction and unlawful confinement, it does not explicitly address enforced disappearance, a distinct crime characterised by the involvement of state apparatuses and the deliberate concealment of the victim's fate. Furthermore, legal provisions requiring government approval to prosecute public officials create a near-insurmountable legal barrier, effectively shielding perpetrators from accountability.**

democracy. Alarming, Bangladesh remains devoid of a legal framework to prosecute perpetrators of enforced disappearances, dismantle the entrenched culture of impunity, or implement the necessary legal and institutional reforms to ensure justice.

## The magnitude of the crisis

Over the years, human rights organisations such as Odhikar and Mayer Dak have meticulously chronicled the staggering scale of enforced disappearances under the Hasina regime. Their exhaustive reports provide compelling evidence of how the country's security apparatuses—including the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the Detective Branch (DB) of police, the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), and the Counter-Terrorism and

rights to life, liberty, and protection from government-sanctioned persecution.

## Shocking revelations by the inquiry commission

In August 2024, the interim government established the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances to investigate the grave human rights violations committed under the Hasina regime. Chaired by a High Court judge, the commission released its interim report in December last year, documenting over 3,500 cases. Among the 758 cases examined in detail, 204 victims (27 percent) remained unaccounted for. The report revealed the horrific nature of these atrocities as follows:

1) The crimes were systematically executed under a centralised

case, a returned victim was explicitly informed that Hasina had granted him a "second chance," conditional upon his permanent withdrawal from politics, exile from Bangladesh, and return only with government approval.

3) A key tactic in enforced disappearances was the use of covert abductions without witnesses, made possible through the extensive use of state surveillance networks that tracked political opponents and dissenters.

4) Victims were held anywhere from days to several months or even years. Some were placed among legal detainees, while others were confined to Aynaghar, secret detention centres. There were several Aynaghar centres across the country, many of which were later dismantled.

5) Torture methods were barbaric. One victim's lips were sewn shut without anaesthesia. Another was subjected to electrocution on his ears and genitals, reflecting a methodical approach to psychological and physical torment.

6) In instances of extrajudicial executions, perpetrators deliberately endeavoured to erase the identities of the victims by discarding bodies into rivers or abandoning corpses on railway tracks to be gruesomely disfigured by passing trains.

Notable cases included the abduction of Sukharanjan Bali from the Supreme Court premises in Bangladesh, the transfer of BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed to the Indian authorities, and the interrogation of Hummam Quader Chowdhury by Hindi-speaking operatives.

The findings of the commission provide irrefutable evidence that enforced disappearances were not isolated incidents, but rather a deliberate and calculated government policy. These crimes were carried out with systematic precision, alleged foreign complicity, and a clear objective to eliminate political opposition and silence dissent under the guise of national security.

## Failures of the legal system

Despite constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights—including the right to life (Article 32), protection from arbitrary detention (Article 33), and safeguards against torture (Article 35)—the judiciary in Bangladesh has persistently failed to uphold these protections. Habeas Corpus petitions filed by victims' families were routinely dismissed, with courts deferentially accepting the government's narrative rather than exercising their constitutional duty to safeguard individual liberties.

Although the Bangladesh Penal Code, 1860 criminalises abduction

A fundamental flaw in Bangladesh's legal framework is that while the Penal Code criminalises abduction and unlawful confinement, it does not explicitly address enforced disappearance, a distinct crime characterised by the involvement of state apparatuses and the deliberate concealment of the victim's fate. Furthermore, legal provisions requiring government approval to prosecute public officials create a near-insurmountable legal barrier, effectively shielding perpetrators from accountability.

## International legal frameworks

Enforced disappearances constitutes a flagrant violation of multiple provisions under international law. Such acts are explicitly prohibited under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT), and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED).

With the ratification of the ICPPED in August last year, Bangladesh is now legally bound to address enforced disappearances through comprehensive domestic legislation. This requires immediate legal and judicial reforms to dismantle entrenched impunity and establish

# Fusion energy: The holy grail of clean power



Dr Quamrul Haider is professor emeritus at Fordham University in New York, US. He is one of the authors of the book 'Nuclear Fusion: One Noble Goal and a Variety of Scientific and Technological Challenges' (Intech Open, London, UK, 2019).

QUAMRUL HAIDER

In light of the escalating challenges associated with climate change, the pursuit of a sustainable, renewable, clean, and plentiful source of energy has reached unprecedented importance. Accordingly, physicists have been investigating the energy released during nuclear fusion reactions, but the challenge of converting it into a viable source of energy has proven to be persistently difficult.

However, the question persists regarding the potential of nuclear fusion to become a primary source of energy for our increasingly power-dependent world. If this possibility is indeed attainable, will it be achieved in time to prevent the catastrophic consequences of climate change?

Nuclear fusion replicates the mechanism that fuels the stars, presenting the prospect of a clean and nearly unlimited supply of energy. In contrast to fossil fuels, fusion does not emit greenhouse gases (GHGs). The fusion reaction, which involves the combination of light atomic nuclei—specifically, isotopes of hydrogen such as deuterium and tritium—offers the promise of generating energy with minimal carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions while avoiding the hazardous, long-lasting radioactive waste linked to current nuclear fission reactors that split heavy radioactive nuclei, uranium-235 or plutonium-239.

The Earth possesses virtually inexhaustible reserves of the raw materials—deuterium and tritium—essential for a fusion reactor. Deuterium is abundantly available in ocean water, with sufficient quantities to feed a reactor for billions of years, but naturally occurring tritium is exceedingly scarce. Nevertheless, it can be generated in a reactor through the neutron activation of lithium, which can be sourced from brines, minerals, and clays.

Despite notable advancements, many challenges remain in the development of a commercially viable fusion reactor. The major ones are: i) reaching the temperature (exceeding 100 million degrees Celsius) necessary to initiate a self-sustaining fusion reaction; ii) containing the extreme heat produced in the plasma, an ultra-hot mixture of gases where electrons are entirely separated from their atomic nuclei; and iii) maintaining the plasma at this superhot temperature for a sufficient duration so that the energy produced surpasses the input energy needed to sustain the process.

The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), a collaborative project involving 35 nations and currently under construction in Cadarache, France, represents the world's largest fusion reactor.

Once operational, it is expected to achieve continuous energy output at a power plant scale, approximately 500 megawatts. However, since its establishment in 2006, the ITER has experienced uneven progress, facing numerous technical setbacks, a complex decision-making framework, and a significant increase in cost projections, which have escalated from five billion euros to nearly 20 billion euros. Additionally, the planned operational start in 2035 may be pushed back

**As we look to the future, there are compelling reasons to believe that fusion energy will play a consequential role in the energy landscape, particularly as more developing and underdeveloped nations begin to demand levels of energy consumption comparable to those of Western countries.**

to the 2040s.

One of the challenges the ITER faces is how to control the hot plasma at a temperature of around 100 million degrees and keep it away from the walls of the container. No known material can withstand such a high temperature; even extremely heat-resistant metals such as tungsten would melt instantly.

Physicists have developed two rival methods for managing the hot plasma and preventing it from contacting the walls of its containment vessel. These methods are known as magnetic confinement and inertial confinement. The procedures necessitate

exceptional precision. Additionally, the intensely heated plasma is inherently unstable—it tends to form large temperature gradients, resulting in powerful convection currents that make the plasma turbulent and difficult to control.

Moreover, a sustained fusion reaction that produces substantially more energy than it consumes has never been achieved. The ITER, which uses magnetic confinement by employing a doughnut-shaped chamber in which magnetic fields keep the plasma in perpetually looping paths without touching the walls, still has not produced a sustained reaction. The longest fusion reaction achieved so far is 17 minutes and 46 seconds, set recently in China.

Attaining the sought-after goal of "net energy" in nuclear fusion has been the holy grail for scientists working in this domain. A net energy gain was notably demonstrated in December 2022 at the National Ignition Facility (NIF), a laser-based inertial confinement fusion research lab located at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. At the NIF, plasma is produced by directing intense lasers at a small pellet filled with deuterium and tritium.

The ratio of output energy to input energy at the NIF was 1.5. Although this accomplishment represents an important milestone, it is still far from establishing fusion as a practical source of energy. For fusion reactors to be deemed viable for commercial energy generation, they must attain a threshold ratio of 10. The challenges associated with inertial confinement are considerable as well, and at present, only a handful of facilities around the globe are dedicated to its research.

The widely reported success at the NIF

elicited a typical range of responses: fervent endorsement from proponents of the technology and scepticism from detractors, who contend that scientists have consistently claimed that practical fusion energy is just two decades away—or three or five decades, depending on the viewpoint. Furthermore, energy production is not a primary objective of the NIF. The facility was primarily designed to initiate nuclear reactions for the purpose of studying and maintaining the US's nuclear arsenal.

As we look to the future, there are compelling reasons to believe that fusion energy will play a consequential role in the energy landscape, particularly as more developing and underdeveloped nations begin to demand levels of energy consumption comparable to those of Western countries. That being said, fusion is not a panacea for mitigating the devastating effects of climate change. Addressing climate change requires decarbonisation of the atmosphere using available technologies, including renewable sources such as solar and wind power, hydropower, geothermal energy, and potentially carbon capture methods.

As for the question of when nuclear fusion will become a reality, there is no clear answer. Nonetheless, experts generally agree that the likelihood of achieving large-scale energy production through nuclear fusion is unlikely before 2050, with some more cautious projections suggesting an even longer timeline. Given that the rise in global temperatures over the coming decades will likely be heavily influenced by our actions—or lack thereof—regarding GHG emissions during this period, it is evident that fusion cannot be considered a near-term solution.

# ANISUR RAHMAN

## Farewell to a fellow traveler

REHMAN SOBHAN

### Coming of age

Anisur Rahman and I have traveled together across the troubled landscape of Bangladesh's history over many years. We first came together in October 1957, when we were recruited as teachers by Professor M.N. Huda, then the Chairman of the Economics Department at Dhaka University (DU). Amongst his contemporaries, Anis was clearly the best-equipped to be an economist of distinction. He commanded formidable theoretical skills, underwritten by a creative mind, which enabled him to produce academic work of considerable originality. His Ph.D. thesis was a theoretical work dedicated to addressing the issue of regional disparity, which was deemed by his supervisor at Harvard to be of a level worthy of publication as an article in one of the profession's most prestigious journals, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics (QJE)*.

From an early age at the Economics Department, Anis engaged himself with social and political issues where he could use his skills as an economist to add value and quality to the public debates on regional economic disparity, which dominated the public discourse. When Anis returned from Harvard in 1961, equipped with a Ph.D., he was elevated to a Readership in the Economics Department.

In those days, along with Nurul Islam, Anis, Abu Mahmood, and me, the Economics Department served as a major source of comment and dissent on the issues of regional disparity, social injustice, and the political economy of policymaking under the cantonment-based regime of Field Marshal Ayub Khan. Nurul was invited to be a member of the Finance and Price Commissions set up by the central government, while Abu Mahmood, Anis, and I wrote on a variety of issues in the newspapers of that period. It was not surprising that the Economics Department of DU was viewed by the Ayub regime and its local satrap, Monem Khan, as a hotbed of subversion against the Pakistani state. The regime's hostility to the Economics Department culminated in a physical assault on its then Chairman, Abu Mahmood, by a group of hoodlums associated with a government-patronized student party, the National Students Federation (NSF).

Anis believed that there was little scope for serious academic work within such a poisonous atmosphere in DU and so moved abroad on a fellowship to Yale University and eventually resigned from his position at Dhaka University. When Anis chose to return to Pakistan, he was not inclined to return to Dhaka University. Along with Professor Wahidul Haque, who was then teaching at the University of Toronto, Anis accepted a position as a Professor of Economics at Islamabad University, where he and Wahid together built the Economics Department into a faculty of recognized quality.

In this position, Anis could reach out to some of the brightest graduates of the Economics Department at DU, such as Wahiduddin Mahmud, S.R. Osmany, and Atiqur Rahman, among others, who moved to Islamabad to study for a master's degree in Economics under his tutorship.

### Political engagement

During the last days of the Ayub regime, at the fateful Round Table Conference (RTC) in Islamabad in February 1969, which was attended by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he invited Anis, Wahidul, and Nurul Islam to advise him during the negotiations. This was perhaps Anis' first encounter with Bangabandhu and, through him, with national politics. While some of us economists wrote and spoke on the politically incendiary issue of regional disparity, we remained academics. I had been more engaged with the political process through my relationship with H.S. Suhrawardy and, through him, with Bangabandhu, who had eventually invited Kamal Hossain and me to contribute to the preparation of the AL manifesto for the National Elections in 1964. But this was an episodic occasion. My more substantive engagement in the political process really dates from 1969, when Nurul Islam, Anis, and I were invited by Bangabandhu and Tajuddin Ahmed to become more directly involved with the democratic and nationalist struggle.

Whilst still teaching at Islamabad, Anis joined Kamal Hossain, Nurul Islam, and me to prepare the election manifesto of the AL for the 1970 elections. Anis and Wahidul Huq eventually moved to Dhaka University to join the Economics Department as Professors, where Anis could more actively engage himself in the struggle. He wrote a number of influential articles in *Forum*, a weekly set

up by Kamal, Hamida Hossain, and me, where he discussed the economic policy options for a forthcoming elected government in a self-ruled Bangladesh.

In the post-election period, Bangabandhu again invited Anis, Nurul, me, Sarwar Murshid, and Muzaffar Ahmad Chowdhury to advise him on how to incorporate the Six Points into the draft of the constitution being prepared by AL, which would underwrite the agenda for self-rule for the Bengalis, for presentation at the forthcoming meeting of the Constitutional Assembly scheduled to be convened in Dhaka in March 1971.

The sine die postponement by General Yahya Khan of the convening of the Assembly provided a clear signal that self-rule could not be attained peacefully within a United Pakistan and set the stage for the liberation war. The month of March 1971 witnessed a massive political mobilization across Bangladesh, which had few equals across the post-colonial world in contemporary history. Not only did all segments of the population in Bangladesh—public, official, and business—withdraw their cooperation from the government of Pakistan, but they pledged their allegiance to Bangabandhu, entrusting him with the responsibility to run the government. During this historic month, Bangladesh emerged de facto as an independent nation-state under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

Whilst negotiations were eventually initiated between Yahya and Mujib to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis,

Anis was convinced, along with many others, that during the month of March, the Pakistan army was preparing for an impending massacre of the people of Bangladesh. He wrote letters to his many professional colleagues abroad, alerting them to such a prospective genocide and encouraging them to speak out against this impending atrocity.

Both Anis and I have written, in our respective memoirs, of our adventures in traveling out of Bangladesh following the military aggression on an independent Bangladesh, our encounters with the Indian leadership and Tajuddin Ahmed, the first Prime Minister of an independent Bangladesh, and our eventual engagement with the liberation struggle in 1971. During this period, Anis moved to the US, where he had been invited by Williams College in Massachusetts to serve as a visiting Professor. During this time, he periodically took time off to campaign for an independent Bangladesh along with the entire probashi Bangali community then active in the US. I was assigned by Tajuddin Ahmed to campaign for stopping global foreign aid to Pakistan, which engaged me throughout 1971 in the US, UK, and France. During this period, Anis invited me to give a lecture at Williams College on the Bangladesh liberation struggle. He then informed me that, as an act of solidarity with the freedom fighters, he slept on the floor throughout the war.

### Planning for the people

Following the liberation of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971, Anis immediately opted to return to Bangladesh and expected to resume his teaching position at Dhaka University. Bangabandhu frustrated this idea by insisting that Anis join Nurul Islam and me in setting up the Planning Commission and work with him in the challenge of constructing a 'socialist' Bangladesh committed to building a just and inclusive society. In this task, we were joined by Mosharraf Hossain. Both Mosharraf and Anis were skeptical about the idea of building such a progressive society within the prevailing political dispensation, but they decided to accept the challenge.

I have written in the second volume of my memoir, *Untranquil Recollections: From Dawn to Darkness*, about the varying approaches of the four Members of the Planning Commission toward their responsibilities in government. Among the four of us, Anis was in many ways more emotionally involved with the idea of social change and was perhaps the most idealistic of his colleagues. He came into the Commission with misgivings, as he was not fully convinced that the ruling party really wanted change. However, once inside, he believed that they could be educated to take up the most radical positions.

He strongly believed in the importance of our leaders practising austerity in their lifestyles to set an example to the people who were themselves facing hardships. Among other suggestions, Anis proposed that the Prime Minister and his colleagues, including the Members of the Planning Commission, should get rid of their official cars and ride to their offices on bicycles. This may have been a good idea since the cars made available to the Ministers and the Planning Commission were hardly roadworthy. My own official

vehicle, an ancient Land Rover, periodically broke down at public functions, much to my embarrassment. The Planning Commission declined to allocate public

funds for purchasing new cars for official use due to the need for budgetary austerity.

Anis argued that the Planning Commission should present the Cabinet with broad policy guidelines for constructing a more just society and should secure their commitment to these positions. Since the Ministers were rarely inclined to put themselves into confrontation with their rhetorical radicalism, it was hardly possible for Anis to secure categorical responses from the Cabinet or PM to such generalized proposals.

Anis, however, lacked the inclination to work out his policy recommendations in detail. The process of studying the files or holding inter-ministerial consultations needed to prepare projects to operationalize his ideas was something he found profoundly tedious. In the first six months, as the Member in charge of the General Economics Division, he involved himself in much of the detailed work associated with budgeting, including the preparation of the First Annual Plan. He prepared a document that was both informative and self-critical, which is today unusual for a government publication. He was also associated with the work of the Committee on Agrarian Reform, set up by the Planning Commission under the leadership of Mosharraf Hossain, and helped in the drafting of the final report. Little came out of this progressive initiative by the Commission, but we received an education on the political economy underlying such reforms. Such a lesson may need to be learned by the Interim Government, led by

government titled, *The Lost Moment*.

Frustrated by the lack of response from the regime to

his ideas, Anis began involving himself in an initiative to engage his students at Dhaka University in village uplift work, which gradually took up more of his time. When he eventually resigned from the Commission in November 1973, he had for some time before virtually ceased to be a Member. He, however, did associate himself with the First Plan, which was prepared by the Commission in a record time of one year. Though he did not participate in its formulation, he made a number of useful

comments on various sections, which were incorporated into the Plan. The document, which was finally presented to the Cabinet in the last quarter of 1973, had his approval and carried his signature. The First Plan remains a landmark document on the possibilities and preconditions for social change in Bangladesh at that time.

Following the publication of the Plan, Mosharraf Hossain resigned from the Planning Commission at the end of 1973 and joined the Economics Department of Dhaka University as a Professor. I resigned from the Commission in September 1974 and took over as President of BIDS. Nurul Islam took leave from the Commission in 1975 and moved to Nuffield College, Oxford, where he remained until he joined the FAO in 1976.

### The tensions within

Some months prior to the assassination of Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975, Anis was invited to participate in a research project at the Asian Development Institute (ADI) in Bangkok. He was, thus, in Bangkok on August 15. Whatever his differences with Bangabandhu on policy, he remained a great admirer and was deeply shocked at the

pantheon. However, he discovered from his field experience that the fate of the disenfranchised could hardly be changed by UN advisors, however deeply motivated they were. He recognized that he needed to be engaged on the ground, accepting all the risks and discomforts associated with any enterprise for social change if he was to have an impact on improving the lives of the disempowered.

By the time Anis retired from the ILO, he had become disenchanted with the discipline of economics and refused to be categorized as an economist. Back in Bangladesh, now in his 60s, Anis joined one of his close friends and colleagues in the UN, Shamsul Bari, to establish Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB), where he could propagate the philosophy of PORP by encouraging self-directed research on and among some of the least privileged communities in Bangladesh. However, this was no substitute for fully re-engaging himself with his earlier aspirations of changing the lives of the underprivileged.

This contradiction within Anis—of wanting to work for and with the *shorbohora* but never being able to sacrifice his middle-class compulsions to prioritize his family needs and to continue to live a life, however austere compared to the new middle class of Dhaka—could never be reconciled by him. Sadly, such contradictions are not unique to Anis and apply to a wider constituency of left-wing intellectuals in Bangladesh, who have moved away from the austere lifestyles once practiced by the left in South Asia in an earlier era.

Fortunately, Anis could redirect some of his frustrations as a social reformer through his passionate commitment to the works of Rabindranath Tagore, particularly *Rabindra Sangeet*. In Geneva, Anis served as the cultural guru who brought the resident Bengalis together every Sunday to enjoy the practice of *Rabindra Sangeet* and to preserve links with their cultural roots. Anis retained his commitment to the Bard, continued to practice *Rabindra Sangeet* at a level where he could periodically give public recitals, and eventually wrote a scholarly volume of some originality on modes of singing *Rabindra Sangeet*, which put him into fierce contestation with traditionalists at Chhayanaut, such as Waheedur Rahman and Sanjida Khatun. He was eventually associated with and co-edited a scholarly volume with Muchkund Dubey and Imtiaz Ahmed, commemorating the birth centenary of Tagore.

### A sad farewell

Anis lived a highly disciplined life wherever he was. I had the occasion to experience his lifestyle when I was invited by Dr. Manmohan Singh at the end of 1989 to spend two months with him in Geneva at the South Commission, working to prepare a report on reforming the global economy from the perspective of the South. During my time in Geneva, Anis insisted that I stay with him in his small apartment outside the city. His wife, Dora, was away in the US with her daughters but had carefully packaged and labeled meals for us to last two months.

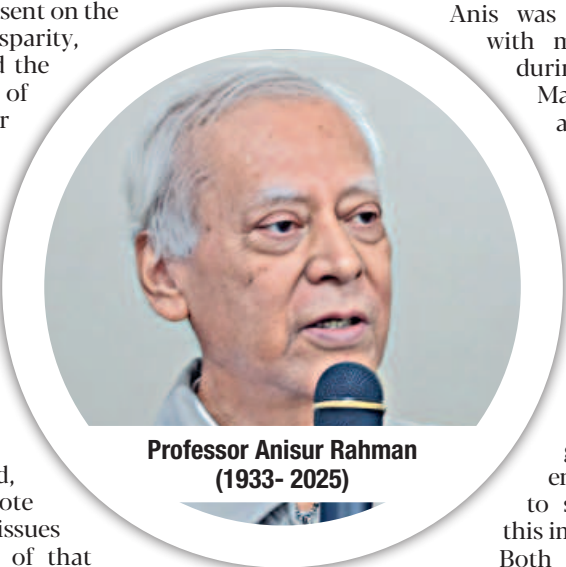
During my stay, I shared Anis' disciplined lifestyle, which meant rising at 6:00 am, departing for work in Geneva at 7:00 am, taking an evening walk with him along the lakefront—where I could never keep up with his brisk pace—having an early dinner, and retiring to bed by 10:00 pm. Saturdays were devoted to marketing, and Sundays to *Rabindra Sangeet*. I cannot claim to have faithfully adhered to this monk-like lifestyle, as my own way of life is constructed on more anarchic terms. However, I can certainly say that I emerged in better health after my two months with Anis, during which I came to more fully appreciate his disciplined and principled approach to life.

Ironically, such a disciplined and healthy lifestyle should have rewarded Anis with a long, healthy, and comfortable life. But, sadly, Anis developed a severe case of diabetes. This required an even more disciplined lifestyle and dietary pattern, but it did little to contain the seriousness of his disease.

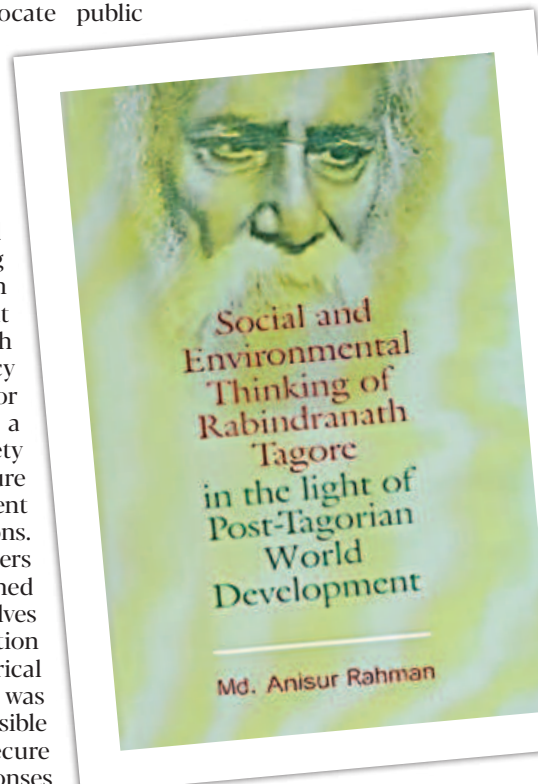
The stroke that silenced and immobilized his wife, Dora—also a dear friend of Rounaq and me—appeared to have had a life-changing impact on Anis. Dora was Anis' great love and life support. He spent the last few years of Dora's life sitting by her side, but she never recovered from her stroke. When she eventually passed away, Anis went into a state of decline and eventual withdrawal from the world. His last years, lying silently in bed in his apartment in Segun Bagicha, cut off from the world, with no family members around and looked after by aides, provided a sad end to one of Bangladesh's most committed and talented sons.

I hope that the memory of Anisur Rahman can be revived and immortalized through the compilation and publication of his diverse body of work across disciplines, and that an accurate and insightful account of his services to Bangladesh and Bengali culture can be faithfully recorded and shared with posterity.

Professor Rehman Sobhan is one of Bangladesh's most distinguished economists and a renowned public intellectual. He is also the founder and chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a leading think tank in Bangladesh.



Professor Anisur Rahman (1933-2025)



Prof. Yunus, in setting out to implement its reform agenda.

Anis remained frustrated with the details of administration. The lack of response to his policy guidelines, his own growing unease at being involved in a regime that he believed to be indifferent to the compulsion for social change, led to his progressive withdrawal from the day-to-day work of the Commission.

From February 1973, Anis returned to his job as a Professor of Economics at Dhaka University, but he continued to remain a part-time Member of the Planning Commission. In this position, he attended meetings of the Commission, Cabinet meetings, and meetings with the Prime Minister, who was now Chairman of the Commission.

Anis eventually took to writing a series of policy papers designed for the eyes of the Prime Minister. In this task, he had the concurrence of the Commission. In these papers, Anis gave expression to his philosophy and expectations for promoting change through the government. Whenever he prepared one of his visionary papers for giving direction to the economy and society, he requested Nurul, as Deputy Chairman, to pass it directly to the Prime Minister. Anis occasionally sought a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister to persuade him to move on his proposals. It is not clear to what extent the Prime Minister responded to these ideas, but from the revealed actions of his regime, it would appear that little was done on Anis' recommendations. Anis has put all his missives to the Prime Minister on record in a volume published by him about his days in

killings in Road 32. He was further disturbed by the jail killings on November 3 of the four leaders of the Mujibnagar government of 1971—Tajuddin Ahmad, Nazrul Islam, Mansur Ali, and Qamruzzaman—and took the fateful decision not to return to Bangladesh. He moved from Bangkok to the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Sussex on a fellowship but eventually took up a more permanent position at the ILO in Geneva towards the end of 1976 and remained in Geneva until his eventual retirement in 1990. Mosharraf Hossain and I joined Nurul Islam in Oxford at the beginning of 1976, but we eventually returned to Dhaka in 1979.

In effect, Anis remained in a state of self-exile from Bangladesh for around 15 years. As with Nurul Islam, who also permanently exiled himself from Bangladesh after August 1975, Anis was never comfortable with his status as an exile because his heart remained in Bangladesh. However, both Nurul and Anis felt obligated to their respective families and particularly their children to ensure them a stable, tension-free life with prospects for a good education.

Anis never quite exorcised the tension from his consciousness over his abandonment of Bangladesh in favor of living a secure family life abroad. At the ILO, he did not occupy a very senior position worthy of his talents but sought to assuage his conscience by working on issues related to the self-empowerment of the resource-deprived all over the world. His pioneering work at the ILO on people-oriented research programmes (PORP) earned him a niche in the ILO policy

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## India's spin ploy pays off

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN FROM DUBAI

The ploy of having a diverse spin attack in the Champions Trophy once again clicked for India, this time in the all-important final against New Zealand at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

It did not come as a surprise when India named a spin-heavy squad for the tournament as they were scheduled to play all of their matches in Dubai where surfaces are more conducive to spin, as opposed to the ones in Pakistan, where other teams were scheduled to play except for the games against India.

For their first two matches, against Bangladesh and archrivals Pakistan, India had the same three-ponged spin attack of left-arm spinners Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja alongside chinaman Kuldeep Yadav.

India opted to crank their spin ploy up a notch, adding mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy alongside the aforementioned three from their last Group A game against New Zealand. Varun made an instant impact, claiming a career-best 5-42 in the final group game.

India went with the same spin quartet in yesterday's final as well. However, for a while, it seemed as if their spin-plot would finally backfire when New Zealand openers Rachin Ravindra and Will Young put up a quick 57-run opening stand after India skipper Rohit Sharma lost a record-equaling 12 tosses in a row.

The wicket of Sunday's final was previously used during India's match against Pakistan on February 23, and during that game, spinners got a decent amount of purchase from the surface.

With spinners on Sunday extracting very little turn, it looked like the Black Caps were heading towards a big total in the final.

According to broadcasters, the average



PHOTO: AFP

turn was only 2.0 degrees on Sunday during New Zealand innings, the lowest in all five matches played so far in Dubai. The opening match between Bangladesh and India here witnessed a 3.5 degree turn -- the highest in the tournament -- while the second semifinal against Australia saw an average turn of 2.7 degrees.

But the Indian spinners quickly adjusted to the condition, bowling with extra pace at stumps. The result was evident as the four spinners combined to account for five wickets in 38 overs, conceding just 144 runs.

Introduced in the first Powerplay, Varun, just in his second over, gave India the first breakthrough, trapping Young in front for 15.

Kuldeep then joined the party by taking two quick wickets -- those of Rachin (37) and Kane Williamson (11). Jadeja removed Tom Latham (14), and suddenly the momentum of the game had changed, with the Black Caps reduced to 108 for four in the 24th over.

When Glenn Phillips (34) was trying to build a partnership with Daryl Mitchell (63), Varun once again hit back by castling

the former to put India on top in the contest in front of the sea of blue in the Dubai gallery.

Axar might have finished wicketless, but his economical bowling saw him build the pressure on the Kiwis as he gave away just 29 in his eight overs.

26 of the 47 wickets claimed by Indian bowlers in the tournament were scalped by spinners -- a fact that sums up how spinners were pivotal in India's bid to regain the Champions Trophy title for first time after 2013.

## 'We have always wanted to train with seniors'

Bangladesh women's football team defender Afeida Khandokar was handed the captaincy after 18 players, including most seniors, boycotted training under coach Peter Butler. The lanky centre-back wore the captain's armband in two friendlies against hosts UAE recently, both matches ending in 3-1 defeats for Bangladesh. Following her return to the country, Afeida spoke with *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman in an interview, where she opened up about their recent tour, their experience of playing without the seniors, and a few other issues.

The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS): You have represented Bangladesh several times along with the senior players, but this time, you were probably the most experienced player in the senior squad. How was your experience?**

**Afeida Khandokar (AK):** When I represented the national team along with the senior players, there was no pressure on me because there were players like Sabina [Khatun], Masura [Parvin], and other senior players in the team, and I just played my own game. But, in the matches against UAE, there was a bit of pressure because our team had only three weeks of preparation. Besides, we were also tired while playing the first match against UAE because we had reached there just a day before the match after a sleepless night. So, it was really hard for us to play without rest, and there was also a fear of how UAE would perform because we had no prior knowledge about them.

**DS: What do you think were the differences between Bangladesh and the UAE team?**

**AK:** The UAE players had more experience and were better at decision-making on the field. We might have failed to make the final pass, which allowed them to counter, and we conceded goals due to mistakes in defense and midfield. Another difference was the physical advantage of the UAE players, who were taller than us. Also, many players in our team represented the senior team for the first time, and a few played their first international matches. So there were some differences, but we were satisfied with our performance.

**DS: Did you feel the absence of the senior players who were not part of the team?**

**AK:** We could have fought better had the SAFF-winning squad played the matches. We might have even won the matches. However, we did not dwell too much on the absent players; rather, we focused on those who were available.

**DS: How did you feel about the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Tabitha Awal's announcement to start the next women's camp with 55 players, including the boycotting players, on the night you returned from UAE?**

**AK:** We also want to put everything that happened behind us and start afresh as a

team. We were really pleased to hear the announcement from the BFF president. Before leaving for Dubai, we were happy to hear that they would join the camp after the two friendly matches because we never wanted to see them outside the training camp. We always wanted to train with the seniors.

**DS: How did you enjoy leading the senior national team in the two friendly matches?**

**AK:** I never thought about leading the senior national team, but I had to do it. I tried to fulfill the responsibility I was given in both matches.

**DS: How long do you think it may take for this group of young players to mature?**

**AK:** I think the only thing this group of girls lacks is experience. If they are given opportunities to play many international matches, they will develop quickly. Our senior players have been playing international matches for the last 12 years. They also played in the SAFF Women's Championship when they were U-16 players. We finally became SAFF Champions in 2022. The result did not come overnight; it happened over a long period. I think every player should be given time, and the results will come eventually.

**DS: I want to go back a bit. What was your mental state when a group of senior players skipped training while a group of young players, including you, continued training under Peter Butler?**

**AK:** We came here to play, and we prioritised playing, regardless of who conducted the training, because we were about to sign contracts with the federation. It is a professional environment where an individual player has to focus on her own performance.

**DS: What do you expect from the Bangladesh women's team in the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers?**

**AK:** We should play more beyond our comfort zone, especially beyond South Asia. We still don't know our opponents in the Asian Cup Qualifiers. The coach will take care of how we prepare after the draw. However, we expect good results in the Asian Cup Qualifiers because the senior players will rejoin the team, and together, we will try to perform well.

### HIGHEST TEAM SCORE IN DPL

Team	Score	Oppositio	Ground	Year
Prime Bank	422-8	Brothers	SBNCS	2025
Abahani	393-4	Prime DSC	BKSP	2018
Prime Bank	388-5	Shinepukur	BKSP	2022
Prime Bank	380-4	Brothers	BKSP	2024
Abahani	377-7	Rupganj	BKSP	2019

## Naim-powered Prime Bank post record score to go top

SPORTS REPORTER

Prime Bank posted the highest ever score in a DPL game, reaching 422 for eight against Brothers Union at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday to register a 173-run win. Mohammad Naim was the architect of the record score with his highest List A score of 176.

Prime Bank's 422 helped them overtake Abahani's 393 for four posted against Prime Doleshwar back in 2018. It was the very first instance of a team surpassing the 400-run threshold in the domestic List A circuit and Naim, who has been struggling to get back into the national team, executed his plans to help break a record.

Naim showed an ability to accelerate in short bursts, especially against pacer Nur Muhammad with a slinging action, picking up a four and a six in the sixth over to get going. The opening duo of Naim and Sabbir Hossain put on 140 for to set the platform for a big score before Sabbir fell for a 63-ball 73. Naim dispatched a few more fours and sixes in the 14th over to reach his fifty. He would go on to score 176 -- the fourth-highest individual score in DPL -- hitting 18 fours and eight sixes during his 125-ball stay. Although Naim missed out on a double ton, Abdulla Al Mamun's 22-ball 40 and Sazzadul Hoque's 50 took Prime Bank to the record total.

Naim's favoured areas were mid-wicket, long-on and long-off but while his footwork was always an issue, he said he had been working on his shots through the off-side.

"Obviously I have been working on shots through cover and extra cover. I have been doing it from the NCL [T20]. There are specific areas where if you score runs, you feel good. Maybe I scored more runs but I was trying my best not to miss out on deliveries in these zones," Naim said in a video message.

So vigilant was Naim that Nur bowled just five overs for 66. Salauddin Shakil conceded 75 off nine overs for two wickets while Al Amin Hossain bagged three for 77 in his 10 overs.

"Definitely they [Brothers Union] came with their best attack but I don't want to give any personal opinion. I have tried to play my best game," Naim said, evading controversy on the nature of the attack that gave away the record total.

"It's history? I didn't know that but feels good," he said, showing he was unaware of the record during the game.

Prime Bank bowled out Brothers for 249 to win by 173 runs and climb to the top of the table with two wins in three games.

Meanwhile, Tajjul Islam and Nasum Ahmed shared seven wickets between them before skipper Tamim Iqbal hit an unbeaten 125 off 112, laced with 11 fours and five sixes, to help Mohammedan beat Partex Sporting by seven wickets at BKSP Ground 4.

At BKSP 3, Rupganj Tigers reached 260 all out, courtesy of Mohamad Al Amin Jr.'s 89-ball 104 but Abahani picked up a six-wicket win after contributions from Mohammad Mithun (60) and Mosaddek Hossain (47).



<b>MOST RUNS</b>
263 Rachin Ravindra
Matches 4
Average 65.75
<b>MOST WICKETS</b>
10 Matt Henry
Matches 4
Economy-rate 5.32
<b>PLAYER OF THE FINAL</b>
Rohit Sharma
<b>PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT</b>
Rachin Ravindra



### ROHIT SHARMA

**It [uber-aggressive approach in batting] is not natural to me, but something I really wanted to do. I have played all these years in a different style, and now we are getting the results with this. We have to understand the nature of the surfaces and I was very clear about how I wanted to execute in the first five-six overs. I have gotten out as well earlier, but the execution matters. The depth [in our batting lineup] gives me the freedom and it helps.**

### MITCHELL SANTNER

**We lost to a better side today. We lost a couple of wickets after the Powerplay and they really got the squeeze on. Credit to how their spinners bowled. They are world-class bowlers. We were 20 or 25 runs under to what we were looking for.**



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## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

### Cancel passports of 10 Rab, seven police officials

#### Inquiry commission asks home ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Commission for Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance recently wrote to the home ministry, seeking cancellation of the passports of 10 Rab and seven police officers for being involved with enforced disappearance.

The list includes two former directors general of Rab M Khurshid Hussain and Md Harun Or Rashid

After receiving the letter on March 4, the Security Services Division asked the department of immigration and passports to implement the commission's directive and impose a travel ban on the individuals.

The others named in the list are three additional directors general of Rab's operation division, Col Anwar Latif Khan, Col KM Azad, and Col Kamrul Hasan; four Rab intelligence officers, former directors, Lt Col Muhammad Khairul Islam, Lt Col Md Mashirur Rahman Jewel and Lt Col Saiful Islam Suman, and additional

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Construction of the bridge in Badurgacha area of Dumuria, Khulna, was completed eight years ago. But the only way to access the bridge is the rickety staircase made of bamboo and wood as the authorities could not build roads because they had not acquired land on either side of the structure.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## SURFACE WATER PLANT PROJECT

### Implementation delay irks Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has expressed dissatisfaction over the prolonged delay in implementing the Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant (Phase-3) and the Meghna River Protection Master Plan.



At a meeting held yesterday at the state guesthouse Jamuna, he said, "It is alarming that such a crucial project has been stuck for almost 10 years. Excessive extraction of groundwater is endangering the environment, yet work on an available solution has not commenced," he said.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Local Government Division, Dhaka WASA, the Planning Commission's Physical Infrastructure Division, the Economic Relations Division (ERD), the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Department of Environment. SDG Chief Coordinator Lamia Morshed and Chief Secretary Siraj Uddin Mia were also present.

Yunus instructed the relevant ministries and divisions to identify obstacles delaying the projects and explore cost-cutting measures.

Officials revealed that 70 percent of Dhaka's water supply comes from underground sources, causing

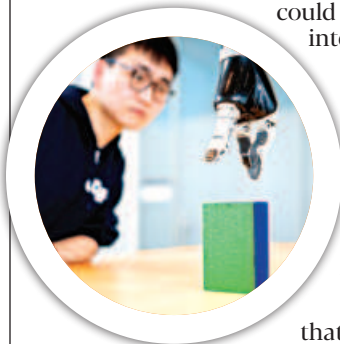
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## Paralysed man moves robotic arm with his thoughts

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have enabled a paralysed man to grasp, move and drop objects just by using his thoughts.

Researchers in San Francisco developed a robot arm that receives signals from the brain to a computer, allowing a man who could not speak or move to interact with objects.



The device, known as a brain-computer interface, worked for a record seven months without needing to be adjusted. Previous attempts of using such a device have only worked for a day or two.

It works by using AI that adjusts to the small changes that happen when a person repeats a movement — or in this case, simply imagines a movement — and then learns to do it in a more refined way.

"This blending of learning between humans and AI is the next phase for these brain-computer interfaces," said Professor of Neurology Karunesh Ganguly. "It's what we need to achieve sophisticated, life-like function," he added.

As part of the study published in the journal Cell, the participant had tiny sensors implanted on the surface of his brain that could pick up brain activity when he simply thought about moving.

Researchers Professor Ganguly and Neurology researcher Nikhilesh Natraj previously discovered that patterns of brain activity in animals represent specific movements, and saw these patterns changed day-to-day as the animal learned.

## Seize assets of ex-land minister Saifuzzaman

### Court also orders confiscation of Nassa Group chief's properties

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to freeze shares worth Tk 102.85 crore and confiscate 957 bighas of land worth Tk 46.56 crore owned by former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, individuals and organisations associated with him in connection with corruption allegations.

The immovable properties are situated in Anwara upazila of Chattogram.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after Md Mahfuz Iqbal, the head of the Anti-Corruption Commission's inquiry team, submitted an application in this regard, ACC deputy director Md Akhtarul Islam told The Daily Star.

ACC's Public Prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir moved the application on behalf of the anti-graft body.

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## Russia hits Ukraine with 100 drones

### Damage reported in six regions; Russian soldiers creep through gas pipeline to strike Ukrainian forces in Kursk

AGENCIES

Ukraine said yesterday that Russia launched over one hundred drones overnight, targeting the capital and several regions at a crucial point in the war as Washington has frozen aid supplies.

The wave of attacks followed deadly strikes Friday and Saturday in eastern and northeastern Ukraine that killed at least 14 people.

Ukraine is set to hold negotiations with US officials in Saudi Arabia tomorrow, with Washington hoping to forge a deal on a ceasefire and a "framework" for a peace agreement after freezing arms shipments to Kyiv and blocking access to intelligence reports and satellite imagery.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on X yesterday that Ukraine is "fully committed" to having a constructive dialogue with US representatives in Saudi Arabia next week, even as Donald Trump said he found it "easier" to deal with Russia than with Ukraine in efforts to end the war.

In Ukraine, its air force said Russia launched 119 drones overnight, of which 71 were downed in a dozen regions and in Kyiv, while 37 others went missing without causing harm.

It said drones caused damage in six regions,

without giving specifics, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Russian special forces crept miles through a major gas pipeline near the town of Sudzha in an attempt to surprise Ukrainian forces as part of a major offensive to eject Ukrainian soldiers from the western Russian region of Kursk, pro-Russian war bloggers said.

Thousands of Ukrainian soldiers seized about 1,300 square km of Russia's Kursk region in August last year in what Kyiv said was an attempt to gain a bargaining chip in future negotiations and to force Russia to shift military forces from eastern Ukraine, reports Reuters.

In its daily update on the situation in Kursk, Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had retaken the village of Lebedevka, as well as seizing Novenka, a hamlet across the border in Ukraine's neighbouring

Sumy region.

Yuri Podolyaka, a Ukrainian-born, pro-Russian military blogger, said Russian special forces had walked miles along the inside of the major gas pipeline and some had spent several days in the pipe before surprising Ukrainian forces from the rear near Sudzha.

Pro-Russian war blogger Two Majors said a major battle was under way for Sudzha and that Russian forces had surprised Ukrainian soldiers by entering the area via a major gas pipeline.

» Kyiv set to hold truce talks with US officials in KSA

» Russia claims capture of village in Ukraine's Sumy region

## Robbers hack gold trader dead, take 25 bhoris

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Robber hacked a gold trader to death in front of his wife and looted about 25 bhoiri of gold in Savar last night.

The deceased, Dilip Das, 47, owned the jewellery store Dilip Swarnalay.

The incident happened around 9:00pm at Nayarhat Bazaar Swarnapotti, known for its numerous gold jewellery shops.

According to witnesses, three armed men arrived in a white car and detonated crude bombs to create panic.

They then approached Dilip, who was about to close his shop, and stabbed him indiscriminately before snatching the bag of gold he was carrying. His wife was with him at the time.

The criminals detonated more crude bombs before fleeing the scene in their vehicle.

Dilip was rushed to Enam Medical College Hospital in critical condition, but he succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

His wife, Saraswati Das, said, "The armed men hacked my husband to death and looted 20 to 25 bhoiri of gold in his bag right in front of me."

Dr Merajur Rayhan, emergency medical officer at Enam Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star that Dilip had suffered severe injuries to his chest, face, and multiple parts of his body. "We started treatment immediately, but he died due to excessive bleeding," he said.

When contacted, Kamal Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Ashulia Police Station, said law enforcers were at the scene.

An investigation was underway, he added.

## Eid train tickets go on sale from March 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) will start selling train tickets in advance from March 14 to ensure a hassle-free journey for homegoers.

Similarly to previous years, all the tickets will be sold online.

On March 14, tickets for March 24 will be put on sale. BR will sell tickets for March 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 on March 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, respectively.

The railway will start selling the return tickets in advance from March 24. On that day, they will sell tickets for April 3.

BR will sell tickets for April 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 on March 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, respectively.

This year, BR will operate a total of five pairs of special trains on different routes during the Eid rush.

Alfzal Hossain, director general of Bangladesh Railway, made the announcement after an Eid preparation meeting held at the capital's Bidyut Bhaban yesterday.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the railway and road transport and bridges ministries, presided over the meeting, while officials at various government agencies, police, and transport leaders were in attendance.

Meanwhile, a total of 159 spots on various highways have been identified as potential congestion points during the Eid rush.

Of those, 48 are on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, 54 on the highways connected to the northern region, six

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A large crowd behind a mobile shop of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. Most of the people in the queues came to the spot on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue hours before the truck with subsidised goods arrived around 2:00pm.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

In Focus: Farewell to a fellow traveler

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PRAYER TIMING		MARCH 10	
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:57	12:45	4:30	6:06 7:30
JAMAAT 5:07	1:15	4:45	6:21 8:00
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING			
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
9	10		6:06
10	11	4:55	6:06
11	12	4:54	6:07