

MAGURA GIRL DIES

# Nation engulfed by grief and anger

Protesters torch alleged rapist's house

STAR REPORT

After an agonising six-day struggle for life, the eight-year-old Magura girl succumbed to her injuries yesterday, leaving the nation in mourning.

The girl, who was choked and allegedly raped, breathed her last around 1:00pm at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka, the army announced.

Protests erupted in Magura as an army helicopter carrying the girl's body landed at the local stadium around 6:00pm. At one stage, the protesters set fire to the accused's house in Sadar upazila.

Aiyub Ali, officer-in-charge of Magura Sadar Police Station, said the law enforcers struggled to bring the situation under control. The atmosphere grew sombre as the body reached Nomanai Maidan for funeral prayers, he added.

Thousands thronged the Maidan for the girl's namaz-e-janaza before she was laid to rest at 7:30pm.

Earlier, her mother, sobbing inconsolably at the CMH, said, "I thought my daughter would survive. If she had

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Magura rape victim's mother in tears in front of her coffin at CMH.

## Trial may begin in a week

Says law adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government expects the trial for the rape and murder of the eight-year-old girl from Magura to begin within a week, said Law Adviser Asif Nazrul yesterday.

Law enforcement, medical professionals, and the judiciary are working with utmost urgency to this effect, he added.

There have been precedents where sensational cases were concluded within seven to eight days, the law adviser said at a press conference at the Secretariat yesterday afternoon.

He added that, under special arrangements, the post-mortem report would be available by the end of the day (yesterday).

"We expect to receive the DNA report within five days. However, if there is any delay, and if the judges find the circumstantial evidence sufficient, the

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## THE DISAPPEARED OF THE JULY UPRISING PART 2

# AL govt sought to hide true extent of massacre

Seven months after the July uprising in Bangladesh, many protesters still remain missing. We investigated 31 cases: six were buried as unclaimed bodies at Rayerbazar graveyard; four were identified by families from among the charred bodies in Ashulia; two were handed over to families after DNA testing; and 19 are still unaccounted for.

We found evidence of systematic government efforts to cover up medical records and bodies of the victims so they can never be found again. This four-part series also documents how families were denied time to collect the corpses from hospital morgues, and how they are now waiting for the bodies of their loved ones.



The "Wall of the Dead" at Anjuman Mufidul Islam. Among these 114 buried in unmarked graves in Rayerbazar in July-August 2024 are many victims of the July massacre. PHOTO: COLLECTED

MASHFIQ MIZAN, KEERO ADHMAN AHMED and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

They all had families, desperately searching for them amid a nationwide curfew and internet shutdown at the height of the July uprising. Yet, they were buried as "unclaimed" bodies within one to six days after being shot dead, before their loved ones could find them. Seven months after the July killings, these families do not know where their kin rest.

An investigation by The Daily Star indicates that the hasty burials of the victims were part of a systematic effort by the fallen Awami League government to conceal the true extent of the massacre.

In some cases, medical records were tampered with and standard protocols for handling unclaimed bodies were bypassed. In other cases, the police quickly disposed of the bodies even though hospital morgues had the capacity to keep them longer, according to documents and morgue sources.

For example, Dhaka Medical College Hospital has two morgues with a combined capacity to hold around 100 bodies.

Before July 15, when killings of the protesters had not yet begun, there were 28 bodies in its mortuaries, said Ramu Chandra Das, a morgue assistant.

Yet, general diaries from Shahbagh police and registers at DMCH morgue and Anjuman Mufidul Islam, a burial service, show that eight protesters were buried on July 24 as "unclaimed" bodies in Rayerbazar graveyard within one to six days of their deaths.

These eight bodies include Sohel Rana, Md Assadullah, Faisal Sarker and Rafiqul Islam, who were killed by gunshots (Read their story in Part 1 of this series). The identities of the rest four remain unknown.

Asked why they got rid of these bodies so fast, Ramu said, "It was done on police instructions.

We could have kept the bodies longer."

Typically, DMCH reports about unclaimed bodies to police about a week after the bodies are brought to the hospital. Upon completion of various official processes, including autopsies, burial of such corpses takes about a month or even more.

"We usually keep unclaimed bodies for at least a week in the morgue. Many bodies are also kept for months or even years," Ramu said.

Documentary evidence also suggests that DMCH does keep unclaimed bodies longer.

For instance, on July 8, 2024, a week before state forces began to kill protesters, Anjuman Mufidul sent seven bodies, all from DMCH, to Rayerbazar for burial. Records show they died between June 12 and July 4. This means, before

these bodies were sent to Anjuman, six of the bodies were kept at mortuaries for about three weeks or more.

In contrast, Anjuman received eight bodies on July 24, by which time the number of corpses at hospitals was rising every day.

Records show that four of these eight died just the previous day, and the four others the day before.

This suggests a systematic effort to

erase evidence and prevent families from finding their loved ones.

According to the eight general diaries filed by Sub-inspector Jabbar from Shahbagh Police Station in relation to these bodies, six were from Jatrabari, and two from Uttara. All died from gunshot wounds, the GDs show.

Usually, Anjuman receives unclaimed bodies from hospitals after autopsies in the presence of police officers who facilitate the process. Before the handover of the bodies, representatives from Anjuman and a police officer are required to sign the morgue register.

However, this protocol was not followed in the case of at least nine bodies connected to the uprising.

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## Six more land in jail over rape, attempted rape

STAR REPORT

At least six people were sent to jail in rape and attempted rape cases in six districts yesterday.

Besides, two men were sued in cases filed over the rape of their stepdaughters -- one of whom is a child and the other is a teenager -- in Savar's Ashulia. Both suspects are on the run.

In Panchagarh town, a 30-year-old man was sent to jail in a case filed over the rape of a three-year-old child.

Shariful Islam Shourav, an easy-bike driver, was the girl's neighbour.

A district court recorded the victim's statement yesterday morning under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Citing the case statement, Panchagarh Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge SM Masud Parvez said the incident took place when the child was playing near her house Wednesday afternoon.

As her mother was busy with household work, Shariful took the child to his room and raped her there, the mother said in the rape case filed against Shariful later that night.

Contacted, Dr Abdul Kadir, a physician at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital, said the victim was undergoing treatment there.

In Mymensingh, a 55-year-old man was sent to jail in a case filed over the rape of a five-year-old child.

Siddique Miah was arrested on Wednesday, said Mirza Mazharul Anwar,

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## Over 5,600 children raped in 10yrs

Says ASK; police on average record 13 rape cases every day



MUNTAKIM SAAD and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

At least 5,632 reports of rape of girls aged below 18 were made across the country in the last 10 years, according to Ain Salish Kendra data.

The highest was recorded between 2019 and 2021. The worst year was 2020, when 1,018 children reportedly suffered sexual violence, followed by 986 in 2019 and 774 in 2021.

A noticeable decline in reported cases was observed in recent years, with 561 incidents in 2022 and 389 in 2023. The number dropped further to 270 in 2024. In the first two months of this year, 52 children were raped, ASK says, citing its own sources and media reports.

Activists and legal experts say the numbers may not reflect reality because many victims do not report the crime.

The number of children killed after

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## UN chief in Dhaka to put spotlight on Rohingyas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day visit that will highlight the Rohingya crisis that has worsened with cuts in monthly food aid for the refugees.

This is also his first visit after the political changeover in Bangladesh in August last year.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain welcomed the UN chief after he landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the afternoon.

"... Antonio Guterres will have iftar with Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Rafiqul Alam said at a media briefing yesterday.

Later, the UN chief in a Facebook post last night said, "Every Ramadan, I spend time with Muslim communities living in difficult circumstances, to observe the fast with them & help shine a spotlight on their plight. This year I'm in Bangladesh to express my solidarity with Rohingya refugees & the Bangladeshi people hosting them."

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Children welcome UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres with flowers at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday as Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain looks on.

PHOTO: P10

## CONSENSUS COMMISSION 30 parties miss deadline for feedback

BNP, Jamaat, NCP, 13 others ask for more time to respond on reform proposals

MD ABBAS

The National Consensus Commission is struggling to gather timely feedback on key reform recommendations as most political parties are yet to respond within the deadline.

So far, seven out of 37 political parties have submitted their opinions: the Liberal Democratic Party, Khelafat Majlish, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh, Jaker Party, Bhasani Anusari Parishad, Jatiyatabadi Gonotantrik Andolan and Amjanatar Dal.

However, 16 political parties including the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, the National Citizen Party (NCP), Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the AB Party have sought more time to submit their feedback.

On March 6, the National Consensus Commission sent spreadsheets containing key recommendations from the Constitution Reform Commission, Public Administration Reform Commission, Election System Reform Commission, Judiciary Reform Commission and Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission to 37 political parties.

The parties were asked to respond by March 13. Contacted, Ali Riaz, the vice-president of the National Consensus Commission, said they have received responses from seven political parties, while 16 had requested one or

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Protesters carrying lit torches march on Dhaka University campus under the banner of Bangladesh Against Rape and Abuse yesterday evening. Top right, former and current DU journalism students demonstrate in front of Raju Sculpture. Bottom right, students of printing and publications department take out a procession.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, ANISUR RAHMAN

## China urges 'diplomatic' Iran nuclear solution ahead of Beijing talks

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday called for a "diplomatic" resolution to the Iran nuclear issue as it prepared to host diplomats from Tehran and Moscow for talks.

The United States withdrew from a landmark deal, which had imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief, during President Donald Trump's first term.

Tehran adhered to the 2015 deal for a year after Washington's withdrawal but then began rolling back its commitments.

Efforts to revive the pact have since faltered. Beijing is set to host Russia and Iran — both key diplomatic partners — on Friday for trilateral talks on Tehran's nuclear programme.

"In the current situation, we believe that all parties should maintain calm and restraint to avoid escalating the Iran nuclear situation, or even walking towards confrontation and conflict," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a regular briefing.

The meeting will be attended by China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, Beijing has said.

Iran's foreign ministry has said the meeting would focus on "developments related to the nuclear issue and the lifting of sanctions".

## Six more land in jail

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officer-in-charge (OC) of Gouripur Police Station.

The girl's father filed a rape case following the incident on March 6.

The victim is now undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said police.

In Narayanganj, a 40-year-old man was sent to jail in a case filed on charges of raping his sister-in-law on multiple occasions.

According to the case statement, he first raped her in May last year and filmed the incident. Then, he raped her multiple times, blackmailing her with the tape. He last raped her on February 15, this year.

Police arrested him yesterday following the case filed by the victim, said Arahazar Police Station OC Enayet Hossain.

In Rangpur, a 50-year-old man was sent to jail in a case filed over the rape of a nine-year-old child.

Ruhul Amin, of Mithapukur upazila, appeared before the district court yesterday with a bail prayer. The court rejected it and sent him to jail, said Mithapukur Police Station OC Abu Bakkar Siddique.

Ruhul raped the girl on February 21 morning, when she went to Ruhul's yard to collect flowers, according to the case filed by the girl's father.

In Savar, two men were sued in two separate cases filed over the rape of their stepdaughters — one of whom is a 10-year-old and the other is a 14-year-old.

The victims' mothers filed the cases with Ashulia Police Station — one on Wednesday and the other yesterday.

The accused are on the run, and police are trying to arrest them, said Ashulia Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Kamal Hossain.

According to the case statements, the 10-year-old girl was raped on March 9 at her residence. The 14-year-old victim was first raped around one year ago, and a second time on February 15 this year.

In Dinajpur, a teenage boy was sent to jail yesterday for attempting to rape a fourth grader at Biral upazila.

In Bandarban, a man was sent to jail yesterday for attempting to rape a middle-aged woman at Rowangchhari upazila.

In Netrokona, Rab early yesterday arrested Shahidul Islam, 22, a rape accused who fled from police custody on February 17 from Dhaka court premises.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report.]

## Trial may begin in a week

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trial may proceed without the DNA report. This will depend on the judges' satisfaction," he noted.

Meanwhile, an ordinance amending the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act is expected to be issued next Sunday.

The amendment will introduce provisions for the establishment of special tribunals to expedite trials in cases of child rape and abuse, he said.

According to the proposed draft, the time frame for investigating rape cases will be reduced to 15 days from 30 days, while the trial period will be shortened to 90 days from 180 days.

Asif Nazrul further said, "The government has taken all necessary steps swiftly. There has been no negligence on the part of the authorities."

He also assured that all future actions would be carried out with diligence.

"If we make any errors, you are welcome to point them out, but creating chaos and causing suffering to people will not be tolerated."

## Nation engulfed by grief and anger

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made it through, I would never have let her go anywhere alone again."

She added that she wants to see the perpetrators meted out the highest punishment.

The girl's death touched off a wave of outrage in Dhaka and other parts of the country, as reports of children being raped continued to come from different parts of the country — a grim reminder of the persistent threat to women and children's safety.

Netizens flooded social media with posts expressing both sorrow and anger. One of them, writer Sohel R Rana, shared a photo of the victim's crying sister on Facebook.

He wrote, "Today, when the girl was crying and saying, 'My sister, who will I talk to now?' I couldn't bear this! As an ordinary citizen of the country, I can only say that I demand justice. I demand severe punishment for this brutality. No ifs or buts. Full stop!"

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus expressed deep sorrow and instructed the authorities to bring the culprits to justice without delay.

Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter, along with the girl's mother, accompanied the body on the helicopter to Magura.

"The state and the government are treating this with utmost importance. The rape of such a young girl is unimaginable and unacceptable," Farida told reporters.

Earlier in the afternoon, the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate said the girl could not be saved despite advanced medical care and the best efforts of specialist doctors.

In a statement, the ISPR said the child, who was transferred to the CMH in a critical condition on March 8, suffered three cardiac arrests in the morning. While doctors managed to stabilise her after the first two, she did not regain a pulse after the third.

District Mahila Parishad General Secretary Laboni Zaman echoed similar sentiments and promised to stand by the child's family until the trial is completed.

National Citizen Party leaders Hasnat

Abdullah and Sarjis Alam, and Khelafat Majlish Amir Mamunul Haque also visited Magura.

"It's a shame for entire Bangladesh. We, the nation, apologise to our sister," said Sarjis. "We have to ensure exemplary punishment to those responsible within the 90-day time frame."

A gayebana janaza (an absentee funeral) for the girl was held at 7:30pm at Dhaka University's VC Chatter, organised by the Dharshan Birodhi Mancha. Another such funeral was held at Jagannath University.

Following the funeral, the protesters marched to the Raju Bhaskarjo, where female college and university students delivered speeches.

They urged the public to stand in solidarity with the Mancha's five-point demand and support the platform in pressuring the government to expedite justice for rape victims.

Demonsrators of another platform, Bangladesh Against Rape and Abuse, brought out a torch procession on the campus.

Many protesters stressed that the government should refrain from making populist decisions and instead focus on reforming the laws related to women and children's safety for a permanent solution.

They also called for clarifying the legal definitions of rape, which they say are currently ambiguous.

The protesters said Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury will have to step down if he fails to ensure justice for rape victims and improve women's security.

In a statement, the National Citizen Party said, "The torture inflicted on the child and her subsequent death is a severe disgrace to our state and societal systems."

It called on the interim government to restore citizens' trust by ensuring justice through a proper investigation into incidents of rape and abuse.

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## AL govt sought to hide true extent of massacre

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Constable Salahuddin of Shahbagh police collected eight of these bodies from Dhaka Medical, and Sub-inspector Shakil Joarder of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police collected another body from Suhrawardy Medical.

In both instances, Anjuman received the bodies from the respective police stations rather than directly from the hospitals, documents show.

Asked why he rushed the burial of these individuals, Shahbagh police Constable Salahuddin said he just followed orders from Shahbagh's then officer-in-charge Mostajizur Rahman. Two other police officers gave a similar version. Mostajizur could not be reached for comments.

Both the DMCH authorities and Salahuddin claimed that no other bodies related to the protests were sent to Anjuman.

by The Daily Star to have been buried at Rayerbazar as unclaimed bodies, protested on July 19 at Mohammadpur's Town Hall with his brother, Abdul Jabbar. Jabbar returned home, but Mahin did not.

Jabbar later found Mahin's picture among the deceased on Anjuman's "wall of the dead".

Mahin's wife gave birth to their first child 15 days after he disappeared.

The Daily Star found Mahin's autopsy report (autopsy # 679/24) from Suhrawardy Medical College. The report describes him as "unidentified" and says he was found on July 19, the day he went missing, with bullet wounds on both sides of his head.

His family later confirmed his identity from the photo on the autopsy report.

Suhrawardy Medical's morgue records show that Mahin's autopsy was done on July 20, and his body was handed over to Sher-e-Bangla police Sub-inspector Shakil Joarder two days later.

"We could've kept the body longer; there were ample empty freezers. But the police took away the body," says Jatan Kumar, a morgue assistant at the hospital.

SI Shakil told The Daily Star that he only handed over the body to Suhrawardy morgue, but did not collect it from there to send it for burial. However, the morgue register bears his name on two dates in relation to Mahin's body: on July 19, the day he handed over the body to Suhrawardy morgue for an autopsy, and on July 22, the day he collected it for burial. The Daily Star contacted him on the very mobile number recorded in the morgue register.

Despite such hard evidence, the Suhrawardy morgue authorities claim they did not deal with any unnamed bodies.

Apart from Mahin, eight other unclaimed bodies from Suhrawardy, with dates of death from July 17-23, were buried at Rayerbazar from July 22-27. Of them, five were aged between 23 and 35, according to the cemetery register.

At least some of these bodies are likely connected to the uprising, although we could not verify it as we could not collect

their autopsy reports and other relevant documents.

Dhaka Medical's claim that only eight uprising victims were sent to Anjuman is also questionable.

For example, Ahmed Jilani was killed on August 3. His autopsy was conducted

on August 13 at DMCH, and he was buried at Rayerbazar on August 31. The autopsy report shows he had gunshot and stab wounds on the back of his head.

Based on the autopsy numbers of the other eight bodies and Jilani, The Daily Star can confirm that Jilani is not on the DMCH list of the eight unnamed bodies buried at Rayerbazar.

Our suspicion that medical and burial records were tampered with to conceal the true extent of the massacre aligns with the UN fact-finding report.

The report, published last month, mentions that state agencies confiscated medical records and CCTV footage in many hospitals, without due process, and medical staff were pressured to withhold proper medical documentation.

In some hospitals, deaths from gunshot wounds were recorded as "accidental" under threat of legal action. From July 18 onwards, autopsies were often delayed or not conducted at all, violating national and international standards, the report adds.

Read Part 3 tomorrow on how state agencies sought to cover up bodies, and how families were denied time to find their loved ones.

nor contacted the commission.

Speaking to The Daily Star, CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince said that responding within the given timeframe was not feasible.

"We are currently analysing the reform proposals. Since we do not believe it is possible to provide feedback simply by ticking 'agree', 'disagree' or 'partially agree', my party thinks that a dialogue is necessary."

The CPB needs more time for a comprehensive response, he added.

When asked about the timeline for discussions given the commission's previous statement that talks would begin in mid-March, Riaz said the commission would meet next Sunday to determine the next course of action.

However, he expressed hope that discussions could begin with parties that submit their feedback by the third week of March.

On the implementation of several recommendations from six reform commissions, Shafiqul Alam, the chief adviser's press secretary, said that some reforms do not require consultation with political parties.

A 30-page document is being prepared, which will be sent to the respective ministries for administrative implementation within their jurisdiction, he said during a media briefing yesterday.

The chief adviser has urged the ministries to take swift action on the decisions, Alam added.

## Over 5,600 children raped

FROM PAGE 1

alleged rape is dismayingly high: At least 318 such cases had been reported in the last 10 years, according to ASK.

In the latest horrifying incident, an eight-year-old girl of Magura, who was allegedly raped earlier this month, died yesterday at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the capital.

According to a report on rape cases from the Police Headquarters (PHQ), 5,191 cases were filed in 2023.

In 2024, the number stood at 4,394. From January 2023 to January 2025, a total of 9,977 rape cases were recorded across the country.

This translates to an average of 13 women and children being raped each day.

An analysis of rape cases filed in January of 2023, 2024, and 2025 shows that the highest number of cases was recorded in January of the current year. In January 2023, 354 rape cases were filed. The number dropped to 308 in January 2024 and 392 in January 2025.

**DELAYS IN PROBE, TRIAL**  
On May 3 last year, a 9-year-old girl was raped and killed allegedly by her 30-year-old cousin in Babuganj Upazila of Barishal.

Her mother filed a case three days later with Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Barishal, accusing Farid Ahmed Towhid of rape and murder and his father Sultan Howlader of trying to pass the homicide as suicide.

Police have yet to press charges as they still do not have the autopsy report, and the accused who were arrested earlier, had been released last month after the High Court granted them bail.

Contacted, Inspector Muhamad Towhiduzzaman of Wazirpur Police Station said, "Once we receive the autopsy report, we may be able to submit the charge sheet."

Her mother said she was heartbroken when the accused got bail. "The killers are walking free. I doubt if I will ever get justice," she said.

Experts say prompt legal proceedings and gender equality are needed to lower the frequency of violence against women.

"If we ensure prompt trials for only one or two cases [that cause public outrage], similar crimes will continue to occur. We must establish a system of expedited and fair justice," Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, told The Daily Star.

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Perpetrators of rape often commit the crime as an assertion of power. There is a culture of exerting power in our society — be it in the family, administration, or other spheres. Since women are in a weaker position, men exploit this power dynamic to assert dominance over them. This is why it is essential to establish the idea that men and women are equal," she added.

Prof Omar Faruk, who teaches criminology and police science at Mawlana Bhasani Science and Technology University, said the conviction rate in cases of violence against women and children is very low.

Victims of gender-based violence face numerous challenges during the investigation process and many do not seek legal remedy because of fear of harassment.

A new government initiative to reduce the time for investigation is commendable, he said. "But appeals for time extension for investigations should not be entertained, because that would undermine the initiative."

DNA matching should be mandatory in investigations as it is globally recognised as an effective tool to identify perpetrators. Unless it's mandatory, there is a risk that false cases would be filed, he said.

**GOVERNMENT STEPS**  
Amid widespread outrage against sexual violence, the PHQ launched a hotline (01320002001, 01320002002, 01320002222) through which people can report violence, offensive behavior, derogatory remarks, harassment, and sexual abuse.

On March 9, Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said, "Those guilty of violence against women or rape would be brought to book."

Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul recently said that the existing laws in cases of rape and abuse of women will be amended to reduce the investigation time from 30 days to 15 days.

Additionally, the trial for rape cases will be completed within 90 days instead of the previous 180 days. DNA evidence will be required in rape cases, said the adviser.

The amendments would be made after consultations with stakeholders on this matter.

If a judge believes that the investigation and trial of the case can proceed based solely on the medical certificate, they will be able to make such arrangements, added the law adviser.

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## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS

Rivers are the lifelines of Bangladesh, shaping its geography, economy, and culture. However, unchecked encroachment, pollution, and water withdrawal from upstream have left many rivers struggling to survive. Once-mighty rivers like the Padma, Bhairab, and countless others are drying up, forming vast shoals, disrupting agriculture, and forcing fishermen to abandon their livelihoods. The worsening crisis demands urgent attention and action. On this International Day of Action for Rivers, let's have a look at two of our rivers, which once used to flow gloriously, but are now being choked to death due to a lack of sustainable management, dredging, and pollution control.

## The shrinking Padma

Declining water levels fuel shoal expansion, threatening livelihoods

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

School teacher Rakibul Islam used to cross the mighty Padma at the Shilaidah point in Kushtia every day to reach his school. But this year, his journey has become even more arduous due to the expanding shoals in the river.

"The 4-kilometre-wide river has narrowed to just 300 metres. Now, I have to cross over 3.5 kilometres of shoal, which is both costly and time-consuming. This year, I am forced to stay in Kushtia instead of commuting," said Rakibul, a teacher at Gangadhardiar Government Primary School in Pabna Sadar upazila.

A visit to different points of the river revealed excessive shoal areas developing across its course, severely affecting agriculture and fishing.

Farmer Abdul Malek from Mokarampur in Bheramara upazila of Kushtia, who used to cultivate paddy on the riverbank near Hardinge Bridge during the dry season, said this year the land has become uncultivable due to excessive sand accumulation.

"As the water recedes, the entire riverbank is getting covered in sand, making the land infertile for crops," he said.

Many farmers who prepared seedbeds in early winter lost their crops as vast sand fields developed along the riverbanks.

Apart from that, fishing communities are also facing challenges due to the shrinking water space.

"Five to six years ago, I could catch 5 to 10 kg of fish daily. Now,

I barely get 2 to 3 kg," said Bodhon Kumar, a fisherman from Pakshey in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila.

Around 75 fishermen living near Hardinge Bridge are experiencing the same crisis, he claimed.

Meanwhile, despite concerns over water shortage, officials say the recorded flow at Hardinge Bridge has increased this year compared to last.

According to the Joint River Commission, the flow of water at



Hardinge Bridge in January last year was 63,113 cusec, 48,518 cusec, and 48,359 cusec in three cycles.

This January, the recorded flow increased to 69,643 cusec, 64,186 cusec, and 64,672 cusec.

Similarly, in February last year, the flow was recorded at 43,926 cusec, 34,697 cusec, and 35,751 cusec, while this February, it rose to 59,202 cusec, 49,984 cusec, and 42,886 cusec.

"The flow of water has increased at the Hardinge Bridge due to more water discharge from upstream," said Zahedul Islam, executive engineer of Regional Hydrology Department.

However, asked about the formation of shoals, he said the water

level still remains low, and due to a lack of proper dredging, silt is being accumulated, forming shoals in different points.

According to experts, the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (1996) ensures that Bangladesh receives a fixed share of water from India's Farakka Barrage between January and May each year, but this allocation is not enough to sustain the Padma.

The 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty is set to expire this year, prompting Bangladesh and India to begin discussions on its renewal.

However, experts emphasise the need for a fair water-sharing agreement based on international regulations.

"Since the construction of the Farakka Barrage, we have been deprived of our fair share of water, leading to the gradual destruction of the river," said Mizanur Rahman, a wetland activist and member of the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Despite the increased flow at the Padma this year, the water level remains a lot less than ideal, and the level is still declining, leading to the expansion of shoals, he also said.

"We have been receiving an insufficient share of water for years, leading to the gradual destruction of the Padma," he said, adding that to save the river, Bangladesh must negotiate a fair share of water in accordance with international regulations.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



## Wasa pipeline chokes Bhairab

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The 20km part of Bhairab River, stretching from Khulna to Bagerhat, is shrinking into a stagnant canal due to a massive pipeline installed by the Khulna Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

The 56-inch diameter pipeline, laid without an adequate environmental assessment, has severely disrupted the river's natural flow, causing heavy siltation and making navigation nearly impossible for boats and trawlers.

To protect the pipeline, Wasa later erected five- to six-foot high iron structures, further worsening the situation.



These barriers obstruct boat movement, forcing fishermen and transporters to wait for high tide to cross. During low tide, the pipeline remains exposed, creating an impassable obstruction.

"Almost every day, I have to wait an extra six to seven hours for the tide to rise just to cross the pipeline," said Sabur Rana, a fisherman from

Naihati village, Rupsha. "Khulna Wasa did this without thinking of our plight. We urge the authorities to resolve it immediately."

Mohammad Ali, a 75-year-old tea stall owner near the Mulghar Bridge, said, "This river, once 300 feet wide, has narrowed to just 20-25 feet over the years. The pipeline has made things worse."

The once-mighty Bhairab, vital for trade and transportation, is now struggling to survive. Businesses relying on river transport face immense hardship, with goods-laden boats frequently getting stuck.

In 2019, Water Development Board (WDB) undertook a Tk 24.23 crore excavation project to improve the river's water flow, dredging 17.5km of the river from Daratana in Bagerhat to Atharobaki in Khulna.

However, the benefits of this effort have been undone by the pipeline's installation.

Md Humayun Kabir, WDB sub-assistant engineer, said, "We opposed the pipeline installation. When the river flow was obstructed post-excavation, we warned them again. Instead of resolving the issue, they made things worse by erecting an iron cage."

Environmentalists say Bhairab's condition reflects

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



## Manzur Elahi laid to eternal rest at Banani graveyard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent industrialist and entrepreneur Syed Manzur Elahi was laid to eternal rest at Banani graveyard yesterday.

He was buried around 4:30pm, according to a senior officer of Apex.

Elahi's first namaz-e-janaza was held at East West University in Dhaka at 10:30am yesterday.

He was then taken to the headquarters of Mutual Trust Bank PLC, where employees of the bank and Apex Group paid their respects and bid him farewell, officials said.

Later, he was taken to Gulshan Azad Mosque for the second janaza after the Zohr prayers.

Tributes from all corners of society, including business leaders, government high-ups, political leaders, and employees from different organisations he established, poured in, honouring his memory.

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin, economists Rehman Sobhan and Mustafizur Rahman, President of International Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh Mahbubur Rahman, business leaders

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## 122 DU students involved in July 15 violence

Finds fact-finding committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fact-finding committee of Dhaka University has identified 122 DU students involved in violence on the campus on July 15 last year.

Outsiders including students of other educational institutions were also involved, Quazi Mahfujul Hoque Supan, convener of the committee, told the reporters after handing over the report to the DU vice-chancellor.

"As an institution, Dhaka University cannot directly file a criminal case. However, the authorities will take institutional measures against the perpetrators," said Mahfujul Hoque Supan, associate professor of the law department.

After receiving the report, VC Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan said, "The report will be presented at the meeting of syndicate which will take further decisions."

The convener said the July 15 violence is a well-planned attack on the students.

The committee has also found the involvement of many former students.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত ও মর্মান্বিত।



এপেক্স গ্রুপের চেয়ারম্যান

সৈয়দ মনজুর এলাহী

ইন্তেকাল করেছেন

(১৯৪২-২০২৫)

(ইন্না লিল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)

সৈয়দ মনজুর এলাহী এর মৃত্যুতে শাহজালাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক পরিবার গভীরভাবে শোকাহত ও মর্মান্বিত। আমরা মহান আল্লাহর দরবারে তার রুহের মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি এবং প্রার্থনা করছি আল্লাহ্‌তায়ালার তাকে যেন জান্নাতুল ফেরদাউস দান করেন-আমীন।



শাহজালাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

আন্তর্জাতিক সেবার প্রতিশ্রুতি

MODEL MOSQUE  
Govt to probe graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has formed a committee to investigate corruption allegations linked to the construction of model mosques during the previous autocratic regime.

"During the authoritarian regime, around 560 model mosques were built at a cost of nearly US \$1 billion. Concerns over irregularities have been raised, as the expenditure could have been halved if corruption had not occurred," said Press Secretary to the Chief Adviser Shafiqul Alam at a press briefing yesterday.

Addressing vacancies in government positions, Shafiqul said the Chief Adviser has instructed authorities to expedite recruitment. "The cabinet secretary will present a report in the next meeting outlining potential appointments," he added.

The press secretary also announced that the Food and Agriculture

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

LUBNAN Richman INFINITY Mega Mall

## Manzur Elahi laid

FROM PAGE 3  
Ak Azad, Aftab Ul Islam, Simeen Rahman, Nihad Kabir, Rizwan Rahman, Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, Russell T Ahmed, Arif Dowla, Md Sabur Khan, Sharif Zahir, Ashraf Ahmed, political leaders Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Zonayed Saki, among others, paid their respects at the Gulshan mosque.

Bankers, including Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, Naser Ezaz Bijoy, Sheikh Mohammad Maroof, and Rizwan Dawood Shams, also paid their tributes. Earlier on Wednesday, his body was brought to Dhaka from Singapore. Elahi breathed his last at Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore on Wednesday. He was 83.

"Plain living, high thinking," Elahi repeatedly told his children, said Syed Nasim Manzur, son of Elahi, at the janaza. Before his death, Elahi advised his children that the country comes first, above everything else. This reflected his unparalleled patriotism, as he never considered leaving the country under any circumstances, said his children. With his demise, Bangladesh has lost one of its finest industrialists — a man who built not just businesses, but institutions, including Apex Footwear, Apex Tannery, Mutual Trust Bank, Pioneer Insurance, Grey Advertising, East West University, Sunbeams School, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Freedom Foundation, and many more, Apex said in a statement on Wednesday.

Born on September 26, 1942 in Calcutta, British India, Elahi came from a family of legal minds. His father, Sir Syed Nasim Ali,

was the chief justice of the undivided Bengal.

While Elahi could have followed the same path, he chose to become an entrepreneur and succeeded.

Moreover, he served as an adviser to the caretaker government twice, played a leadership role in various chambers and associations, and contributed to improving the business and regulatory environment.

He also played key roles in the Bangladesh Association of Banks, Bangladesh Bank, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and several other financial and industrial institutions.

His contributions to Bangladesh's economic landscape earned him prestigious honours, including Business Executive of the Year 2000 by AMCHAM, Business Person of the Year 2002 by The Daily Star and DHL, and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023 from UKBCCI, Apex also said.

## Ensure swift

FROM PAGE 5  
nation is shocked by the rising incidents of rape, and so are we." She urged the government to ensure swift trials and justice.

Prominent writer Nurunnahar Khanam pointed to past successes in curbing acid attacks through strict punishments and urged similar measures to tackle the recent surge in violence against women.

Activist Afifa Mushtari attributed the rise in sexual violence to legal loopholes. The protesters demanded stricter law enforcement and fast-track tribunals.

They also called for justice in recent cases, including the rape of the 8-year-old girl in Magura, who died yesterday.

## KALIGANGA RIVER Residents struggle due to lack of boat quays



KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Local residents have long been suffering while crossing the Kaliganga river in Pirojpur's Nazirpur upazila using Toyoberhat-Gholarhat boat ferry as there is no boat quay (ghat) on either side of the river.

Passengers crossing the river using boats regularly face inconveniences, especially during monsoon, when the river swells, prompting them to pull their cloths above knee-height, remove their shoes, and go barefoot to get on board the boats, often facing mishaps.

Every day, around 400-500 people from different neighbouring areas, including Daubarhi Dobra, Malikhali and also Koldoania unions, use the boat ferry route for going to upazila headquarters and other areas of the district.

"We face a lot of hassle to cross the river as there is no quay for getting onto the boats," said Nomita Rani, a local resident.

"Often we have to tread through 50 metres in the water along the river bank to get on board the boats. Men can pull their trousers above knee and somehow

manage unscathed, but we cannot do it, and often get our clothes drenched in water. Imagine the inconvenience!" she added.

The route is popular as it cuts travel time short compared to other alternative routes to the upazila headquarters, said Masud Howlader, another local.

"However, the sufferings we have to go through is unbearable. If boat quays are constructed on both sides of the river, it will benefit the local people immensely," he added.

Echoing him, Montu Mia, a trader at Gholarhat bazaar, said boat quays on both sides of the river will also make it convenient for traders like him to carry their goods to the market.

Mohammad Bellal, a boatman who ferries passengers across the river on the route, said they also face much hassle to get passengers and goods on board their boats. "If there were quays on banks of the river, it would have benefitted both passengers and boatmen," he added.

Contacted, Arup Ratan Singha, upazila nirbahi officer in Nazirpur, said steps will be taken by the upazila administration to construct quays on the riverbanks for this route.

## Two held for harassing RU students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday arrested two people for allegedly harassing two Rajshahi University students in the city's Kazla area.

The arrestees are Minhaz Tommy, 28, and Milon, 38. Tommy runs a tea stall near RU main gate.

Abdul Malek, officer-in-charge of Motihar Police Station, said a police team arrested the duo from the Dharampur area.

The victims are both students of the RU English Department from the 2019-20 session.

Farhan Mahmud, a victim, filed a case in this connection, said the OC.

The arrests came after English Department students demonstrated on Paris Road, demanding immediate action against the accused.

The incident occurred on Wednesday afternoon, where the students, including a female student, were allegedly physically assaulted. When they protested, a scuffle broke out, leaving Farhan injured.

## 122 DU students

FROM PAGE 3  
Regarding these individuals, the university authorities could consider canceling their academic certificates.

Regarding the outsiders, the DU authorities will contact their respective institutions to take measures, according to the convener of the committee.

Supan said the violence involving students has been categorised into three types: attacks on female students, attacks on

the injured at the Dhaka Medical College Emergency Department, and attacks on general students.

"We used several digital fact-checking tools while scrutinising the video evidence to ensure that no innocent individuals fall victim to wrongful accusations," the convener said.

The DU authorities formed the fact-finding committee on September 30, 2024.

## Magistracy power

FROM PAGE 5  
person. The circular states that commissioned army officers with magistracy power will have jurisdiction across Bangladesh.

As per the circular signed by Senior Assistant Secretary Jeti Pru, commissioned army officers will be able to exercise authority under section 64 and other provisions of the CrPC.

The Section 64 grants an executive or judicial magistrate the power to order an arrest without a warrant if an offence is committed in their presence.

The decision was made to improve law and order at a time when police presence

has significantly decreased on the streets following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5, after a mass uprising.

## Salman

FROM PAGE 5  
drawings and designs, they brought in mere documents, thereby laundering the money abroad.

Furthermore, the LC amount was converted into a forced loan, and even after eight years, the outstanding Tk 33.64 crore has not been repaid. Based on these allegations, a case has been filed against the accused for embezzlement.

## Special BCS on the cards

FROM PAGE 5  
committee will be formed to decide what prefix medical assistants can use.

The verdict, delivered on Wednesday in response to a writ petition, followed protests by intern doctors and medical students.

Although they issued a joint statement on Wednesday withdrawing

their work abstention and academic shutdown, some students and interns are still continuing their protests, Prof Sayedur said. He urged them to call off demonstrations, assuring them that their concerns are being addressed.

Additionally, the ministry has taken action

against substandard Medical Assistant Training Schools (MATS) and formed a committee to review their curriculum.

Prof Sayedur added that discussions will be held with private hospital owners to establish a minimum wage for doctors working in private healthcare facilities.

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**লেবার ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের দরপত্র আহবান**  
উত্তরা ৪নং সেক্টর জামে মসজিদ কমপ্লেক্সের ৩য় তলা প্রায় ১৫০০০ (পনের হাজার) বর্গফুট আয়তনের নির্মাণ কাজ সম্পন্ন করার লক্ষ্যে অভিজ্ঞ ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের জন্য জরুরি ভিত্তিতে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। ছাদের উচ্চতা ১৫ ফুট, রাউন্ড কলাম সাইজ ৪৮" ডায়া ৬টি, আয়তকার কলাম ১৮" x ২৪" ২টি, ২০" x ২০" ৮টি, ১০" x ২০" ৬টি, ১২" x ২৪" ৪টি, ২০" x ২০" ২টি, ১২" x ২৪" ২টি, ১২" x ২৪" ৪টি, স্ট্রোর ঢালাই ৮ইঞ্চি, এবং রিম সাইজ ২০" x ২০", ২০" x ২০", ২০" x ২০", ২০" x ২০", ১২" x ২০", ১২" x ২০", ১২" x ২০", ১২" x ২০", ৩ বাপে ঢালাই দেয়া যাবে। সম্পূর্ণ স্টীল স্ট্রাকচার এবং গুপ্ত (স্টীল স্ট্রাকচার) ব্যবহার করতে হবে। স্ট্রাকচার মূল্যমাল ও নির্মাণ যন্ত্রপাতি ঠিকাদারকে সরবরাহ করতে হবে। প্রেক্ষিতমূলক কন্ট্রাক্ট এবং এনক্রোল রুট মসজিদ কর্তৃক সরবরাহ করবে। ঠিকাদারকে এ ধরনের কাজের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। নিম্নোক্ত ঠিকাদার হতে আবেদনযোগ্য ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকার বিনিময়ে ১৪/০৩/২০২৫ সন্ধ্যা ১০:০০টা হতে ২৬/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০টা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সংগ্রহ করা যাবে এবং ২৭/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখ রোজক বন্ধপত্রের দুপুর ১২:০০টা পর্যন্ত মসজিদে রফিক দরপত্র বাস্তবে সিঁদাপালা নামে দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে এবং এদিন ১২:০০ ঘটিকার উপস্থিত দরপত্রদাতাদের (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) সম্মুখে দরপত্র সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা হবে। যোগাযোগ: সাধারণ সম্পাদক, উত্তরা ৪ নং সেক্টর জামে মসজিদ কমপ্লেক্স। প্লট-৯, রোড-৯, সেক্টর-৪, উত্তরা, ঢাকা-১২০০। মোবাইল ০১৭২৬০৮৮৪০৭, ০১৮৪৪৫০৬৬০০, ০১৯১২৬৬১৯২৭, মোহাম্মদ আলী আমজাদ হোসেন, সাধারণ সম্পাদক, উত্তরা ৪ নং সেক্টর জামে মসজিদ কমপ্লেক্স।

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## Govt to probe graft

FROM PAGE 3  
Organization of the United Nations will assist the government in bringing rural farmers under insurance coverage. The FAO will provide US \$4 million in aid for the country's agricultural development.

Additionally, the advisory council discussed importing electricity from

Nepal. Bangladesh, Nepal, and India will need to sign a UN-backed agreement with support from the Asian Development Bank to facilitate the process, he said.

"There are also plans for Bangladesh to export electricity to Nepal during the winter season," he added.

## Wasa pipeline chokes

FROM PAGE 3  
the larger crisis facing Khulna's rivers.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, divisional coordinator of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), said, "Around 50 rivers in this region are under threat. A responsible government institution should protect them. The pipeline must be removed or relocated immediately."

WDB has repeatedly urged Wasa to relocate the pipeline, with even the deputy commissioner of Bagerhat writing to higher

authorities, including the cabinet secretary, five times. Yet, no concrete action has been taken.

Khan Salim Ahmed, superintendent engineer of Khulna Wasa, said steps are being taken to relocate the pipeline. "The estimation is complete, and a contractor has been appointed. We are working on laying the pipe deeper underground for a sustainable solution," he said.

However, locals remain skeptical, fearing that bureaucratic delays will further endanger the Bhairab's survival.

## The shrinking

FROM PAGE 3  
Talking to The Daily Star, Abdul Hamid Khan, Secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon Pabna unit, emphasised the need for urgent action.

"Proper dredging is essential to keep the river flowing. Additionally, establishing reservoirs could help maintain water levels throughout the year," he said.

Meanwhile, encroachers and sand traders continue to exploit the river.

During a visit at Hardinge Bridge, dozens of trucks were seen moving across the vast shoal, carrying sand extracted from different points.

Experts warn that such unregulated sand mining is altering the river's natural course and further damaging its ecosystem.

**Bangladesh Red Crescent Society**  
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684-686, Red Crescent Sarak, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka 1217.  
PABX: +88-02-48310188-9, Ext: 222, 258, Direct: +88-02-48316602, Web: www.bdracs.org

**INVITATION FOR TENDER**

1. Invitation Reference, Tender ID No, and Date	Ref. No. Pro. (Log.) 76/2025, Tender ID: 17/2025, date: 13/03/2025
2. Procuring Entity Name	Secretary General, BDRCS
3. Name of Requisition Department	DR Department
4. Procurement for	Congenital Heart Defects Devices
5. Invitation for	Supplying of Heart Defects Devices for Cardiac Catheterization Surgeries of Children (Materials needed for Heart Surgery)
6. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
7. Budget and Source of Funds	Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS)
8. Purchase of Tender document	Tender documents and schedules with detailed information are available at the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) website: www.bdracs.org. Tender Schedule Download Link: https://bdracs.org/tender/
<b>Important Details:</b>	
Interested bidders are requested to collect the tender documents within the stipulated timeframe from the mentioned link/BDRCS website.	
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Failure to include the bKash transaction reference number may result in the disqualification of your bid.	
9. Tender Schedule available	From 13-03-2025 to 06-04-2025
10. Tender Submission Date and Time	06-04-2025 at 3:00 PM
11. Tender Opening Date and Time	06-04-2025 at 3:15 PM
12. Pre-bid Meeting Date and Time	18-03-2025 at 11:00 AM (Interested firm must be attend in the pre-bid meeting)
13. Address of Tender Submission & Opening	Logistics Room, National Headquarters, BDRCS, 684-686 Red Crescent Road, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka-1217.
14. Eligibility of Tenderer	Bidders should have at least 5 years of practical experience in a similar type of job. Authorized Sole agents/Importers /Dealers and manufacturer Companies are eligible to apply.
15. Tender Security Amount	The bidder(s) will have to deposit 2.5% of the quoted value of the consignment as Tender Security Money (refundable) in the form of a Demand Draft/Pay Order from the scheduled bank in favor of 'Bangladesh Red Crescent Society' at the time of submission of bid(s).

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender or split the order without assigning any reason whatsoever and will not be bound to accept the lowest bid.

Dr. Kabir M. Ashraf Alam, ndc  
Secretary General

**BRAC UNIVERSITY**  
Inspiring Excellence

**SEARCH FOR**  
CHAIRPERSON  
DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY  
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

BRAC University (BRACU) is looking for an exceptionally excellent academic individual as Chairperson, Department of Pharmacy. S/he will serve as the administrative and academic leader of the department and will play a pivotal role in advancing the university's mission and vision to fostering academic excellence, societal impact, and human flourishing.

BRACU is accredited by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and approved by the Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh which has established itself as one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh. The university is playing an integral role in the development of skilled graduates for a knowledge-based economy. We are searching for a dynamic and seasoned academic leader to make a meaningful impact in Pharmacy.

**POSITION PURPOSE**  
As the Chairperson of the department, S/he will provide strategic leadership and vision for the department, oversee curriculum development, accreditation, and faculty mentorship, foster research, collaboration, and external partnerships, promote student success through academic and professional guidance, manage departmental administration, including budget and resources.

The Chairperson works closely with the Dean and is a senior leader responsible for contributing to policy development and implementation while advancing the university's long-term goals and objectives. This role involves assisting the Dean in strategic planning and decision-making to ensure the effective delivery of academic programs within the School of Pharmacy, aligning with departmental and university strategic plans.

For more information about the job description please visit [career.bracu.ac.bd](http://career.bracu.ac.bd)

**QUALIFICATIONS**  
The position requires an outstanding academic qualifications with a PhD in Pharmacy along with preferably five (05) years of teaching and research experience, as Professor and two (02) years of experience in a leadership role. The candidate should have a strong research background with significant publications; Minimum 7 published peer-reviewed papers in high-quality international publications, of which 3 publications should be of Level A standard. Excellent communication, organizational, and managerial skills are essential, along with a demonstrated commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE**  
Applications should include the following documents: a cover letter, curriculum vitae, statement of research, teaching and leadership, names and contact information of three professional references.

Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Prospective candidates are encouraged to submit applications by email to: [chair-recruitment@bracu.ac.bd](mailto:chair-recruitment@bracu.ac.bd)

**ENQUIRIES**  
Enquiries about the position and application process should be directed to: [recruitment@bracu.ac.bd](mailto:recruitment@bracu.ac.bd)

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 15 April 2025**

**INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)**  
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

• Registrar • Librarian

Application Deadline  
**Thursday, March 27, 2025**

For detailed information and to apply, please visit:  
<http://iub.ac.bd/news-and-events/jobs-at-iub> or scan the QR code

**INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)**  
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

**Operations & Maintenance Department**

• Assistant Engineer (Civil Engineering)

**School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (SLASS)**

**Department of English and Modern Languages (EML)**

• Program Manager

**Department of Global Studies and Governance (GSG)**

• Office Manager

Application Deadline  
**Thursday, March 27, 2025**

For detailed information and to apply, please visit:  
<http://iub.ac.bd/news-and-events/jobs-at-iub> or scan the QR code



People of all ages wait to collect water from a deep tube well in the Jharna Para area of Pahartali, Chattogram yesterday. With summer approaching, water shortages have already begun in the port city due to intense heat. To make matters worse, a mechanical failure at the main water pump in the Sagarika area has further intensified the crisis.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

## Ensure swift trials to tackle sexual violence

### Demand women activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists have called for swift trials and exemplary punishment for rapists, citing a surge in sexual violence due to delays in justice.

The demand was made at a human chain organised by Nari Odhikar Andolon in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Momtaz Mannan, former Division Chief of the Planning Commission and president of the movement, said, "Women and girls are not safe. The

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## RECRUITMENT OF 2,000 DOCTORS

# Special BCS on the cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health ministry has proposed holding a special BCS exam to recruit 2,000 doctors, alongside the ongoing hiring of around 3,500 others through three BCS exams.

On Sunday, the ministry wrote to the public administration ministry, requesting the special BCS to expedite recruitment.

On March 4, the advisory council approved the hiring of 2,000 additional doctors to strengthen healthcare services, particularly in rural areas.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said yesterday that the recruitment process for 3,463 doctors is already underway - 450 under the 45th BCS, 1,682 under the 46th BCS, and

1,331 under the 47th BCS.

On March 9, the ministry again wrote to the public administration ministry, urging the swift arrangement of a special BCS.

Additionally, Prof Sayedur said the ministry has proposed increasing the entry age for the BCS health cadre to 34 years. Previously set at 32—compared to 30 for other cadres—to account for the five-year MBBS degree and one-year internship, the age limit was not raised when all other cadres' limits were increased to 32. To address this, a proposal was sent on 5 March.

He also said the ministry will issue a circular regarding the 'doctor' title once it receives the High Court's full verdict, which ruled that only MBBS and BDS degree holders can use the title. A

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Fish traders travel through a village carrying pangas and carp fry in silver pots. They sell 100 pieces for Tk 300, earning around Tk 5,000 daily. This photo was taken in the Raypasha Bosurhat area of Barishal Sadar upazila recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## ARMED FORCES Magistracy power extended again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has once again extended the magistracy power granted to commissioned officers of the armed forces with the rank of captain, its equivalent, or above for another 60 days.

Additionally, the magistracy power has been extended to officers on deputation in the Bangladesh Coast Guard and Border Guard Bangladesh, according to a circular issued by the public administration ministry yesterday.

This marks the fourth time the government has extended the magistracy power for commissioned officers of the armed forces at the rank of

captain or higher.

According to the notification, executive magistrates have been empowered under sections 64, 65, 83, 84, 86, 95 (2), 100, 105, 107, 109, 110, 126, 127, 128, 130, 133, and 142 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. The circular is set to take effect immediately.

An officer with magistracy power has the authority to arrest individuals and place them in custody. In cases of self-defence and extreme necessity, the officer can also open fire, as per the law.

Under section 12 (f) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the government has the authority to confer all or any executive magistracy powers upon any

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## Salman F Rahman, son charged for money laundering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has charged Salman F Rahman, adviser to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, his son Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman, and nine others for laundering Tk 76 crore to London and embezzling Tk 33.64 crore in loans.

ACC Director General Md Akhtar Hossain confirmed the matter yesterday.

He said the accused colluded to abuse their power and sanctioned a loan in the name of Beximco Group's subsidiary, Index Power & Energy Ltd.

Violating the terms of the letter of credit (LC), they opened an LC for US \$9.82 million (Tk 76.39 crore) to import drawings and designs for Index Power & Energy (Unit-2) from a shell company named Kawaj in the British Virgin Islands. Instead of receiving the actual

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ভোলা  
(স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা)।  
[www.bhola.gov.bd](http://www.bhola.gov.bd)

তারিখঃ ২৬ ফাল্গুন ১৪৩১।  
১১ মার্চ ২০২৫।

স্মারক নং-০৫.১০.০৯০০.০০৮.০৬.০০৮.২৪. ১৯৯

**“পুণঃদরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”**

ক্রমিক নং	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ, স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়।
০১	দরপত্র আহবানকারী	জেলা প্রশাসক, ভোলা।
০২	দরপত্রের বিবরণ	গ্রাম পুলিশদের (দেফাদার ও মহল্লাদার) পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ।
০৩	অর্থের উৎস	মঞ্জুরি সহায়তা খাত (জিওবি) ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছর।
০৪	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ওটিএম) প্রত্যেকের জন্য।
০৫	সরবরাহকৃত মালামালের বিবরণ	১) ফুল শার্ট=৬৮৯টি, ২) হাফ শার্ট=৬৮৯টি, ৩) ফুল প্যাট=১৩৭৮টি, ৪) সোশার ব্যাচ=৬৮৯জোড়া, ৫) বেল্ট=৬৮৯টি, ৬) উন্নত মানের কাপড়ের জুতা(মোজাসহ)= ৬৮৯জোড়া, ৭) লায়নার বীশী=৬৮৯টি, ৮) বেতের লাঠি=৬৮৯টি, ৯) শাড়ী (নীল রংয়ের)=০৮টি, ১০) পেটিকোট (নীল রংয়ের)=০৮টি, ১১) রাউজ=০৮টি (সকল পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরকার অনুমোদিত নমুনা অনুযায়ী সরবরাহ করতে হবে)।
০৬	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সময়	(১) ১ম বার ১৩/০৩/২০২৫ হতে ০৭/০৪/২০২৫ তারিখ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়) পর্যন্ত। (২) ২য় বার ১৩/০৪/২০২৫ হতে ২৭/০৪/২০২৫ তারিখ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়) পর্যন্ত। (১ম বারের দরপত্রে সঠিক সরবরাহকারী নির্বাচিত না হলে)।
০৭	দরপত্র সিডিউল জমা দেয়ার তারিখ ও সময়	(১) ১ম বার ০৮/০৪/২০২৫ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। PPR/২০০৮ এর নিয়ম অনুসারে দরপত্র সীলগালাকৃত খামে দাখিল করতে হবে। (২) ২য় বার ২৮/০৪/২০২৫ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। PPR/২০০৮ এর নিয়ম অনুসারে দরপত্র সীলগালাকৃত খামে দাখিল করতে হবে। (১ম বারের দরপত্রে সঠিক সরবরাহকারী নির্বাচিত না হলে)।
০৮	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান ও সময়	জেলা প্রশাসক, ভোলা এর সম্মেলনক্ষেত্রে দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ দুপুর ০২.৩০ ঘটিকার সময় উপস্থিত দরপত্র দাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে।
০৯	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, বরিশাল মহোদয়ের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল/স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ভোলা/পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ভোলা/উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয়, ভোলা সদর, ভোলা।
১০	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ভোলা/উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয়, ভোলা।
১১	কাজের মেয়াদ	কার্যদেয় প্রাপ্তির পর ৩০দিনের মধ্যে গ্রাম পুলিশদের শারীরিক মাপ গ্রহণ করে পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ করতে হবে।
১২	সিডিউলের মূল্য	প্রতিটি ৩,০০০/- (তিন হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য ১-৩৭০১-০০০১-২৩৬৬ নং কোড নম্বরে ট্রেজারি চালানের মাধ্যমে টাকা জমা করে চালানের মূল কপি জমা দিয়ে সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে।
১৩	জামানত	দরপত্র দিলে সাথে ২,৫০,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ পঞ্চাশ হাজার) টাকা জামানত হিসেবে যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার জেলা প্রশাসক, ভোলা এর অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে। নন-রেসপন্ডিভ দরদাতার দরপত্র জামানত ফেরত দেওয়া হবে।
১৪	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	১। প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/তিকাাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান বিগত ০৩(তিন) বছরের মধ্যে ৩০.০০ (ত্রিশ লক্ষ) টাকার পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ করেছেন মর্মে বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। ২। সরবরাহকারী/তিকাাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের ৩০.০০ (ত্রিশ লক্ষ) টাকার ব্যাংক স্থিতি থাকতে হবে। ৩। হাল নাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর ও ভ্যাট সনদ থাকতে হবে। ৪। দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলির নিরিখে সরবরাহকারী/তিকাাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে যোগ্য হতে হবে।
১৫	দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিলতবা কাগজপত্রাদি/ নমুনা	১। দরপত্র দাতার বিগত ০৩ (তিন) বছরের মধ্যে যে কোনো ০১(এক) বছরে ন্যূনতম ৩০,০০,০০০/- (ত্রিশ লক্ষ) টাকা মূল্যে বিজিবি/পুলিশ/আনসার ও ডিডিপি/গ্রাম পুলিশ অথবা সরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত/বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে গ্রাম পুলিশদের পোশাক ও অন্যান্য সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ থাকতে হবে। ২। ব্যাংক কর্তৃক আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদ, হালনাগাদ বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর ও ভ্যাট সনদের সত্যায়িত ছায়ািলপি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। ৩। সিডিউল মোতাবেক শার্ট ও প্যান্টসহ প্রতিটি আইটেমের নমুনা দরপত্রের সাথে আলাদা দাখিল করতে হবে (মন্ত্রণালয়ের সরবরাহকৃত নমুনা অনুযায়ী)
১৬	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	১। দরপত্রে স্পষ্টাক্ষরে উদ্ধৃত দর অঙ্কে ও কথায় লিখতে হবে। ২। দরপত্রে কোন কাটাকাটি/ঘষামাজা করা যাবে না। ৩। দরপত্র আহবানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান দরপত্রের যে কোন শর্তাবলী পরিবর্তন/পরিবর্ধন করতে পারবেন এবং কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। ৪। দাখিলকৃত বিলের উপর বিধি মোতাবেক আয়কর ও ভ্যাট কর্তন করা হবে। ৫। নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের মধ্যে মালামাল সরবরাহ করতে ব্যর্থ হলে জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত করা হবে এবং কার্যদেয় বাতিল করা হবে। ৬। দরপত্রের সকল কার্যক্রম “পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮” মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে। ৭। সরবরাহকৃত পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদিতে কোন ত্রুটি পরিলক্ষিত হলে নিজ খরচে তা পরিবর্তন করে দিতে হবে। ৮। কার্যদেয় গ্রহণকৃত কাপড়ের মান এবং পরিমাণ সঠিক রাখতে হবে। অনাথায় তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ৯। পোশাকের মাপ নেওয়ার সময় ৬৮৯জন গ্রাম পুলিশের প্রত্যেকের মাপ নিতে হবে এবং প্রত্যেক গ্রাম পুলিশ সদস্যের এক কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ছবি মাপ ডায়েরীর পাতায় সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। ১০। উপজেলা ডিডিপি মাপ নিতে হবে এবং মালামাল বুঝিয়ে দেওয়ার সময় সংশ্লিষ্ট উপজেলার সকল গ্রাম পুলিশ সদস্যকে এক জায়গায় একত্রিত করে পোশাক ট্রায়াল প্রদান অর্থে নির্দিষ্ট গ্রাম পুলিশের হাতে প্রদান করতে হবে। ১১। কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক গৃহীত দরপত্রের দরদাতা অবহিত হওয়ার ০৭(সাত) দিনের মধ্যে ১০% কার্যসম্পাদন জামানত বাবদ জেলা প্রশাসক, ভোলা এর অনুকূলে জমা দেওয়ার পর ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকার নন-জুডিশিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পের উপর শর্ত মোতাবেক নির্ধারিত সময়ে নির্ধারিত নমুনা ও মাপ অনুযায়ী পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ করা হবে মর্মে অঙ্গীকারনামা সম্পাদন করার পর কার্যদেয় প্রদান করা হবে।

বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে পাওয়া যাবে। নমুনা অফিসে রক্ষিত আছে। নমুনা অনুসারে মানসম্মত পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ করতে হবে।

মোঃ আজাদ জাহান  
জেলা প্রশাসক  
ভোলা।

GD-657

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
BANGLADESH TELEVISION  
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING  
RAMPURA, DHAKA-1219.  
[www.btv.gov.bd](http://www.btv.gov.bd)

বাংলাদেশ  
টেলিভিশন

**e-Tender Notice**

This is an International Online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. For more details, please contact e-GP support desk contact numbers.

e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Office of the Senior Engineer (O&M), BTV as below:

Tender ID No. / Reference No. / Procurement Type	Name of Goods	Tender Publication Date and Time	Last date & Time for Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing & Opening date & Time
1 Tender ID: 1087012 Re- Tender ID: 1048840 Invitation Reference No.: 15.54.0000.023.07.197.24. Procurement Type: ICT Procurement Method: Open Tendering Method (OTM)	2 Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Production Control Room (PCR) Equipment for Auditorium of BTV Dhaka Station on Turnkey Basis.	3 13-Mar-2025 14:00 BST	4 16-Apr-2025 14:00 BST	5 16-Apr-2025 15:00 BST

e-Tender details can be downloaded from e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursue. e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in e-GP System Portal, accepted Tenders will be opened online immediately as stated in above table.

13.03.2025  
Muhammad Anisur Rahman  
Senior Engineer (O&M)

GD-658

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

### Play: 'Rashomon'

Open Space Theatre presents a stage adaptation of Ryunosuke Akutagawa's stories and Akira Kurosawa's renowned film *Rashomon*. Directed by M Arifur Rahman, known for popular adaptations of *12 Angry Men* and *Arsenic And Old Lace*, the production brings Japanese folklore to Dhaka audiences in a captivating performance.

DATE: TODAY | MARCH 14

TIME: 3:30-5PM AND 7:30-9PM

VENUE: EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE HALL,  
BANGLADESH SHILPAKALA ACADEMY



### Pakistani model Zara Ahmed to star in Bangladeshi film 'Force'

Pakistani model and actress Zara Ahmed is making her Bangladeshi film debut in the Asif Iqbal directorial *Force*. She will portray a police officer in a revenge-driven narrative. Impressed by her performances in Pakistani dramas, Asif shared a teaser of the film, which prompted her to sign on after finding the script and production plan compelling.

Filming is set to begin on April 10 at BFDC, with additional shoots in Keraniganj and Gazipur. Zara will stay in Bangladesh for two weeks, with the film slated for an Eid-ul-Azha release.

Known for *Hum Kahan Ke Sachay Thay* and *Khudsar*, she will star alongside Bangladeshi actor Mak Didar. Meanwhile, she has also signed the Pakistani project *Chu Lay Aasman*.



## Jaya Ahsan continues to make an impact

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

For the first time in her career, Jaya is set to appear in a Bangladeshi web-series, which will premiere on Hoichoi on March 28. Titled *Jimmi*, the series is helmed by acclaimed director Ashfaque Nipun.

*Jimmi* marks several firsts in Jaya Ahsan's career—it is her first web-series in Bangladesh and also her first collaboration with Ashfaque Nipun.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Jaya Ahsan shared, "*Jimmi* is my first web-series in my country, which I am feeling great about. It is also my first time working with Ashfaque Nipun. I wanted to start my journey in a Bangladeshi web-series on a strong note, and this project gave me that opportunity. *Jimmi* involves a lot of firsts for me, and I feel a deep sense of love and excitement for it."

When asked about her experience working on *Jimmi*, Jaya shared, "This project is very close to my heart. Just as the director has crafted it with great care, we also poured our love into the filming process."

She further added, "Audiences have always seen me in diverse roles and narratives, and *Jimmi* will be no different. It's a unique project, and I'm happy to have been part of it. The character I portray truly captivated me."

When asked about her expectations from the audience, she stated, "Viewers always appreciate good work. I would urge them to watch *Jimmi* and stay connected with it. I'm confident they will enjoy it."

Meanwhile, her musical film *Bagan Bilash*, directed by Sadiya Islam, was recently released and has received widespread appreciation.

Earlier Jaya's performance in the *Beshura* episode of



PHOTO: COURTESY OF HOICHOI

the anthology series, *Dui Shaw* by Nuhash Humayun, garnered praise.

More recently, Jaya visited the Netherlands, where her Kolkata-based Bangla film *Putul Nacher Etikotha* was screened at an international film festival.

Additionally, the *Debi* star has once again secured a nomination at India's Joy Filmfare Awards Bangla 2025. Reacting to the news, she shared, "I'm delighted. It's truly a joyful moment for me."

### Has our humanity disappeared?: Shahiduzzaman Selim

Shahiduzzaman Selim, National Film Award-winning actor and newly elected president of the Directors' Guild, expressed deep concern over the growing violence against women and children in Bangladesh. Leading a protest in Dhaka, Selim condemned the alarming rise in gender-based violence, stating, "We are witnessing horrific incidents of rape and abuse. Has our humanity disappeared?"



Selim also discussed his upcoming Eid film *Daagi*, in which he plays a negative character, and urged audiences to support local cinema during this challenging time. As Guild president, he aims to improve the industry and criticised the previous administration for its inefficiency. Selim hopes for better days ahead, for the country and its film industry.

### 'Stranger Things' star Sadie Sink joins 'Spider-Man 4'

Sadie Sink is gearing up to debut in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). The *Stranger Things* star has officially joined the *Spider-Man 4* cast, where she will appear alongside Tom Holland.

According to Deadline, which first broke the news, speculation abounds that she could portray Jean Grey—one of the most iconic members of the *X-Men*. Famke Janssen and Sophie Turner previously portrayed the character on screen.

Destin Daniel Cretton, known for *Shang-Chi*, will direct the fourth instalment, replacing Jon Watts, who led the successful trilogy.

*Spider-Man 4* is set to hit theatres on July 31, 2026, continuing Peter Parker's journey after erasing himself from the memories of his loved ones in the previous film instalment, *No Way Home* (2021).



## NEWS

### Yunus-Xi talks on March 28

FROM PAGE 12  
spokesman, told reporters at the weekly briefing at the foreign ministry.

On March 27, he will deliver a speech at the opening plenary of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference. He will meet with the Executive Vice President of China's State Council later that afternoon.

On March 29, he is scheduled to attend an event at Peking University in the morning before returning home that night.

The ministries concerned are working on the bilateral agendas and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to be signed during the high level visit.

Earlier this week, an inter-ministerial meeting was held at the foreign ministry to discuss Bangladesh's agenda in the upcoming talks with the Chinese president.

The government is working on about one dozen MoUs. The Daily Star has learnt from foreign ministry officials informed with the proceedings.

Dhaka wants to increase exports to China and foreign direct investment from China. At present, Bangladesh's exports to China amount to less than \$1 billion, while its imports stand at about \$24 billion.

During the visit of Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain to China in January, Beijing agreed in principle to extend the repayment period for Chinese loans and assured Dhaka it would look into the request to lower the interest rate to ease Bangladesh's foreign debt repayment pressure.

Also at yesterday's briefing, Dhaka termed recent remarks on Bangladesh by New Delhi as "unwarranted" and amounting to "interference" in another

country's domestic affairs.

"Bangladesh took note of India's External Affairs Ministry spokesperson's March 7 comments concerning Bangladesh's elections, law and order situation and matters related to minorities," Alam said.

On March 7, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesman for India's External Affairs Ministry, said New Delhi supports "a stable, peaceful, inclusive and progressive Bangladesh in which all issues are resolved through democratic means and by holding inclusive and participatory elections."

"We remain concerned about the deteriorating law and order situation as you mentioned which has been further exacerbated by the release of violent extremists who were sentenced for serious crimes," he said.

In response, Alam said: "Bangladesh firmly believes these issues are entirely its internal affairs, and such remarks are unwarranted and tantamount to interference in another country's domestic matters."

New Delhi's comments were misleading as well as it did not "reflect the reality on the ground".

Bangladesh upholds the principles of respecting every nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs while remaining committed to fostering friendly and constructive relations with India based on mutual respect, trust and understanding, he said.

"From this perspective, Bangladesh hopes that the relevant authorities of the Indian government will take necessary measures to refrain from making such remarks."

India is yet to respond to Bangladesh's

extradition request for former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to face trial in connection with the killings during the July uprising last year, he said.

Asked how the foreign ministry is working to counter the propaganda by Indian media, Alam said the negative campaign against Bangladesh is mostly being carried out by various media houses at the private level in their own ways.

"It is not easy to deal with such propaganda properly. But this matter is under consideration by the ministry of foreign affairs. We are regularly discussing how to best respond," he added.

However, the chief adviser's press wing yesterday sent out a rejoinder on the matter, urging the Indian media outlets to retract the stories and issue clarifications.

The reports in certain Indian media outlets including The Economic Times and India Today alleging coups or instability within the Bangladesh Army are "not only baseless but also deeply irresponsible", the statement said.

Bangladesh is a stable, democratic nation with strong institutions, including its armed forces, who have consistently demonstrated professionalism and commitment to protecting national interests, safeguarding the people and the constitution, the statement said.

Such disinformation campaigns undermine the principles of non-interference and harm the spirit of regional cooperation and mutual respect.

"The people of both India and Bangladesh deserve better than to be subjected to fear-mongering and divisive propaganda," it added.

comprehensively with the question of genocide," he added, potentially later this year.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem told AFP the report "confirms what has happened on the ground: genocide and violations of all humanitarian and legal standards".

He said it underscored "the urgent need to expedite the prosecution of its (Israel's) leaders for these crimes and ensure their swift trial at the International Criminal Court".

Netanyahu branded the Human Rights Council an "anti-Israeli circus".

He said the UN "once again chooses to attack the state of Israel with false accusations, including absurd claims".

### EC employees demonstrate nationwide

FROM PAGE 12  
The letter mentioned that according to article 119 of the constitution, the supervision, direction, and control of preparing the voter list for the election of president and parliament are vested in the EC. Besides, as per section 11 of the Voter List Act 2009, the EC is responsible for updating it.

"If the database of National Identity card, which includes the voter list, is transferred elsewhere, it would not only conflict with the constitution but also diminish the constitutional authority of the Election Commission."

FROM PAGE 12  
Addressing the police's role in the July uprising, the police chief stated, "Before August 5, some of our senior officers—mostly senior ones—were overly enthusiastic."

"I do not differentiate between Awami League and BNP, but due to their political loyalties, the entire police force has been disgraced. The world now questions how Bangladesh Police became so ruthless. I am also part of the police, and this burden of accountability

falls on me as well. Even in retirement, I bear this responsibility."

"My relatives asked, 'What are you doing? What has your force become?' We did not fulfil our responsibilities; instead, we acted against the people. This happened because of the excessive ambition of some individuals and their blind and unjust loyalty," said the IGP.

IGP Baharul further added, "Police officers are being attacked while enforcing the law, and criminals are being freed from custody. When traffic

Mohammad Monir Hossain, convener of Bangladesh Election Commission Officers' Association and EC deputy secretary, yesterday said, "The Election Commission is the guardian of all voters' personal information. The NID will remain with the Election Commission."

On March 4, the interim government proposed transferring NID services to a separate commission -- Civil Registration Commission.

From that day, EC officials and employees are holding different programmes to press home their

demand for keeping the NID services under the EC.

On March 12, Fayeze Ahmed Tayyab, chief adviser's special assistant for posts and ICT ministry, said that although NID services will remain under the EC for now, they will have to be placed under an independent agency in future.

Along with the EC Secretariat, there are 10 regional offices, 64 district offices, and over 500 upazila election offices across the country where more than 5,000 officials work, according to EC officials.

### 'Let us do our job; please do not attack us'

FROM PAGE 12  
police instruct someone not to drive in the wrong direction and to obey the law, they are also being assaulted."

"Why has this tendency to disregard the law emerged? Some believe that since police actions were once seen as anti-people, they can now act as they please. This perception is completely wrong. No civilised country can function without law enforcement. The people must understand that without crime prevention and law enforcement, no citizen can live in peace," he added.

teaching from the University of Mysore in India, supported by an Indian government scholarship.

He further honed his skills through various training programmes at prestigious institutions such as the University of Manila, the University of Minnesota, and Cornell University.

In 1980, Prof Siddique began his teaching career at DU, where he devoted nearly four decades to educating and inspiring countless students.

He was elected Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) president twice. He also served twice as the general secretary of DUTA.

Beyond his work at Dhaka University, he contributed to the higher education sector at the national level.

During his tenure as VC, the DU campus remained largely peaceful, with few instances of unrest or closures due to clashes between student bodies. Additionally, session jam eased.

He was appointed chairman of the Board of Directors of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) in 2020.

He was also at the helm of the board of trustees at the Bangladesh National Museum, where he worked to preserve and promote the country's rich cultural

heritage.

Prof Siddique was a member of the advisory board for the Bangladesh Journalists' Welfare Trust. He also served as the president of Bangabandhu Parishad from 2016 to 2023.

As the news of his demise spread, there was an outpouring of grief among his students and colleagues. Many took to social media to share their fond memories about Arefin Siddique.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mir Masrur Zaman, general secretary of DU Mass Communications and Journalism (MCJ) Alumni Association, said, "One of his lasting legacies would be how he was so loved by his students irrespective of political stripes. He always stood by his students in times of need."

Azad Majumder, deputy press secretary to the chief adviser, wrote on Facebook, "Arefin Siddique sir was my direct teacher for four years. I got the opportunity to watch him closely in tutorial classes for two of those four years. Even though I disagree with his political views, I have always found his teaching methods fascinating and am forever grateful to him for what he taught me and my countless MCJ fellows. May Allah grant him Jannat."

### Israel attack on Gaza IVF clinic

FROM PAGE 12  
It said this amounted to "two categories of genocidal acts" during Israel's offensive in Gaza, launched after the attacks by Hamas militants on Israel on October 7, 2023.

The United Nations' genocide convention defines that crime as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

Of its five categories, the inquiry said the two implicating Israel were "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction" and "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group".

The three-person Independent

International Commission of Inquiry was established by the UN Human Rights Council in May 2021 to investigate alleged international law violations in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Commission member Chris Sidoti explained that the crime of genocide concerned action and intention -- both general and then specific -- and the report had so far only looked at action.

"We have not made any finding of genocide. We have identified a number of acts that constitute the categories of genocidal act under the law. We have not yet examined the question of genocidal purpose," he told a press conference.

"We'll be soon in a position to deal

## WAR ON DRUGS IN PHILIPPINES

# Duterte says he is 'responsible'

ICC takes him into custody

AFP, Rotterdam

Former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte said he was prepared to accept responsibility as the International Criminal Court took him into custody Wednesday to face charges over his war on drugs.

The ICC, based in The Hague, believes there are "reasonable grounds" to charge Duterte with murder as a crime against humanity, as an "indirect co-perpetrator" during the anti-drug campaign that rights groups estimate killed tens of thousands.

"I am the one who led our law enforcement and military. I said that I will protect you and I will be responsible for all of this," Duterte said in a video posted to his and a close advisor's Facebook pages.

"I have been telling the police, the military, that it was my job and I am responsible," said the 79-year-old, the first Asian former head of state to appear before the ICC.

A spokesman confirmed Duterte was in court custody after he arrived in Rotterdam by private jet.

A vehicle thought to be carrying Duterte drove into the ICC detention centre in The Hague past a crowd of dozens of supporters, some shouting: "Bring him back" and waving national flags.

"There has been no due process," said caregiver Duds Quibin, 50. "This is kidnapping. They just put him on a plane and brought him here," he told AFP.

The centre, located close to the North Sea coast, offers each prisoner an individual cell equipped with a computer to work on their case, along with an outdoor exercise area.

Duterte will be held there until an initial court appearance, likely in the coming days.

Speaking to AFP outside the ICC, Gilbert Andres, a lawyer representing victims of the drug war, said: "My clients are very thankful to God because their prayers have been answered."

"The arrest of Rodrigo Duterte is a great signal for international criminal justice. It means that no one is above the law," Andres added.

Before her father's departure, the Philippines' Vice President Sara Duterte said he was being "forcibly taken to The Hague", labelling the transfer "oppression and persecution".



Syrian security forces inspect the site of an Israeli air strike on a building in Damascus in an area where Palestinian leaders are known to reside yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION Syria leader hails 'new history'

AFP, Damascus

Syrian leader Ahmed al-Sharaa yesterday hailed the start of a "new history" for his country, signing into force a constitutional declaration regulating its five-year transitional period and laying out rights for women and freedom of expression.

The declaration comes three months after Islamist-led rebels toppled Bashar al-Assad's repressive government, leading to calls both inside and outside the country for an inclusive new Syria that respects rights.

The new authorities repealed the Assad-era constitution and dissolved parliament.

Interim President Sharaa yesterday said he hoped the constitutional declaration would

mark the beginning of "a new history for Syria, where we replace oppression with justice... and suffering with mercy", as he signed the document at the presidential palace.

The declaration sets out a transitional period of five years, during which a "transitional justice commission" would be formed to "determine the means for accountability, establish the facts, and provide justice to victims and survivors" of the former government's misdeeds.

The declaration enshrines women's right to participate in work and education. It maintains the requirement that the president of the republic must be a Muslim, with Islamic jurisprudence set out as "the main source" of legislation.

It also stipulates the "absolute separation of powers".

## Azerbaijan, Armenia peace deal 'ready for signing'

AFP, Baku

Azerbaijan and Armenia yesterday said that they had wrapped up peace talks aimed at resolving the Caucasus neighbours' decades-long conflict, both sides having agreed the text of a possible treaty.

A deal to normalise ties would be a major breakthrough in a region where Russia, the EU, the United States and Turkey all jostle for influence.

Baku and Yerevan fought two wars for control of Azerbaijan's Armenian-populated region of Karabakh: at the end of the Soviet Union and again in 2020, before Azerbaijan seized the entire area in a 24-hour offensive in September 2023.

Both countries have repeatedly said a comprehensive peace deal to end their long-standing animosity is within reach, but previous talks had failed to reach consensus on a draft agreement.

## 'Many will die' due to US aid cuts: UN

AFP, United Nations

Cuts to US foreign aid under President Donald Trump have caused a "seismic shock" to global humanitarian work, a UN agency head said, warning that "many will die" as a result.

Tom Fletcher, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), estimated that 300 million or more people are in need of humanitarian support worldwide, and that "the pace and the scale of the funding cuts that we've faced are, of course, a seismic shock to the sector."

Since Trump returned to office in January, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been in the crosshairs of his administration's quest to slash government spending, with ripple effects already felt around the globe.



Children create signs during a rally in the Hart Auditorium in support of the Department of Education and School at the U.S. Capitol yesterday in Washington, DC. Earlier this week, the House passed a continuing resolution that would cut over \$1 billion from DC's budget, potentially leading to layoffs and reduced public safety, school, and transportation services.

PHOTO: AFP

## UN chief in Dhaka to put spotlight on Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 1

This morning, the UN chief will hold meetings with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, and High Representative on Rohingya Crisis and Priority Issues Khalilur Rahman.

"UN cooperation with Bangladesh on the Rohingya crisis and solutions and important global and regional issues are expected to be discussed," the spokesperson added.

In the afternoon, the chief adviser and Guterres will fly to Cox's Bazar where they will join an iftar event with more than 100,000 Rohingyas and the host community.

On March 15, the UN chief will visit a photo exhibition at the UN Common Premises and take part in a roundtable discussion on reforms, a dialogue with the youth and a meeting with civil society.

In the afternoon, Yunus and Guterres will hold a joint media briefing before joining an iftar in his honour to be hosted by the chief adviser.

He will be leaving Dhaka on March 16 morning.

"We are expecting his visit to draw global

attention and stronger response to the humanitarian crisis as well as addressing the Rohingyas crisis in a sustainable way, which is their repatriation to Myanmar," Spokesperson Rafiqul said.

Bangladesh faces a serious challenge with over a million Rohingyas, most of them fleeing the military crackdown in 2017.

No Rohingyas could be repatriated despite several attempts since then. Since the middle of last year, almost another one lakh Rohingyas fled the Rakhine State of Myanmar amid conflicts between the Myanmar military and the rebel group Arakan Army.

Close to 90 percent of Rakhine State is also now controlled by the Arakan Army, complicating the Rohingyas situation in Myanmar, with a lot of them and other Myanmar citizens displaced.

Some diplomatic sources said the UN was seeking a humanitarian corridor allowing supplies of aid through Bangladesh to Rakhine State.

However, Spokesperson Rafiqul could not say whether Bangladesh would agree to this.

The World Food Programme has decided

to cut monthly food aid from \$12.5 to \$6 per person from April amid USAID trimming of its funds globally.

Children in the Rohingyas camps are already experiencing the worst levels of malnutrition since 2017, with admissions for severe malnutrition treatment up 27 percent in February compared with the same month in 2024, said UNICEF.

"We believe the visit of Antonio Guterres will bring the Rohingyas crisis back to the forefront of global discussions," Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told reporters.

Shafiqul in a Facebook post last night said, "In light of the dire humanitarian situation in Rakhine State, Bangladesh will positively consider supporting UN-led humanitarian assistance to the state."

"We reiterate our appeal to all donors and the UN system to ensure that the assistance to Rohingyas is given high priority and aid to them does not diminish," he said.

He said Bangladesh hopes that the UN secretary general will give the Rohingyas community a message of hope.

He said they would urge

the secretary general to invest his leadership to make progress towards the objective of the Rohingyas' early repatriation and to ensure that international aid for them are not affected.

Shafiqul said considering the newly emerged situation in the Rakhine State, Bangladesh government ought to act and safeguard its border security, stability, and peace.

"Therefore, we are keeping operational contact with the actors on the other side of the border."

Meanwhile, Guterres may discuss the ongoing reforms and human rights situation in Bangladesh, diplomatic sources said.

The UN Fact Finding Mission already published a report on the human rights violations during July-August uprising and made a number of recommendations.

"The UN agencies are working with the interim government for supporting reforms. It is up to the government how it will implement the UN Fact Finding Mission's recommendations," a UN official told this correspondent.



### Bangladesh Bank

Department of Currency Management  
Head Office, Dhaka  
Website: [www.bb.org.bd](http://www.bb.org.bd)

Tender No. DCM/IAS/2025-1202 Date: 12/03/2025

### Invitation for Tender Through Web

Tenders through Electronic Media (e-Tenders) are invited from the Bonafide Contractor/Firm/Authorized Suppliers for their Local Agent/Distributors/Reputed Manufacturers for supply of 6000 (Six thousand) Kg or 750 Roll of Note Strapping Tape for Note Strapping Machine for the Cash Department of Bangladesh Bank, Motijheel Office, Dhaka-1000. Necessary information is given below:

1	Procuring entity	: Department of Currency Management, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
2	Sources of fund	: Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
3	Tender No.	: DCM/IAS/2025-1202 Dated: 12/03/2025
4	Method of procurement	: Open Tendering Method (OTM)
5	Bidders eligibility	: This Tender is open to all eligible Manufacturers/Suppliers of Bangladesh who have: i) Business experience at least 05 (Five) years and satisfactorily completed at least 1 (One) similar nature of work of supplying any strapping tape. (Work completion certificate must be submitted). ii) Work completion certificate is needed for Minimum Taka 20.00 (twenty) lac. in a single contract by supplying any Note strapping/Banding Tape in any Govt./Semi-Govt./Autonomous organizations or Banks and Financial Institutes of Bangladesh during the last 5(Five)years. iii) Minimum liquid assets/credit facilities shall be Taka 50.00 (Fifty) lac only. In case of credit facilities Bank ensures that the abovementioned credit limits will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor. iv) Tenderers shall have to fulfill the qualification criteria stipulated in the Tender Data Sheet & other Terms and Conditions of the Tender Documents otherwise Tender should be considered as non-responsive.
6	Website address	: Submit in <a href="https://etender.bb.org.bd">https://etender.bb.org.bd</a>
7	Address	: To Director, Department of Currency Management (28th floor of 30-storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
8	Last date and time for submission of tender document through web	: 24/04/2025 up to 03:00pm.
9	Date, time and place for tender opening	: All Tenders will be opened at Department of Currency Management (28th floor of 30-storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka on 24/04/2025 at 03:30pm. (Intending Tenderers or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend the tender opening with authorization letter).
10	Specification of the machine	: Type: Strapping Machine-Brand: Tay-Chian, Model-TC-400, Country of Origin: Taiwan.
11	Brief specification of Note Strapping Tape	: Supply of 6,000 Kg/750 Roll Heat sealable polypropylene Note Strapping Tape made of virgin resin material for Note strapping Machine with Bangladesh Bank Logo.
12	Time for completion of the work	: Maximum 90 (Ninety) days from the date of issuing Award of Contract.
13	Tender Security	: Taka 2,00,000.00 (Taka Two lac) only in the form of BG.
14	Special Instructions	: i) The Tenderer should submit tender and scanned copy of documentary evidence through Bangladesh Bank Website (e-Tendering) & must have valid E-mail address for participation through e-Tendering. ii) Original BG as Tender Security along with Tender submission letter as per format PG3-6 must reach at Director, Department of Currency Management within stipulated date and time mentioned in TDS. iii) Tenderer should provide all documentary evidence (original or attested whichever necessary) when requested, failing which may be considered as non-responsive. iv) Tenderer shall duly fill in the (Form PG3-1) Tender Submission Letter and Form PG3-4 (Tenderer Information) as format given in Tender document. v) Form PG3-1 should be completed and signed by the Authorized Signatory on the Letter Head Pad attached by Scanning during submitting tender and original should be sent to the Director, Department of Currency Management, within scheduled time as per TDS. vi) Collect Sample from Department of Currency Management, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka. vii) Minimum 02(Two) Roll (Note Strapping Tape) have to be submitted as sample to this Department (DCM) before submitting tender. Furnishing of any false, misleading documents may result in rejection of tender and may lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008. viii) All sorts of security & safety measures must be carried out by the Manufacturers/Suppliers during execution of the work. ix) Bangladesh Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or whole tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

সূত্র নং ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৫-৭৫১  
তারিখঃ ১৩/০৩/২০২৫

  
**K. M. Ibrahim**  
 Director (DCM)  
 Department of Currency Management  
 Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka  
 Phone: 88-02-9530090  
 E-mail: [km.ibrahim@bb.org.bd](mailto:km.ibrahim@bb.org.bd)

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

GD-660

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## Moody's downgrade is a big blow

It should serve as an urgent wake-up call for Bangladesh

Moody's recent downgrade of Bangladesh's banking system outlook from "stable" to "negative" is deeply concerning. This marks the third time since 2023 that Moody's has downgraded Bangladesh's rating. Initially, the agency downgraded Bangladesh's sovereign rating, followed by the ratings of specific banks—though the impact extended beyond them. Now, it has downgraded the entire banking sector. Unfortunately, this series of events paints a bleak picture of the country's economy.

Given the previous downgrades, this latest development was not entirely unexpected. However, it could have been avoided had earlier concerns been addressed and negative trends reversed. As Moody's highlighted, key issues—such as deteriorating asset quality, high inflation, and slowing economic growth—continue to undermine banks' profitability and financial stability. The agency also pointed to "structural risks to banks' asset quality, such as lax regulations and poor corporate governance," which remain unaddressed. Meanwhile, the government is expected to continue supporting banks through regulatory forbearance and liquidity measures to mitigate contagion risks.

With non-performing loans (NPLs) on the rise, Bangladesh's banking sector faces mounting asset risks. In this context, the negative outlook also reflects the government's declining capacity to support banks in times of crisis. However, one silver lining is that Moody's expects liquidity across the banking system to remain stable, albeit tight.

This downgrade is likely to further erode investor confidence. Foreign investors may become even more reluctant to invest in Bangladesh, while existing investors could consider withdrawing. Additionally, banking transaction costs may rise, and opening letters of credit (LCs) could become more expensive, placing further strain on businesses and the economy.

The negative outlook reflects broader economic challenges, including prolonged instability and deepening financial sector vulnerabilities. Political uncertainty, concerns over law and order, and various forms of unrest are likely to have an even greater economic impact. Moreover, disruptions in supply chains—particularly within the garment sector—and weakening demand both domestically and internationally pose significant risks that the government must urgently address.

To restore confidence and improve its credit rating, Bangladesh must implement urgent reforms in both the banking sector and the broader economy. Strengthening corporate governance, enforcing stricter banking regulations, and addressing NPLs should be top priorities. The government must also enhance regulatory oversight, ensure better risk management practices, and increase capital buffers in line with Basel III standards to bolster financial resilience. Additionally, fostering transparency, reducing political influence in lending decisions, and promoting financial inclusion are essential to help rebuild investor trust.

## Rohingya crisis needs a lasting solution

We hope to see positive outcomes from the UN chief's visit

At a time when Bangladesh is struggling to deal with the Rohingya crisis amid fund cuts by the US and other international donors, the importance of UN Secretary General António Guterres's visit to Bangladesh cannot be overstated. This visit is also important for Bangladesh as the country undergoes a major political transition following the July uprising that ousted the fascist Awami League regime in August last year. As the primary focus of the UN chief's visit this time is to observe the Rohingya situation in Bangladesh, we hope it will reignite global attention to this crisis and mobilise international donors to financially support Bangladesh in providing the necessary assistance to the over one million Rohingya living here.

The UN chief is scheduled to visit the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar today and attend an iftar party with them, a gesture that reflects Guterres' empathy and support for the refugees. We were also encouraged by the concern he showed about the Rohingya crisis a month ago, when he sent a letter to the chief adviser, reaffirming the UN's solidarity with Bangladesh in its ongoing efforts to manage the humanitarian impact of the crisis. Therefore, we expect him to deliver a strong message to the world that, without global support, Bangladesh cannot continue shouldering this immense responsibility alone.

In the past few years, numerous other global crises have overshadowed the Rohingya issue, and funds for the refugees have declined alarmingly, making it challenging for Bangladesh to provide basic services to this forcibly displaced population. The recent fund cuts by the US have further worsened the crisis, and the impact is already evident in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas. Moreover, the renewed violence in Myanmar has forced around 80,000 more Rohingyas to seek shelter in Bangladesh since August last year, adding to the staggering 1.2 million already living here. A recent Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit study painted a grim picture of the living conditions in the camps, highlighting gender-based violence and security concerns. The ongoing violence and instability within Myanmar are also hindering repatriation efforts.

Against this backdrop, we hope Guterres' visit will help push for a swift resolution to the Rohingya crisis—enabling them to return to Myanmar with safety and dignity. We would also request him to use his own and his office's influence to boost the dwindling humanitarian aid for the Rohingya.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Vladimir Putin reelected

On this day in 2004, Vladimir Putin, the intelligence officer and politician who became president of Russia in 1999 upon the resignation of Boris Yeltsin, was overwhelmingly reelected to a second term as president.



FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

We need a new political party, and we need one that is rooted in a recent struggle against all forms of abuse of power.

# Will the new party spark a new political culture?

The culture of leader above the party and the party above the nation must stop



THE THIRD VIEW  
Mahfuz Anam  
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

It was quite an experience to be invited by the National Citizen Party (NCP) to attend their inaugural iftar party last Tuesday. I enjoyed being there. I remembered my own first attendance as a student at a somewhat similar event. It was the 10th National Conference of the East Pakistan Students Union (EPSU), held in the late sixties at the Engineers' Institute. The similarity lay in the composition of the participants—mostly young students. Their energy, their dreamy eyes, and the eagerness in everything they did took me back nearly six decades to my own young dreams of building an egalitarian society, as most of us then were fully converted to the Marxist views that permeated the progressive ideologies of that era.

Bangladesh needs a new political party with youthful energy, spirited patriotism, and genuine love for the poor and downtrodden. We need a party full of dreams for a future without any shackles of oppression and exploitation. We need a party that will take us to the future and not drag us into the past. For too long, we have been governed by a politics and politicians whose only interest was to promote personal and partisan interests. We need a political party truly devoted to serving the interests of democracy, the rights of all, and prosperity for the masses.

The NCP seem full of potential. Some fundamental issues remain unclear—its ideological orientation, acceptance of our diversity, approach to our cultural heritage, views on the role of religion in politics, short- and long-term goals, etc. It should publish its party charter as soon as possible.

A smell of change was mildly, almost imperceptibly, floating in the air. There was an atmosphere of expectation that most of us strongly felt, and a definite sense of determination that I silently admired. As I sat amidst a splendidly diverse group of students and guests, I realised the wide appeal of NCP and its potential to emerge—if not immediately—as a significant political party.

While I sat and watched the event unfold and heard the three speeches of their top leaders—the very fact that only three spoke and not a plethora of them impressed me—the question that was repeatedly crossing my mind was: are these students and their

leaders fully equipped to handle the challenges of setting up a new political party, especially in the face of the disappointing performance of past political parties? Are they aware that thousands of venomous snakes were hovering around them, waiting with boxes full of ill-gotten money to flood them with? Will they be able to judge which offers of help are genuine and which ones are traps? Will they be able to change the culture of sycophancy that so afflicted our traditional parties?

The history of Bangladesh from 1972-1991 is a mixture of euphoric beginnings with endless dreams of making a modern, secular, democratic, and prosperous country, which ended with the formation of a one-party state and the assassination of Bangabandhu. This was followed by two military coups that brought in two generals—General Ziaur Rahman and General HM Ershad—into power, both of whom formed their respective parties while in power—Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jatiya Party (JP)—that ruled Bangladesh in the subsequent years.

Three of our major political parties—AL, BNP, and JP—all became dynastic, with the founding family driving them. Their inner democracy was non-existent, with the various levels of party hierarchy being selected rather than elected, and that also at the whim of one person. Ironically, Jamaat was the only one that followed some structure of bottom-up representation.

Looking back over the last 54 years of independent Bangladesh, and especially over the last 34 years since the restoration of democracy and elected government, there are vital lessons to be learned about the role of political parties.

The saddest part was that they always put the leader's interest above that of the party, and the party's above that of the nation. Not public interest, but the party's benefit was the goal. None of the big parties had any internal democracy, and their inner workings were totally centralised to the extent of one person making all the decisions—his or her wish was the command. Nepotism and cronyism were the order of the day, which inevitably led to the emergence of loyal groups that usurped the party

hierarchy and destroyed discipline. They never held their annual organisational elections on time and in a free and independent manner. It was always top-down selection of leadership from the lowest tier to the very top, except for the top post and a few of their favourites.

Over the years, party positions could be "availed of" for money, and

**Getting into power should not be the main motivator of NCP, but public service. The most important party culture to pursue, and one that will distinguish it from others, will be accountability—both to the public but equally importantly, to its own grassroots workers. A vital practice to be inculcated is financial transparency.**

the term "nomination trade" became prominent every time we had national elections. MP nomination seekers had to spend enormous amounts to get the party ticket. All of that money was retrieved after becoming an MP, as a large portion of the development funds became means of "returns for investment," which, of course, was many times over the original. What was called a donation for the party fund was, in effect, extortion for personal gain, not necessarily always for the top person but for everyone along the way who could influence the process.

Corruption was ingrained in the political parties, which spread to the bureaucracy, and the corrupt elements within it took full advantage and quickly, enthusiastically, and irretrievably aligned themselves with that process. The police became an instrument of coercion, abuse, and extortion. The involvement of the political parties in widespread corruption ensured that the bureaucracy, the police, the judiciary, and, of course, the corporate world would never be held accountable. A section of the media, forced by its owners and some willing journalists, became a part of it.

It is in this background of myopic, shortsighted, and self-serving history of our political parties that a new political party, led by students of the July-August movement that liberated us from the clutches of corrupt dictatorship, is being formed. How they will fare is the big question of the moment.

The fact that NCP avoids terms like

party president, secretary-general, etc. and calls themselves "convenors" is a good sign. It narrows the differences in their hierarchy. At the iftar referred to above, I heard one over-enthusiastic announcer calling their leader "jana neta" and "ek dafar ghoshok." This should be avoided. Let's not fall into the trap of self-promotion and let history judge who is what.

Getting into power should not be the main motivator of NCP, but public service. The most important party culture to pursue, and one that will distinguish it from others, will be accountability—both to the public but equally importantly, to its own grassroots workers. A vital practice to be inculcated is financial transparency. The absence of this mostly destroyed all our traditional political parties. Today, AL looks like the most rotten party ever because it was in power with total impunity. BNP looks good because it has been oppressed and forcibly kept out of power through rigged elections. One can only guess what it would look like if things were different. As Jamaat has mostly been out of power, we have no data to judge them on the "money" issue. During the period it held two vital ministries in a coalition government with BNP, questions did circulate about its unethical behaviour. Today, it is mostly accused of pushing its candidate into vital posts, not on the basis of merit but party loyalty. This is corruption in another name.

NCP held two expensive but necessary events—the Manik Mia Avenue launch and the Intercontinental iftar. We think they both were sponsored, which can be accepted only if the sponsors' names are made public. As a new party, it will obviously need sponsors. A good idea would be to take multiple sponsors, never one or two, and on the condition that they do not insist on secrecy. Make their names public. This will set NCP apart in a way that will give them tremendous credibility—which is vital in the present context and at this stage of party formation.

We need a new political party, and we need one that is rooted in a recent struggle against all forms of abuse of power. But we also need a new political culture, including a change in the functioning of political parties. It must be democratised and made accountable. We repeat, many of our failures can be directly attributed to the culture of putting the leader's interest above that of the party and the party's interest above that of the nation. NCP has the potential to change all of this.

Three practices—accountability, transparency, and inner democracy—will make all the difference. We wish them all the best on this new journey.

# Stop predatory gas price hike and reform the sector



**M. Shamsul Alam**  
is energy adviser at the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), and professor of electrical and electronic engineering at Daffodil University.

M. SHAMSUL ALAM

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) rejects Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC)'s proposal to increase gas prices for industrial and captive power generation, which the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources has approved. Consumers protested and made their demands known during the public hearing on February 26, 2025.

According to the price hike proposal, if the gas price for industrial and captive power increases by Tk 75.72, the projected additional annual revenue would be around Tk 3,241 crore, assuming an annual gas supply of 28,224 million cubic metres. Additionally, the system loss in gas distribution and transmission is 13.53 percent, whereas BERC reports it as only 1.12 percent. The remaining losses result from waste and theft. If these were adjusted, the current pricing model would lead to Tk 10,870 crore in savings. The data shows that merely ensuring fair and rational VAT and dealing with system loss would prevent Tk 14,418 crore in expenses annually. However, instead of addressing the real system loss and predatory costs in gas supply, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources approved the price hike proposal, and BERC endorsed it. As a result, both entities stand accused of compromising consumer interests and rights, depriving consumers from fair energy pricing.

Moreover, the total gas supply in 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 was 28,640, 28,037, and 28,224 (estimated) million cubic metres, respectively. Domestic gas supply during these years was 22,651, 21,082, and 20,067 (estimated) million cubic metres, respectively. This gradual decline in gas supply in the country intensifies the energy crisis. Currently, 25 percent of the gas supply comes from LNG, which is projected to increase to 75

percent by 2030. This will further heighten uncertainty in energy security. However, despite this looming crisis, all charges are being increased unreasonably.

In 2023, after gaining the authority to set price rates, the previous government increased gas prices manifold—including for production, transmission, and distribution charges. The charges for Petrobangla and Rupantarita Praktirik Gas Company Limited were also increased unnecessarily. The gas price was raised for large, medium, small, and cottage industries as well. For captive power, the price was increased by 97 percent, and for electricity, it was raised by 209 percent. The current government raised the price of gas used in industrial and captive power generation too. This indicates that the previous government not only turned the country into a power and energy import market but also moved towards turning it

strategically created the groundwork for increased LNG imports. Looks like the current government is moving towards the same direction.

The previous government initiated large-scale megaprojects for solar power development through private sector investments without competition. According to the Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), the electricity price for these projects was around Tk 14 per unit, even though solar power could be produced for less than Tk 4.5 per unit. The current government has cancelled these initiatives and called for competitive investments instead. However, due to the lack of capacity of the Power Division, there is uncertainty about electricity price decline to a fair and reasonable level. To develop this sector, it is necessary to enhance and empower Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) to ensure stakeholder participation under BERC, and limit the involvement of the Power Division. Additionally, a bottom-up approach should be adopted to promote this sector as a small and cottage industry, encouraging the creation of domestic entrepreneurs.

Due to the Electricity and Energy Speedy Supply (Special Provisions) Act, 2010, which allowed non-competitive investments, the development of the power and energy sector led to increased predatory costs. In 2023, an

rights of citizens. The approval of the recent price hike proposal by the ministry and its acceptance by BERC demonstrate that there has been no improvement in the situation.

The current government repealed the Special Provisions Act, 2010, as well as Section 34A of the BERC Act. However, the provision that states, "Until the commission formulates regulations, the government may, by notification in the official gazette, determine,

government has provided an opportunity, and people should find solutions to their problems. Consequently, consumers demand that—(a) The proposal to increase the gas tariff for industrial and captive power use by 75.72 percent, as presented in the hearing, must be dismissed immediately. (b) All tariff-related orders issued by the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources under Section 34A of the amended BERC Act must



FILE VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

**Energy security cannot be guaranteed unless electricity and primary energy are made accessible at prices within consumers' purchasing power. This necessitates a comprehensive reform of the energy sector, which must be carried out by BERC with the participation and empowerment of stakeholders.**

into an import market for industrial products. Now the ministry and the BERC seem to be doing the same.

In the 2022 public hearing, it was revealed that 65 percent of the Gas Development Fund remained unutilised, and 35 percent of the fund was spent on paying foreign contractors. National capacity development was not prioritised. The previous government, with the support of the ministry and BERC,

amendment to Section 34 of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission Act, 2003 transferred the power and authority to set all energy tariffs to the ministry stripping BERC of its regulatory power. As a result, the ministry has frequently raised energy tariffs, leading to an unbearable increase in the cost of living for the people and severe disruptions to national energy security. This has ultimately jeopardised the fundamental

re-determine, or adjust tariffs," is yet to be repealed. The ministry thus has continued to set the tariff of liquid fuels. Sections 2(b) and 2(c) were added in the ordinance, effectively granting immunity to the wrongful and criminal activities carried out under the previous law. This betrayed the people, making them victims of a new cycle of exploitation.

Energy security cannot be guaranteed unless electricity and primary energy are made accessible at prices within consumers' purchasing power. This necessitates a comprehensive reform of the energy sector, which must be carried out by BERC with the participation and empowerment of stakeholders. To achieve this, the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources must be rendered inactive. During the hearing, concerns were raised that the public appeal should not escalate into a mass movement. The chief adviser acknowledged that the

be revoked. Additionally, liquid fuel prices should be determined solely through public hearings conducted by BERC. (c) The total amount of predatory costs incorporated into electricity and primary energy pricing under the previous government must be identified. Existing tariffs must then be adjusted by removing these unjustified and predatory costs and lowering government revenue, ensuring a fair price for all consumers. (d) A tribunal, led by a retired Supreme Court judge, must be formed to bring energy criminals to justice and ensure accountability. (e) The BERC Act must be reformed to establish a legal framework that ensures fair energy distribution and protects consumers from predatory practices. (f) To ensure affordable access to electricity and primary energy, the sector must undergo structural reform under a BERC-supervised commission comprising stakeholder representatives.

# The 'bhodroshomaj' that is killing women and girls



**Shahana Siddiqui, PhD**  
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SHAHANA SIDDIQUI

The Egyptian Arab Spring began with demonstrations across the country, participated by working class youths, including women who voiced out against sexual violence and harassment, connecting the culture of impunity to Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship. Yet, in real time, we witnessed the hijacking of the entire movement by the religious right. Seeing the July-August movement, an Egyptian friend who was part of the Arab Spring, disillusioned but sincere, hoped that the same would not happen in Bangladesh. Even with my own optimism, I had told him that we had been an Iranian Revolution in the making for a long time—but yes, time would tell.

Not much time was needed for the story to unfold. We are a "wonderful" mix of the Iranian Revolution and Arab Spring—where class, religion, and national politics are played out on women's and female children's bodies. The battle for women's basic safety and dignity, fought on the streets, is not a momentary reaction but a litmus test for Bangladesh's national outlook for decades to come.

From the neighbourhood bully "uncle" allegedly assaulting a young woman for publicly smoking, to gang rapes across the country; from *tawhidi janata* demanding the release of a harasser, to the death of an eight-year-old girl who succumbed to her injuries after being allegedly gang-raped by her male family members—there seems to be no safe corner left for Bangladesh's women. After a week of convoluted and factually incorrect statements by the home affairs adviser, met with fierce protests, the interim government finally initiated steps to arrest the alleged perpetrators. It is disappointing, to say the least, to witness the sluggish response of a cabinet comprising members who built their careers on "women's empowerment." There is greater fervour in finding "fascists," shifting blame onto the previous government's failures than in addressing today's gendered horrors. The AL government often blamed everything on the BNP and the general "anti-Ekattor er chetona/razakars." The blame-game narrative remains unchanged.

An excellent body of work has emerged on the culture of misogyny and impunity, in the face of growing religious conservatism. However, an important piece of the puzzle is still missing from these analyses: why, globally, Bangladesh continues to be one of the most unsafe countries for women when its national success was achieved on women's backs. I would, therefore, argue for a critical

class analysis of gender and violence, which is often simplified as a rights and development issue or reduced to a general description of shame/honour culture. Critical class analysis is understudied in Bangladesh's academia, yet class struggle lies at the core of gender-politics-violence.

Returning to Iran and Egypt, we saw how, as a reaction against the morally and financially corrupt autocratic regimes, religious conservatism rose within the middle and lower-middle income groups. Along with financial corruption, autocrats concentrate power through fearmongering and social gatekeeping, preventing socio-economic mobility and leading to class tensions. In such contexts, controlling women's bodies and sexuality becomes pivotal to class struggle, which is usually watered down as a mere progressive vs fundamentalist dichotomy.

Partha Chatterjee's critique of the "*bhodroloksomaj*"—the respectability class of Bengal Renaissance—argued for Indian sovereignty on two important points: (a) the scientific prowess of the "native" educated elite, at par with their British colonisers; and (b) the Indian moral superiority, embodied in the propriety and spirituality of Indian women (Chatterjee, 1994). The mark of modernity was to pursue scientific knowledge, including the "allowance" of women's education, while ensuring their spiritual and physical virtue (e.g. Begum Rokeya Shakhawat Hossain, the women of the Tagore household). When it came to practices of gendered propriety—*zenana/purdah*, marriage as the sole option for women, Sita-esque purity imposition—Hindu and Muslim men were united (Hoek, 2013; Lal, 2005).

Indian feminists have shown that South Asia's decolonial movement was primarily an exchange of power between colonial and elite native men, leaving the subaltern—mainly women and lower caste class groups—out of decision-making (Chatterji, 2007). Colonial administrative, legislative, and judicial systems, based on European puritanical and racist beliefs regarding gender and sexuality, form the basis of post-independence state-building (Baxi, 2013; Karim, 2012; Menon, 2000; Siddiqui, 2024). The Penal Code, 1860 and Evidence Act, 1872 systemically established two simultaneous notions: (a) that native women are "habitual liars" and not to be trusted, and (b) that to charge a man with rape, it must be proved beyond doubt, making the woman's "character" central in sexual assault cases (Baxi, 2013). This is reflected in

the infamous two-finger/virginity test, which, despite being repealed (2014) and banned (2018) by the High Court (Hossain, 2016; Huda, 2022), is still practised in medico-legal examinations (Siddiqui, 2024). Although the colonial penal system has been reformed, it lacks a fundamental overhaul to ensure restorative justice. Even the special law Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000, focuses on protecting women's honour to prevent

("biye tikano") for fear of losing social and economic status, allowing male violence and questionable behaviours to continue.

Irrespective of gender, I found service providers quite conservative, often letting personal beliefs influence professional duties. These providers—police, doctors, junior-mid-level government officers, lawyers, NGO workers—are usually first-generation urban residents, part of the "new" middle class,

women's rights as a development problem rather than a crisis of citizenship. The donor-driven development sector—with "patchwork developmentalism"—has turned women into apolitical categories—"poor/vulnerable," "RMG workers," "youth," and "victims"—marred with paternalistic language and band-aid solutions.

As one of the posters from the recent protests rightfully stated, women are citizens/vote banks only during elections. The rest of the time, they are "cheap" emotional and industrial labour that keep the home and national economies running. The result of both—the conservative economic middle class and the progressive (classist) elites—is the perpetuation of structural violence through familial and state systems.

In the absence of critical discourse on marriage class sexuality, patriarchal relations, i.e. kinship, to a man remain the primary option for accessing resources for women. Men have no incentive to question or destabilise their own power hierarchies and women are co-opted into violent structures. This is why known sex offenders and assaulters, without facing any consequences, continue to be celebrated for the respective positions they hold in society. This is why we use passive terms such as "violence against women" or "gender-based violence" rather than the active voice: "men assaulting women," or "men raping girls." This is why madrasa teachers can hide behind "but the devil made me do it" narratives, gaining sympathy from their peers. This is what delays policymakers in taking immediate actions and prioritising the issue as a national crisis. This is also why women across class divide perpetuate violent kinship structures, protect the men in their lives, and morally police one another.

Socio-cultural and political realms of Bangladesh do not view women as viable, political, active citizens who deserve not just rights, but the dignity to live our lives on our own terms. The male protestors of the anti-discrimination student movement welcomed their female peers when they stood as shields before them. Like all things with women in Bangladesh, once their presence was utilised fully, they were pushed to the sideline.

Undoubtedly, there has been an unprecedented rise in male violence against women but the patriarchal culture of impunity, and undermining women as anything other than industrial or reproductive labour, is also nothing new. The "*bhodroshomaj*" has been killing us for a long time. As long as we continue to function within Victorian patriarchal political and legal structures that, by design, are to ensure male domination, we will remain as subjects, not citizens, in our own country.

The question is: do we keep taking to the street every time a gruesome rape happens and settle with little band-aid solutions, or do we rip it all apart and demand a social upheaval where women are no longer apolitical categories but political citizens with dignity?



FILE VISUAL: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

violence. Research shows that this law is often abused, and in authentic cases, the system fails survivors (Ibid).

Having conducted ethnographic research on the medico-legal procedures of sexual violence in Bangladesh, I frequently encountered the intersection of class and propriety across the board. Young people, for instance, aspire to achieve class mobility through education, employment and marriage. Across class divisions, marriage still remains significantly important as men attain "manhood" status and women uphold familial status through it. In a society where marriage is the only socially acceptable rite of passage for women, virginity or its perception is a powerful social capital to attain class and respectability (hence high child marriage rates) (Siddiqui, 2005; Siddiqui, 2024). From professional women's rights work to supporting divorcees, I can firmly state that it is a common misconception that only economically disenfranchised women stay in violent marriages. In fact, the middle class and above prolong unhealthy marriages

from across Bangladesh. The majority of this group received public or madrasa education, surrounded by a Middle East remittance-driven socio-cultural environment. Religiosity is both a matter of spirituality and strategic social capital building for them, often feeling justified in morally policing others. For example, similar to female garments workers adopting *purdah* as survival strategy (Kabeer, 1994), middle class women adopting *hijab* practices to access higher education and "respectable" jobs (Huq, 2021).

The stakeholders, on the other hand, were part of the "old" middle class which is more of a social status than an economic marker. The elite minority is usually a complex mix of the upper-middle class with the uber-rich, related by blood or marriage. Religion is also used by many in this category to "socially whiten" financial corruption. Given their power-coopted position, they tend to generalise religious others with colonial, racist undertones, showing little understanding of dynamics outside. The elite class frames

JUSTICE  
DELAYED  
IS JUSTICE  
DENIED.  
BUT  
JUSTICE  
HURRIED IS  
JUSTICE  
BURIED



LAW OPINION

## Is rushed justice 'just'?

**Proposals to complete investigations hastily, without addressing the underlying law-and-order issues, are not quite connected with the reality. First, let us assess whether forensic reports or proper investigations can be obtained even within a month. Only after that can we discuss how a comprehensive investigation can be concluded in 15 days.**

MD. ZAHID HOSSAIN

There is a well-known saying in law, "justice hurried is justice buried". It means the more rushed the justice process is, the more it will compromise the transparency and acceptability of the judicial proceedings. In essence, the case itself will be doomed. On 9 March 2025, Professor Dr. Asif Nazrul, the Honorable Adviser, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, noted that to swiftly complete the trials of rape cases, investigation will be completed in 15 days and trial will complete in 90 days. While this appears to be a step in the right direction, it raises important concerns regarding the thoroughness of the legal process.

According to Bangladesh's Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, the investigation and trial of any crime must follow a prescribed process. On the other hand, the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 specify provisions for the expedited trial of crimes such as rape. However, even with a solid legal framework, one must ask: can a comprehensive and thorough investigation, which is critical to proving the crime, be completed within a brief timeframe and what will be the consequences if the investigations are not thorough?

Crimes like rape often require DNA and

forensic reports right from the outset. However, due to the limitations of forensic laboratories and their heavy caseloads in Bangladesh, it typically takes at least a month to receive a DNA test report. If it is attempted to be rushed, there is a good chance that we may get the wrong results vitiating the entire process.

Furthermore, the time required for crime scene inspections, gathering statements from victims and witnesses, obtaining medical reports, are all significant. If these procedures are rushed, the quality of the investigation will be inevitably compromised. As a result, the case will lack credibility in court, and the merit of the case could be ruined from the start.

Speedy resolutions without thorough procedural alignment only increase the likelihood of flawed investigation reports and decisions. This can potentially also lead to wrongful release of real perpetrators as insufficient evidence or a weak chargesheet could allow actual criminals to be acquitted. Moreover, innocent individuals may be convicted. This will not only cause immense frustration for the victims but also create opportunities for criminals to continue their criminal activities.

Moreover, while public opinion may influence lower courts, the Supreme Court

is less moved by mass sentiments due to the temporal gap between the two judicial processes. As a result, hurried judgments given by lower courts often do not hold up in higher courts. Therefore, it is often seen that a decision, reached upon significant public protests, is later changed by the higher court. Indeed, the saying "justice hurried is justice buried" remains valid. On the other hand, "justice delayed is justice denied" is also true. Swift justice is essential, but it must not undermine procedural justice.

Proposals to complete investigations within 15 days and trials within 90 days, without addressing the underlying law-and-order issues, are not quite connected with the reality. First, let us assess whether forensic reports or proper investigations can be obtained even within a month. Only after that can we discuss how a comprehensive investigation can be concluded in 15 days. Rushing sensitive issues, such as rape cases, will ultimately lead to injustice disguised as justice.

The result of inadequate and flawed investigations is quite predictable – acquittal of the accused. Justice must be rooted in the law and fairness, not in haste.

The writer is Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

LAW LETTER

## Payment of dower and economic realities

Recently, on 6 March the Cumilla Family Court of Chandina gave out a decision regarding the payment of dower (mahr), stating that the dower amount should be adjusted according to inflation and currency devaluation. This means that the husband must pay the dower based on the current value of money, not the amount set at the time of marriage.

This decision, if sustained, will change the way we currently interpret the law relating to dower. The judgment ensures that the dower keeps its real value over time. It may be argued that the decision was given by the court under the power given to it by section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 (CPC). The section reads, "nothing in this Code shall be deemed to limit or otherwise affect the inherent power of the Court to make such orders as may be necessary for the ends of justice or to prevent abuse of the process of the Court." However, the ruling has sparked a debate, with many lawyers and legal experts supporting it as a fair and modern approach, while others are disagreeing.

Traditionally, dower is fixed at the time of marriage. But inflation and currency devaluation reduce its real worth. This means a woman may receive much less than what was originally intended, not in terms of amount but in terms of worth when the dower is not fully paid at the time of the marriage. This ruling takes a more dynamic approach by suggesting that if the dower is not paid at the time of marriage, it should be recalculated based on the current currency rate to ensure fairness.

This case has reignited discussions on how financial obligations in marriage should be addressed in light of economic realities. The need for a just and practical approach to dower valuation has been reflected here. It is submitted that, considering the complexities of inflation, the dower amount should be adjusted to reflect the current economic conditions rather than being bound by outdated financial standards. In the alternative, to ensure fairness, dower may be provided in the form of tangible assets, such as gold or land, which retain their value over time and are not as susceptible to currency fluctuations.

However, there are some concerns. Some legal experts worry that changing the dower amount based on inflation might cause legal confusion and affect traditional contract laws. Others argue that this change is necessary to ensure justice and fairness.

The author believes that this judgment is an effort to balance tradition with modern financial realities. It may set an example for future cases on financial rights in marriage. Whether it will be fully accepted or not is uncertain as of now, but it has started an important discussion on how laws should adapt to realities, if at all.

Tahsina Zaman,  
Student of Law,  
Bangladesh University of Professionals.



LAW VISION

## A comprehensive legal approach to the crime of rape

**Improving forensic and medical evidence collection is vital to securing successful convictions. Bangladesh should invest in state-of-the-art forensic labs and ensure that medical professionals receive specialised training in handling evidence related to sexual violence.**

MD. MAHABUB UL ALAM KHAN

A recent report from the Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) has highlighted that in February 2025, there were 295 recorded incidents of violence against women and children in Bangladesh. The high number of cases, especially involving children, indicates a deepening crisis of sexual violence in Bangladesh.

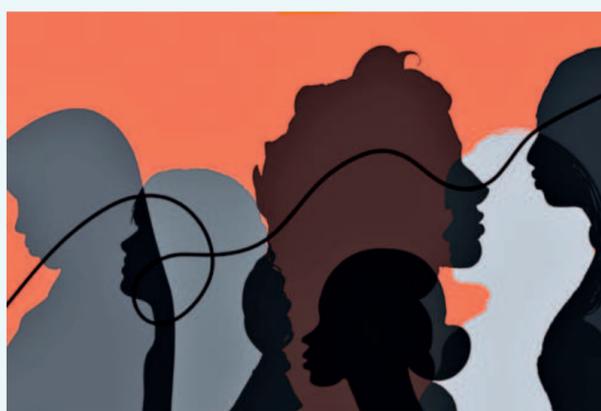
Despite the staggering number of reported incidents, the justice system's response has been critically insufficient. Convictions for such crimes remain exceptionally low, casting doubt on the efficacy of the legal framework in addressing violence against women and children. According to data from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, only 24 perpetrators have been convicted in the past five years for such crimes, a number that is alarmingly small given the scope of the problem. This highlights systemic failures in the legal system, ranging from delayed and flawed investigations and inadequate evidence collection to societal factors such as victim-blaming and a lack of proper support for survivors.

In Bangladesh, the legal framework surrounding rape is primarily governed by the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 (WCRPA), which was significantly amended in 2020 to impose more stringent punishments, including life imprisonment or the death penalty for perpetrators of rape. Section 9 of the Act lays down the punishment

for rape, with a particular focus on cases involving gang rape, custodial rape, or death of the victim. This Act is complemented by the Penal Code 1860, which provides the definition of rape under section 375, classifying it as sexual intercourse without consent, against a woman's will or by putting her in fear of death or hurt.

The Evidence Act 1872, infamously allowed questioning a victim's past sexual history, often to discredit their testimony. However, a significant reform in 2022 removed section 155(4), which used to permit such questioning, protecting the dignity of survivors and ensuring a fairer trial. Despite these comprehensive legal provisions, the implementation of rape laws faces persistent challenges in Bangladesh, which include, delays in investigations and trials, poor evidence collection, and finally leading to low conviction rates.

One of the most pressing issues is the delay in the judicial process. While the WCRPA mandates that rape trials should be completed within 180 days, in practice, many cases take years to reach a conclusion due to subsisting backlog, lack of resources, and procedural delays. This extended waiting period not only discourages survivors from pursuing legal action but also leaves them vulnerable to ongoing social stigma and victimisation. Witness intimidation also plays a significant role in undermining the trial process, as witnesses may be coerced into retracting their statements or



withdrawing from testifying. Moreover, dedicated police units trained in handling sexual violence cases would ensure that victims are treated with dignity and sensitivity from the moment a case is reported. Drawing inspiration from the UK's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), Bangladesh could appoint professionals to support rape survivors in navigating the complexities, helping with the access to both psychosocial counseling and legal guidance. This would reduce the psychological burden on victims and ensure they do not feel isolated during the trial process. Further, improving forensic and medical evidence collection is vital to securing successful convictions. Bangladesh should invest in state-

of the art forensic labs and ensure that medical professionals receive specialised training in handling evidence related to sexual violence. In addition to legal reforms, social and cultural attitudes toward sexual violence must change. Victims often face social stigma, especially in rural communities where rape survivors are often blamed for the assault or pressured to settle the matter privately. To counter this, the government should implement nationwide public awareness campaigns focusing on gender equality, victim rights, and the importance of respectful relationships. Incorporating gender based violence education into the school curriculum would also be an effective long-term strategy to prevent future occurrences

of sexual violence. Public education should also emphasise consent, gender stereotypes, nature and punishment of sexual offences etc.

Additionally, establishing rape crisis centers across the country should offer comprehensive support to rape survivors, from medical care to legal assistance and psychological counseling. These centers would provide survivors with a safe space to report the crime, access legal help, and receive support without fear of discrimination or reprisal. Legal aid should be available to all survivors, particularly for those who cannot afford it, to ensure equitable access to justice.

Finally, addressing witness intimidation is crucial for ensuring that rape victims can safely testify. The government should establish a national witness protection program to safeguard the safety of victims and witnesses throughout the trial process. This would encourage more survivors to come forward and participate in legal proceedings without fear of retribution from the perpetrators.

By adopting these recommendations and drawing from successful international models, Bangladesh can strengthen its legal response to rape and improve victim support services, ensuring that survivors receive the justice they deserve and that perpetrators are held accountable.

The writer is research associate, The Lawyers & Jurists.

"They look lost. I think they look scared and just scared to make a mistake. I do think Bruno (Fernandes) is the one who keeps producing. But it needs massive changes to the squad. I think 10 to 15 players need to leave the club,"

Manchester United great **Wayne Rooney** said about the club, who are 14th in the Premier League.



"I've never seen the VAR called to review a penalty in a shootout... Never! Did you see him touching the ball twice? Please whoever was present in the stadium and saw him touching the ball twice, the ball moving, please come forward and raise your hand! I don't see anybody with their hand raised so that's all I have to say... next question."

Atletico Madrid coach **Diego Simeone** was fuming with the referee's decision to rule out Julian Alvarez's spot kick in the penalty shootout.



"We made it more difficult by losing unnecessary balls that constantly found us out of position... If they scored 2-0, then the game could have gotten out of control. We wanted to finish the game before penalties, sure, but here we are, still fighting and in contention, as is customary at this club."

Real Madrid coach **Carlo Ancelotti** was relieved to win the game.



PHOTO: AFP

## Over a dozen goals scored, but does it help Bangladesh?

ANISUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh national football team scored more than 12 goals in a match on Thursday. At first glance, this might seem like an extraordinary feat, a reason to celebrate the team's attacking prowess -- especially since Bangladesh are not known for scoring heavily at the international level.

However, when placed in context, it raises concerns about the Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) planning and vision.

With an eye on their upcoming Asian Cup Qualifiers opener against a strong Indian side on March 25, the national team is currently undergoing a training camp in Taif, Saudi Arabia. As part of their preparations, Bangladesh played a practice match against Al-Wehdat Football Club of Taif City -- an academy team based in Makkah -- and dominated. Although the team management did not disclose the exact scoreline, sources indicate that Bangladesh netted over a dozen goals.

"It has been good practice for the players. Most of them got at least 45 minutes on the pitch, and it was a valuable opportunity to implement what we have been working on over the past eight days in Saudi Arabia," head coach Javier Cabrera said in a video message provided by the BFF.

Following the match, questions have been raised about whether playing against an academy side and scoring so many goals serves as ideal preparation for Bangladesh. Meanwhile, India are set to play a single practice match against the Maldives on March 19 at the same venue in Shillong, where they will host Bangladesh in the qualifiers.

Cabrera's charges also participated in a one-hour practice session, a gym workout, meetings, and other activities on the same day as the match. This highlights how comfortable the game was for them, as they still had enough energy left for additional drills.

Italy-based Fahamedul Islam also featured in the match, though details on how the right-winger performed and adapted alongside local players remain unknown.

"We will continue our preparations and hope to play at least one more practice match while in Saudi Arabia," Cabrera stated. However, he had previously mentioned that Bangladesh would play three practice matches, including one against Sudan, which was later canceled due to scheduling conflicts.

Additionally, Bangladesh are awaiting the arrival of Hamza Choudhury, who plays for Sheffield United in the Premier League. He is expected to join the camp on March 17, meaning he will miss all practice matches, making it more challenging for him and the team to build chemistry.

Given these circumstances, one must question whether Bangladesh would have benefited more from playing against the country's top domestic clubs -- such as Abahani, Bashundhara Kings, and Bangladesh Police FC -- who are currently in training for the Bangladesh Premier League.



## Alvarez slips, Real do it again

STAR SPORTS DESK

When it comes to the Champions League, Real Madrid somehow get the job done -- Los Blancos have all but established this notion simply because of the way they have been churning out victories in the competition.

Manchester City, Chelsea, PSG, and Bayern Munich have all been victims of Real's ruthless resilience in the past decade -- even at times when it seemed almost impossible to stage a comeback.

Wednesday was such a night when Real were never on top of their game, yet they still managed to walk out as winners following a 4-2 win on penalties after their last 16 tie against city rivals Atletico Madrid ended in a 2-2 aggregate scoreline at the Metropolitan stadium.

However, the talking point of the game has been the decision to rule out Julian Alvarez's penalty during the shootout.

### The Incident

Alvarez stepped up for Atletico's second penalty after Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe, Jude Bellingham, and Atletico's Alexander Sorloth had already converted. As Alvarez ran towards the ball, he slipped but managed to keep his shot on target. The ball flew into the roof of the net.

### The VAR Intervention

Confusion arose in the moments that followed. Before Federico Valverde could take Real's next penalty, referee Szymon Marciniak halted play for a VAR review.

While initial replays broadcast worldwide were inconclusive, the VAR found evidence that Alvarez's left foot had made contact with the ball before he struck it with his right.

The final VAR decision confirmed: "Atleti player, No. 19, double touched the ball when the penalty kick was taken."

### The Aftermath

Referee Marciniak signaled the double



### CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERFINALS

#### FIRST LEGS

8 April

Arsenal vs Real Madrid

Bayern München vs Inter

9 April

Paris vs Aston Villa

Barcelona vs Borussia Dortmund

#### SECOND LEGS

15 April

Aston Villa vs Paris

Borussia Dortmund vs Barcelona

16 April

Real Madrid vs Arsenal

Inter vs Bayern München

touch by holding up two fingers, but the decision was not immediately communicated to the stadium. Atletico fans, unaware of the ruling, continued celebrating despite their team now trailing 2-1.

A clearer replay angle, captured from behind the goal and released nearly an hour after full time, showed that Alvarez's sliding left foot had nudged the ball onto his right foot before the strike.

Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois later revealed that he had sensed an irregular touch and informed the referee. "I sensed that Alvarez touched the ball twice, and I told the referee," Courtois said. "It's not easy to see, and it's bad luck for them."

Meanwhile, CBS Sports' FIFA rules expert Christina Unkel explained that ball-tracking technology contributed to the decision.

"The rule is simple and straightforward -- if the ball is touched twice, it's an infringement. Additionally, VAR has access to semi-automated offside technology, which helps detect contact with the ball at the precise moment of impact," Unkel explained.

**What Happened Before The Shootout**  
Conor Gallagher's strike 27 seconds into the game at the Metropolitan stadium had levelled the scores on aggregate.

Gallagher's close-range finish cancelled out Real's 2-1 lead from the first leg last week, but the reigning champions could have progressed inside 90 minutes. They won a spot-kick midway through the second half when Kylian Mbappe was hauled down by Clement Lenglet after accelerating into the box.

However, Vinicius Junior blazed his kick high over the bar, and the game went to extra time and then penalties with no further scoring.

## UEFA TO REVIEW PENALTY RULE

UEFA said the correct decision was made to disallow Julian Alvarez's penalty in Atletico Madrid's Champions League loss to city rivals Real Madrid on Wednesday but European football's governing body would enter discussions to review the rule. "Although minimal, the player made contact with the ball using his standing foot before kicking it. Under the current law (Rules of the Game, Law 14.1), the VAR had to call the referee signalling that the goal should be disallowed. UEFA will enter discussions with FIFA and IFAB (International Football Association Board) to determine whether the rule should be reviewed in cases where a double touch is clearly unintentional," UEFA said in a statement on Thursday.



Forward **Marco Asensio** came off the bench and scored twice to help Aston Villa to a comfortable 3-0 win over Club Brugge at home in the second leg of their last-16 encounter of the Champions League. Asensio, who joined Villa from PSG in the January transfer window, scored his seventh goal since the switch. His brace in the second-half on Wednesday helped Villa to a 6-1 aggregate win, setting a reunion with his parent club in the last eight of the competition.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Need to give time to Riyadh, Mushfiqur's replacements'

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud was disappointed that Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad could not bid goodbye from ODIs from the field and said patience would be key in finding replacements for the veteran duo.

"They had glorious careers. Their careers are a bright chapter in Bangladesh cricket. They took Bangladesh cricket from one place to another. So, they deserved to retire from the field," Mahmud, who is one of the only Bangladesh cricketers who retired from the field, told the media in Mirpur yesterday.

"Leaving the game is painful, especially as it's something you love the most. But of course, both of them made wise decisions regarding the timing of their retirement," he added.

Mahmud was part of the Bangladesh dressing room in different capacities for a big chunk of the 'Big Five' era of the national team -- a period in which the likes of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah were the core of the side.

But after Mahmudullah announced his retirement from international cricket on Wednesday, just days after



Mushfiqur also quit the ODI format, no member of the 'Big Five' are now currently a part of the 50-over setup.

Although the 'Big Five' have achieved a lot as individuals, but in terms of getting Bangladesh to the next level, a big trophy remained elusive.

By comparison, the previous generation of cricketers like Minhajul Abedeen, Aminul Islam Bulbul and Mahmud helped Bangladesh cricket make a giant leap by lifting the ICC Trophy in 1997, a triumph that took

Bangladesh to its maiden ODI World Cup in 1999 and eventually made way for them to attain Test status.

The 'Big Five' came close to winning the Asia Cup multiple times, finishing as runners-up thrice, reached the semifinal of the ICC Champions Trophy in 2017 and the quarterfinal of the ODI World Cup in 2015, but could not win any notable silverware as their triumphs were mostly limited to bilateral successes.

Both Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah

faced public ire on social media after Bangladesh's poor showing in the recently-concluded Champions Trophy, where both of them also failed to deliver and soon after announced that they are stepping away.

Mahmud spoke about the harsh criticism the team faced after the Champions Trophy disaster which he felt crossed limits at times.

"Of course, there were expectations from the Champions Trophy but you have to be realistic. The boys too will have to take responsibility for failures but there can't be such bitter criticism like we saw on social media."

The big question in Bangladesh cricket right now is who will replace Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah in ODIs moving ahead.

Although Mahmud did not name any names, he said patience would be key in finding the proper replacements.

"You can't buy the experience of Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah. They were not big stars from the beginning; they built themselves up gradually."

"This is not musical chairs. If you drop someone after just one game then you would need 70 players in the pipeline. BCB is getting players from the pipeline and investing in them. You have to give them time."

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## Arefin Siddique passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Abu Ahsan Mohammad Shamsul Arefin Siddique, widely known as AAMS Arefin Siddique, passed away at a city hospital yesterday.

He was 72. Prof Siddique, who served as the Dhaka University vice-chancellor for two consecutive terms, breathed his last at

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At the end of the workday, bumper-to-bumper traffic is seen on city streets as people rush to get home in time for iftar. The photo was taken at Panthapath in the capital yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## EC employees demonstrate nationwide

Insist on keeping NID services under EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding the National Identity Card registration services remain under the Election Commission jurisdiction, its officials and employees yesterday demonstrated at the EC headquarters in the capital and election offices across the country.

They formed human chains and held sit-in programmes from 11:00am to 1:00pm, causing suspension of all types of services, including NID, during that time.

If no visible steps are taken in this regard by March 18, EC employees announced that they will observe a three-hour work abstention from 9:00am on March 19.

"We believe that NID services should remain under the EC," EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said while responding to a reporter's query at the EC.

He further explained, "We have been developing this system since 2007. We have technical expertise and are providing the required services."

"Since this is an established system, it is logical to

**If no visible steps are taken in this regard by March 18, EC employees announced that they will observe a three-hour work abstention from 9:00am on March 19.**

## 'Let us do our job; please do not attack us' IGP urges people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam yesterday urged the public not to attack law enforcement officers, emphasising the importance of allowing police to perform their duties.

"Let us do our job; please do not attack us. We are part of this society... citizens of this country. How can we ensure stability if we are unable to work? If we cannot perform our duties, how will we move towards a fair election?" he said.

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## Israel attack on Gaza IVF clinic a 'genocidal act'

Finds UN probe; Netanyahu slams claims as 'false'

AFP, Geneva

A United Nations investigation yesterday concluded that Israel carried out "genocidal acts" in Gaza through the destruction of its main IVF clinic, maternity facilities and other reproductive healthcare facilities.

The UN Commission of Inquiry said Israel had "intentionally attacked and destroyed" the Palestinian territory's main fertility centre, and had simultaneously imposed a siege and

blocked aid including medication for ensuring safe pregnancies, deliveries and neonatal care.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reacted by calling the findings "false and absurd".

In a statement, the UN commission said it found that Israeli authorities "have destroyed in part the reproductive capacity of Palestinians in Gaza as a group through the systematic destruction of sexual and reproductive healthcare".

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## Yunus-Xi talks on March 28

Dhaka terms Delhi's comments unwarranted

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus is set to hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on March 28, said the foreign ministry yesterday.

This would be Yunus's first high-level bilateral meeting since taking office on August 8 last year.

Yunus is expected to depart for China, Bangladesh's largest trading partner, in the afternoon of March 26, Rafiqul Alam, the foreign ministry's

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expand the existing structure instead of creating a new one. This is what we have been reiterating."

Asked whether NID data is secure under the EC, he responded, "A total of 182 organisations access data from the EC, along with other agencies. They do so because the data is secure."

Regarding the continuation of NID services under the EC, its secretariat on March 9 in a letter said that this decision would curtail the constitutional authority of the EC.

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## UNTIL THEY LEARN TO FLY

A mother sunbird is feeding insects to her little chicks. She will nurture her babies until they learn to fly, at which point they will leave the nest. Belonging to the Nectariniidae family, these birds are adept at hovering near flowers, much like hummingbirds, to sip nectar using their long, curved beaks. Apart from nectar, sunbirds also feed on insects, contributing to pollination and pest control. They are commonly found in tropical regions across Africa, Asia, and Australia. In Bangladesh, several species of sunbirds are seen inhabiting forests, gardens, and areas dense with shrubs and trees. Sunbirds are renowned for their skilful nest-building, constructing intricate oval-shaped nests hanging from branches. Their agility, beauty, and role in the ecosystem make them fascinating creatures to observe! This photo was taken recently near Shaheed Sheikh Abu Naser Specialised Hospital in Khulna's Khalishpur.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Putin questions US-backed ceasefire plan

Says lots need to be discussed before deal

AGENCIES

Vladimir Putin has said he has many questions about the proposed US-brokered ceasefire with Ukraine and appeared to set out a series of sweeping conditions that would need to be met before Russia would agree to such a truce.

Speaking at a press conference at the Kremlin alongside the Belarusian president, Alexander Lukashenko, Putin said that he agreed in principle with US proposals to halt the fighting but said he wanted to address the "root causes of the conflict".

"The idea [US ceasefire] itself is correct, and we certainly support it," Putin said.

But he suggested that Ukraine should neither rearm nor mobilise and

that western military aid to Kyiv be halted during the 30-day ceasefire.

Donald Trump responded briefly before a meeting with the Nato secretary general, Mark Rutte, saying that Putin had "made a very promising statement, but it was not complete".

The US president said he was "ready to talk to Putin".

"We will see if Russia agrees, and if not, it will be a very disappointing moment," he said.

By avoiding an outright rejection of Trump's ceasefire proposal, Putin appears to be balancing between not openly rebuffing Trump's push for peace while also imposing his own stringent demands - potentially prolonging negotiations.



## PRAYER TIMING MARCH 14

	Fajr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4:53	12:30	4:30	6:08	7:30
JAMAAT	5:03	1:15	4:45	6:23	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
13	14	6:08	6:08
14	15	4:51	6:08
15	16	4:50	6:08

**SYED MANZUR ELAHI**  
(26<sup>TH</sup> SEP 1942 - 12<sup>TH</sup> MAR 2025)

We at Paramount Group extend our heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of Syed Manzur Elahi and to Apex Group.

A visionary entrepreneur and the founder of Apex Group, he was instrumental in shaping Bangladesh's trade and industry. As the founding & serving Chairman of Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) and two-time adviser to the caretaker Government, his leadership and contributions left a lasting impact. His pioneering efforts in the footwear industry brought Bangladesh global recognition, and his dedication to excellence earned him numerous awards.

We honor his legacy of vision, leadership, and integrity. May his soul rest in eternal peace.