



A young girl takes a dip in a waterbody inside Suhrawardy Udyan, trying to cool off amid the ongoing heat wave. According to the meteorological office, soaring temperatures could continue throughout this month with the possibility of reaching the level of a severe heat wave. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Three held for harassing female journo in Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-3 yesterday arrested three individuals, including the prime accused, in a case filed over the harassment of a female journalist in the capital's Rampura area.

The prime accused, Shoaib Rahman Zishan, 25, was arrested from Meradia, Rampura, early yesterday.

Following his information, law enforcers arrested Md Raisul Islam, 21, in the Bailey Road area and Md Kawsar Hossain, 21, from Gendaria.

The arrests were made following an investigation, Sanad Barua, senior assistant superintendent of police, said in a press release.

According to Rab-3, the incident, which occurred on Wednesday night, went viral on social media, triggering widespread outrage. Upon noticing the matter, they immediately launched a shadow investigation.

A case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act was filed at Rampura Police Station against the named and unidentified accused.

The arrestees are currently in police custody, and legal proceedings are underway at Rampura Police Station, Rab-3 officials confirmed.

Rafia Tamanna, a journalist with New Age, was sexually harassed, and her two companions, including her brother, were assaulted by a group of unruly youths in Rampura on Wednesday night.

## Teen held over rape of 6-year-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A case was filed on Wednesday over the rape of a six-year-old girl in Kabirhat upazila of Noakhali.

The mother of the child filed the case under the Child Abuse Prevention Act in connection with the incident that took place on March 23.

Kabirhat Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Md Shahin Mia confirmed the matter yesterday. Police have arrested the accused, a 16-year-old from Dhanshalik union of the upazila, and sent him to court.

According to the case statement, on March 23, the accused had allegedly taken the victim to an abandoned tin-shed room and raped her while her parents were busy at home.

Afterwards, the child's health deteriorated, and the mother eventually filed the case.

# One in every 41 births a stillborn

Say UN reports on Bangladesh; at least 1 lakh children die before reaching 5

ISSUES	BANGLADESH RECORDS OVER 63,000 STILLBIRTHS ANNUALLY, HIGHEST IN SA	RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High home delivery rates</li> <li>Limited access to specialised care</li> <li>Shortage of trained midwives</li> <li>Inadequate postnatal care</li> <li>Unregulated private healthcare</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in primary healthcare</li> <li>Need more trained professionals</li> <li>Take action to improve maternal, newborn health</li> <li>Expand newborn care units</li> <li>Strengthen healthcare system</li> </ul>

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recent UN study revealed that Bangladesh records over 63,000 stillbirths each year, meaning there is one stillborn in every 41 births, the highest rate in the region.

Meanwhile, another study showed that over 1 lakh children in Bangladesh die before reaching five, with nearly two-thirds of those deaths occurring within the first 28 days of being born.

The new reports were published by the United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) recently. While progress has been made since 1990, Bangladesh continues

to record the highest rate of stillbirths in South Asia.

Experts said Bangladesh faces significant challenges in maternal and newborn care, with the country needing to save an additional 28,000 newborns annually to meet its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target.

"Over 1,00,000 newborns in Bangladesh die annually from preventable causes such as premature birth, complications during delivery, and infections like sepsis and pneumonia," said Farook Adrian Doomun, deputy representative (operations) of Unicef in Bangladesh.

This violates their basic need -- the right to survive and thrive,

he said. He stressed the need for increased investment in strengthening the healthcare system, particularly in primary healthcare, and expanding the number of trained professionals, including midwives, to ensure safe births.

WHO Representative in Bangladesh Dr Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, said, "Stillbirths and preventable child deaths remain a heartbreaking reality. While Bangladesh has made significant progress in maternal and child health, disparities in access to quality and timely care persist."

He emphasised that implementing WHO's prenatal,

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## Extortion main cause of violence in CHT: adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said strict action will be taken to stop extortion and terrorist activities in the hills.

"Extortion is the root cause of various forms of violence and problems in the hills, and without putting an end to extortion, the issues in the region cannot be resolved," he said while talking to reporters at the Rangamati Sector Headquarters of Border Guard Bangladesh.

"We have directed law enforcers to stop extortion, and no extortionist will be spared," he added.

The adviser warned against taking the law into one's own hands and urged citizens to seek assistance from law enforcers if they face any problems.

He said some Indian media outlets are dedicated to spreading false information about Bangladesh, and the response to this should come through truthful reporting by Bangladesh's media.

The home boss mentioned that the weapons looted from various police stations during the August mass uprising have not yet been recovered.

He said if these weapons can be retrieved, the problem will be significantly reduced.

Jahangir said the number of BGB camps in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is being increased to ensure security and prevent arms smuggling along the border. Before talking to reporters, Jahangir visited various BGB camps, shared Eid greetings with the force members, and also met with local dignitaries.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Adviser Supradip Chakma and BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui, among others, were present.

# Treat political ties of judges as misconduct

Recommends reform commission

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Judiciary Reform Commission has recommended that any judge showing political allegiance or expressing political views be considered guilty of misconduct and face disciplinary measures under the relevant code of conduct.

It also said judges must remain free from all forms of political influence and involvement.

Under the constitution, any judge of the Appellate or High Court Division of the Supreme Court can be removed from office for "misconduct" or "incapacity".

President Mohammed Shahabuddin removed Justice Khizir Hayat from his post as an HC judge for "misconduct" or "incapacity" under Article 96(6) of the constitution on March 18 this year, according to a notification issued by the law ministry on March 19.

The commission also stressed the need for political parties to make a clear commitment that they will not interfere



### RECOMMENDATIONS

Measures against politically aligned judges

Judges must be free from political influence

Commission for SC judge appointments

Prevent political activities on court premises

in the selection of candidates in elections of bar associations and the Bangladesh Bar Council.

The commission said the SC must issue clear directions to prohibit gatherings, processions, demonstrations, boycotts, or besiege activities within court premises, in line with a 2005 HC judgment, and must ensure compliance with this directive.

In its final report, submitted to the chief adviser on February 5, the reform body, led by Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, proposed introducing an independent commission

to appoint Supreme Court judges. This would prevent appointments based on political considerations and free the judiciary from the negative influence of party politics.

The report noted that the existing constitutional framework lacks proper provisions to safeguard judicial independence, leading to a growing trend of judicial politicisation over the last few decades.

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## Conspiracies on to obstruct uprising trials

Says ICT chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal Muhammad Tajul Islam yesterday alleged that individuals accused of crimes against humanity during the July uprising made significant financial investments to obstruct the trial.

"We have received specific information indicating that when these accused and their associates realised their trials were inevitable, they engaged in various conspiracies," he told a private TV channel.

He claimed that the accused fabricated stories to discredit the tribunal and undermine its credibility. "To support their propaganda, they launched targeted projects and made financial investments," he added.

Tajul urged the public to stand by the tribunal against the impending wave of propaganda, warning that without public support, it would be difficult for the investigation agency and prosecution to ensure justice for the martyrs.

"Any lapse in our efforts could disrupt the investigation and judicial proceedings," he emphasised.

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## Ex-EC secy Helal under scrutiny for Rohingya NID scam

ACC to probe 2018 polls irregularities

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched an investigation into financial transactions that allegedly enabled 55,310 displaced Rohingyas to obtain Bangladesh's national identity cards and irregularities in the 2018 parliamentary elections.

As part of the probe, the ACC is scrutinising Helal Uddin Ahmed, who was the Election Commission secretary at the time.

Multiple ACC sources confirmed this development to The Daily Star.

An ACC director general, speaking anonymously, said the investigation began after police recovered a Bangladeshi NID smart card from Nur Alam, a Rohingya who was killed in a reported gunfight in February 2019. The card had been issued by the regional election office in Chattogram.

**The ACC has sent letters to multiple government offices, including the Election Commission, requesting records of Helal's tenure and activities, as well as details of NIDs issued to him and his family.**

"Subsequent media reports revealed that Nur obtained the NID through financial transactions, prompting the ACC to investigate. Initially, Helal Uddin Ahmed's name did not appear in the probe, but later findings pointed to the involvement of high-ranking officials in facilitating fraudulent NID issuance for Rohingyas," the ACC official said.

On June 17, 2021, ACC Assistant Director Sharif

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Sand-laden barges stay docked by the bank of the Shitalakshya. With the Eid holidays underway, most of the workers are yet to return to the capital. The photo was taken in Demra yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN