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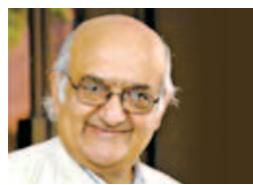
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ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Life term or death penalty for culprits

Proposes draft ordinance

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Government officials will face death penalty or minimum life sentence if found guilty of causing the death of enforced disappearance victims, according to a draft ordinance unveiled yesterday.

The draft "Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance 2025" also has provisions for financial penalties of up to Tk 1 crore for the perpetrators.

Government officials responsible for any enforced disappearance, but not guilty of causing the victims' death, will be sentenced to life term rigorous imprisonment or minimum 10 years in jail, and will also have to pay a fine of up to Tk 50 lakh.

If approved by the president, it will be for the first time that Bangladesh will recognise state-sponsored enforced disappearance and try the perpetrators in criminal courts. Currently, abductions or kidnaps are recognised under criminal laws, but enforced disappearances are not.

The draft ordinance has also provisions for trying the culprits in absentia.

If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the accused has gone into hiding, the court may issue a notice within 20 days of taking the charge sheet into cognisance, directing the accused to appear before the court.

"If the accused does not appear before the court within the specified time mentioned in the notice, the court may proceed to try the case in the absence of the accused," it added.

The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs yesterday shared the draft at its first stakeholders' meeting at the Judicial Administration Training Institute in Dhaka where selective jurists and rights activists offered their views on the proposed ordinance.

The draft seeks to set up tribunals, equivalent to district judges' courts, across the country within the 60 days of its formulation.

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PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Farmers are drying corn under the sun in the Matikata area of Godagari, Rajshahi. Each mound of dried corn sells for around Tk 1,100, which the farmers find satisfactory. Corn is mainly used as an additive for food items for humans and to make poultry feed. The photo was taken yesterday.

Yunus for a fresh vision for Bangladesh's future

At Earthna Summit, the CA says country close to new social contract rooted in inclusion, justice, dignity



"The exclusion of the poor from the financial system is one of the most powerful tools of disempowerment in our time. When people do not have access to capital, they cannot dream, they cannot build, and they cannot participate in shaping their own futures."

Prof Muhammad Yunus

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said Bangladesh now stands at a turning point to forge a new social contract in which financial inclusion and the empowerment of marginalised communities become integral.

In the new social contract, the state and its people, especially its youth, to create a future rooted in inclusion, tradition, justice, dignity, and opportunity, he said in his keynote speech at Earthna Summit 2025 in Doha, Qatar.

Earthna Centre for a Sustainable Future (Earthna), a member of Qatar Foundation, is organising the second edition of the summit.

Prof Yunus said financial inclusion is not a matter of charity, but justice.

"The exclusion of the poor from the financial system is one of the most powerful tools of disempowerment in our

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Interpol issues red notice for ex-IGP Benazir Says PHQ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) has issued a red notice against Benazir Ahmed, a former inspector general of police (IGP) during the Awami League regime.



"Interpol notified us about the issuance of a red notice against Benazir Ahmed recently," Enamul Haque Sagar, assistant inspector general (media) at the Police Headquarters (PHQ), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The notice was issued after the National Central Bureau (NCB) of the PHQ submitted a request to Interpol in February, following a directive from a Dhaka court based on

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Ensure CJ picked from 3 senior-most judges

BNP tells consensus commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The chief justice must be selected from among the three most senior judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, the BNP yesterday proposed.

Regarding judicial appointments, the party supports the proposal to form a Judicial Appointment Commission, but notes that it's important to discuss the matter in parliament.

The party also agrees with the proposal for appointment of qualified law professors as judges, BNP Standing Committee member Salauddin Ahmed told reporters after attending the third round of meetings with the National Consensus Commission at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

The BNP recommends amending Article 100 of the Constitution to mandate the establishment of circuit benches in divisional cities.

Salauddin said his party was committed to ensure the full independence of the judiciary.

"We want a separate Supreme Court Secretariat and the formation

because that would make "governance complicated".

These bodies should continue to operate in legislative frameworks, Salauddin said.

Besides, the party agrees with a reform proposal that says impeachment of the president should require a two-thirds majority vote from representatives of both houses of parliament.

On the issue of referendums, he said referendums should only be held for specific constitutional articles and that decisions on holding them should be left to representatives of future parliaments.

The constitution's preamble should be restored to its state prior to the 15th amendment, he said. That preamble neither mentioned secularism nor pluralism as fundamental principles of the state.

The party welcomed the commission's suggestion to include equality, human dignity, and social justice as fundamental principles.

To ensure a balance of power between the president and the prime minister, the BNP proposed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Can Bangladesh fend off Vietnam in RMG race?

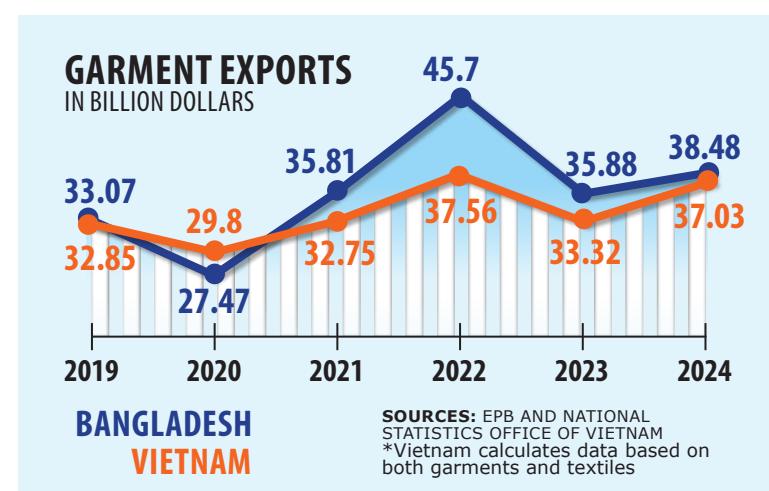
REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh's status as the world's second-largest garment exporter has become increasingly precarious, driven by a confluence of global trade shifts, regional competition and structural inefficiencies at home.

The imposition of 37 percent tariffs by the Trump administration has only intensified the pressure on Bangladesh, prompting industry leaders and analysts to express concern over the country's ability to maintain its global standing.

The country now faces a decisive test of its export resilience and trade negotiation capacity. For a sector built on cost competitiveness and heavily dependent on price-sensitive markets, the tariff escalation poses a direct threat to a business model long anchored in low-wage labour.

Many industry leaders are monitoring Vietnam's ascent warily. Although Vietnam faces a steeper tariff -- 46 percent compared to Bangladesh's 37 percent -- there is growing concern that Bangladesh's limited trade diplomacy, coupled with its slower shift towards value-added production, could allow Vietnam to surpass it in global



rankings.

"If we don't move fast, we will not be able to save the day," said Rubana Huq, former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

In 2023, Bangladesh accounted for 7.4 percent of global apparel exports, valued at \$38 billion, according to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Only China ranked higher, with \$165 billion in exports and a commanding 31.6

percent market share. Vietnam followed closely, exporting \$31 billion of garments and holding a 6 percent share.

These rankings, however, reflect 2023 performance. The WTO's 2024 data -- yet to be released -- may offer a clearer picture of shifting dynamics. Compounding concerns, the WTO revised Bangladesh's previously reported export figures downward by \$9 billion due to discrepancies in data submitted

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Mob justice can no longer be allowed Says home adviser

STAR REPORT

Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said mob justice can no longer be allowed at a time when the law-and-order situation in the country has improved significantly.

"Enough is enough. If anyone has an issue, they must seek legal recourse," he said at a discussion with armed forces and officials from various departments at the Jashore deputy commissioner's conference room yesterday.

On the weapons looted from police stations across the country during last year's mass uprising, the adviser said the weapons have not all been recovered. "All those weapons must be recovered as soon as possible."

About notorious criminals getting out on bail, he said, "While the issue of bail is not in our hands, as judges grant bail based on their discretion,

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MORE NEWS

Stocks fall for seventh consecutive day

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Realisations aplenty, execution zero

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আমরা শোকাত

গভীর শোক ও দুঃখের সঙ্গে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, খলিল ফ্লেচের কর্মধারী জোড়ার খলিল চোধুরী (একজন বিশিষ্ট ব্যবসায়ী, সমাজসেবক, শিক্ষাব্লগী ও মানবান্তরোপনী) আজ আমাদের মাঝে আব নেই (ইয়া লিপুরি ওয়া ইন্স ইলাইট রাজিউন)। তাঁর মৃত্যুতে আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাত। তিনি শুধু একজন সফল ডেনোডা না, ছিলেন একজন মানবান্তরী, সমাজের উন্নয়নে নিবেদিত প্রাণ মাধ্যম। তাঁর অভিব কখনো পূরণ হবার নয়।

আমরা তাঁর বিদ্যু আমাদের মাঝের মাঝে করছি। মরহমের জামাজ আমাজ আব বাদ জোহর বারিধারা বায়তুল আতিক আমে মাজিল অস্টিত হবে।

আল্লাহ তাঁকে জামাতুল ফেরাদুস নমিব করুন। আমিন।

খলিল ফ্লেচের সকল কর্মকর্তা, কর্মচারী ও পরিবারবর্গ।