

## Neonatal mortality

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Despite these issues, Bangladesh's broader child health indicators reflect substantial progress, said the study.

According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2022, the under-five mortality rate has dropped to 31 per 1,000 live births, nearing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of 25 by 2030.

However, neonatal mortality, accounting for the majority of under-five deaths, remains high at 20 per 1,000 live births, far from the SDG goal of 12, it said.

According to the study, Bangladesh aims to establish 62 SCANUS and 111 NSUs nationwide by 2025 to improve access to life-saving care for newborns.

However, researchers stressed that expanding facilities alone won't be enough. Stronger maintenance practices, equipment upgrades, and better resource allocation are crucial for improving care for the most vulnerable infants.

According to the UN

Inter agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), over 100,000 children in Bangladesh died before age five in 2023 -- nearly two-thirds of them within the first 28 days of life.

To meet SDG targets, Bangladesh must save an additional 28,000 newborns every year. This requires renewed efforts in maternal and newborn health, both in hospitals and at the community level, the study said.

At the conference, Bridget Job Johnson, deputy representative (OIC) of Unicef Bangladesh, said "Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing newborn and maternal deaths, but we're still losing a newborn every 8 minutes -- often from preventable causes like prematurity, low birth weight, birth asphyxia, and infection."

"To accelerate progress, we must support mothers and adolescents, improve nutrition, promote healthy birth spacing, and raise awareness to end preventable newborn and maternal deaths," she added.

## Timely polls

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He expresses hope that the government will take measures to ensure the election aligns with the people's expectations, saying, "There's no alternative to the election."

Meanwhile, at a meeting, BNP leader Amir Khasru has stressed the urgent need for clarity to prevent further uncertainty, saying, "Currently, the absence of an election announcement or roadmap by December is creating doubt, hesitation. Therefore, this needs to be addressed."

The meeting was held with Ganoforum leaders at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office.

"...Every party has already submitted their reform proposals to the government. Where has the government reached a consensus? Why is this not being presented to the public? This is the question everyone is asking," he told reporters.

A 12-member delegation of Ganoforum met BNP leader Amir Khasru and Vice-Chairman Barkatullah Bulu.

## Ensure long-term

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compensation. She said the current government had directed the prosecution to expedite proceedings. "Since I took charge last October, I've been instructed to ensure quick disposal. We're under pressure to complete it, and I hope it'll be resolved by next year."

Sifat Khanam of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) presented updates on the case and outlined several legal and policy recommendations.

She suggested forming a monitoring team of lawyers, journalists, trade unionists, and other private sector stakeholders to regularly track case progress.

She recommended daily hearings in Sessions and Labour Courts for all pending cases and proposed that the High Court assign a dedicated bench for pending petitions related to Rana Plaza.

She also urged the Ministry of Home Affairs and police to actively pursue outstanding arrest warrants and hold those responsible for delays accountable.

On compensation and rehabilitation, Sifat said victims of Rana Plaza -- and other workplace disasters like Tazreen -- should receive adequate

hours after the collapse. She suffered several injuries to her spine, legs, and head, and despite receiving treatment for a long time, she has not recovered enough to return to normal life.

In 2017, Rana was also sentenced to three years in prison in a separate graft case.

## BUILDING CODE VIOLATION CASE

Rajuk filed the second case on the day of the collapse for violating building codes while constructing Rana Plaza.

Charges were pressed against Sohel Rana and 17 others on May 24, 2015, and indictments followed on June 14, 2016.

However, the trial is still pending at the additional chief judicial magistrate's court of Dhaka.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Estiyak Hossain Zupu said the proceedings had been delayed due to the High Court stay orders, which were recently scrapped.

He expressed hope that the trial will start soon.

## VICTIMS STILL WAIT FOR JUSTICE

Nilufar Yasmin, who used to work as a sewing operator on the fifth floor, was rescued nine and a half

hours after the collapse. She suffered several injuries to her spine, legs, and head, and despite receiving treatment for a long time, she has not recovered enough to return to normal life.

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