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A rain-soaked sparrow perches on a branch, unable to fly. Two days of rain in Khulna have left many birds stranded with their nests washed away and no place to shelter. This photo was taken at the city's Shibbari intersection yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN

## Offenders now weaponising AI

Cyber Support for Women and Children reports 29 cases of cyber abuse in last 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cyber and gender-based violence in Bangladesh has seen a disturbing rise in the first half of 2025, with artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly being used to cause harm, according to a new report by the Cyber Support for Women and Children (CSWC) platform.

Between January and June, the CSWC recorded 29 incidents based on data compiled from media sources and human rights organisations.

The cases revealed a trend of technology-enabled abuse, including blackmail and sexual harassment through digitally recorded videos of rape incidents, AI-generated obscene images, and the unregulated online spread of private photos, videos, and personal information.

The report noted that the nature of these crimes is becoming more complex and layered, often involving

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## Rape cases already near last year's total count

481 incidents recorded from Jan-Jun in 2025, compared to 516 in all of 2024, says Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From January to June this year, 481 cases of rape against women and girls were reported in Bangladesh, with 345 of the victims being children, according to data from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

This figure is nearly as high as the total number of rape cases reported throughout all of last year, which was 516, the organisation noted.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad published these figures after compiling reports from 15 newspapers on violence against women and girls.

An analysis showed that in just six months of 2025, the number of reported rape incidents is only 35 fewer than the entirety of 2024. Among various forms of violence against women, rape remains the most common.

These findings were presented at a discussion titled "The Scenario of Violence Against Women and Girls:

## AT A GLANCE

- 345 of the victims children
- 106 cases involved gang rape
- 17 victims killed after the assault

Perspectives of Women Journalists" held yesterday at the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad's office in the capital's Segunbagicha.

Munima Sultana, special correspondent at The Financial Express and a member of the organisation's media subcommittee, and Afruza Arman, senior training and research officer at the organisation, presented two reports at the event.

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## SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

PBI allowed to interrogate accused Tanvir

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to interrogate Tanvir Rahman, an accused in the case filed over the murders of journalists couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Rumi in 2012.



Tanvir, a family friend of the couple, was arrested on October 10, 2012 in connection with the murders and later released on bail.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Minhazur Rahman passed the order after Investigation Officer Md Azizul Haque, also an additional superintendent of police at the PBI, appealed on May 21 in this regard.

The magistrate asked Tanvir to meet the IO on the next scheduled date.

A day before the death of the victims, Rumi met Tanvir in front of Square Hospital at Panthapath around 5:15pm on February 10, 2012 and travelled in Tanvir's car to different places in the capital.

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ENGINEERING SECTOR  
Buet students demand merit-based promotion

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) students staged a sit-in yesterday, demanding a recruitment test for promotions to assistant engineer or equivalent positions, alongside direct entry, and eligibility restricted to BSc engineering degree holders.

At a press briefing on the campus, they said sub-assistant engineers (10th grade) with diplomas are often promoted to 9th-grade assistant engineers through internal quotas, reducing entry-level opportunities for BSc graduates.

They alleged this violates rules allowing only 33% promotion per vacancy, yet nearly 100% are filled through promotion.

The protest, held in front of the registrar's building, included a three-point demand. Students also

## JP splits deepen as top leaders ousted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Participating in the next national election amid ongoing mob violence and a lack of security would be like "jumping into a pond with hands and feet tied," said Shameem Haider Patwari, newly appointed secretary general of the Jatiya Party (JP), yesterday.

He also announced the removal of three top leaders - Anisul Islam Mahmud, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, and Mujibul Haque Chunnu - from all party positions in line with the JP charter.

In response, the three leaders held a press conference in the capital, rejecting their removal and calling JP Chairman GM Quader's move illegal.

They said they do not accept his decisions and plan to participate in the party's upcoming council.

**WHAT SHAMEEM SAID**

Speaking to reporters at his office in Dhaka, Shameem said JP's participation in the election depends on whether the government and the Election Commission ensure security and a level playing field.

"If there's no security, if mob violence continues, then taking part in the election will be like jumping into a pond with hands and feet tied," he said.

He stressed the need for visible government action to create a safe and fair environment. "The government must ensure all political parties can

participate safely," he added.

Shameem also said the party has been unable to secure a venue for holding its council. "We booked a hall, but the authorities cancelled it citing security reasons," he said.

Noting that holding national elections is a massive task, he said JP would decide on participating after observing whether the government and the EC are capable of managing it properly.

## STATEMENTS FROM ANISUL, HAWLADER, AND CHUNNU

At a press briefing at Hawlader's office in Gulshan, the three ousted leaders claimed the meeting in which they were removed was not valid, as only the secretary general can convene such a meeting under party rules.

"GM Quader cannot call such a meeting. The decision is unconstitutional - we remain in our posts," said Anisul.

On Monday, GM Quader removed Senior Co-Chairman Anisul, Co-Chairman Hawlader, and Secretary General Chunnu, replacing Chunnu with Shameem as the new secretary general. With this, if JP leaders have been removed in the past week, deepening party tensions.

Anisul demanded that the clause of the party charter enabling the chairman to unilaterally appoint or

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