

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Invisible in data, ignored in policy

Speakers call for concrete action, inclusive data, and gender-focused disability policies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite women outnumbering men in Bangladesh according to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, their

Women with disabilities in Bangladesh face greater challenges in education. While 55 percent of men with disabilities are illiterate, the illiteracy rate among women with disabilities rises to 72 percent.

There is an urgent need for government and private institutions to guarantee opportunities and facilities for women with disabilities.

SARA HOSSAIN
Executive director of BLAST



Meaningful change at the state level requires following a specific protocol – something no government has yet implemented in a holistic or strategic way.

FARIDA YESMIN
Executive director of DRRRA

representation in disability-related data remains significantly lower than that of men.

This underrepresentation suggests that women with disabilities are not being adequately presented in official surveys and data collection, leading to serious underreporting of their true numbers.

The issue extends beyond statistics.

Participation in vocational training is alarmingly low, at just 0.13 percent, while labour force participation stands at a mere 1.04 percent. Among those employed, only 3.13 percent work in the formal sector, with the vast majority (96.87 percent) engaged in informal work.

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Speakers at a seminar titled “Women with Disabilities: Rights and Inclusive Services”, organised by Women with Disabilities Development Forum (WDDF) at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Admission to colleges begins July 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Admissions for students who recently passed the SSC and equivalent examinations will begin on July 30 and continue until August 11, as per the admission policy for Class XI published yesterday.

Classes for the 11th grade are scheduled to begin on September 15, according to the notice signed by the senior secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division under the education ministry.

As per the policy, applications are to be submitted online which would be processed in three phases, based on the SSC results.

Students must pay an application fee of Tk 220 and can choose a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 colleges.

The first phase of the admissions are scheduled to take place from August 12 to 14, with results set to be published on August 20.

Two percent of seats would be reserved for children of officials working at the education ministry and its affiliated offices, provided that they meet the minimum qualifications.

In addition, five percent of seats will be reserved for children of freedom fighters. If no eligible candidates are found under this quota, the seats must be filled from the general merit list. These seats

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DISRUPTING OFFICE WORK

Now govt can dismiss employees within 31 days

BAHARAM KHAN

If investigations prove allegations such as disrupting government work or disobeying lawful orders from a superior authority, the government will have the power to impose strict punishments within 31 working days.

These punishments may include dismissal, compulsory retirement, salary reduction, or demotion, as outlined in the “Public Service (Second Amendment) Ordinance-2025,” issued last Wednesday at midnight.

This ordinance follows a first amendment enacted

PUBLIC SERVICE ORDINANCE

- Punishment to be imposed if allegations proven
- A three-member inquiry committee to complete probe in 14 days
- New law replaces “disobedience” with “lawful order” violation
- No appeal against president’s order; only review permitted
- Protest by secretariat staff led to ordinance revision

on May 22, which permitted disciplinary actions, including dismissal, without investigation and on just eight days’ notice. That earlier amendment sparked strong protests from government secretariat employees, prompting the government to revise the ordinance.

This marks the second amendment to the “Public Service Act-2018” within three months by the interim government. The amendments come in the wake of the July uprising and growing professional disputes among cadre officers, absenteeism, scuffles in secretariat offices, and incidents such as locking secretaries’ rooms during protests.

The new measures effectively reinstate the strict provisions of the repealed Government Servants (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1979, albeit in a modified form.

Under the revised ordinance, any allegation against a government employee requires a show-cause notice within seven working days. If the employee’s explanation is unsatisfactory or no response is received within the stipulated time, a three-member inquiry committee must be formed within three working days. The committee is required to complete its investigation and submit a report within 14 working days of receiving the order, though the investigation period can be extended by up to seven working days if necessary.

Failure to submit the report within the specified period may lead to the formation of a new committee, and misconduct proceedings may be initiated against committee members who delay without valid reason. Punishments from such proceedings will be recorded in the officers’ Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs).

The initial amendment had included “disobedience” as a ground for disciplinary action, a provision widely criticised by public servants. The second amendment replaces this with “lawful order of the government”. It also reduces the number of prescribed punishments from four to three: demotion to a lower post or salary grade, compulsory retirement, and dismissal from service.

The revised ordinance introduces a three-member inquiry committee, mandating at least one female member if the accused is a woman. Unlike the earlier version, the opportunity to appeal against a presidential order has been removed. Clause 37(K) (II) states no appeal can be filed against an order by the president, though review of any penalty order is allowed within 30 working days.

Following the first amendment, secretariat employees protested the law, labelling it a “black law”.

A five-member committee of secretaries, led by the land secretary, held several meetings with employee representatives but failed to resolve the issue.

Subsequently, on June 4, a review committee under Law Adviser Asif Nazrul engaged with protesting employees’ organisations to gather concerns and began amending the ordinance accordingly.

CLIMATE VICTIMS IN KOYRA

All affected, only 18% got support

Says OKUP study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 99 percent of households in coastal Koyra in Khulna have been affected by climate-related disasters in the past five years, yet only 18 percent have received any form of assistance, a study by Oviashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) has revealed.

The alarming gap in support underscores major shortcomings in Bangladesh’s social protection mechanisms, particularly for disaster-prone communities.

OKUP Research Manager Urmi Jahan Tanni and Researcher Sheikh Mohiuddin Shahrujjaman jointly presented the findings yesterday at a dissemination event for the action research titled “Social Security Programmes in

Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Regions of Bangladesh: Scopes, Challenges and Opportunities,” held at a hotel in the capital.

The research was conducted under the CARe Project — Rights-Based Model for Creating Sustainable Adaptation and Resilience of Climate-Induced Migrants in Bangladesh.

It was carried out in Koyra upazila, a climate-vulnerable region of Khulna, engaging over 3,200 participants through household surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and community profiling. The study outlines a complex web of vulnerabilities. Around 79 percent of surveyed families live in kutcha houses, 70 percent use kutcha toilets,

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Presidency univ in Kolkata hosts event honouring Abul Mansur Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Sociology at Presidency University in Kolkata is organising a special event today in memory of noted journalist, political thinker, and writer Abul Mansur Ahmad.

The event titled “Abul Mansur Ahmad’s America: A Global Intellectual History of the Language Movement in East Pakistan/ Bangladesh,” will be held at the university’s AK Basak Auditorium from 3:00pm to 5:00pm.

Prof Rochona Majumdar of the University of Chicago will attend as the keynote speaker, according to a press statement.

In a letter, Presidency University Associate Prof Upal Chakrabarti invited the writer’s family to share personal memories.



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A man passes through a broken section of a road divider in the capital’s New Market area to cross the street, with a rickshaw just behind him and vehicles approaching from the opposite direction. Such a risky move could easily lead to an accident. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Fakhrul calls for exemplary punishment of ex-CJ Khairul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has demanded exemplary punishment for former Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque, holding him directly responsible for the gravest political and constitutional crises in Bangladesh’s history.

Thanking the government for detaining him, even if belatedly, Fakhrul said Khairul caused great harm to the country by misusing his position.

“He should be given exemplary punishment so that no one can dare to harm the country being in such a position in the future,” Fakhrul told reporters outside the BNP Chairperson’s Gulshan office yesterday.

“He was in a position to determine the fate of Bangladesh, and from that position, former Chief Justice Khairul Haque cheated the people, he cheated the state,” he added.

Fakhrul said his party hopes a proper investigation will be carried out on all matters and that Khairul Haque’s trial will be conducted fairly.

Detective Branch officials detained Khairul Haque from a house in Dhaka’s Dhanmondi area



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