

Woman assaulted in Dhanmondi 32 sent to jail in uprising case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent to jail a woman who was assaulted in Dhanmondi 32 by another woman during the Awami League-announced “lockdown” on Thursday, after showing her arrested in an attempted murder case linked to the July uprising.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Partha Bhadra passed the order after police produced Salma Islam before the court, said a court sub-inspector.

A video of the assault went viral on social media on Thursday.

In the footage, a woman was seen hitting Salma with a plastic pipe near what was once Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s residence in Dhanmondi 32, claiming Salma was affiliated with the AL.

Police later rescued Salma and took her into custody.

Police produced her before the court yesterday with an application to show her arrested as a suspect in an attempted murder case.

The court granted the plea and sent her to jail, rejecting her bail petition, said a court staffer.

According to the case documents, Abu Sayed Md Saim joined protests on Satmasjid Road in Dhanmondi on July 19 last year, where he was shot in the back.

Saim filed a case on December 1 last year with Dhanmondi Model Police Station against 37 people, including top AL leaders.

Dhaka through the eyes of a rickshaw-puller

JANNATUL BUSHRA

If there is one vehicle that truly defines Dhaka, it has to be the rickshaw! Three wheels, one bell, some flashy artwork, and infinite audacity. A contraption that makes you question science: how does it survive in a city full of apps, cars, and speed limits?

And the man who drives it, the rickshaw-wala mama, is perhaps Dhaka’s truest narrator. Because nobody understands the city better than someone who navigates it inch by inch, hour after hour.

No, he doesn’t write essays. At first glance, he looks ordinary – a lungi or pant, a patched shirt or panjabi, a rusty bell, the usual. But once the wheels start moving, the urban data begins to flow.

“What’s wrong with the city?” you ask. His answers are never bureaucratic. There is no mention of zoning codes, population density, or infrastructure. Instead, he says, “Bhoddrolokrao signal mane na, apa.” (Even gentlefolk don’t follow traffic signals, sister).

To him, this is the root of all chaos. Not climate change, not megacities, not density

graphs, and certainly not his own occasional defiance of traffic rules. He talks about the city like it’s a classroom where everyone cheated their way out of the traffic chapter – except him.

Although he learned his lessons well! He knows every alley where time moves strangely faster, every shortcut that saves minutes, and which



streets to avoid because “political meeting” or “traffic police await.”

Forget Google Maps – his knowledge is built on years of fieldwork.

He also believes Dhaka runs on two economies: the fare according to the metre in his head, and the fare dictated by the rider’s outfit, mood, or corporate ID. Expensive shoes? Tk 20 extra. Student look? Tk 10

discount, along with a fifteen-minute lecture on education reform. Yet, he listens, too. He has heard every flavour of urban anxiety: breakups in Banani, burnout in Shahbagh,



PHOTO: STAR

existential dread in Mohakhali. Sometimes, he even diagnoses. A fifteen-minute ride with him is no less than a therapy session.

The mama is simultaneously economist, sociologist, therapist, and political analyst – yes, all rolled into one.

Ask him about the city, and he doesn’t call it unlivable. He points out lived problems you might add to a survey. Five minutes in his rickshaw, and you’ll know his family tree, the fastest shortcuts not just in Dhaka but Rangpur or Sherpur, and how much he

misses home.

Humour surfaces sometimes. But it’s never cheap – it’s collected from lived pain. You might struggle with his accent, but you cannot miss his care, his observation, his insight. Some U-turns will make your heart skip, but he insists they save time. So, you listen.

And, as always, the rickshaw-wala mama has the last word – part complaint, part confession, fully Dhaka. “In this city, everyone talks, no one’s ready to listen,” he says.

Dhaka argues with itself at every intersection. Everyone wants order here, yet no one is willing to wait. Horns blare, engines stall, tempers flare – and somehow, against all logic, the city moves. And through it all, the rickshaw-wala mama keeps moving too.

For him, Dhaka is a ledger of small sacrifices. In every ride, every cramped turn, there is stubbornness, grit, and a pulse that refuses to quit. Yes, the city is exhausting, maddening, sometimes absurd. But it is alive. And its rhythm is strongest in those who navigate it inch by inch, knowing that survival here is both a chore and a kind of quiet pride.

BNP softens stance, Jamaat still rigid

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total votes received by each party. The PR system was among Jamaat’s core demands.

At a Standing Committee meeting on Thursday night, BNP leaders reviewed Yunus’ address and voiced dissatisfaction over several elements.

Yet, as part of a strategy to keep the election at the heart of its politics, the party decided against any aggressive response for now. Acting chairman Tarique Rahman virtually presided over the meeting at the party chairperson’s Gulshan office.

“The party does not want to start a new dispute over the charter at this stage. The government has placed proper importance on holding the election, a key demand the party has long been pushing for,” a Standing Committee member told this newspaper after the meeting.

“We will now closely watch how the government proceeds in the coming days,” the member added.

Speaking at an event in Shahbagh yesterday, Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said the BNP remains committed to upholding the July National Charter exactly as signed.

Welcoming the referendum timing, he added, “If any coercive proposals beyond the signed July charter remains, the people will give their decision on these matters through the referendum on the election day.”

DEBATE AT STANDING COMMITTEE
During the three-hour meeting, Salahuddin detailed discrepancies between the signed charter and the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order, 2025 issued by President Mohammed Shahabuddin soon after Yunus’ address.

Under the order, the next parliament would also function as a Constitutional Reform Council to implement the charter’s reforms.

Salahuddin objected broadly to four points: the referendum question, formation of the Constitutional Reform Council, use of the PR system for the 100-member upper house, and the president’s authority to issue such an order.

Several members argued that taking a confrontational stance now would only spark complications and distract from election preparations. One member said Tarique was dissatisfied with Yunus’ speech but agreed to adopt a softer line as the majority wanted to keep the polls at the centre of its politics.

“There are some people in the Yunus team who want to make the situation complicated. Ahead of the polls, many complications may arise. That’s why we must watch every action of the government,” another member said.

The leaders accepted the same-day referendum but said the process is flawed, with a complicated question containing four sections. They said citizens cannot vote on multiple issues in a single referendum question.

They also questioned the legitimacy and authority of a Constitutional Reform Council whose members would not be directly elected – an issue that had surfaced during the National Consensus Commission talks.

Salahuddin further criticised the government for choosing the PR system for the upper house despite divergent views in the consensus process.

Some members said the president has the authority to issue ordinances, but the head of the state does not have the constitutional power to issue an order of this kind.

JAMAAT REMAINS RIGID

The eight-party alliance, including Jamaat and Islami Andolan Bangladesh, maintained its uncompromising demand for holding the referendum before the national polls.

The government had “bowed to the

demand of BNP” by planning both votes on the same day, Jamaat Nayeb e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher said while delivering the alliance’s official reaction.

He said they were “surprised” that instead of adopting the consensus commission’s recommendations, the chief adviser introduced “many changes by compromising with a particular party,” implying the BNP.

“As a result, the people and the nation are disappointed,” Taher said at a briefing in Moghbazar, flanked by alliance leaders.

Taher argued that the nation had wanted the referendum on a separate day and claimed that if it were held earlier, “80 percent people would go against the thinking and ideology of a particular party.”

He said the BNP had refused to accept any referendum held first, and the government had “bowed to their demand.”

Accusing the interim government of losing neutrality, he said it was “aligned with a particular party” and attempting to hold an election “in any manner necessary to bring that party to power.”

Without naming anyone, he alleged that three advisers were working for that party and demanded their removal.

Taher warned that the alliance would take a “final decision” at its meeting on Sunday, if its demands were not met, though he expressed gratitude to Yunus for giving constitutional legitimacy to the July charter through an order.

Leaders of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Khelafat Majlisch, Bangladesh Nezame Islam Party, JAGIPA, and Bangladesh Development Party were present.

NCP SEES VAGUENESS, RISKS

The NCP said several key aspects, such as the implementation order, referendum question, fate of dissent notes on crucial reform proposals and the Constitution

Reform Council’s authority, are still unclear.

“What will happen if the council cannot complete its job within the 180-day timeframe?” NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen asked while giving the party’s official response to the chief adviser’s address at a press conference yesterday.

One of the alternative proposals recommended by the consensus commission had stated that the proposed reforms would be automatically incorporated into the constitution in case of the Constitution Reform Council’s failure to complete the process within a 270 day timeframe. The final order shortened the deadline, but dropped the proposal on automatic inclusion.

“The language used in the order is subject to interpretation As a result, instead of ensuring transparency, the order has created further questions,” Akhter said.

He urged the government to promptly provide a clear explanation of the order and remove all ambiguities so that the ongoing crisis surrounding the July charter can be effectively resolved.

He demanded that the referendum result must be made binding so that no one can deviate from the charter.

“All in all, the ambiguities and interpretive flexibility left within the July charter implementation order make it vulnerable to exploitation by those who will come to power. We find it deeply concerning,” he said.

Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said the party would sign the charter only after receiving clarity on the implementation order, referendum framework, and reform roadmap.

“We wanted to dismantle the authoritarian framework of 1972, but through this order, we are once again walking the path of the 1972 Constitution,” he said.

repayment schedules, and grace periods to avoid a cycle in which new loans only serve old debts.

UNIFIED DEBT MANAGEMENT

Bangladesh is now preparing to establish a unified Debt Management Office to strengthen public debt oversight and reduce fiscal and operational risks, following recommendations from the IMF and the World Bank.

The multilateral lenders, which are providing technical assistance, presented their proposals at workshop earlier this month at the Finance Division.

A joint mission observed that debt management responsibilities are currently scattered across multiple agencies, creating coordination gaps, inconsistent data, and difficulties in formulating and executing a comprehensive strategy, according to a Finance Division statement.

It noted the absence of a centralised, audited debt database and a formal cash flow forecasting mechanism – both essential for informed and cost-effective borrowing.

The mission proposed consolidating all government and government-guaranteed debt functions under the Finance Division, beginning with restructuring the Treasury and Debt Management Wing.

Russia pounds Kyiv with drones, missiles

Eight killed, dozens injured; Zelensky says Ukraine hit targets in Russia successfully

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia launched a massive drone and missile attack on Kyiv early yesterday, killing eight people and wounding dozens in strikes on energy facilities, apartment buildings and infrastructure, Ukrainian officials said.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said the Russian forces used 430 drones and 18 missiles, making the attack one of the biggest on the capital so far. Kyiv was responding with long-range strikes, he said, urging allies to toughen sanctions on Russia.

The air force said most of the drones and missiles were shot down, but officials said falling debris and fires damaged high-rise apartments, a school, a medical facility and administrative buildings across nine districts in the city of about 3 million.

BBC apologises to Trump over speech edit

Rejects defamation claim

REUTERS, London

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) sent a personal apology to US President Donald Trump on Thursday but said there was no legal basis for him to sue the public broadcaster over a documentary his lawyers called defamatory.

The documentary, which aired on the BBC’s “Panorama” news programme just before the US presidential election in 2024, spliced together three parts of Trump’s speech on January 6, 2021, when his supporters stormed the Capitol. The edit created the impression he had called for violence.

“While the BBC sincerely regrets the manner in which the video clip was edited, we strongly disagree there is a basis for a defamation claim,” the broadcaster said in a statement.

Lawyers for the US president threatened on Sunday to sue the BBC for damages of up to \$1 billion unless it withdrew the documentary, apologised to the president and compensated him for “financial and reputational harm.”

AL cannot take part

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trade, the Rohingya crisis, and cooperation in the aviation and maritime sectors.

Prof Yunus said the July charter would mark “a new beginning” for Bangladesh,



PHOTO: COURTESY

reflecting the aspirations of millions who took part in the July-August uprising last year.

‘Too complicated for voters’

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consent to the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, and the following proposals related to constitutional reforms mentioned in the July National Charter? (Yes/No)

a) The election-time caretaker government, the Election Commission, and other constitutional institutions will be formed in line with the process outlined in the July charter.

b) The next parliament will be bicameral. A 100-member upper house will be formed in proportion to the votes received by parties in the national parliamentary election. Approval from a majority of the upper house will be required to amend the constitution.

c) The parties that win the next parliamentary election will be bound to implement the 30 proposals agreed upon in the July National Charter, including increasing women’s representation in parliament, electing the deputy speaker and several committee chairpersons from the opposition, limiting the prime minister’s term, enhancing presidential powers, strengthening fundamental rights, ensuring judicial independence, and empowering local government.

d) Other reforms mentioned in the July National Charter will be implemented as per the commitments of the political parties.

BNP standing committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said the process is fundamentally flawed, as voters have no scope to vote on the four proposals separately.

“There is only one question covering four things. That makes it a leading question,” he said. “People are being forced to say ‘yes’ to all of them or ‘no’ to all of them. For example, the proposal for forming an upper house in proportion to votes is being imposed here with no option to approve or reject it separately.”

Jamaat e-Islami Nayeb e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher told a press briefing in the capital’s Moghbazar that dividing the question into four parts “has placed people in a spot of bother.” Analysing each point to form an informed opinion, he said, would be difficult for voters and likely cause further confusion.

Adding to the discourse, NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen said, “The four

Chapman thanked him for his leadership since assuming charge of the interim government and praised the dialogue between the National Consensus Commission and political parties over the July charter.

Yunus said his government is committed to ensuring safe migration and encouraging more Bangladeshis to seek employment abroad through legal channels.

When the Rohingya crisis came up for discussion, Yunus noted the need for continued humanitarian support for more than a million refugees living in camps.

He also said Bangladesh is purchasing a British research vessel to conduct maritime studies in the Bay of Bengal.

Chapman called for stronger aviation ties between the two nations, adding that the head of Airbus International is expected to visit Bangladesh soon.

parts of the question contain many issues on which political parties have expressed notes of dissent during the consensus talks. It still remains unclear whether these dissenting points will be implemented according to the language of the July charter, the consensus commission’s recommendations, or the individual positions of the political parties.”

With this multi-part question, some reforms have been given less importance, he added.

Communist Party of Bangladesh central leader Ruhin Hossain Prince said ordinary voters will struggle to understand the complex issues embedded in the question. “This bundling of issues will force voters to accept or reject the entire package, even if they support some reforms and oppose others.”

Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal Assistant General Secretary Rakezuzzaman Ratan echoed his concern, calling the question not only complex but also “unethical.”

Both leaders said the question should have been simple and easily comprehensible.

Saiful Haque, general secretary of the Revolutionary Workers Party, expressed doubt whether the objectives of the referendum could be met through such a process.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlisch Ameer Mamunul Haque said in a statement that including four separate parts within a single question puts the entire process at risk.

If the referendum is held alongside the national election under party symbols, he warned, public attention will be divided and voters will struggle to properly understand or express their views on the referendum issues. “As a result, the transparency and credibility of the referendum will be undermined.”

Abul Hasan Rubel, Ganosamhati Andolan executive coordinator, speaking at an event in Shahbagh, said the clauses relating to the referendum question are unclear.

He said it is the interim government’s responsibility to explain each clause. He said the government should ensure that voters are fully informed about the content and process of the referendum through television, newspapers, and other media before the election.