

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

### 'THE CATCHER IN THE RYE'

*The Catcher in the Rye*, an exhibition where the voices of marginalised children come alive through their art. **Project Potchola**, an initiative of the Give Bangladesh Foundation, showcases the art of children who grew up in red-light areas, offering a window into their dreams, struggles, and imagination. These young artists have turned their struggles into imagination, showing the strength and dreams that often go unnoticed.

Date: Friday-Saturday | Dec 5-6, 2025

Time: 3pm to 10pm

Venue: National Art Gallery, BSA



### REJOINDER

An article titled "Enough is enough: Showbiz women clap back at virtual harassment", published on November 29 under the 16 Days of Activism shoulder in The Daily Star, included a quote from actress Ashna Habib Bhabna. The actress referenced a social media campaign titled #MyNumberMyStory, which she incorrectly attributed to UN Women (UNW).

This information was incorrect: UN Women did not launch any campaign under that name. The attribution resulted from a miscommunication regarding the details provided by the artiste.

The Daily Star regrets the error and apologises for publishing the misinformation.

## HAMIN AHMED disseminates decades of knowledge in masterclass



Miles frontman Hamin Ahmed led the third edition of the Guitar Masterclass (GMC) Session yesterday evening at the Yamaha Flagship Centre in Tejgaon, offering aspiring guitarists a deep dive into professional musicianship and the modern industry. Organised by Team Alpha, the event combined hands-on learning with intimate insights from the maestro.

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

The session was structured in two parts: the first focused on technique, tone shaping, and the essential skills of digital music-making. The second half provided a fascinating glimpse into Ahmed's personal studio setup, where he broke down his gear, from his audio interface and monitoring chain to his processors and plug-ins. He demonstrated how he meticulously builds tone layers and shapes dynamics, stressing that contemporary guitarists must master both analogue warmth and digital precision. A key highlight was his detailed breakdown of iconic Miles tracks like *Priyotoma*, *Jay Din Jay*, and *Dhiki Dhiki*, examining their emotional texture and chord voicings.

Speaking afterwards to The Daily Star, Ahmed addressed the challenges facing young artists. He observed

that today's society is "Disposable" due to the never-ending content flow, but maintained that "what matters is a great song", proven by Miles' continued relevance to the 18-24 age group. He cautioned against internet-fuelled insecurity, urging musicians to focus on honing skills rather than comparing themselves to others.

Ahmed's tone hardened when discussing the business side, stressing that musicians must be conscious of their rights and strict about securing royalties. He acknowledged that many artists are ill-equipped for the legal realities, advising them to "approach this smartly".

Asked for the best musical advice he had ever received, Ahmed smiled and replied, "Nobody". He concluded by stating the only thing a musician truly needs is "love for music", emphasising that passion and discipline are the foundation of a lasting career.

## NEWS

### Verdict in case against Hasina

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On November 25, Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka set the date after concluding the trial in 14 hearings, said Belal Hossain, bench assistant of the court.

The verdict is expected to be delivered around 10:30am, he added.

The other accused include former housing and public works state minister Sharif Ahmed, former secretary Kazi Washi Uddin, former additional secretary Md Oluullah, former administrative officer Saiful Islam Sarkar, and former senior assistant secretary Purabi Goldar.

Rajuk's ex-chairman Anisur Rahman Miah, former members, Mohammad Khurshid Alam, Tanmoy Das, Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, and Nurul Islam; former deputy director Nayeb Ali Sharif and former assistant director Mazharul Islam are accused among others.

Prime Minister's Office's former secretary Mohammad Salahuddin is also an accused in the case.

Only Khurshid is now in jail among the accused.

Thirty-two people testified in the case during the trial, according to the case records.

Of them, three are Anti Corruption Commission officials; four Rajuk officials; four employees of the housing

and public works ministry; three tax office employees; three Sonali Bank officials; three employees of Eastern Housing Ltd, and three staffers of Dhaka South City Corporation.

The others include three employees of Chief Adviser's Office; two magistrates of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka; three former sub-registrars in Dhaka and Gazipur; and a director of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

Besides, the trials of two other corruption cases lodged against 21 people, including Hasina, her nieces Azmina Siddiqi and Tulip, and nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiqi Bobby, are now pending at the same court. The verdicts of the cases are expected to be delivered in January next year, says the prosecution.

Tulip used her power to get plots for Rehana, Bobby, and Azmina, say ACC officials.

Between January 12 to 14 this year, the graft watchdog filed six cases with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 over alleged irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project.

In the cases, the ACC brought charges of criminal misconduct under section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, along with several other charges, including criminal breach of trust and cheating, in the Penal Code.

The anti-graft body alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots -- each measuring 10 kathas -- in the diplomatic zone of Sector 27 of the Purbachal New Town project for herself, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and daughter Saima Wazed Putul; and Rehana, her son Bobby and daughter Azmina despite their ineligibility under existing regulations.

On March 25, the ACC filed six charge sheets with the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka where Hasina was named as a common accused in all six cases.

Charges were framed against 29 people on July 31, including Hasina, Rehana, Joy, Putul, Bobby, Tulip, and Azmina, in their respective cases.

On November 27, Hasina was sentenced to 21 years' rigorous imprisonment, seven years in each of the three cases filed the over Purbachal plot scam. Joy and Putul were co-accused in separate cases -- one each -- and were given five years' imprisonment.

In the cases, Sharif, Washi, Purabi, Anisur, Nasir, Shamsuddin, and Khurshid were convicted for various jail terms, while Saiful was acquitted.

Salahuddin, Tanmoy, Nurul, and Nayeb Ali were sentenced to different jail terms in two graft cases, while Mazharul was jailed in a graft case.

### 3 killed, 9 hurt

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escalated, drawing supporters from both sides into a fierce confrontation, armed with sticks, sharp weapons, and locally made arms.

Ershad and Kulshum died on the spot. Kawser succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.

Eyewitness Jahirul Islam said no one dared intervene as both groups appeared prepared for violence. He added that villagers now fear retaliation.

Nine injured people were taken to Nageshwar Upazila Health Complex and other facilities.

Dr Noor Islam of the health complex said the conditions of Nur Mohammad and his elder brother were critical, with severe injuries to their heads, arms, and legs. Preparations were underway in the afternoon to transfer both to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Nageshwar Police Station OC Reazul Karim said officers rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies, and brought the situation under control.

Additional personnel have since been deployed and patrols intensified.

### AI fuelling cyber violence against women

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Contacted by The Daily Star, Niva said, "What I saw left me shaken. I had no idea how to react."

After confiding in her husband and family, she approached the police, who found several of her students -- all minors -- involved. They were counselled and handed over to their parents. Police assured her the doctored images had been removed.

But the trauma stayed. "Even now, I live in constant fear. The social humiliation hasn't gone away."

Niva's experience reflects a rising trend where AI generated deepfakes and digitally manipulated sexual content are weaponised against women and girls, undermining dignity and affecting victims physically, psychologically, and professionally.

From media personalities and political leaders to activists, young professionals, and ordinary women, one is exempt.

Last December, a fabricated image involving Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan and actress Mehazabien Chowdhury was widely circulated. The AI-generated photocard falsely depicted Mehazabien in an "environment-friendly condom dress", with a caption implying the adviser endorsed it.

According to a UN Women report, AI is creating new forms of abuse and amplifying existing ones at alarming rates. Studies show that technology-facilitated violence against women affects between 16 and 58 percent of women globally.

The National Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey-2024, conducted by BBS with UNFPA assistance, showed that 8.3 percent of women -- especially younger, digitally connected ones in urban areas -- experience technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TGBV), including unwanted sexual communication, blackmail, image-based abuse, or other forms of online control.

A report by Cyber Support for Women and Children (CSWC), a coalition of 14 rights groups led by BLAST, found that offenders are increasingly weaponising AI, making crimes more layered and harder to trace.

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Priya Ahsan Chowdhury said, "With AI, it has become very easy to create fake or sexually suggestive images -- even if offenders don't have any personal photos. Previously, people would cut

and paste faces. Now it takes a single image and a free AI tool."

Cybercrime consultant Gazi Mahfuz Ul Kabir said, "In the past, leaking private photos required technical effort. Now anyone can create explicit or misleading content simply by uploading one image. This no skills process is extremely dangerous."

#### PROBING TFBGV CHALLENGING

AHM Shahadat Hossain, assistant inspector general (Media) at the Police Headquarters, said social stigma remains a key barrier. "Victims feel shame and fear the consequences. Many don't want to be exposed. When we advise them to lodge a general diary or file a case, they often withdraw or negotiate with perpetrators due to pressure, preventing police from pursuing offenders."

Gazi Mahfuz Ul said offenders usually share files in closed groups on platforms such as Telegram or Terabox, leaving police without direct links for removal. "Major tech companies, operating outside Bangladesh, follow global rather than local policies, slowing down takedown responses.... When an image is repeatedly shared, its metadata changes, making it nearly impossible to trace the original uploader."

The VAW-2024 survey noted that police and judges require specialised training on digital violence. It recorded instances where officers downplayed image-based abuse or focused only on Facebook, leaving platforms like Snapchat, Telegram, and TikTok largely unmonitored.

AlG Shahadat said police also face technological limitations. "Investigative tools are often misunderstood as intrusive surveillance, but they're used solely to identify offenders and ensure justice."

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM ILL-EQUIPPED

The new Cyber Protection Ordinance 2025 criminalises harmful or intimidating materials generated or edited using AI.

However, Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmin S Murshid said on November 25, "While Bangladesh has strong laws to combat cybercrime, weak enforcement is allowing offenders to act with increasing impunity."

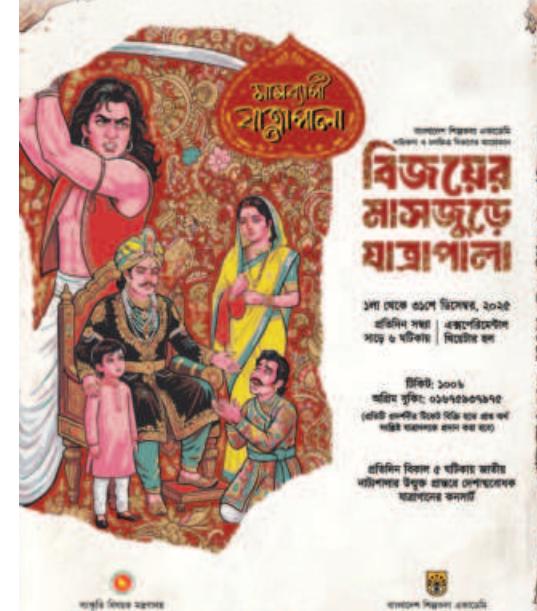
Barrister Priya said the justice system is "not prepared at all". "While cyber units and helplines exist, survivors often receive little meaningful assistance."

She cited cases where police

Month-long Jatra festival begins at Shilpakala Academy in December

**The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy is launching a month-long Jatra festival this December to mark Victory Month, aiming to revive interest in the traditional folk theatre form. Held from December 1 to 31, the festival will feature daily Jatra performances at 6:30pm at the Experimental Theatre Hall, with troupes from across the country participating.**

Tickets are priced at Tk 100, and all proceeds will go directly to the performing artistes as financial support for their work in preserving this heritage. Alongside the stage productions, the National Theatre Hall's open courtyard will host patriotic Jatra song concerts every day at 5pm, celebrating the spirit of liberation. The event is organised by the academy's Drama and Film Department.



### Judicial independence

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The statements must include the salaries and allowances payable to judges, judicial officers, judicial staff, and officers and employees; the administrative expenses required for running the judicial administration of the country; and the recurring and development expenditures, research, training and other ancillary expenses of the SC, subordinate courts and related offices, organisations, institutions, commissions, institutes, academies, etc.

The chief justice -- who will be the final authority for approving the expenditure of funds allocated in the budget for the SC secretariat -- will forward the statements to the finance minister for submitting to the parliament by attaching them to the government's financial statement.

The SC and the SC secretariat must send the initial projections and estimates of revenue targets, receipts and preliminary expenditure limits to

discouraged victims from filing complaints. In one instance, a survivor was warned that a case could be filed against her as well, prompting her to withdraw. In another case, the officers were unaware of the cyber protection laws.

"Such gaps leave survivors exposed from the outset, and the absence of victim or witness protection mechanisms discourages many from reporting."

Priya also pointed to a critical gap: forensic evidence remains optional, weakening the legal framework for digital crimes. "Courts currently accept screenshots as evidence, although these can be manipulated and lack context. More advanced recording methods used abroad have not been adopted."

A 2024 study by the Media, Law, and Digital Space Cohort said Bangladesh urgently needs more digital forensic experts, as collaboration between police and specialists remains limited, and cases rarely receive technical support.

"Digital evidence and forensic reports are highly technical, and justice sector actors -- including judges -- require further training. Mandatory forensic evidence, improved lab capacity, and technical expertise are essential," Priya said.

**NATIONAL LACKS DIGITAL READINESS**  
Kazi Mustafiz, president of the Cyber Crime Awareness Foundation, said most incidents stem from poor digital literacy and weak understanding of data protection. "Despite having multiple digital forensic labs, services remain inaccessible to ordinary citizens. Increasing capacity and skilled manpower is essential."

He stressed that careless sharing of personal data continues to put individuals at risk. "Widespread awareness of AI-related offences is essential, especially among political leaders."

Gazi Mahfuz Ul urged the government to establish a one-stop cyber crisis centre for rapid takedowns, victim support, and direct liaison with global tech companies.

He also called for large scale digital literacy programmes in schools, universities, and communities. "One simple rule is never to share unnecessary personal photos or videos. Once online, they can be misused to create AI generated content. In rural areas especially, the consequences can be devastating."