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HC rejects writ petition seeking stay on Feb polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a writ petition seeking a stay on the process for holding the 13th national election scheduled for February 2026.

The bench of Justice Sikder Mahmudur Razi and Justice Raziuddin Ahmed told petitioner Md Earul Islam that the entire nation is now focused on the election. Filing such a petition at this stage is not appropriate, and therefore a plea of this nature is not acceptable at this moment, the court said.

The bench rejected the petition on the grounds that it was not placed before it properly.

Advocate Md Earul Islam, secretary general of the political party Bangladesh Congress, who filed the petition, told The Daily Star that he had sought the order in what he described as the greater interest of the nation.

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Speakers at a roundtable, titled “Ending Digital Violence: Policy Priorities for Advancing Health and Justice for Women and Girls,” at the capital’s The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The event was organised by the CSO Forum for Strengthening a Sustainable SRHR Ecosystem in Bangladesh and The Daily Star as part of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.”

PHOTO: STAR

Many major antibiotics now less effective

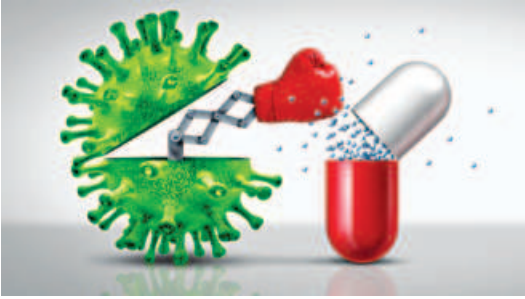
Says BMU report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several widely used antibiotics in the country have become even less effective than they were three years ago, putting life-saving treatments at risk, according to a Bangladesh Medical University (BMU) report.

Some antibiotics, including Ciprofloxacin and Azithromycin, now show resistance levels above 80 percent against certain pathogens – meaning these drugs are effective in less than 20 percent of such infections.

For example, Salmonella Typhi, a Gram-negative bacterium that causes bloodstream infections, showed an estimated resistance rate of 83.4 percent to Azithromycin. This marks a sharp rise from 31 percent in 2022, according to the report prepared by BMU’s Department of Microbiology and Immunology and presented at the university yesterday.



- Several widely used antibiotics have become less effective than in 2022
- BMU analysed 46,279 samples; 24% contained germs
- Health experts blame overuse, livestock antibiotics, poor hygiene, lack of new drugs

According to WHO, AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, making infections harder or impossible to treat and increasing the risk of severe illness, disability and death.

The Antimicrobial Resistance Report 2024–25 analysed 46,279 inpatient and outpatient samples from July 2024 to June 2025.

It recommended strengthening surveillance, implementing targeted interventions, developing evidence-based policies, and increasing collaboration and investment to curb antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The findings follow recent reports by the World Health Organization and the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), both of which warned of rising antibiotic resistance and growing public health risks.

According to WHO, AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, making infections harder or impossible to treat and increasing the risk of severe illness, disability, and death.

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ICT exonerates Fazlur Rahman of contempt charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday cleared BNP chairperson’s adviser and Supreme Court lawyer Fazlur Rahman of contempt charges over his recent remarks about the tribunal during a television talk show.

Fazlur appeared before the tribunal and offered an unconditional apology, which the court accepted.

At the start of the proceedings, Fazlur’s counsel, pro-BNP lawyer Ruhul Quddus Kazal, requested that his client be allowed to sit as he was standing before the court. Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder granted the request.

Kazal told the tribunal that Fazlur expressed deep remorse for his comments. The tribunal then sought a response from the prosecution. Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said Fazlur had stated during the talk show that he did not accept the tribunal.

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When asked to speak, Fazlur told the court he had not spoken in that manner. “It was a slip of the tongue. I am 78 years old, and this is the first mistake I have made. I offer my unconditional apology,” he said.

Cautioning him, the tribunal said, “You have liberty, but you must remain within limits.”

It added that the ICT is not a court for any specific group or era and deals with crimes against humanity, which can occur at any time. The chairman also said, “There is a misperception that freedom fighters are being brought here for trial.”

Meanwhile, two defence witnesses – former inspector (operation) of Shabbagh Police Station Md Arshad

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Online abuse taking toll on women’s mental health

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Online abuse has become a growing health concern for women in Bangladesh, with many victims of cyberbullying or online harassment reporting depression, anxiety and stress.

These emotional problems often disrupt daily life, relationships and physical well-being. Symptoms include persistent sadness, loss of interest in routine activities, sleep disturbances and low self-confidence.

In many cases, the emotional harm also appears as physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches and sleep problems, according to a keynote paper presented yesterday.

The keynote was delivered by icddr,b scientist Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman at a roundtable titled “Ending Digital Violence: Policy Priorities for Advancing Health and Justice for Women and Girls,” held at The Daily Star Centre.

The event was organised by the CSO Forum for Strengthening a Sustainable SRHR Ecosystem in Bangladesh and The Daily Star as part of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.”

Ehsanur highlighted findings

from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics’ Violence Against Women Survey 2024, which showed that eight percent of women who have access to technology have experienced technology-facilitated gender-based violence at least once. The highest prevalence was among young and urban women.

education.

Nearly half of the perpetrators were strangers, indicating how digital platforms create vulnerability even within private spaces.

Supreme Court advocate Barrister Priya Ahsan Chowdhury presented “Women and Children in

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM	
KEY ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Online violence pushing young women into depression	Strengthen digital safety edn in schools, communities
Cyberbullying emerges as major health threat	Create a single, easy-to-remember emergency helpline
Digital harassment linked to rising emotional distress	Improve coordination among law-enforcement, mental health services, NGOs
Young women most vulnerable to online abuse	Simplify legal processes so victims can report without fear or stigma

Sixteen percent of women aged 20 to 24 reported facing this form of violence.

Exposure was also shaped by education and wealth. Almost one in five women with a bachelor’s degree or higher encountered online violence, compared to 2.8 percent of women with no

Online Space: Navigating Through the Justice System in Bangladesh,” where she discussed the threats women face online, actions that can be taken in cases of cyber violence, evidence preservation and relevant laws.

Prof Ruchita Tabassum Navad,

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Shaukat Mahmood sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered senior journalist and Janata Party Bangladesh Secretary General Shaukat Mahmood to be sent to jail in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Jewel Rana passed the order and fixed Thursday for a hearing on the investigation officer’s 10-day remand plea.

Mahmood, a former president of Jatiya Press Club, was arrested from his home on Sunday by a team of the Detective Branch.

Enayet Karim Chowdhury, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin, is also accused in the case lodged with Ramna Police Station, said Shafiqul Islam, additional commissioner of the Detective Branch.

Enayet was arrested from Dhaka’s Minto Road over his suspicious movement on September 13. The next day, Sub-inspector Azizul Hakim of Ramna Model Police Station filed a case against him for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the interim government. He was later placed on a total of 12 days’ remand in three phases.

Inspector Akther Morshed of the DB’s Ramna Zonal

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A schoolgirl browses through winter clothes and accessories at a shop before picking out an animal-motif cap and trying it on. With winter finally here, shops around the capital are selling a wide range of seasonal items. The photo was taken in Mohammadpur yesterday.


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



In Loving Memory
Barrister Mainul Hosen
1940 - 2023

On his 2nd death anniversary, we honour his legacy and cherish those precious moments.
Always in our hearts.

- Family



Nurul H Khan
(1935 - 2020)

In loving memory
All those you left behind