

When law arrives after the video spreads



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On a winter morning in Dhaka's Gulshan, a place better known for embassies, cafés and the illusion of order, a woman was tied to an electric pole and doused with water. The cold was real, the humiliation public, the violence spectacular enough to be recorded, edited and circulated for collective consumption. By the time the video reached our phones, the act had already done its job. It had entertained, shocked, outraged and, in a disturbingly large number of cases, amused. Only later did the state wake up, as it often does these days, alerted not by conscience but by virality.

The official explanation now unfolding is familiar, almost ritualistic. The woman was suspected of theft. She had entered a madrasa. Stories emerged about changing identities, contradictory statements, and moral suspicion layered upon criminal suspicion, all of which served to render the victim suitably ambiguous, morally complicated, and perhaps even "deserving" of what followed. This is an old social reflex. When violence shocks us too deeply, we rush to muddy the character of the violated, hoping it will soften our discomfort.

But strip away the justifications, and the image remains stubbornly simple: a woman restrained in public, punished by a crowd, while others watched, filmed and

occurred. The news has been framed as swift action. Yet, it is difficult to ignore that this action by law enforcers arrived only after the video went viral. Before that, there was silence. In a society increasingly governed by algorithms, justice now seems to require trending status.

This dependence on virality reveals a deeper malaise raising the question: had no video, no outrage, no digital echo chamber been amplifying the scene, would the incident have mattered? Or would it have quietly dissolved into the vast archive of unrecorded humiliations endured daily by the poor, homeless, and the nameless?

The justification offered by those involved follows a predictable script. Punishment administered in the name of discipline, protection and social order. The crowd, as always, believed itself righteous. After all, what is a little public humiliation when compared to the alleged crime of theft? Especially when the accused is a woman with no visible social protection, influential relatives, or immediate defenders.

There is something profoundly convenient about mob justice. It is fast, emotionally satisfying and requires no paperwork. It allows ordinary people to play judge, jury and executioner, all before breakfast. It also provides a moral spectacle, one that

of the act. This is not an anomaly but a symptom of a broader educational failure, one that prioritises rote obedience over ethical reasoning and moral responsibility. When education becomes detached from humanity, it produces graduates fluent in discipline but illiterate in compassion.

It would be comforting to treat this as an aberration, an unfortunate deviation from our values. But recent years suggest

outsider also deserves scrutiny. It subtly shifts attention away from the violence inflicted upon her and redirects it towards her supposed character flaws. It reassures society that the real problem is not the act, but the person it was done to.

This is where the cruelty becomes systemic. Once we accept that certain people are morally disposable, extraordinary violence begins to feel ordinary. The law, instead of

voiceless.

If we are honest, the most frightening aspect of this incident is not that it happened, but that it felt familiar. We have seen variations of this story before, with different victims and slightly altered justifications. Each time, we express outrage, promise reflection and then we move on.

Societies do not collapse overnight. They erode gradually, normalising cruelty



Mob justice provides a moral spectacle, one that reinforces power hierarchies and reminds the vulnerable of their place.

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

otherwise. Beatings, lynchings, public shaming and crowd-led punishment have steadily entered the social mainstream. Each incident is followed by familiar statements of regret and resolve, only to be replaced by the next spectacle.

What makes this case particularly unsettling is its setting. Gulshan is not a remote village where state presence is minimal and desperation high. It is one of the most policed and privileged areas of the capital. If such an act can unfold here, in daylight, near institutions of religious and moral learning, it raises uncomfortable questions about the depth of our collective moral erosion. Geography, it seems, no longer offers protection from barbarity.

The language used to describe the woman repeatedly as a thief, a liar, a social

being a shield, becomes a distant abstraction, selectively applied and easily bypassed. The crowd, emboldened by precedent and impunity, steps in eagerly.

The lack of knowledge about the whereabouts of the victim adds another layer of discomfort. Is she safe? Has she received medical or psychological support? In a system obsessed with perpetrators and process, victims often disappear quietly, their suffering acknowledged only as a footnote.

We are repeatedly reminded that the law will take its course. This phrase has become a kind of national lullaby, soothing enough to quiet outrage without demanding real accountability. Yet the same law often moves slowly, selectively and unevenly, especially when the victims are marginalised and

one incident at a time. Today it is a woman accused of theft. Tomorrow it may be someone else, accused of something equally unproven. The law will arrive late. The victim will disappear.

When violence becomes acceptable order begins to rot. When humiliation is treated as justice, justice loses meaning. And when society learns to look away, barbarity no longer needs accountability.

The question, then, is not whether arrests have been made or investigations initiated. The real question is whether we are willing to confront the culture that made this incident possible, predictable and, for a brief moment, entertaining. Without that reckoning, the electric pole in Gulshan will not remain an isolated symbol. It will become a warning we chose to ignore.

Educational institutions are meant to resist such impulses. They are supposed to cultivate restraint, empathy and respect for the rule of law. Yet here, students and teachers themselves appear at the centre of the act. This is not an anomaly but a symptom of a broader educational failure, one that prioritises rote obedience over ethical reasoning and moral responsibility. When education becomes detached from humanity, it produces graduates fluent in discipline but illiterate in compassion.

participated. No warrant, no police station, no court, no due process. Just rope, water and the confidence that nothing serious would happen to the perpetrators. That confidence, more than the rope or the water, is the most disturbing element of this story.

We are told that five people have been arrested, some of them minors, all connected to the institution where the incident

reinforces power hierarchies and reminds the vulnerable of their place. In that sense, tying a woman to a pole is not merely punishment. It is a performance.

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MD ABDUL LATIF and SHIRIN SULTANA

Each year, thousands of Bangladeshis brightest leave for Canada, the US, the EU or Australia, seeking better pay, security, and respect. Once, migration was a survival strategy; now the departure of skilled workers reveals a contradiction: what sustained the economy is draining its future. Talent, in countries like

wealthy nations intensify efforts to draw the talented from the Global South. After Covid, many European states eased entry for foreign medical staff; Canada recruits nurses and IT experts from South Asia. Meanwhile, prospects at home are limited: rural doctors are underpaid, researchers lack funding, and entrepreneurs face

can make talent flows mutual and developmental, rather than one-sided and extractive.

When skilled graduates leave Bangladesh, the primary loss is economic. Doctors and engineers trained at public expense become a subsidy from poor taxpayers to rich countries when they settle abroad. A doctor educated in Dhaka but practising in London is a public investment serving another state.

The second loss is institutional. Health systems, universities, and the civil service steadily lose talent. Hospitals and rural clinics face shortages; universities lose potential teachers and researchers; capable officials look overseas instead of building careers at home. This erodes state capacity, weakens policy-making, and hampers basic services.

The health sector shows this most sharply. Bangladesh has too few doctors and nurses. Patients at home endure long waits and overworked staff, while publicly trained doctors fill foreign vacancies. The pattern repeats in higher education and the technological sector. Losing skilled workers deepens a knowledge gap, increases reliance on foreign expertise and technology, and weakens self-reliance as the country seeks a knowledge-based economy.

Remittances have long served as a political safety valve in Bangladesh's economy. In fiscal year 2024, they brought in about \$23.9 billion, easing deficits and sustaining consumption. This apparent success masks an imbalance. Most remittances come from low- and semi-skilled workers in Gulf countries, not from the skilled professionals who migrate to the West.

These funds largely cover household expenses rather than productive investment, and they seldom generate technology transfer, research partnerships, or industrial development. Policymakers praise remittance inflows but ignore the forgone tax revenue, innovation, and institutional leadership that emigrating professionals might have provided. The myth of a

"remittance dividend" conceals a long-term structural deficit in human capital.

The goal is not to stop migration, but to turn "brain drain" into "brain circulation"—a two-way flow where knowledge, skills, and resources move between Bangladeshi migrants and their homeland. Bangladesh can move in this direction by (i) creating return incentives such as research grants, startup funding, and faculty exchange or visiting scholar programmes; (ii) strengthening ties with the diaspora to support mentorship, technology transfer, collaborative research, and

investment networks; (iii) negotiating fair migration agreements with destination countries that include training partnerships, recognition, and reintegration support; (iv) investing in domestic research and innovation ecosystems so that young professionals see credible futures at home, not only abroad.

Countries like South Korea, China and Taiwan once saw large outflows of talent but reversed them by aligning education, industrial policy, and innovation incentives. Bangladesh has the talent to do the same if it creates compelling reasons for its

citizens to stay, return, and build. Yet this is not a one-country issue; it is a global one. Today's system allows the Global North to relieve its labour shortages with professionals trained at the expense of the Global South—a quiet transfer of public investment from poorer states to richer ones, and a deepening capacity gap.

The real challenge is not whether people will move—they will—but whether that movement can be made fair? If talent truly has no borders, then responsibility for nurturing and sharing it should not have borders either.

Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat	
Administration Section	
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1225	
www.parliament.gov.bd	
Invitation for Tender	
1 Ministry/Division	Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat
2 Procuring entity name	Deputy Secretary, Administration Section, Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat.
3 Invitation for	Supply of Laptop, Display Monitor & CCTV for Data Center.
4 Invitation Ref. No.	11.00.0000.000.604.07.001.25/10, Date: 06.01.2026
5 Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National).
6 Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget.
7 Tender package name and short description of goods	Package 10 (Lot-2)-IT Device
8 Tender selling place	Reception Room (Inside Tunnel), Parliament Secretariat.
9 Tender selling date	12/01/2026-21/01/2026 (Time: 10:00am-4:00pm)
10 Tender submission date, time and place	Submission date: 22/01/2026, Time: 9:30am-12:00pm, Reception Room (Inside Tunnel), Parliament Secretariat.
11 Tender opening date, time and place	Opening date: 22/01/2026, Opening Time: 12:05pm Deputy Secretary (Admin-1), Level-7, Block-East, Room No. 7, (Lift-13, 14, 15 & 16).
12 Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	Reputed Firms/Suppliers having valid trade license (2025-2026), income tax clearance certificate (2024-2025) (for company 2023-2024), BIN, Experience Certificate & Distributor/Reseller Authorization letter & (b) Detailed terms & conditions will be mentioned in tender schedule.
13 Price of tender schedule	Price of schedule Tk. 2000/- (Two thousand) only (As mentioned in the schedule).
14 Tender security & tender validity period	50,000/- (Fifty Thousand) only. Validity period: 150 days.
15 Name, designation, address & phone number of official inviting tender	Md. Mahbub Jamil, Deputy Secretary (Administration), Block: North-East, Ground Floor, Room No. 131, Parliament Secretariat (Phone: 55029007).
16 Special instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings. • Lot based lowest bidders will be selected.

07.01.2026
Md. Mahbub Jamil
Deputy Secretary
Phone: 55029007

Bangladesh, is often celebrated as an opportunity to go abroad, but behind the success stories is a stark loss of human capital that weakens health systems, slows innovation, and undermines self-reliance. Brain drain is not just economic; it is a political question of development justice.

Migration is often framed as personal choice, but those "choices" are shaped by the rich countries. Facing ageing populations and labour gaps, states in the Global North design policies to attract skilled workers from places like Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's young, educated, digitally savvy population has become a recruitment target. As demand for healthcare staff, engineers, and tech workers grows,

heavy bureaucracy. Migration becomes less a free choice than a rational escape from structural stagnation.

This raises ethical questions: is it fair for rich countries to benefit from doctors trained with Bangladesh's public funds? Should their labour shortages be solved at the expense of the Global South's development?

Today's talent extraction echoes older dependency. Where colonialism drained raw materials, current migration channels siphon intellectual capital. Bangladesh's English-speaking, globally trained middle class is absorbed into richer markets, deepening inequality under the banner of "mobility." The issue is not people's right to leave, but whether global rules can make talent flows mutual and developmental, rather than one-sided and extractive. When skilled graduates leave Bangladesh, the primary loss is economic. Doctors and engineers trained at public expense become a subsidy from poor taxpayers to rich countries when they settle abroad. A doctor educated in Dhaka but practising in London is a public investment serving another state.