

POLITICAL SATIRE

Men to the rescue: A modest proposal for women's political relief



THE SOUND AND THE FURY
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In a generous act of national service, men across the political spectrum have stepped forward to rescue women from the exhausting burden of political participation. Panels have been formed. Microphones secured. At last, women's rights are being discussed safely, sensibly, and above all, without women.

This is a relief to everyone involved. Women, after all, are busy. They have revolutions to survive, harassment to endure, families to manage, jobs to show up to (frequently at unequal pay), reputations to defend, and public humiliation to absorb with grace. Why add the chaos of elections to the list? Standing for office is stressful. It requires money, stamina, exposure, and the willingness to be misrepresented daily. Men, ever thoughtful, have decided to spare women this ordeal by simply doing politics on their behalf.

It is an elegant solution. Out of 1,981 parliamentary candidates nationwide, about 76 are women, a figure so modest it can be presented without blushing, while 30 registered political parties have achieved the remarkable feat of submitting nomination lists without a single woman among them. This, you see, is what happens when concern is properly organised.

First and foremost, applause must go to the National Consensus Commission, that shrine to male consensus-building, which gathered the nation's finest defenders of the status quo to confront the truly destabilising prospect of women in politics. After much hand-wringing and heroic restraint, it delivered a proposal of breathtaking bravado: five percent female candidates. Five percent asked for almost nothing—and still proved too much. That most parties couldn't even bring themselves to nominate a single woman was really just an honest admission that even symbolic inclusion requires effort. Tokenism,

it turns out, is hard work.

Credit must also be given to the Election Commission, which looked on serenely as parties violated this laughably low bar agreed upon in the July Charter (accountability is such an aggressive word). And how can one forget the interim government, many of whose members built lifelong careers peddling women's empowerment and now oversee its quiet disappearance with the steady professionalism of people who know exactly what they are doing?

If you think about it (and women, really, should not bother to do that), women are being protected from the indignity of candidacy itself. No need to tire themselves with fundraising, smear campaigns, threats, abuse, or character assassination. True, women are receiving most of this anyway—just without the inconvenience of a seat, or any authority. But let's not get distracted by details.

Women already do most of the unpaid work that keeps the economy from collapsing in on itself. This includes care work, emotional labour, crisis management, ensuring food security, and the small matter of reproducing the labour force. None of this appears in GDP calculations, which is how we know it is essential.

In the fields, women are bent over rice seedlings at dawn and still working when the light fades, saving seed for the next season, feeding animals, processing harvests, and running households, as if these were not already several full-time jobs. Along the water, they dry fish, mend nets, process shrimp, manage ponds, and quietly keep the entire post-harvest economy afloat. Naturally, none of this qualifies them as farmers or fisherfolk. Recognition, after all, is reserved for people who own boats, land titles, or microphones loud enough to drown reality.

In garments, women earn the foreign exchange that props up national pride, exports, and press releases. In return, they are offered long hours, low wages, and inspirational speeches about resilience. Political representation would only spoil the symmetry.

Women are also, inconveniently, busy managing violence, which is a full-time occupation in itself. Not just the cinematic

Men can debate land rights while women cultivate land they do not own. You get the gist. It is a beautiful division of labour.

Unencumbered by the unrealistic expectations of capitalist fascist patriarchy, men can, thankfully, continue their public service with the grace of people who never had to apologise for their existence. They gather in rooms designed to keep out women, reach consensus, issue statements, and nod

nominate a single woman to parliament, and manages to organise all-male panels under the banner of its women's wing, where men gather to discuss women's lives so women don't have to.

The farce continues with the National Citizen Party, which arrived bearing the promise of a "new arrangement," only to reveal that the arrangement was new mainly in branding. Like Jamaat, the NCP is keenly concerned about women, particularly about when they should step aside for the greater good. The women who stayed with the party through its many contradictions over the past year, defending it and absorbing criticism on its behalf, were eventually unceremoniously discarded when alliances had to be secured and seats redistributed. This, too, was done for women's own good. Surely, nothing spares women the burden of politics quite like being cut loose at the moment power is negotiated.

And then there is the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), now burnished into a symbol of liberal respectability and rhetorical commitment to women's empowerment. When it came time to translate principle into practice, the party managed an impressive 3.5 percent of women candidates. Not nothing, you understand. Just very nearly. This was achieved, in part, by discarding figures like Rumin Farhana, who spent years defending the party with near-ornithological ferocity at a time when senior BNP leaders were so absent from public view that one could have searched for them with a microscope. Her reward was dismissal. Why? For the unforgivable offence of failing to heed the party line, apparently. And in a party that treats corruption and opportunism as survivable flaws, it was almost moving to see discipline enforced with such speed—once again, and unmistakably, on a woman.

It is all very caring, let me reassure you. We should all really just heave a sigh of relief that women are being spared the chaos of elections, the mess of ambition, and the danger of visibility. They are being protected from power itself, which, frankly, can be bad for one's skin. Instead, they can continue doing what they do best: holding everything together while being politely excluded from the decisions that affect them.

The men, generously, will take it from here. At least until the next uprising, when women will once again be urgently required.



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLOB CHAKROBORTY

kind that earns headlines and hashtags, but the ordinary, bureaucratic sort: deciding which streets feel safe today, how much to say, when to shut up, which message to delete, which threat to ignore, which warning to take seriously. A constant, low-level calculation that stretches from home to office to street to screen. By the time all that is accounted for, the idea that women should also sit around pondering their political futures, drafting demands, or contesting power begins to feel wildly unrealistic. Luckily, men—freed from these minor inconveniences—have stepped in to do the thinking. It's efficient. It keeps things moving. No one has to ask awkward questions about why women are always exhausted.

Politics is where we need men to handle the heavy intellectual lifting. Men can decide budgets while women stretch them. Men can design policies while women survive them.

gravely. They mansplain to women why now is not the time, why patience is strategic, and why they need to "trust the process." They warn women not to fracture unity—meaning the unity of men who already agree.

This posture of benevolent supervision is perfected by Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, which insists every chance it gets that it is deeply invested in women's wellbeing. Jamaat does not exclude women from power; it protects them from it. Consider the generosity of promising to reduce women's working hours to five a day, a touching gesture of concern that somehow never extends to equal pay, job security, or the question of who will make up the lost wages. Women, apparently, need rest—but not remuneration. Authority, meanwhile, remains far too strenuous to risk. This is the same party that speaks endlessly about women's dignity while failing to

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN ENERGY

Can we afford to not pursue clean energy?



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Conversations around energy transitions are typically focused on swift transitions, with solar panels appearing overnight on rooftops, wind farms sprouting across landscapes like mushrooms after rain. The reality, particularly for developing nations navigating complex economic pressures, tells a different story.

And for Bangladesh, a country that simultaneously grapples with climate vulnerability and economic transition, clean energy isn't just an environmental aspiration, but a necessity that could redefine the industrial future.

Picture this: nearly 666 million people globally still live without reliable electricity, with over 85 percent concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. And while the entire population in Bangladesh is said to have access to the grid, "access" is not the same as reliability. Frequent power cuts and a heavy reliance on expensive, imported fuels make the system fragile.

While the lights are mostly on, heating energy is where the real crisis resides. Less than 30 percent of Bangladeshi households have access to clean cooking fuels like gas or electricity. Most still rely on wood or crop waste, creating indoor smoke that is a leading cause of early death in the country. This "energy poverty" isn't just an inconvenience, but a significant health hazard to a substantial portion of the population.

However, Bangladesh suffers not only from a lack of energy access, but is also one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations. According to the World Bank, tropical cyclones already cost the country about \$1 billion every year. If sea levels rise by just 27 cm by 2050 (which is a very real possibility), the southern coast could lose nearly 18

percent of its farmland, plunging the country into a severe food crisis. Every new coal or gas plant built today adds to this risk of exacerbating climate change. The irony is that Bangladesh produces very little of the world's pollution, yet it pays one of the highest prices.

Transitioning to clean energy isn't just about "being green," but also about stopping the cycle of damage that drains billions from the economy. Bangladesh's economy relies heavily on exports, with around 85 percent of its export earnings coming from the readymade garment industry. To grow further into leather, jute, and food processing, the country needs massive amounts of energy. Modern manufacturing is energy-intensive. The RMG sector requires reliable, affordable electricity for every stage of production, from spinning yarn to running sewing machines to powering climate-controlled warehouses. Leather processing demands substantial energy for tanning and finishing. Food processing and cold chain logistics are energy voracious. If Bangladesh hopes to expand and diversify its industrial base, it must solve the energy equation.

Currently, the country is stuck in an "import trap." About 65 percent of the country's power depends on imported fossil fuels like liquefied natural gas (LNG) and coal. In 2025 alone, the cost of importing LNG jumped to nearly \$3.9 billion. So, when global fuel prices spike because of wars or supply chains, Bangladeshi factories suffer.

Clean energy offers an alternative pathway. By using sunlight and renewable resources, Bangladesh can harness energy domestically, reducing import dependence and price volatility. Consider the RMG sector

specifically. Factories powered by rooftop solar installations coupled with energy-efficient machinery don't just reduce carbon footprints, they lower operating costs and enhance competitiveness in international markets where there is an increasing demand for sustainable production. European and US buyers are implementing stringent environmental standards and factories powered by clean energy gain market access advantages.

Yet, the painful reality is that Bangladesh needs this transition at a time when it can least afford it financially.

The numbers paint a sobering picture. The country has already allocated \$15.7 billion for interest payments alone in fiscal year 2024-25, nearly one-fifth of the total budget. As Bangladesh graduates from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, it faces higher borrowing costs as well as reduced access to concessional financing. Tax revenues remain constrained by a narrow tax base. Development financing is becoming increasingly scarce as global crises, such as wars, pandemics, and other emergencies, dominate international attention and resources.

Climate adaptation and mitigation programmes require substantial funding through bilateral and multilateral sources. But the current geopolitical landscape doesn't prioritise climate action when conflicts rage and economic uncertainties loom. This makes financing for clean energy much harder to find.

To make the jump to clean energy, Bangladesh needs to frame these projects not as "costs," but as "investments." Every dollar spent on a solar farm today is a dollar not spent on expensive foreign oil tomorrow.

Renewable energy projects create construction and operations jobs. Reduced fuel imports improve trade balances. Lower energy costs enhance industrial competitiveness. Energy access in rural areas unlocks economic opportunities previously constrained by darkness.

Renewable sources are abundant, emit minimal greenhouse gases,

and offer energy sovereignty. To stay stable, Bangladesh must move away from fossil fuels. Bangladesh has a goal: to have 40 percent renewable energy in its energy mix by 2041.

The International Day of Clean Energy, observed on January 26 is also the founding date of the International Renewable Energy Agency, and it serves as more than ceremonial recognition. It's a call to action for just and inclusive energy transitions that benefit both people and planet.

For Bangladesh, this day should prompt reflection on uncomfortable truths. Economic stability cannot be built on unstable energy foundations. Industrial diversification cannot succeed without reliable, affordable power. Climate adaptation cannot happen while simultaneously expanding the fossil fuel infrastructure that accelerates

climate catastrophe.

Progress is taking place. Renewable energy capacity in developing countries has grown from 155 watts per capita in 2015 to 341 watts less than a decade later. But Bangladesh, along with the global community, remains off-track in terms of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7, which calls for universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by 2030.

Of course, change takes time. The export diversification Bangladesh is seeking won't be achieved overnight. The clean energy transition requires patient, sustained policy interventions and investments. But the foundation must be laid now, even amid fiscal constraints and global uncertainties.

The incoming government faces a momentous choice: continue down

a path of energy vulnerability and climate risk or embrace clean energy as the cornerstone of economic stability, industrial competitiveness, and climate resilience. The former threatens continued instability. The latter offers a fighting chance at a sustainable future.

For a nation that has survived cyclones, floods, and countless other challenges through resilience and ingenuity, the clean energy transition represents not a burden but an opportunity. An opportunity to power industries with the sun, to build stability on renewable foundations, and to demonstrate that climate vulnerability can catalyse climate leadership.

The question isn't whether Bangladesh can afford this transition, but whether it can afford not to pursue it.

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Memo No. EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/37 Date: 25/01/2026

e-Tender Notice No. 37/2025-26
Limited Tendering Method

This is to notify all concerned that e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works. Details are given below:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work	Document last selling (date & time)	Tender closing (date & time)
1	1219095	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-04	Construction of internal roads, main gate and boundary wall at Jugia Dakhil Madrasa, Sadar, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00
2	1219096	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-05	Construction of semi-Paka hall room including Repair and renovation work of EED Building at Daulatpur Dakhil Madrasa, Daulatpur, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00
3	1219097	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-06	Overall repair and renovation work of existing buildings including construction of main gate at Khoksha Darul Uloom Dakhil Madrasa, Khoksha, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00
4	1219098	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-07	Construction work of Boundary wall at Bahir Char Sol Dag Dakhil Madrasa, Bheramara, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00

The interested persons/firms may visit website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) to get the details of the tender. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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