

## Verdict on Abu Sayed killing on April 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed April 9 for delivering the verdict in the crimes against humanity case over the killing of Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed during the July 2024 uprising in Rangpur.



On January 28, the prosecution and defence concluded arguments in the case. Yesterday, the three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Nozrul Islam Chowdhury set the date for delivering the judgement.

In this case, the accused, including the former vice-chancellor of BRU Md Hasibur Rashid, former Rangpur Metropolitan Police commissioner Md Moniruzzaman, and 28 others, faced charges of murder, attempted murder, abetment, and complicity in crimes against humanity.

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Young women browse through books at the ongoing Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan. Although the crowd turnout this year is lower than usual, visitors with a habit of exploring the fair continue to do so, inspiring others along the way. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## 133 interim govt ordinances to be placed in JS

Some may face further scrutiny, say cabinet sources

BAHARAM KHAN

The government has decided to place 133 ordinances -- issued during the tenure of the interim government -- before Parliament.

According to government sources, the decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat yesterday.

The ordinances were originally promulgated under Article 93(1) of the Constitution, which allows the president to issue laws in emergency situations when Parliament is not in session.

Under constitutional rules, any ordinance must be placed before Parliament within 30 days of the start of a session; otherwise, it loses its legal validity.

Cabinet sources said the ordinances will be reviewed once tabled. Those considered necessary will be converted into formal laws, with amendments if required.

Ordinances that do not conflict with the Constitution and align with the BNP's election manifesto may be enacted without amendments.

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## 75% women leave jobs for motherhood, family duties Shows 1200 applicants' data from BRAC's BRIDGE programme



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professional women in Bangladesh often face interruptions in their careers, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Around 75 percent of them leave the workforce mainly due to family responsibilities and motherhood, according to an applicants' survey conducted by BRAC.

BRAC's Chief People and Culture Officer Moutushi Kabir shared the findings at a media briefing yesterday at BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka's Mohakhali.

The information was taken from data provided by 1200 applicants, who applied for the BRAC's Bridge Returnship programme.

BRAC has relaunched the programme to support professional women returning to the workforce following a break.

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## 'Conviction rate in rape cases close to zero'

Over 10,000 cases unresolved for more than 5 years, says Rape Law Reform Coalition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 10 lakh cases are currently pending in the country's Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals, with over 10,000 rape cases remaining unresolved for more than five years.

Expressing deep concern over the massive backlog and the prolonged judicial process, the Rape Law Reform Coalition -- a group of 17 legal and rights organisations -- has demanded sweeping reforms to existing rape laws, as well as the judicial and law enforcement systems.

The coalition, in collaboration with Feminist Opportunity Now, raised the demands at a press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the capital's Segunbagicha yesterday.

Addressing the event, Shashwatee Biplob, associate director of BRAC's Gender Justice and Diversity programme, highlighted the bleak conviction rate. "The conviction rate in rape cases is less than 1 percent, which is close to zero," she said.

Zakia Anarkoli, vice president of the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, pointed to police non-cooperation when victims try to file general diaries (GD).

Sharing her experience, she said police often force complainants

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**Calling the 109 national helpline only plays a welcome message without connecting callers to any actual assistance. Also, the One-Stop Crisis Centres close early. If a survivor knocks on the OCC door after 2:00pm and finds it closed, nothing could be more horrific.**

KAMRUN NAHAR

A member of the coalition

## 'Welfare funds by registered bodies not extortion'

Rabiul reiterates earlier claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Shaikh Rabiul Alam yesterday reiterated that it's not "extortion" if registered associations for transport owners and workers collect funds for organisational welfare.

Saying there is no scope for exploitation during Eid travel, the minister said, "However, if associations for [transport] owners or workers collect funds for their welfare in a lawful manner, it cannot be called extortion."

He made the remarks while speaking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting on Eid travel arrangements at the Secretariat.

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## 'Let my mother know I am here'

Survivor recounts horrors of secret detention at ICT-1

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

A haunting message scrawled on the wall of a secret detention cell has revealed the grim reality of enforced disappearances, a survivor told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Freedom fighter Iqbal Chowdhury, testifying as the fourth witness in a high-profile crimes against humanity case, described the windowless cell at DGF's Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) as roughly 15 to 16 feet high, with a single overhead light.

The walls, he said, were marked with brick scratches and blood-like red stains bearing desperate messages from previous detainees.

One inscription, written beneath a Banglalink mobile phone number, read: "If any brother sees this, please call this number and tell my mother

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