

President calls for effective steps to ensure women’s safety

UNB, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday called for effective and strict measures to prevent violence against women and address emerging challenges such as online defamation and cyberbullying targeting women.

“Women and girls must not become victims of neglect, abuse or discrimination. We want to build a livable Bangladesh where every woman can be in a safe environment, become self-reliant and have opportunities to lead and where every girl has equal chances to dream and realise those dreams,” he said.

He made the remarks while addressing a programme marking International “Shreshtha Women’s Day 2026” and the conferring of “Adamyia Nari” awards at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

Shahabuddin said acid violence in Bangladesh had once been brought under control through firm political commitment and strict legal measures.

He said in 2002 the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia enacted laws to control acid use and acid attacks and ensured speedy trials

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President Mohammed Shahabuddin hands over the ‘Shreshtha Adamyia Nari’ award to Barrister Zaima Rahman, who accepted it on behalf of her late grandmother, former prime minister Khaleda Zia, in recognition of her contributions to women’s education and the advancement of democracy. The award was presented at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium on the occasion of International Women’s Day yesterday.

Amend RTI Act before passing ordinance

Seeks Right to Information Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Right to Information (RTI) Forum yesterday demanded the immediate formation of Information Commission and further amendments to the Right to Information Act, 2009, saying the recent amendment ordinance should not be passed in parliament in its current form.

“It is a world record that despite a legal obligation, the Information Commission remained unformed for one and a half years,” said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Iftekhharuzzaman at a press conference in the capital’s TIB office.

He urged the government to form the commission without delay and appoint qualified, experienced and independent individuals capable of working beyond partisan influence.

The remarks came at a press conference titled “Immediate Formation of the Information Commission and Necessary Amendments to the RTI Act, 2009,” organised by the RTI Forum.

Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam, also convener of the RTI Forum, said civil society organisations had repeatedly proposed reforms through consultations, but many of those recommendations were not reflected in the recently issued amendment ordinance.

“We do not want the ordinance to be passed in its current form in the parliament session starting March 12.

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‘Visible on the street, not in policy making’

Speakers stress more women representation in reform efforts at MJF event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite their pivotal role in national movements and the recent July uprising, women in Bangladesh remain excluded from decision-making and denied equal citizenship, speakers said at a town hall meeting yesterday.

The event, titled “Her Voice, Her Rights,” was organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at its office in Mirpur, Dhaka, to mark International Women’s Day. It focused on the marginalisation of women and girls from the national reform process.

“Equal rights with dignity for everyone were at the heart of our fight for independence,” said Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, in her welcome remarks.

She noted that although women have repeatedly demonstrated courage during moments of national change, they remain largely absent from positions of power.

Stressing that rights must apply equally to those on the margins, Shaheen Anam called for strict enforcement of laws and greater institutional accountability.

She also referred to the Beijing Conference as a landmark whose commitments remain relevant today, urging young people to defend the rights of girls.

“Girls’ rights cannot be treated as a secondary issue; they must remain central to any serious national commitment to justice, democracy and equality,” she said.

Wasiur Rahman Tonmoy, MJF’s lead for youth engagement and social cohesion, said despite women’s visible participation in the July uprising, they remain severely under-represented in ongoing reform efforts.

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Equal rights with dignity for everyone were at the heart of our fight for independence.

SHAHEEN ANAM
Executive director of MJF

Same fields, same labour, never the same pay

Despite rising participation in agriculture, rural women remain caught in a cycle of unequal wages

MOSTAFA SHABUIJ and MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Every day, life starts for Nurnahar Begum before sunrise in Rajosh village of Gobindaganj upazila in Gaibandha.

Alongside household chores, she spends long hours threshing crops at farmers’ homes and working in nearby fields during the harvest season.

Yet, despite doing the same work as men, she earns barely half their wages.

“We get half the wages of men for the same work,” said the 38-year-old labourer.

Women workers typically earn Tk 8,000 to Tk 9,000 a month, while male labourers receive Tk 20,000 to Tk 22,000, she added.

Her experience is far from unique. Thousands of women farm labourers across the region face the same disparity.

On March 2, Rosina Kisku, 25, and Dipali Kisku, 20 – two Santal women – were seen planting paddy seedlings in Rajabirat village of Gobindaganj.

Their work involved lifting bundles of seedlings and transplanting them across waterlogged fields. For this labour-intensive job, women earn Tk 500 a day, while men receive Tk 700.

“It feels painful to receive less for the same work,” Dipali said. “But if we demand equal pay, we may lose



PHOTO: STAR

our jobs.”

Despite the wage disparity, women’s participation in agriculture has grown significantly over the past decade, largely driven by economic necessity and the migration of men to non-farm jobs.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), women’s labour force participation increased from 24 percent in 2000 to 36 percent in 2010, peaking at 42.8

percent in 2022 before falling to 38.40 percent in 2024.

A report by the interim government’s Women’s Affairs Reform Commission says much of the increase in women’s employment over the past decade has come from agriculture.

Citing BBS data, the report notes that women’s participation in agriculture rose sharply from 46

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‘He was hiding, not forcibly disappeared’

Defence counsel alleges at ICT-1; Arman rejects claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A defence lawyer yesterday questioned whether the International Crimes Tribunal should continue relying on rules introduced during what he described as a “fascist” government while cross-examining a prosecution witness in a case over alleged enforced disappearance and torture.

Lawyer Aminul Ghani Titto raised the issue before ICT-1 while representing seven former Rab officials, who are on trial over allegations of enforced disappearance and torture at the force’s Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI) cell.

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3RD TERMINAL DEADLOCK
Japanese team, CAAB may resume talks March 11

RASHIDUL HASAN

A Japanese delegation is scheduled to visit Dhaka on March 11 to resume the talks with the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) over the operation of the Dhaka airport’s third terminal.

The discussions are expected to break the current deadlock in negotiations between CAAB and the Japanese consortium comprising Japan Airport Terminal Company, Sumitomo Corporation, Sojitz, and Narita International Airport Corporation.

“Talks between the CAAB and the Japanese technical team over operation of the third terminal will be held on March 11 at the foreign

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NCP launches women’s platform ‘Nari Shakti’

STAR REPORT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday launched a women’s platform, “Nari Shakti,” aimed at addressing issues related to women’s rights, dignity, security, and empowerment.

NCP Convener and Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam made the announcement at a programme at the Dhaka Reporters Unity. The launch coincided with International Women’s Day.

Nahid introduced a three-member leadership committee for the platform, which will expand to 41 members.

Monira Sharmin, joint convener of the NCP central committee, was named convener, while Dr Mahmuda Alam Mitu will serve as member secretary and Nusrat Tabassum as chief organiser of Nari Shakti.

Monira was elected general secretary of

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LAND WANTED

Pubali Bank PLC., the largest Private Commercial Bank in Bangladesh is looking for a **commercial unhindered plot/Land** in the **prime location of Tejgaon area & Gulshan Area** for **construction of corporate office Complex / Head Office building or newly constructed commercial building/ the building of under construction (total floor area above 2 lacs sft.)** for Pubali Bank PLC.

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