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## BNP's women leaders unhappy as it opens door to outsiders

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A section of BNP's women leaders is unhappy that the party has opened the door to outsiders and little-known figures in the race for women's reserved seats in parliament.

They feared that long-serving loyalists, who stood by the party despite years of repression and political struggle, may be overlooked while importance is being given to outsiders who neither held party posts nor made any visible contribution in the last 17 years. Such a move has already demoralised leaders and activists across the country, they added.

According to party insiders, the BNP interviewed a number of outsiders over two days, including Meghna Alam, Farzana Sithi, Rukaiya Jahan Chamak and others.

Many of them are relatives of party leaders but do not hold any party post, sources said.

Seeking anonymously, an aspirant from Dhaka Mohila Dal unit of BNP said, "With the number of reserved seats so limited, even one or two nominations

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A private firm employee operates his e-bike amid fuel shortages, as many turn to electric vehicles to avoid long waits at pumps. According to industry insiders, monthly sales surged from 800-1,000 units to about 2,200 in March during the fuel crisis and could reach 3,000 if the trend continues. The photo was taken on Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Road in the capital's Agargaon area yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'They threatened to shoot me if I spoke' Enforced disappearance victim testifies at Int'l Crimes Tribunal-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A victim of enforced disappearance told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday that as he pleaded for release, saying he had two children, plainclothes men who detained him threatened to shoot him if he spoke up.

Masrur Anwar Chowdhury, a 36-year-old electrical and electronic engineer, said five to six men abducted him near Gulshan on March 1, 2020, while he was on his way to the office. They dragged him into a microbus, handcuffed and blindfolded him, and took him to a secret detention centre.

Testifying as a prosecution witness in a case linked to a Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell allegedly operated under the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Masrur said he was held in two locations for about a week, during which he was tortured twice and threatened with death.

He said he was first taken to a small cell and interrogated about social media posts critical of the then Awami League government and India.

"When I denied links to any militant group, I was beaten twice -- once with a belt and again with a hard object. They threatened to kill me if I did not confess," he said.

Masrur said he was later moved to what he believed was a Rab compound, where he was kept in a narrow cell, often blindfolded and handcuffed. Detainees were given only a few minutes for basic needs and were beaten if they exceeded the time.

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## Solar no longer a choice, but a necessity

Experts urge immediate shift to renewables amid energy crunch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Generating 10,000MW of solar power by 2030 is no longer just an ambitious target but a critical necessity for Bangladesh to cope with the global energy crunch, experts said at a panel discussion yesterday.

They made the remarks at the 9th Sanem Annual Economists' Conference at BRAC Centre Inn in Mohakhali, as the escalating Middle East conflict exposed the country's vulnerability to volatile global fuel markets.

At the session titled "The Global Energy Crunch Driven by Middle Eastern Conflicts: South Asian Perspective," Shafiqul Alam, lead energy analyst at Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) Bangladesh, said the country's dependence on imported primary energy has risen to 62.5 percent from 47.7 percent in 2021.

"Last year, we spent around \$12 billion on energy imports," he said, warning that rising crude oil and spot LNG prices could lead to severe summer load-shedding, higher inflation, and an unsustainable subsidy burden.

**Solar is coming, whether the government wants it or not. We must make the transition easier for investors while ensuring regulations remain both investment- and environment-friendly.**

SYEDA SULTANA RAZIA  
Member, BERG

To address the crisis, Syeda Sultana Razia of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) urged the government to prioritise local gas exploration, noting the country's strong 1-in-

3.3 success ratio compared to the global average.

She also stressed the need to expedite the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, warning that delays are costing around Tk 12 crore per day in fines.

Highlighting the urgency of renewable energy, Razia said, "Solar is coming, whether the government wants it or not. Look at Pakistan, where consumers and industry shifted without waiting for policy."

"Solar is our future. We must make the transition easier for investors while ensuring regulations remain both investment- and environment-friendly," she added.

Md Rafiqul Islam, additional secretary and a member of the Bangladesh Energy and Power Research Council (BEPRC), suggested using the country's 7.8 billion metric tonnes of coal reserves to run its existing 7,000MW coal-based power capacity.

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## 13TH PARLIAMENT

### 'If no fuel crisis, why long queues at pumps?'

Rumeen Farhana slams govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

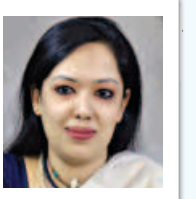
Lawmaker Rumeen Farhana yesterday slammed the government over its stance on the fuel situation.

Addressing the parliament, the Brahmanbaria-2 MP

questioned, "If there is no fuel crisis, then why are there such long lines in front of filling stations?"

During a discussion in parliament under Rule 71 on urgent public importance, she questioned why

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### Will invite int'l bids for energy blocks Energy minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku yesterday told the parliament that there are plans to invite international bidding for oil and gas exploration blocks in the Bay of Bengal soon.

While responding to MP Nurul Islam, the minister said with the experience of "Bangladesh Offshore Bidding Round 2024" and based on the review of production sharing contracts (PSC) of

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### Formulation process for 10th wage board for journo soon

Info minister tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapan yesterday told parliament that the process of forming the 10th Wage Board for journalists and media professionals will begin soon.

He said the 9th Newspaper Wage Board Award was published in the Bangladesh Gazette on September 12, 2019. However, due to disagreements between journalists and newspaper owners regarding income tax payments, the 9th Wage Board has not been implemented. Currently, six writs and civil

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**সরকারি**  
**সব শিক্ষা উপবৃত্তির টাকা**  
**সহজেই নিন**  
**বকেটে-এ**

নিরাপদে নিশ্চিত্তে ঘরে বসে উপবৃত্তির টাকা  
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আপনার **বকেট** নাম্বারটি নিবন্ধন করুন।

