

# Fighting terrorism without losing the republic



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Recently, the Police Headquarters issued a nationwide alert about possible militant attacks on key installations, including the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, public places such as Shahbagh intersection, places of worship, entertainment centres, police and army establishments, as well as armouries. Despite contradictory statements later made by Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister's Adviser on Information and Broadcasting Dr Zahed Ur Rahman on the existence of militancy in Bangladesh, the alert underscores that violent extremism has not disappeared; it has only changed form, language, and platform.

A report by The Daily Star, based on court filings and intelligence findings, gives the warning a sharper context. It says police detected communications between several alleged Neo-JMB members, and that a 16-year-old boy from Habiganj Sadar had been in regular contact with two dismissed army personnel. After the boy's arrest earlier this month, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit reportedly seized his phone and found materials that investigators believe indicate links with Neo-JMB, as well as his presence at a secret meeting at Zia Uddin. The documents describe him as an "IS ideology follower/Neo-JMB member." Officials also claim the group used online platforms and pseudonyms, with the boy allegedly even receiving bomb-making training. His mother, however, denied any militant involvement, saying he is mentally unstable. That denial warrants consideration given his age; however, one cannot dismiss the pattern.

Another report, published by the Times of Bangladesh, has also caused a stir recently. According to it, a Bangladesh Air Force warrant officer has been allegedly missing from a Chattogram base for about two months and later traced to a Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) hideout. This has apparently led to a sweeping internal probe and the detention of more than 20 people, including BAF members and non-combatants. The report cited unnamed security and intelligence sources, while the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) declined to comment. Because the investigation is ongoing, these claims must be treated carefully. But even as reported allegations, they demand careful scrutiny. If extremist recruitment has touched even a small segment of trained personnel, it is no



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

longer only a question of fringe radicalisation. It becomes an institutional security concern.

This is the point that Bangladesh keeps missing. Counterterrorism should not mean panic, media trial, or collective suspicion of religious groups. After the recent terrorism alert, a CTTC joint commissioner was right to say there is "no reason to panic." But calm is not the same as denial. Earlier assurances from the interim government sit uneasily alongside these recent warnings, suggesting that national security concerns have been overlooked for some time. In July 2025, then Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said there was "no militancy in Bangladesh at present." Around the same period, then DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali reportedly dismissed militancy as a current problem and suggested that earlier "militant drama" had been used to justify killings. Such political assurances may resonate in a polarised public sphere, but they risk obscuring the complexity of our evolving

security landscape. The concern here is not limited to one teenager or one alleged cell. The Daily Star reported in November 2025 that two Bangladeshis, Ratan Dhali and Foyzal Hossain, were killed while fighting for TTP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The Dissent, a journalism platform, has consistently produced evidence-based reports on this issue and warned citizens about the threat,

reportedly trying to join. That should end the temptation to romanticise the issue as youthful confusion, anti-Western anger, or simple religious emotion.

Bangladesh has lived through this turmoil before. On August 17, 2005, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) detonated hundreds of bombs across 63 of the country's 64 districts within about 30 minutes. That was not only an attack on public safety; it was

Moreover, Bangladesh has a traumatic history of enforced disappearances, with the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances identifying some security agencies among the main perpetrators named by victims and families. These findings matter because public trust is not a luxury; it is an essential component of the counterterrorism infrastructure.

A family that fears arbitrary detention may stay silent even when a son is being radicalised. A community that sees counterterrorism as partisan revenge will not cooperate with intelligence agencies. This is how real threats hide within the noise created by state abuse. Bangladesh, therefore, needs a firmer but more democratic counterterrorism doctrine that puts transparency and human rights at its core. The state must be uncompromising towards those who plan violence and seek to destroy the constitutional state for a utopian "Khilafat state". At the same time, it must be equally uncompromising about due process, judicial oversight, evidence-based prosecution, and protection from torture, enforced disappearance, and politically motivated cases. These are not opposing goals; they are mutually necessary for national security and for sustaining public support.

The social media and public sphere also need close attention. In recent years, pro-al Qaeda, pro-ISIS, pro-Taliban, and Neo-JMB style narratives have become more visible on social media and in some public forums. Not every conservative religious view is extremism, and the state must never criminalise belief. However, it must draw a clear line between religious expression and ideological preparation for violence. When speakers glorify armed jihad in Iraq, Syria, or Afghanistan, justify killing opponents and bombings targeting civilians, delegitimise the constitutional state, or present Bangladesh's security forces as enemies of Islam, the matter moves from opinion to incitement and recruitment.

Bangladesh's security agencies need resources, training, coordination, and public support, but they also need reform and accountability. Bangladesh has reduced the visible threat of terrorism over the years, which is a notable achievement, but low visibility does not mean no threat. Extremism often becomes quiet, reorganises, enters new platforms, and waits for moments of political confusion. To address the extremism-related national security threat, the answer is neither blind support for security agencies nor cynical dismissal of every warning. Fighting violent Islamist extremism means defending both national security and constitutional rights.

## INT'L DAY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

# No more corporal punishment



Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.

LAILA KHONDKAR

A stark and disturbing reality was revealed in the preliminary findings from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025, conducted jointly by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and UNICEF. In Bangladesh, 86 percent of children aged 1-14 experienced physical punishment in the month preceding the survey. This is not a marginal issue. It is a national crisis.

Despite a 2011 circular from the Ministry of Education banning corporal punishment in educational institutions, children continue to be beaten by teachers. Beyond schools, corporal punishment persists in homes, institutions, and workplaces with little accountability. Occasionally, the media exposes horrific incidents of violence against child domestic workers and even children in schools. But these reports capture only a fraction of the truth. Most abuse remains hidden. Corporal punishment is not limited to visible injuries. Humiliation, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and ridicule leave scars that are often deeper and far more enduring.

The widespread social acceptance of corporal punishment indicates how violence has become normalised in child-rearing. It reinforces children's subordinate status in society and paves the way for other forms of abuse.

A 2021 report, titled "Corporal Punishment of Children: Summary of Research on Its Impact and Associations" by the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, reviewed over 300 studies linking punishment to a host of adverse outcomes. Not a single study identified any benefits. Corporal punishment is ineffective as a disciplining technique, as children only comply due to fear but do not learn anything when they are punished. Corporal punishment triggers hormonal

stress responses that can alter brain structure and function, leading to increased anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem, and higher risks of antisocial behaviour or substance abuse in adulthood. What we often dismiss as "discipline" is profound, measurable, and long-lasting harm. Research also demonstrates a troubling insight: adults frequently misjudge the force they use when hitting children. What is intended as "mild" discipline can escalate quickly into violence.

Around 70 countries worldwide have already prohibited corporal punishment in all settings, including homes. Bangladesh is not among them. This is a glaring gap in our legal framework. This must change. Bangladesh, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, has both a legal and moral obligation to act.

"I was hit as a child, and I turned out fine" is a common statement. But this argument misses the point entirely. Many people survive harmful experiences. That does not make those experiences acceptable or beneficial. Resilience should not be used to justify harm.

Many argue that adults usually resort to hitting out of stress, anger, or frustration. Parents and teachers may need support or more resources, but that should never be a justification to hit children. With sustained investment in public education and awareness building, parents and teachers can learn constructive, respectful ways to guide children's behaviour without resorting to violence.

Politicians are usually hesitant to enact laws banning corporal punishment of children in all settings, in fear of public backlash. This is not an issue where governments can afford to wait for public opinion to shift. On the contrary, leadership must come first. Countries such

as Sweden, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Poland, and Romania have all seen a decline in public acceptance of corporal punishment following legislative action. It is possible to shift societal attitudes and individual behaviours by enacting laws, promoting positive parenting, changing social norms, and ending violent discipline in schools.

The law sends a clear, uncompromising message: hitting a child is unacceptable, everywhere and under all circumstances. Banning corporal punishment is not about criminalising parents. It is about protecting children and shifting societal norms. Evidence from countries that have enacted such bans shows no surge in prosecutions. Instead, these laws serve as powerful educational tools, encouraging healthier, non-violent relationships between adults and children.

In 2015, every country signed up to SDG target 16.2, pledging to end exploitation, trafficking, torture, and all forms of violence against children by 2030. We have less than five years to meet the commitments. Bangladesh must take proactive measures to protect children from violence. This should include enacting comprehensive legislation banning corporal punishment in all settings; strengthening enforcement of the existing ban on corporal punishment in educational institutions; investing in nationwide awareness campaigns promoting positive, non-violent parenting and teaching practices; building the capacity of parents, teachers, and service providers to interact with children without violence; and ensuring children's voices are heard and respected in shaping policies that affect them.

Ending corporal punishment is not just about protecting children from harm. It is about building a society grounded in dignity, respect, and non-violence. We must do more and bring momentum to our efforts to create a peaceful society for children. The new government should demonstrate leadership through legal reform to facilitate the social transformation process.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Carriage)  
Bangladesh Railway, Kamalapur, Dhaka  
[www.railway.gov.bd](http://www.railway.gov.bd)

Memo No. BR/DCD/FY26/eGP/Advertisement-5 (Corrigendum) Date: 28 April 2026

**Corrigendum Notice for e-GP Tender**

The e-Tender has been invited through the National e-GP Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of the following package(s):

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package description	Tender closing/ opening date & time	
1	1234562	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-04 Procurement of 1500 Nos. CI brake block for MD-52 type bogie for Dhaka carriage depot [FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT]	As per original tender notice	30-Apr-2026 11:00 hrs
			As per corrigendum tender notice	07-May-2026 11:00 hrs

All potential and interested tenderers are requested to register in the National e-GP System and participate in the e-Tendering process.

*Rasel Alam*  
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এস (২৬) (২৪৯)  
GD-961

**সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি**  
কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিভিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়  
৩৫-৪২, ৪৪, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০

নং-প্রক/নোট সার্টিং/টেন্ডার-২০২৬/৭৮ তারিখঃ ২৮.০৪.২০২৬

**ই-টেন্ডার নোটিশ**

জাতীয় e-GP সিস্টেম পোর্টালে (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) এর মাধ্যমে নিম্নোক্ত পণ্য ক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হয়েছে।

ক্র.সং.	বিবরণ	সি.সি.নং
০১.	টেন্ডার আইডি	১২৬৬১৪৩
০২.	রেফারেন্স নম্বর	এসবিএল/সিএসডি/টেন্ডার/নোট সার্টিং/২০২৬/৭৮
০৩.	পণ্যের নাম	১০(দেশ) টি নোট সার্টিং মেশিন ক্রয়।
০৪.	টেন্ডার প্রকাশের তারিখ	২৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৬, বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকায়।
০৫.	টেন্ডার শিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৪ মে, ২০২৬, বিকাল ২:৩০ ঘটিকায়।
০৬.	টেন্ডার উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ ও সময়	১৪ মে, ২০২৬, বিকাল ৩:৩০ ঘটিকায়।
০৭.	টেন্ডারিং পদ্ধতি	OTM

গুরুত্বপূর্ণ e-GP সিস্টেম পোর্টালে ই-টেন্ডার গ্রহণ করা হবে। সরাসরি কোন টেন্ডারের কাগজপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। ই-টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট ফর্ম ডাউনলোডের জন্য জাতীয় e-GP সিস্টেম পোর্টালে রেজিস্ট্রার ব্যাংকের শাখার মাধ্যমে ফর্ম ফি জমা করতে হবে। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্য e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.com.bd>) এবং এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর ওয়েবসাইট [www.sonalibank.com.bd](http://www.sonalibank.com.bd) এর Tender Board এ রয়েছে।

যোগাযোগঃ কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিভিশন, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।  
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স্বাক্ষরিত/-  
ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার

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