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WOMEN, CHILDREN ABUSE CASES

## 15 districts see zero convictions

SC-BRAC study flags stark regional disparity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the law mandates disposal within 180 working days after investigation and trial, the average duration of a case in Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals stands at 1,370 days – approximately 3.7 years – according to a joint study by the Bangladesh Supreme Court and BRAC.

The study also found that victims endure a grueling judicial process, with each case scheduled for hearing an average of 22 times before a verdict is delivered.

The findings were presented yesterday at a consultation titled "Procedural Hurdles in Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals" at the BRAC Centre in Dhaka's Mohakhali, organised by BRAC's Social Empowerment and Legal Protection (SELP) programme.

Analysing 4,040 cases across 46 tribunals in 32 districts between January and June 2025, the study paints a bleak picture of the justice system, with an overall conviction rate of just 3 percent.

Even more concerning is the regional disparity, with 15 districts recording zero convictions during the study period.

The report noted that while 70 percent of the accused are acquitted, a further 13 percent of cases end in compromise, often due to social pressure and the absence of a witness protection law.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

**The Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Ordinance 2025 has reduced the statutory timeframe for case disposal from 180 to 90 days, without addressing the persistent challenges and underlying procedural constraints.**



Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman speaks at a rally in the capital's Nayapaltan, while Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman addresses a gathering near Baitul Mukarram on Friday, marking International Labour Day. Labour groups, including BLC and Awaj Foundation, in a procession at Keraniganj, place demands for fair wages, safe workplaces, extended maternity leave, trade union rights, and enforcement of ILO Convention 190.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN, STAR

## The BNP govt pursuing 'US First' policy

Says Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP government is pursuing an "America First" policy while paying lip service to its "Bangladesh First" motto, said economist Anu Muhammad yesterday.

He questioned the government's motives for implementing the former interim government's agreements with the US "without any parliamentary debate".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



## Reserved seat MPs take oath today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The oath-taking ceremony for the newly-elected MPs for the reserved women's seats in the 13th Jatiya Sangsad will be held today.

The ceremony will take place at the oath-taking room of Jatiya Sangsad at 9:00pm, the parliament secretariat said in a release yesterday.

The Election Commission on April 30 published a gazette declaring 49 lawmakers elected unopposed to the reserved women's seats in the 13th parliament.

According to the gazette, 36 MPs were elected from the BNP-led alliance, 12 from the Jamaat-led alliance, and one as an independent.

The BNP alliance MPs are Selima Rahman, Shirin Sultana, Rasheda Begum Hira, Rehana

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Nusrat's nomination valid: EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday declared the nomination paper of Nusrat Tabassum, joint convener of the National Citizen Party, valid for a reserved women's seat in the 13th National Parliament under the Jamaat-e-Islami-led H party alliance.

Confirming the development, Returning Officer and Election Commission Joint Secretary Md Moin Uddin Khan told The Daily Star yesterday that Nusrat's nomination paper was scrutinised at 11:00am and subsequently declared valid.

"Her [Nusrat's] nomination will be placed before the Election



SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## Improved, real-time fact-checking must to curb misinfo

Speakers tell programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Misinformation and rumours in Bangladesh are no longer merely online falsehoods but are increasingly being used as political and commercial tools from social media to the streets and then into mainstream media and academics, said media experts and policymakers yesterday.

They made the remarks at a programme titled "Rumours and Misinformation in the Media: Who is the Victim? Who is the Predator?", organised by the Press Institute Bangladesh.

"Fake news, disinformation and rumours should not be treated as random falsehoods. These are now highly political tools," said Prof A Al Mamun of Rajshahi University's Department of Mass Communication and Journalism.

He termed it alarming as the world is witnessing the rise of fascist and autocratic regimes, along with right-wing politics.

In Bangladesh, the reality of the last two years showed a positive correlation between right-wingers and rumours, misinformation and disinformation, Prof Mamun said.

He also said false information can move from social media to the streets and then enter mainstream media, helping create a wider

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Free police stations from middlemen

Salahuddin orders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday directed law enforcement agencies to eliminate middlemen from police stations across the country, including those under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

He issued the directive during a surprise visit to Ramna Model Police Station in Dhaka.

In a 10 minute-29-second video of the minister's visit sent by the Home Ministry, he was seen entering directly into the room of the officer-in-charge (OC) during the inspection. There, he asked those present about their identities and the reasons

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Vehicles ply along the Mirhajirbag road in the capital's Jatrabari area, which remains damaged due to long-neglected maintenance. The state of the road worsens, especially after rainfall, causing delays and sufferings to everyday commuters. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



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