

INT'L CRIMINAL COURT Chief prosecutor suspended amid sex abuse claims

AFP, The Hague

A key governing body of the International Criminal Court on Monday suspended chief prosecutor Karim Khan as he faces sexual abuse allegations against a member of his office.



Karim Khan

The 21-member bureau of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP) decided to refer Khan's case to the wider ASP that represents every member country of the ICC.

The bureau decided "by qualified majority... to suspend the Prosecutor from duty with immediate effect pending the final decision of the Assembly of States Parties as the competent decision-maker," the body said in a statement.

"The bureau emphasises that this suspension is not an indication of the final outcome," added the statement.

The decision will have little practical impact on the functioning of the court, as the 55-year-old Khan stepped aside in May 2025, taking a leave of absence to fight the allegations that he denies.



Unable to sell paddy through the government procurement programme, farmers in Sreeramkathi village of Nazirpur upazila in Pirojpur are being forced to sell their harvest to wholesale traders at lower prices. Farmers allege that politically connected individuals are supplying paddy to the government instead. Inset, farmers gather at the local UNO office to protest their exclusion from the programme. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

Largest budget in the works

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In the interim period, due to stagnation and indecision in development spending, this fiscal year's original budget set the deficit at 3.6 percent of GDP.

While revenue collection will fall short, not all of the government's planned expenditure will be spent either, said a finance ministry official. As a result, the actual deficit at the end of the fiscal year may come down to around 3 percent.

In the upcoming fiscal year, the government is setting an expenditure target of Tk 938,000 crore, which is 19 percent higher than this fiscal year's revised budget.

The government aims to boost public investment in line with its electoral pledges.

Already, a Tk 300,000 crore annual development programme has been approved, which is 50 percent higher than this fiscal year.

However, challenges remain regarding implementation capacity.

Meanwhile, out of the Tk 638,000 crore operating budget, about Tk 450,000 crore may be allocated for interest payments, partial implementation of the new pay scale and subsidies.

From the next fiscal year, partial

implementation of the Pay Commission's recommendations will begin.

According to the government's plan, this will be completed over three fiscal years, with 50 percent of the basic pay becoming effective in the upcoming fiscal year.

As a result, an additional Tk 35,000 crore will be allocated for salaries, allowances and pension benefits of government officials and employees. The total allocation in this sector will stand at Tk 166,000 crore.

Allocations for subsidies and incentives may amount to Tk 126,125 crore and for interest payments Tk 142,000 crore.

Last fiscal year, Tk 122,000 crore was allocated for interest payments, but the actual expenditure reached Tk 134,430 crore. It may reach Tk 140,000 crore this fiscal year.

"To manage the situation, there is no alternative to increasing domestic resource mobilisation," said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

At the same time, in the case of new loans, greater emphasis must be placed on project selection, expenditure control, timely implementation and skillful negotiation of loan conditions.

"Otherwise, the pressure of debt

repayment may intensify in the coming years," he said.

In its election manifesto, the government highlighted the education and health sectors.

Accordingly, in the upcoming fiscal year, more than Tk 100,000 crore will be allocated to three ministries and divisions related to education, and more than Tk 60,000 crore will be allocated to two divisions related to the health ministry.

However, implementation remains a bigger challenge than allocation in these two sectors. How this challenge will be addressed will become clear during budget execution.

In this budget, Khosru will announce a new initiative called the Creative Economy.

As part of this, Tk 500 crore will be allocated in this year's budget, of which the government will provide Tk 200 crore and the Bangladesh Bank will contribute Tk 300 crore from its CSR fund.

In his budget speech, Khosru will highlight the potential of the creative economy and present its framework.

Broadly, the creative economy encompasses film, dance, music, drama, publishing, advertising, architecture, fine arts, crafts, design, software, video games, and similar industries.

AL leaders can contest local govt polls if eligible

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Independent individual uses the election campaign to speak about the Awami League or voice their narratives, that will be an issue. Other than that, if an independent individual meets the criteria to contest the polls, they can certainly run."

"Since the activities of the Awami League are banned but the organisation is not, no one can use their party posts."

Regarding border push-ins, Zahed said this is India's internal political matter, the impact of which is somewhat falling on us. "I don't think the Indian

government is doing this to create tension with Bangladesh. This push-in is rather an expression of the newly elected West Bengal government's electoral promises and its specific politics.

"I firmly believe, based on our discussions at various levels of the Indian government with the new government of Bangladesh, that they want to move past the situation from the time of the Dr Yunus government; both countries want this."

The crisis that is temporarily visible will be resolved quickly, he said, adding, "I don't think they [India] are trying

to keep Bangladesh under intentional pressure in any way."

Besides, a reporter asked why the government has not taken action against those responsible for the deaths of over 600 children from suspected measles, despite acting swiftly over the deaths of six children at Ad-din Hospital.

In reply, the information adviser said the government's immediate priority is to ensure vaccines for the children and to overcome this crisis. However, that does not mean those responsible for this issue will not be investigated or held accountable.

Govt, opposition MPs trade barbs

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block market at three times the price.

"Around 81 percent of current shareholding appeared concentrated within one group. Measures will be taken to return ownership to the genuine shareholders. Let the percentage of shareholding be published," he said.

The minister also referred to Islami Bank's Rural Development Scheme (RDS), alleging that Tk 22,000 crore had been distributed through the project – Tk 11,000 crore before and another Tk 11,000 crore after the August 5 political changeover – "to help a certain group cross the election river".

He further alleged that after the Awami League's fall, Nabil Group received Tk 700 crore in loans against letters of credit from the bank and did not repay after selling imported goods.

"Some say that the money went into a party's election fund. They set up a TV channel, and we know which side that channel plays for."

Salahuddin said Nabil Group's total liability stood at Tk 16,000 crore and questioned why no investigation had followed.

He also called for inquiries into loans, including Tk 40 crore allegedly disbursed before the election without head office approval, and expenditures such as Dhaka Cox's Bazar air tickets purchased under corporate social responsibility programmes.

The home minister alleged that after the bank was "seized", 9,000 employees were dismissed unlawfully and replaced with 6,000 politically aligned recruits.

He said allegations of large-scale money laundering against S Alam Group, which took over the bank under the AL regime, and others should be investigated under Bangladesh Bank's supervision. In response, Shafiqur challenged the minister to substantiate any allegation linking Jamaat to election financing.

"I want to know clearly whether the minister meant Jamaat by this. If he did, I am taking this absolute challenge. If he can prove it, I will personally award him

a medal," he said.

Addressing allegations related to the RDS project, Shafiqur said, "Who took it? Me? My colleagues? If even a single taka went into party funds, I say, searchlights should be used"

He alleged that shareholders had faced intense pressure from a special agency and were compelled to transfer their shares.

Shafiqur also claimed that thousands of employees had been recruited without following procedures or publishing advertisements.

Calling it "a hallmark of fascist times", he said that after the August 5 changeover, those recruits had been invited to sit for examinations to regularise their positions but none appeared.

He accused former prime minister Sheikh Hasina of destroying Islami Bank through S Alam and warned that the group was now being allowed to return.

As an example, he criticised the appointment of Md Khurshid Alam to lead the bank, alleging there was evidence of irregularities against him.

"That man has now been brought back to head a ruined bank," he said. "He is dishonest. Putting him in charge of a devastated bank is unacceptable."

Shafiqur argued that banks must change for the sake of customers, owners and the institution itself.

"The government will run everything. Credit or discredit will go to them. But public perception of this bank must be considered. If incompetent people are again put in charge, whatever remains will vanish."

He urged the prime minister to reconsider the matter. "I urge the prime minister to think seriously, not with prejudice but with reality, to save this bank. We believe that if the Islami Bank is restored, public confidence in the banking system will return."

Responding to criticism over Khurshid's appointment, Salahuddin cited Bangladesh Bank's position that no allegations had been proven against

him and no investigation was underway. "If new allegations arise, they will be investigated," he said.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, delivering the concluding remarks, said concerns had emerged because many people observed unusually high election spending in constituencies during the last polls.

On Islami Bank's chairman, he said Bangladesh Bank had clearly stated that no wrongdoing had been found and noted that there was no precedent anywhere in the world of depositors withdrawing funds merely because of a chairman's appointment.

He argued that withdrawals were driven instead by agitation inside and outside the bank. "Those withdrawing funds seem intent on putting Islami Bank in danger. There is a hidden hand behind this. They want to make the bank fail and reap political benefits."

"During the fascist regime, when the Islami Bank was taken over, did depositors withdraw their money? No, they did not," he said.

The finance minister further alleged that there was a connection between deposit withdrawals, unrest surrounding the bank, and those who initiated the parliamentary discussion.

"It seems to me the entire matter is being used to create political instability. This is not limited to Islami Bank. There is a connection between those withdrawing money, those creating disorder inside and outside the bank, and those who brought the proposal in parliament." He concluded, "You can rest assured that Islami Bank's future is very safe in BNP's hands. Absolutely safe."

After nearly one and a half hours of debate, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Syed Abdullah Mohammed Taher raised a point of order and proposed forming a parliamentary committee to investigate the bank in light of differences between the treasury and opposition benches.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad rejected the proposal, ruling that the "motion has been talked out".

Bangladesh hammer Australia to historic win

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Nahid Rana. The Tigers showed they were ready to compete with cricket's big guns on cricketing terms, unlike the 4-1 T20I series win in 2021 over a depleted Australia on slow and low tracks. This time, Bangladesh reversed the template from spin to pace. They were on Australia's throat on wickets where Australia thrive – sporting and quick.

After Mosaddek Hossain's unbeaten 86 – almost four years since his last ODI appearance – saw Bangladesh post 284 for four, Taskin Ahmed's very first delivery set Bangladesh on course for a dominating win. A length delivery beat Matthew Short all ends up, seaming in to disturb the stumps. In the next over, Mustafizur Rahman trapped Marnus Labuschagne on the pads with an in-swing to leave Australia at two for two.

From then on, it was the Rana pace show. Wind on his back, the crowd roaring as he zoomed in for every delivery, the lanky pacer produced a terrifying performance fit for the world's best. Aussie skipper Josh

Inglis had been handling the quick well, crunching a back-foot glide past point. It only fired Rana up.

Then in the 11th over, Rana produced another of those high-voltage deliveries, a 147.9 kph length ball. Inglis did not move his feet as he prodded at the ball and was caught behind. Rana released his pent-up energy, hurling a few choice words at Inglis, an incident that will no doubt spice up the rest of the series.

In between the chin-and-ear music that Australia batters faced, Rana picked up Alex Carey (47), Liam Scott and Xavier Bartlett – the latter out off a 148.5 kph short ball into the ribs – to finish with four for 41, the best figures by a Bangladesh bowler against Australia in ODIs.

Mosaddek himself was out there doing everything, picking up two crucial wickets alongside some brilliant catching. Lightning saw the match stopped with Australia at 191 for nine in 42.2 overs before Bangladesh were awarded the win via the DLS method.

Earlier, the hosts lost Saif Hassan

early in overcast conditions after being sent to bat with Australia's quicks on the ascendency. Opener Tanzid Tamim and Najmul Hossain Shanto, however, wrested control back quickly, unleashing some tremendous strokes during a 96-run partnership off 91 deliveries. Australia's fielding also let them down on a few occasions, including Labuschagne missing a regulation catch at slips which gave Shanto a reprieve.

Tanzid's departure after a 44-ball 54 caused a mini collapse, with Shanto (67) and Litton Das (seven) departing soon after. From then on, Mosaddek took charge of the innings, paving the way for the win.

The win ends a 21-year wait. Mohammad Ashraful had been the architect in Cardiff in 2005, a victory that remained Bangladesh's only ODI triumph over the six-time world champions until yesterday's 23rd encounter between the sides. This time, a pace demon in Rana and a resurgent Mosaddek have put the Tigers on course for a historic series win.

Jamaat proposes Tk 8.4 lakh crore

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The proposal also includes monthly honorariums of Tk 7,500 for imams, Tk 5,000 for muezzins, and Tk 3,000 for mosque caretakers nationwide.

For government employees, the Jamaat proposed a new pay scale under which employees in grades 10–20 would receive a 100 percent salary increase, while officials in grades 1–9 would receive a gradual 80 percent salary adjustment.

In terms of sectoral allocation, public administration received the largest share at Tk 2,02,245 crore, accounting for 24.09 percent of the total budget.

Education and technology were allocated Tk 1,25,575 crore, followed by Tk 1,27,500 crore for debt servicing, Tk 65,340 crore for transport and communication, Tk 51,670 crore for agriculture, Tk 48,150 crore for social security and welfare, Tk 45,240 crore for health, and Tk 45,220 crore for local government and rural development.

Addressing the event as chief guest, Opposition Leader and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said honesty, transparency, and accountability were essential not only for preparing

a budget but also for ensuring its effective implementation.

Without these, no budget could succeed, he said.

Shafiqur alleged that increasing political interference in financial institutions was putting economic management at risk.

Criticising the tax collection system as ineffective, he said revenue collection could rise significantly if businesses were allowed to operate in a transparent and harassment-free environment.

He also questioned the current July–June fiscal year structure, arguing that it encourages a rush to implement Annual Development Programme (ADP) projects during the monsoon season, creating opportunities for waste and corruption.

The Jamaat chief said his party would propose aligning the fiscal year with the calendar year.

"In June, development activities are often disrupted by monsoon rains, droughts, cyclones, and other natural disasters. Yet a large portion of the ADP is rushed through at that time. The public does not benefit from it;

rather, dishonest beneficiaries do," he said.

Shafiqur also proposed placing supplementary budgets in parliament at least three months before the fiscal year ends to improve oversight of public spending.

At present, supplementary budgets are often tabled at the end of the fiscal year after most expenditures have already been made, limiting parliamentary scrutiny and accountability, he added.

The event was moderated by Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair, head of Jamaat's publicity and media department.

Others present included National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam, Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary, Khelafat Majlish Naye-e-Ameer Ahmad Ali Qasemi, AB Party General Secretary Asaduzzaman Fuad, and Jagpa President Tasmia Pradhan.

Jamaat leaders present included Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, Senior Naye-e-Ameer ATM Azharul Islam, Naye-e-Ameer Mujibur Rahman, and Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad.

3 die after fire at house of rape-murder

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The bodies of the other two victims had not reached the village from Dhaka by the time this report was filed at around 7:00pm, as legal formalities were still underway.

According to police and locals, the body of the teenage girl, stuffed inside a sack, was recovered from the Padma on June 3. A case was filed by the victim's brother on June 4, naming Naim Pramanik as the prime accused, along with two others. All three accused were arrested, and the victim's funeral was held the same day.

Citing locals, OC Tarikul said that following the funeral, a group of angry locals allegedly set fire to Naim's house in Purbo Raghobpur village of Sadar upazila.

As the fire spread, a container filled with petrol exploded, leaving at least six people with burn injuries – most of them neighbours and onlookers who had gathered at the scene, police said, adding that no one from the accused family was present when the fire broke out as they had gone into hiding.

Badsha Alamgir, a resident of the village and a member of the Bharara Union Parishad, said the six burn victims were initially taken to Pabna General Hospital in critical condition.

They were then shifted to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka for advanced treatment.

"Following the rape and murder of the girl, the villagers have now had to witness a series of tragic deaths over the last few days. The village is completely overwhelmed by grief and anxiety. We are working alongside law enforcement agencies to keep the situation under control."

Recalling the series of events, he said, "A young girl was allegedly raped and killed by her cousin near her house. As we were returning home after burying her body, we heard a loud explosion from Naim's house. We rushed to the spot and found several young men lying on the road with severe burn injuries."

Deceased Sumon's brother Md Ukil Sheikh yesterday filed a case with Pabna Sadar Police Station against unidentified individuals.

In the case statement, he claimed that after some locals set Naim's house on fire, his brother, along with five to six others, had gone to the spot to help bring the situation under control.

Md Shakil, a cousin of deceased Sabbir, and Md Imran, the brother of deceased Shapu, claimed the two had

only gone to the scene to watch what happened after the fire broke out.

OC Tarikul said an additional police force has been deployed in the village to maintain law and order and prevent further violence, and an investigation into the incident is underway.

Mother, teenage

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brothers Tofazzal Hossain alias Babu, 23, and Kefayat Hossain alias Puittiya, 27; Mohammad Tanzid, 24; Mehedi Hasan, 24; and Mohammad Tareq, 26.

One suspect, identified as Jisan, had been jailed in a case filed over weapon possession and robbery charges and was released just five days before the attack.

Abhijit confirmed that an organised local criminal network was responsible and added that police are continuing to search for the remaining suspects.

Family members further alleged that the same group had targeted the household on two or three previous occasions.

A case had yet to be filed over the incident [by the time this report was filed] at 8:45pm.

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