NEWS

'It's creating an environment of terror'

1800 in the western world, in the wake of 200 years of abuse of such laws.

"There was no discussion or debate in the parliament over the DSA bill. How can one even expect a discussion when 60 to 70 percent of the assembly is filled with businessmen?" he said.

Barrister Sara Hossain, executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST), said that ICT Act must be kept in discussion, as many cases are still being prosecuted under the law. "No reasonable debate was raised on DSA despite reservations of the UN."

Monir Haidar, founding member of Forum for Bangladesh Studies; Sultan Mohammed Zakaria, country specialist at Amnesty International; Faruq Feisal, regional director at Article-19, academician Shapan Adnan, and Golam Mortoza, Bangla editor at The Daily Star, also spoke.

Eid rush leads

Sources at the country's four airlines -- Biman, US-Bangla, Novoair and Air Astra -- said tickets for domestic and outbound tourist destinations have become scarce due to the ongoing rush of holidaymakers.

Different airlines are counting profits, they said, adding that holidaymakers nowadays prefer travelling by air to avoid extra trouble.

"Almost all tickets on Saidpur, Jashore, Rajshahi and Barishal routes before five to six days of Eid day have already sold out," Kamrul Islam, spokesperson of US-Bangla Airlines, told The Daily Star.

Ticket prices on the routes have increased by around two to three times due to the high demand.

Tickets to different international destinations -- including India, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia and the Maldives -- have also been booked or sold out for that period, said the sources.

Demand for air tickets for Cox's Bazar, a popular holiday destination, is also very high, Kamrul said.

"Improvement in people's financial condition as well as competitive and reasonable prices of air tickets have considerably boosted domestic and international air traffic," he said.

Kamrul said ticket prices are high as the price of jet fuel kept rising for the last one and a half years.

He said people who have bought tickets one or two months ago, got them at the regular prices. But as there are limited seats left now, prices shot up accordingly.

A Biman official, wishing anonymity, said, "It's not true that we are increasing prices targeting Eid. It's a normal trend in the aviation sector across the globe, that prices shoot up when demand is high."

According to Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation expert, the number of domestic air passengers has increased by about 64.73 percent in the country in the last five years since 2019.

Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (Toab) said according to its estimate, around 15 lakh holidaymakers are likely to go on a trip to different domestic tourist destinations this Eid.

Another heritage

for being part of a historic chain of development activities taken during the British period. The authorities have already demolished the western part of the building, but it is still possible to protect it by renovating the demolished part," said Taimur.

He also mentioned that Rajuk, for the first time, prepared a list of 94 heritage buildings and 13 heritage zones in 2009 and the Railway Hospital building was in it. It was also in the 2017 list prepared by Rajuk.

However, the building's name was mysteriously dropped from the list that mentioned the names of 75 heritage buildings in 2020, according to Taimur.

"We are observing that one after another, heritage buildings are being demolished. This is also a clear violation of the High Court's directives," he said.

During a human chain in front of the building protesting its demolition yesterday, Sazzadur Rasheed, associate professor and chairman of the Department of Architecture at Primeasia University, claimed the authorities have long tried to demolish the structure and took the chance when everyone got busy with the recent Bangabazar blaze.

Participating in the human chain, advocate Md Waliul Haque told this correspondent, "These buildings carry our history with them. History will be protected as long as these structures are protected."

"If we can at least protect the part which has not yet been demolished, we will be able to preserve our history and pass it on to the next generations," he added.

Who will save Karatoya?

orders has been implemented.

After the meeting, the organisers submitted a memorandum to the Bogura Deputy Commissioner Saiful Islam to save the river.

The Khulshi Three-Vent Regulator is a sluice-gate-like structure, built across the Karatoya River in Gobindaganj upazila in Gaibandha. Its purpose is to regulate the water flow of the river to prevent flooding in the surrounding areas during monsoon.

However, the regulator obstructs the natural flow of the river upstream, causing it to remain dry up for almost 9 months in a year, alleged environmentalists.

This obstruction prevents fish migration and causes pollution, as the stagnant water creates a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other disease-carrying organisms, they added.

85pc inland

unregistered vessels.

In the meeting, it was suggested that the number of seafarers (sailors) be increased through special programmes.
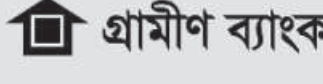
Meanwhile, in yesterday's meeting, some complaints presented by the river commission in the previous meeting of the committee were refuted.

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, a member of the committee, said that some questions of the National River Protection Commission are not in favour of the interests of the government and country.

It is necessary to take strict decisions in the parliamentary committee so that those who are with the government do not go beyond the law and the government's directives,"the junior minister said.

According to the press release of the parliament secretariat, the committee also recommended a re-examination of the existing projects of the shipping ministry because of the revolutionary changes in the shipping communication system, especially in the southern region, due to the launch of the Padma Bridge.

'Threat to press freedom'

a statement terming the incident as a threat to press freedom and democracy.

They said the incident took place after the country's premier slammed Prothom Alo in parliament.

"If anyone is aggrieved at the publication of any report, they can complain to the Press Council. But journalists are being threatened by implicating them in cases under repressive laws, which worries the journalist community," the statement said.

In a separate statement, Dhaka Reporters Unity echoed the same.