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Rohingya crisis being prolonged by geopolitics

Says foreign adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain said yesterday that while the Bay of Bengal holds significant importance for Bangladesh, it also attracts the attention of global powers like India, the US, and China, each of whom has their own strategic interests in the region.

Touhid made the remark while speaking at the opening ceremony of the Bay of Bengal Conversation, 2024, an international geopolitical conference organised by the Centre for Governance Studies, an independent think tank, at a city hotel.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus inaugurated the 3rd edition of the three-day annual conference with the theme "A Fractured World", which is being held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka.

Touhid said Bangladesh has been caught in the crosshairs of competing geopolitical interests.

"I'm not blaming anyone; everyone

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Farmers bringing in their winter vegetables by boat to the Takerbazar Kheya Ghat in Sylhet city yesterday morning. They sell the vegetables to wholesalers at the market without the involvement of middlemen, which helps them make proper profits. Traders said veggies worth Tk 20 lakh is sold in the market every day.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

It must ensure democracy, right to vote

Say speakers at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rule of law, independence of the judiciary, and fundamental human rights can only be guaranteed if democracy and voting rights are protected through constitutional reforms, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

"Ensuring democracy and voting rights will solve all other issues. Through constitutional reforms, we must ensure people can exercise their franchise freely and independently every five years," said Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman.

"To make this happen, we must take the necessary actions. I believe such a constitution would be sovereign, and it would reflect the will of the people of Bangladesh. It would also guarantee the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, justice, and fundamental human rights," he told the discussion.

The event titled "Presentation of Constitutional Draft Proposals and What Kind of Constitution We Want" was organised by the Law Reporters Forum at the Jatiya Press Club.

The chief law officer of the state also emphasised the need for constitutional provisions that ensure people's

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Man kills 2 sons, tries to take his own life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man tried to take his life yesterday after killing his two children in Dhaka's Pallabi, say police, after speaking to his family.

Abdul Ahad, 50, a day labourer, slit the throats of his sons, Rohan, 7, and Musa, 3, before slitting his own around 9:30am, after his wife, a domestic help, left home for work, said his father-in-law, who was there at the time.

Ahad is currently being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. His children were declared dead on arrival at Kurmitola hospital.

His wife, Rozina Begum, said Ahad was in substantial debt, and they would often get into arguments over the matter.

Rozina's parents, Zobed Ali and Ayesha Begum, visiting from Netrakona, were at the house yesterday.

When Rozina was leaving for work in the morning, Ahad made her take her mother along with her to work. Meanwhile, Rozina's father, Zobed Ali, was ill and was sleeping in one of the rooms.

Speaking to this newspaper, Zobed Ali said, "Some time after Rozina and Ayesha left the house, I suddenly heard the kids shouting. When I went to their room, I saw them lying on the bed in a pool of blood, with Ahad standing next to them. As soon as he saw me, Ahad slit his throat and fell on the bed."

Zobed screamed for help, and the locals arrived at the scene.

Rozina was working at a nearby house at the time. When locals informed her about the incident, she rushed back to her house.

Rozina told this newspaper, "My husband borrowed around Tk 3 lakh from some 20 different people over the last couple of years. Recently, the lenders have been pressuring him to repay the loan."

"Almost every day, the lenders were coming over to the

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Judiciary, some media enabled autocratic rule

Says Ittekkharuzzaman

UNB, Dhaka

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director, Dr Ittekkharuzzaman, said yesterday that the judiciary played a facilitating role in establishing Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian rule.

He also criticised sections of the media for contributing to the consolidation of such governance.

Ittekkharuzzaman made these remarks while inaugurating a training workshop on investigative journalism on legal affairs at the Midas Centre in Dhaka.

"The independence of the judiciary and the media are intrinsically linked," he said, emphasising the need for political reforms to achieve a functional judiciary.

"Journalists can play a significant role in driving this change."

He alleged that institutions tasked with ensuring accountability, including the judiciary and certain media outlets, had instead become complicit in enabling authoritarian practices.

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WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS

Compensation remains elusive for most

Oblivious, many don't even seek damages

TUHH SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Thirty-two-year-old Mohiuddin Mal, a ride-sharing driver, was killed when an overloaded truck overturned and crashed onto his car in the capital's Wari area on November 8 last year.

His family was thrust into a desperate situation, as he was the sole earner for their four-member family in Dhaka, which includes two school-going children. To survive, his wife now works as a domestic help.

Family members asked the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) for compensation from the relevant fund. They also filed a case with Wari Police Station against the trucker.

One year has passed, but the family did not get any compensation, let alone justice.

"Their [Mohiuddin's family] world was turned upside down. I don't know how the education expenses of his children will be managed if they don't receive any assistance," said Mohiuddin's brother-in-law, Helal Uddin, who helps the family now.

Mohiuddin's family is one of over 1,300

families who are waiting for compensation from the government fund after filing applications. Thousands others are not even aware of the fund.

Most of the families of road crashes grapple with the emotional and financial fallout of losing their loved ones, many of whom were the sole breadwinners. In some cases, the victims themselves no longer work due to life-altering injuries, including the

loss of limbs.

With no compensation in sight, they face an uncertain and bleak future, struggling to make ends meet and rebuild their lives.

Considering the situation, the previous government under a law took an initiative in January last year to provide compensation to road crash victims or their family members, and a fund was also set up.

However, only 592 road crash victims or their families of 1,940 who filed applications got compensation till November 12 this year.

On the other hand, the total 22,855 were

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Kidnapped child rescued after 16 hours

Woman held; Rab says child's father under surveillance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eight-month-old daughter of a home ministry employee, who was abducted during a robbery in their home in the capital's Lalbagh, was rescued by Rab 16 hours after being kidnapped on Friday morning.

The robbers abducted her to demand ransom from the family, said Rab officials, adding that they also looted Tk 1.5 lakh cash and gold ornaments.

At a press briefing at the Rab Media Centre in the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday, they said they are keeping the child's father under surveillance, adding that they would look into all possible motives behind the kidnapping.

The law enforcers said they arrested 27-year-old Fatema Akter Shapla, who had moved into the house as a "paying guest" just a day earlier.

A Rab-10 team raided a house in the Nabinnagar Housing area of the capital's Mohammadpur around 1:30am on Friday and arrested Shapla. Arisa Jannat Zaiifa, daughter of home ministry employee Farzana Akhter, 33, was rescued from there and handed over to her family.

Farzana's relatives said four people, including a woman, kidnapped the child and took away cash and some gold ornaments after tying Farzana up inside her home. She and her daughter were home alone at the time.

At the briefing, Rab spokesperson Lt

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Philippines braces for Super Typhoon Man-yi

AFP, Manila

A super typhoon sweeping towards the Philippines on Saturday was intensifying and could have a "potentially catastrophic" impact, the state weather forecaster warned, with millions of people at risk from storm surges.

More than 650,000 people have fled their homes ahead of Super Typhoon Man-yi, which is expected to make landfall later Saturday or early Sunday, becoming the sixth major storm to pummel the archipelago nation in the past month.

With wind gusts of up to 240 kilometres per hour (about 149 miles per hour), Man-yi was on track to slam into the sparsely populated island province of Catanduanes as a super typhoon or "near peak intensity", the weather service said.

"Potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation looms for northeastern Bicol region as Super Typhoon 'Pepero' further intensifies," the forecaster said, using the local name for the storm and referring to the southern part of the main island of Luzon.

Up to 14-metre (46-foot) high seas were expected around Catanduanes, while more than 7.6 million people were at risk from storm surges of one to three metres, the forecaster said.



A line of parked motorcycles right in the middle of a pathway in the capital's Chawkbazar market. The drivers leave the vehicles there to buy products from the market, and it causes unnecessary traffic congestion in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Trump faces test with divisive cabinet picks

Names 27-year-old as White House press secy

AFP, Washington

Questions -- and, for some, outrage -- intensified over several of President elect Donald Trump's cabinet picks, as Washington awaits announcements for more major positions, including the FBI and Treasury chiefs.

Trump has vowed to dismantle the liberal "deep state" he says is running Washington and is banking on his decisive victory -- and triumph for Republicans in the US Senate -- to give him the political capital he needs to force through his nominees.

Trump, 78, began shaping his team with a number of unremarkable selections, naming conservative Florida Senator and foreign policy hawk Marco Rubio for secretary of state.

But then came a quartet of nominations for leaders of sprawling federal departments in his new government who have little or no relevant experience -- but a history of loyalty to the incoming president.

"Presidents are entitled to have the people that they want in these key positions to carry out the mandate that's been delivered to him by the voters of the United States," Rubio said Wednesday.

The most controversial nomination, far-right former congressman Matt Gaetz for attorney general, was being investigated by the US Congress over allegations of sexual misconduct and illicit drug use until Wednesday.