

Why are young men becoming so violent?



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

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The senseless killing of Jahidul Islam Parvez, a 24-year-old student of Primeasia University, over a trivial matter encapsulates a frightening trend in our society: violence is seen as the only means of resolution to a conflict. What is scarier is the appeal of violence and brutality among young people, especially young men.

The three main suspects of the murder, who have been arrested after identification through CCTV footage, and the others also in the case are in their 20s. It all happened when Parvez and his friends were chatting and having snacks at a tea stall near the university campus. According to media reports, two female students of another private university were also there and they felt insulted because they thought Parvez and his friends were laughing at them. The young women seemed to have complained to their friends, as soon after, a group of young men, possibly students, came and

they launched their attack on Parvez and his friend Tarikul using sharp weapons. Parvez was stabbed in the chest and died of his wounds, while his friend was critically injured.

Thus, a young life was cut short just because he might have been laughing at two female students. Parvez's assailants were so hungry for blood that they didn't even care that they were committing murder in public, that they would have to bear the consequences of their brutal act. How can they be so cruel and callous about the loss of a life over such a trivial matter?

The violent attacks and deaths of teenagers by "kisher gangs" (teenage gangs) over the last few years are a symptom of a society that is losing its moral compass and has failed its youth. There is a staggering lack of empathy, respect, and compassion in our society, which has seeped into many of our young people. The regular news of college students violently clashing with each other

weapons and making loud noises with their motorbikes, left residents and visitors petrified. CCTV footage of violent crimes taking place that flood social media often show that many of the perpetrators are young men, in their teens or twenties.

So what is happening to our youth? Well, to be honest, given the environment in which they grow up,

territories at universities, with the Awami League ruling uncontested for 15-plus years, its student wing Chhatra League had a free rein to be as violent as they wanted—and get away with it. In 2019, BUET student Abrar Fahad was cruelly beaten to death by Chhatra League members. They were his fellow students of the university that is considered

Every now and then, fights between two gangs result in severe injuries or deaths.

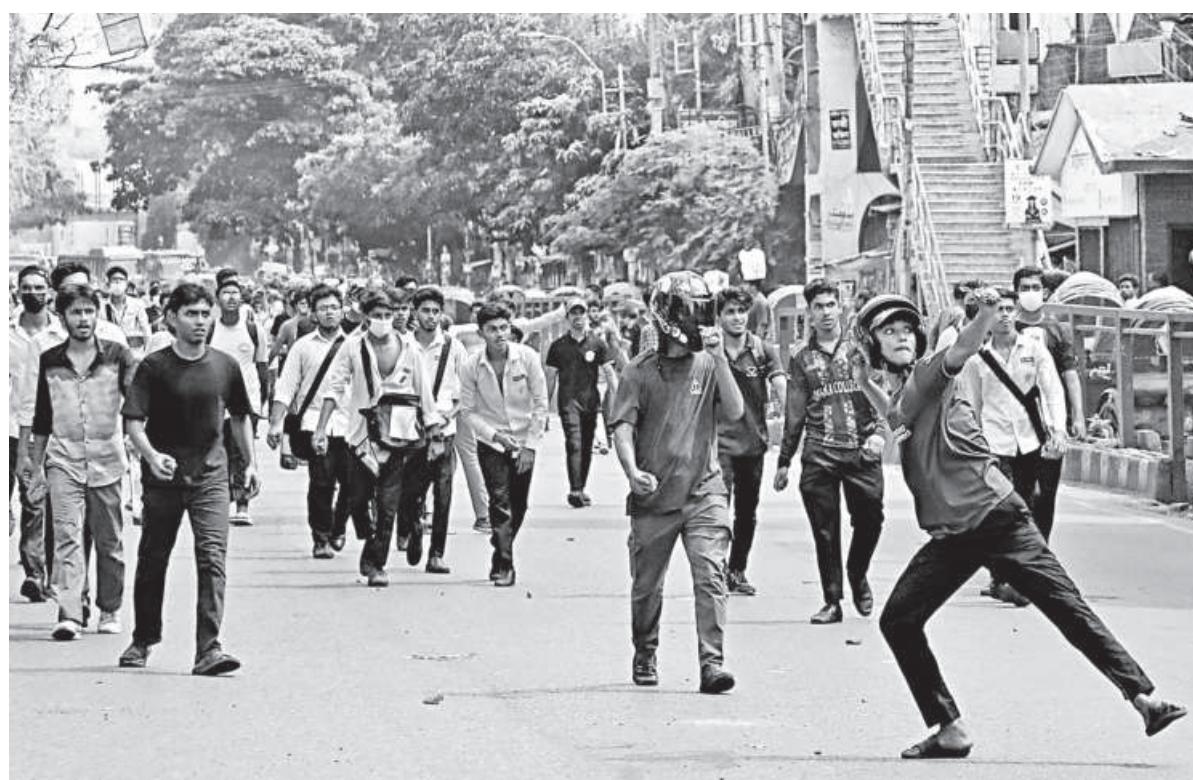
While young criminals are routinely arrested and sent to jail, this social affliction is on the rise.

Educational institutions are also to blame for not instilling the values needed for students to grow up into empathetic beings. Financial

advantages of having a young population (almost 25 percent of the total population is in the 15-29 age group, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics) we often choose to ignore the fact that a huge proportion of our young people are deprived of basic prerequisites of a wholesome life. This includes access to quality education, skills training, health, nutritious food, and decent jobs. Many don't get the guidance and love that are essential for children to grow up with good values. School curriculums are uninspiring, classrooms are overcrowded, and teachers don't have the time to give personal attention to each student. There are not enough playgrounds or recreational facilities for young people. Entertainment has become confined to mobile devices with internet connection, exposing them to violent content and pornography that serve to glamorise sexual violence.

The truth is, our governments and society have grossly overlooked the nation's most valuable asset: its young people. They have been seen merely as cheap labour that will keep the wheels of the economy running, that will bring in huge remittances. But little has been done at the policy or ground levels regarding development of youth that will be impactful.

The July uprising showed the strength and power of young people when they united and led the way to uprooting tyranny. Their courage and sacrifice moved people to join them in their fight for justice. Now is the time for society to harness this strength and spirit. The interim government and political parties must prioritise young people and plan how to empower them with quality education, skills training, and opportunities to earn, as well as make them feel part of nation-building. But most of all, society as a whole must teach young people to be empathetic, peace-loving human beings. It is the only way our nation can survive.



The regular news of college students violently clashing with each other and sometimes harming bystanders is evidence of our youth's growing inclination towards aggression.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

it's not shocking that many of our youth are prone to violent acts.

Politics has had a huge contribution in instilling this thirst for violence. Growing up watching the *Boro Bhais* (Big Brothers) of political parties getting "respect" through the fear they invoke among others with their brutality, many boys especially equate power with being how violent one can be. Though, typically, student wings of major political parties have used violence to establish their

to be one of the most prestigious institutions in the country.

According to a *Prothom Alo* report from last year, in 2024, there were about 237 "teenage" gangs in the country, with most of them being in Dhaka. Here, the term "teenage" can include young men in their early 20s. More than a thousand young men comprise these gangs and are involved in all kinds of crimes: mugging, extortion, drug trade, land grabbing, sexual harassment, rape, and murder.

hardship of the family, lack of communication between children and their parents, and physical abuse (by a parent or someone they know in their community) are other reasons why boys and young men are prone to violence. A misogynistic culture that punishes the female for being raped or sexually harassed and often provides impunity to the male perpetrators serve to encourage young men to commit these crimes.

While we talk a lot about the

confronted Parvez. Three teachers of the university intervened and resolved the issue. But the young men were not satisfied and later when Parvez and his friends were standing in front of the university,

and sometimes harming bystanders is evidence of this strange affinity towards brutality. Recently on the streets of Cumilla city, the rowdy demonstration of nearly a hundred young people, many wielding sharp

Bangladesh must explore sending skilled nurses abroad

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, while speaking at an event back in February this year, emphasised two issues that are hindering Bangladesh's progress: the widespread use of forged documents by migrant workers, and the lack of certified nurses despite demand from around the world. He called for a serious re-evaluation of our current strategy and ascribed both issues to systemic faults, excessive bureaucracy, and opposition to reform.

It is important to have a comprehensive understanding of the global need for nurses and midwives before we make any observations or policy recommendations regarding the nursing profession in Bangladesh. Approximately 2.9 crore nurses and 22 lakh midwives are now providing healthcare worldwide. By 2030, there might be a shortage of roughly 45 lakh nurses and 3.1 lakh midwives because of the growing number of ageing population, expanding healthcare demands, and population growth.

To meet this growing demand, many countries have already started looking for international nurses to recruit. For instance, the United States will require more than 12 lakh nurses by 2030, while Germany will require more than 500,000. Additionally, as 24 percent of the UK's National Health Service (NHS) nurses received their training abroad, these countries are hiring more foreign-trained nurses and expediting credentialing procedures to meet their nursing shortages.

The Philippines and India are the two countries that contribute the most to the nursing workforce worldwide. About 640,000 Indian nurses work overseas, with a sizable portion of them based in the Gulf countries. As the largest represented non-UK nationality in the NHS, Indian professionals make up 10.1 percent of all full-time equivalent nurses and health visitors in the UK. Meanwhile, 28,258 Filipino nursing graduates took the US licensure exam in 2024, and 54 percent of the first-

time test-takers passed the test while 36 percent of repeat takers succeeded. The Philippine economy benefits greatly from the remittances sent home by Filipinos employed abroad, particularly nurses, which amount to about \$8 billion a year.

education, and because of the scarcity of seats, many deserving candidates are turned away every year. The absence of globally recognised BSc and MSc programmes is one of the sector's main structural problems. As a result, many Bangladeshi nurses are unable to get employment overseas, even though they possess practical skills. Outdated courses that don't satisfy global competency standards exacerbate the issue.

This crisis is not just about seat limitations; it is also about deep-rooted professional interests, power-hungry mindsets, and the gatekeeping tendencies of policymakers.

decision-making, and hospital leadership, which may potentially break down the traditional power structure in hospitals.

The Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) exacerbates this structural crisis. The role of this body should be to ensure the quality of education and expand its scope. But in reality, it has restricted the entire sector to government control by not allowing private universities to offer nursing programmes. Private medical colleges are running MBBS programmes under public universities. Similar arrangements could have been made in nursing education.



Few public universities in Bangladesh provide advanced nursing education.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Prof Yunus, in his speech, also emphasised that Bangladesh has the potential to produce globally qualified nurses, yet despite interest from countries like the UK and Japan, systemic obstacles prevent us from meeting this rising global demand.

There are few public universities in Bangladesh that provide advanced nursing

education. The biggest obstacle to nursing education comes from within the medical community and administration. The vested interests that have historically controlled the health education sector fear that if nurses gain professional skills and confidence through an MSc or PhD degree, they would start participating in patient management,

Prof Yunus drew our attention to another deep crisis: the use of fake certificates to avail work opportunities abroad. It is important to stop such corruption. But at the same time, we need to think about the deeper structural issues that encourage workers to commit such crimes.

This problem is not only a domestic failure

for Bangladesh. The international labour market is also riddled with inequalities, lack of accountability, and a lack of institutional recognition. When we send workers abroad, our agreements with those countries often lack clear terms. As a result, opportunists harass our workers under various pretexts.

In developed countries, there is a recognised system called "apprenticeship" or "on-the-job training," where workers are given a formal certificate based on their work experience. But this facility is largely absent for workers in Bangladesh. As a result, when a worker with informal work experience applies for a new job, they are considered "unskilled." This rejection puts them in a situation where they feel the need to produce and present fake certificates. If foreign employers and agreements made with them provided other ways for Bangladeshi workers to prove their skills, the workers wouldn't feel pressured to use fake certificates to get ahead. The lack of such a system contributes significantly to the problem.

Corruption is not only internal; international structure also adds to the problem and helps facilitate the corrupt practices. Why do we not consider these issues seriously while signing contracts to send workers abroad?

It is imperative to take immediate action to address the issues the chief adviser highlighted. If we can produce skilled nurses suitable for the global market through necessary interventions and adequate recognition of work skills, along with other structural reforms, there is immense potential for us in the foreign labour market. We should not lag in utilising these potentials.