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588 lives lost on roads last month
Says Road Safety Foundation report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 588 people were killed and 1,124 injured in 593 road crashes across the country in April, according to a report published by the Road Safety Foundation.

Among the deceased, 86 were women (14.62 percent) and 78 were children (13.26 percent), the report said.

Motorcycles were involved in 218 of the crashes, resulting in 229 deaths accounting for 38.94 percent of total fatalities.

In addition, 116 pedestrians (19.72 percent) and 74 drivers or their assistants (12.58 percent) were among those who lost their lives in the accidents.

The report said seven waterway accidents led to eight deaths and four injuries. Meanwhile, 22 railway-related incidents caused 24 deaths and left six others injured.

Shahida carries more than just brick chips -- she carries the weight of hope for a better future. Every day, she works at a construction site in Mohammadpur for over eight hours and makes Tk 450 a day to ensure her tenth-grade son can stay in school. Her husband remains in their village home, while she shoulders the family's dreams in the city. The photo taken on Rajia Sultana Road, Mohammadpur yesterday on Mother's Day.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Amendment to try organisations a timely initiative
Say ICT prosecutors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday described the recent amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973 as a timely initiative.

The amendment allows the tribunal to try and punish individuals, political parties, their affiliated bodies, and supporter groups involved in crimes under the Act.

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The interim government made the change through an ordinance and issued a gazette notification on Saturday.

"The amendment allows the tribunal to take action against organisations as well as individuals, which is a timely initiative," said Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim, prosecutor (administration) of the International Crimes Tribunal.

"Although Bangladeshi laws already allow

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Bangladesh at a 'crucial crossroad' of transformation
Says Chinese envoy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh can learn from China's success in state governance, social development, and technology, said high-ranking officials from both countries at an event yesterday.

They made the remarks at the opening of the China-Bangladesh Readers Forum on Chinese President Xi Jinping's book "The Governance of China", held at a city hotel.

The event was jointly organised by the State Council Information Office of China, China International Communications Group, and the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh.

A China Book Corner was also inaugurated at the National Library, marking 50 years of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Lack of political will stalls critical reforms

Reform commission members tell BIP event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several heads of key reform commissions have voiced concern over the lack of political will to implement long-pending reform proposals, accusing political parties of prioritising power over equity and justice.

Their observations came on the second day of the 4th International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning, organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, chief of the Electoral System Reform Commission, said politicians selectively support reforms that benefit their electoral interests.

"We are trying to build consensus and enact laws to prevent the return of autocracy. But politicians only support reforms that help them gain or retain power, not the ones that

We are trying to build consensus and enact laws to prevent the return of autocracy. But politicians only support reforms that help them gain or retain power.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar
Chief of Electoral System Reform Commission

No ruling party has taken a holistic approach to governance. Our cities are shaped by a nexus of bureaucrats, political-business elites, and foreign agencies.

Prof Anu Muhammad
Eminent economist

ensure justice and equity," he said.

Dr Majumdar criticised proposals for an upper house in parliament, saying political parties are demanding equal representation as the lower house, defeating the purpose of bicameralism.

Prof Dr Tofayel Ahmed, chief of the Local Government Reform Commission, said, "Ideally, politicians should engage with academics and experts on reforms. Instead, we are left knocking on their doors."

Prof Ahmed emphasised the lack of decentralisation in governance, with local bodies deprived of authority over crucial sectors like education and health.

"We've recommended district-level planning, but we don't even know what a district's budget is. This must be made public," he said.

Speakers at the event stressed that both urban and rural planning must centre on the working-class population.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Police to take stern action against banned orgs

Says Dhaka DIG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will take stern action against banned organisations if they attempt to disrupt public security, said Rezaul Karim Mallick, the newly appointed Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Dhaka Range, yesterday.

He made the statement while addressing a press conference at his office in the capital's Segunbagicha.

When asked which organisations are considered banned, he said, "You are surely aware that those who act against the government or work against the interests of the people -- they are the ones considered banned."

The DIG also warned of strict action if any police personnel are found involved in criminal activity.

JULY UPRISING
Injured protesters continue sit-in

DU CORRESPONDENT

Individuals who were injured during the July mass uprising yesterday continued a sit-in protest by blocking Dhaka's Shabbagh intersection.

They began their demonstration on Saturday night to press home their three-point demand that includes a permanent ban on the Awami League, official recognition of the "July Charter", and access to proper medical treatment.

The protest comes after a three-day demonstration led by leaders and activists of the National Citizen Party (NCP) and other political groups demanding a ban on the AL.

While most of the protesting groups left the Shabbagh intersection following the government's announcement of a ban on AL's political activities,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

National plan must prioritise people, nature
Political parties tell event

RECOMMENDATIONS	
➡ Bar polluters from polls	➡ Planning should be inclusive
➡ Decentralised development	➡ EC should screen eco-offenders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders from various political parties yesterday pledged that no future initiatives in Bangladesh would be taken at the expense of people's lives, livelihoods, or the environment.

They stressed the need for strict regulations to bar any political party from nominating individuals for parliamentary elections who are involved in polluting rivers or destroying forests.

Their remarks came during a high-level policy roundtable titled "Planned Bangladesh and Equitable Development of Urban, Regional and Rural Areas: Political Commitments and Future Roadmap," organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shahiqur Rahman said most individuals who destroy biodiversity operate under the protection of political godfathers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Vehicles inch through narrow lanes in the capital's Tejgaon Nabisco area, where ongoing DPDC underground power line work has left the road dug up, triggering traffic congestion. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Rain likely in Dhaka today

Says BMD
STAR REPORT

Rain or thundershowers with lightning flashes and temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions today, said Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere in the country.

A severe to very severe heat wave is now sweeping over Dhaka, Tangail, Manikganj, Faridpur, Chuadanga, Rajshahi, Sirajganj and Jashore. Furthermore, a mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping elsewhere across the country and it may continue, the BMD said.

Senior meteorologist Md Bazlur Rashid said, "There is a chance of rainfall in many areas of Dhaka, Rangpur, Rajshahi, and Sylhet divisions tomorrow [today]."