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## Time to act like a caretaker admin

BNP tells Yunus; demands removal of 'party-affiliated' advisers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



**"We will choose the individuals [admin officials] who are capable of maintaining peace and order [during polls]. This will be [done] under my supervision. We will do whatever necessary to ensure a peaceful and neutral election."**

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus

The BNP yesterday asked the interim government to assume the role of a non-partisan caretaker administration to ensure that the upcoming national election is neutral and acceptable to all.

It made the demand when a three-member BNP delegation, led by Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday evening.

The delegation also urged Yunus to remove "party-affiliated advisers", if any, from the interim government and ensure that neutral administrative officials are posted during reshuffles ahead of the polls.

Yunus informed the senior BNP leaders that, as the adviser in charge of the public administration ministry, all administrative reshuffles ahead of the election would take place directly under his supervision, according to a statement issued by the CA's Press Wing.

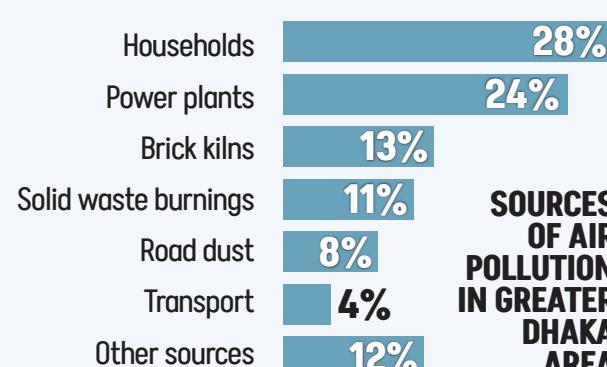
PHOTO ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Palestinian children gather for food distributed by a charity kitchen in Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza Strip, yesterday—one week after a ceasefire took effect. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: AFP

## Dhaka air turns unhealthy even before dry season



PINAKI ROY

With the dry season approaching, Dhaka city's air quality has once again slipped to an unhealthy level, underscoring the inadequacy of the limited measures taken by the authorities to curb air pollution.

Over the past decade, the government has attempted to phase out clay bricks, curb the burning of solid waste, control dust pollution at construction sites, and remove old vehicles from roads. But it has failed to properly implement any of the initiatives.

According to the Department of Environment (DoE) data, the air quality in Dhaka city and its suburbs was classified as hazardous for sensitive groups over the past week. The Air

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## AIRPORT FIRE AFTERMATH RMG, pharma fear snag in production

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Many import consignments of the garment and pharmaceutical sectors are stuck at Dubai and Singapore airports because of the space crisis in Dhaka's cargo village and the lack of cold room facilities for pharmaceutical raw materials after the fire incident.

Currently, the imported goods are stored in a small space of the export cargo section at the cargo village area at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), which cannot handle 550 tonnes of cargo a day that normally arrive. So, the importers are delaying the import of goods and many consignments are stuck at Dubai and Singapore airports.

However, the government has created a facility to release the goods on the same day of import, which is very helpful for manufacturers, said Inamul Haq Khan, senior vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

The Biman authority also asked the importers to take delivery of the goods that could be salvaged from the fire incident as soon as possible.

As of yesterday, 1,300 companies registered their names in the BGMEA launched a temporary web portal claiming damage of \$7.5 million. The final tally will be more as not everyone has registered yet.

The severity of the fire incident will be much higher as the import consignments of many companies were burnt out and they will face a two-month delay in production as they will have to re-import those goods, he said.

Subsequently, some of the international clothing retailers and brands are slashing down the work orders.

Mijanur Rahman, managing director of Fabrica Knit Composite, who suffered damages worth \$300,000

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## ICT to review progress in cases against army officers today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 today is to review the progress in a July uprising killing case and two enforced disappearance cases, in which 32 people, including 25 serving and retired army officers, stand accused.

On October 8, the tribunal issued arrest warrants against the accused after taking cognisance of formal charges submitted by the prosecution and directed the inspector general of police to execute the warrants. It also sent the copies of the warrants to relevant authorities of the accused officers and fixed today for submission of a compliance report.

Asked whether any of the accused had been arrested or would be produced before the tribunal today, Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said such information would come directly to the tribunal's registrar office, which dispatches the tribunal's orders, not to the prosecution.

The tribunal will announce today whether the registrar office has received any such information, he said.

Tamim explained that under the law, accused persons may either

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



## TIGERS' SUPER OVER HEARTBREAK

Bangladesh faltered in their first-ever Super Over appearance in any format, failing to chase down 10 runs against the West Indies in the second ODI of the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The hosts restricted the Windies to 10 runs in the Super Over bowled by Mustafizur Rahman but their batting left much to be desired. Despite receiving extras in the form of two wides and a no-ball, the Tigers still fell short. Soumya Sarkar managed a run-a-ball three, while Saif Hassan scored two off three deliveries. Najmul Hossain Shanto failed to make contact but ran a leg bye before Saif could not score the required three off the final delivery bowled by left-arm spinner Akeel Hosein.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## DEALS WITH INDIA Touhid refutes Asif's scrap list

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain has contradicted LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiya's claim, made in a Facebook post, that the interim government cancelled at least 10 agreements with India.

"Regarding the list that has come out, most of it is either incorrect or doesn't exist," he told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

"Perhaps he could have avoided doing it [making the Facebook post about the issue]," Touhid said.

On Sunday, Asif posted on his verified Facebook page a list of 14 deals with India, saying 10 of them were cancelled by the interim government.

The deals he mentioned include Tripura-Chittagong rail link project; Abhaypur-Akhaura railway expansion; Ashuganj-Agartala corridor; Feni river water management project; agreement on the development of roads and waterways for port use; proposal for financial cooperation on Farakka Barrage; Sylhet-Silchar link project; petroleum pipeline expansion project; Indian economic

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

**KSRM**

শেকড় থেকে শিথরে

## NCP terms Porwar's remarks 'arrogant'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

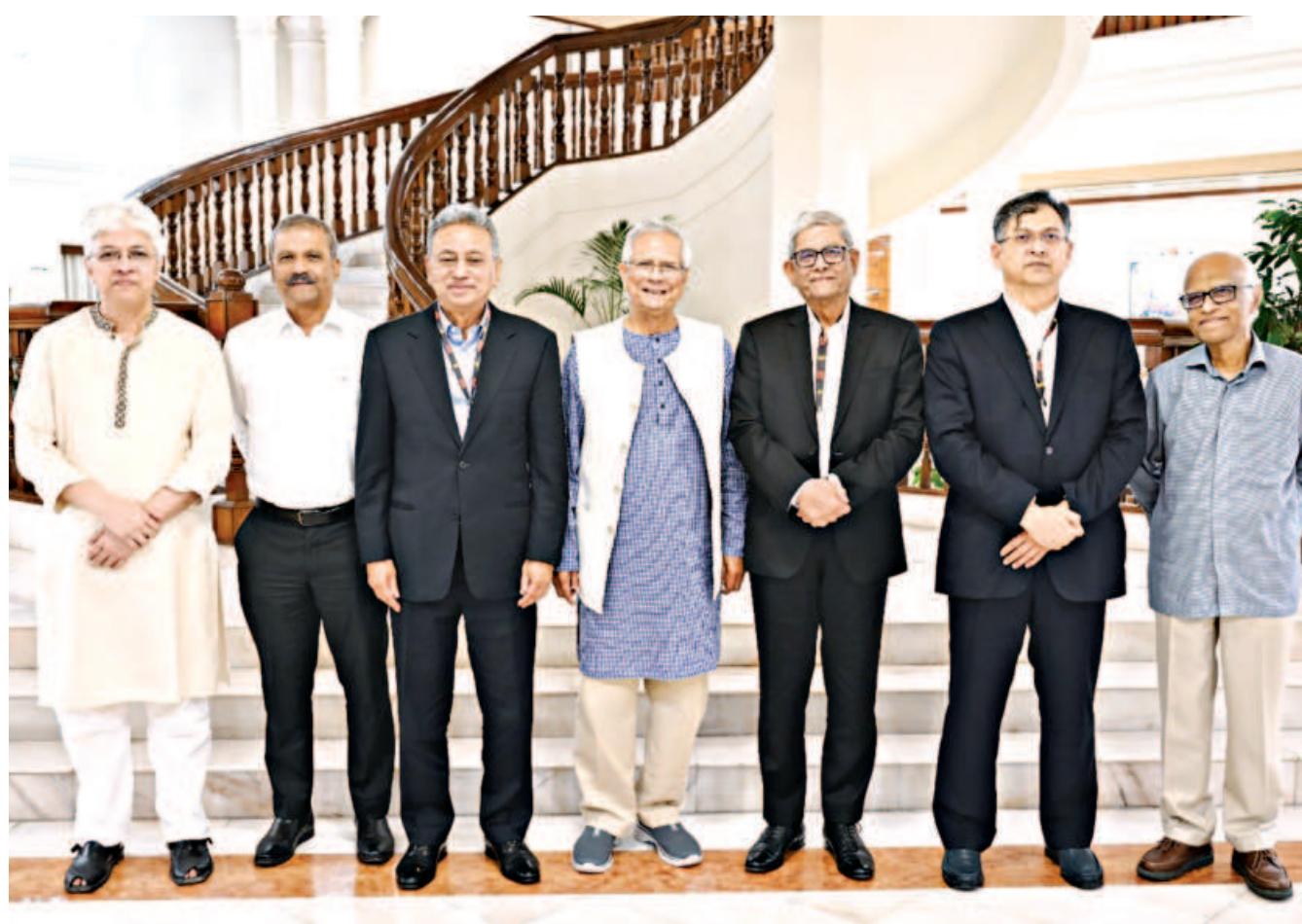
The National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday slammed a recent comment of Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, terming it "arrogant" and an act of "misconduct".

Ariful Islam Adeeb, senior joint convenor of NCP, said the urge to claim patriarchal authority in politics reflects a flaw in perspective.

"NCP was born out of the July uprising. Every political party today is a child of that movement, as all joined the struggle under its leadership," Adeeb told BBC Bangla.

"Those who followed commands during the uprising are now claiming to be commanders -- this is politically arrogant and an act of misconduct."

His remarks followed Porwar's oblique reference to NCP when he told a Satkhira rally, "If you want to compete with Jamaat, you still have a long way to go. Don't challenge your father right after being born."



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and three advisers pose with senior BNP leaders after a meeting at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Photo: PID

243 citizens, Mahila Parishad seek probe into media worker's death by suicide

Call for stronger safeguards for women in workplaces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of prominent citizens has expressed outrage over the recent death of Dhaka Stream graphic designer Sornomoye Biswas, demanding a proper investigation and accountability for those responsible.

In a joint statement signed by 243 citizens, including Jahangirnagar University Associate Professor Dr Rezvana Karim Snigdha and poet-journalist Girish Gaitrik, they called for immediate action against Dhaka Stream's Bangla Content Editor Altaf Shahnewaz, who had been accused of sexual harassment and indecent behaviour by Sornomoye and 26 of her colleagues.

"Despite a written and evidence-backed complaint from 26 media workers, Dhaka Stream's Editor in Chief and Publisher Golam Iftekhar Mahmud took no punitive action against the accused. According to regulations, the accused should have been suspended in such cases, but the institution did not do so," the statement read.

Citing her colleagues, the statement added that Sornomoye had become mentally shattered and deeply depressed after being denied justice.

The signatories demanded that the negligence of the outlet's authorities be investigated, stressing



Sornomoye Biswas

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Time to act like a caretaker admin

FROM PAGE 1

"Deputy commissioner appointments would be made based on merit, with officials selected and placed appropriately before the election."

"It is our duty to remain neutral. The election is a major undertaking. We will choose the individuals [admin officials] who are capable of maintaining peace and order [during polls]. This will be [done] under my supervision. We will do whatever necessary to ensure a peaceful and neutral election."

Fakhrul, along with BNP standing committee members Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Salahuddin Ahmed, held an hour-long meeting with Yunus that began around 6:00pm.

Besides Yunus, Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul, and Industry Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan were present.

On October 13, BNP standing committee meeting decided that party leaders would meet the chief adviser and the chief election commissioner to discuss the government's and EC's neutrality ahead of the polls.

After yesterday's meeting, Fakhrul told reporters that they raised several concerns. "To make the election, scheduled for February next year, neutral, and acceptable to all, the interim government needs to be shaped in the model of a caretaker government."

"For that, the administration must first be made completely neutral, and it must be apparent to the public."

He also demanded that officials in the Secretariat, who are "known to be accomplices of fascists", be removed and replaced with neutral officials.

On the district administration, Fakhrul said they raised concerns about certain individuals who continue to serve the interests of the previous regime. "We called for their removal," he said, adding that neutrality should be upheld in all appointments and promotions of government officials.

Regarding the judiciary, Fakhrul pointed out that some accomplices of fascists remain in the judiciary and urged that they be replaced with neutral ones.

Although the judicial matters fall under the judiciary's domain, the interim government is responsible for overseeing all affairs, he said.

Meanwhile, the CA Press Wing statement said Prof Yunus and BNP leaders discussed the preparation for the upcoming election.

It said the BNP leaders also presented several observations to the chief adviser regarding police recruitment and transfer procedures.

The party congratulated the government for involving political leaders in the United Nations General Assembly and for the successful signing of the July charter.

The leaders also expressed concern over the recent series of fires at various installations across the country and called for an investigation into whether these incidents were acts of sabotage.

The statement further mentioned that a Jamaat-e-Islami delegation is scheduled to meet the chief adviser today.

Ahead of the national polls in 1991, June 1996, and 2001, the caretaker governments reshuffled the administration and police.

## ICT to review progress in cases

FROM PAGE 1

appear voluntarily before the tribunal or be arrested and produced by law enforcement agencies. The tribunal may then decide whether to grant bail or order detention. The prison authorities would determine where they would be held.

"If they don't appear or are not produced tomorrow [Wednesday], a notice will be published in two national dailies -- one in Bangla and one in English -- directing them to appear before the tribunal by a specific date," he said, adding that, "Failure to comply even after the public notice will lead to them being declared absconding, and the tribunal will appoint a state defence counsel to represent them."

Asked about the army statement that 15 of the accused officers were in military custody, Tamim said such claims were unofficial. "The tribunal acts strictly in accordance with the law. It does not rely on social media posts or unofficial briefings. Only

formal communications through the authorities concerned will be considered."

Tamim said the chief prosecutor would decide whether to raise the issue of producing the officers before the court if they are not presented, stressing that the same legal provisions apply to all accused, regardless of their position.

Responding to a question about whether the prosecution faced pressure in filing the cases, Tamim referred to high-profile accused, including the former prime minister, being tried in crimes against humanity cases.

The 32 accused in the three cases include deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, three former director generals of Rab.

In two cases of enforced disappearances, Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former defence and security adviser to Hasina, is accused.

## NCP, 4 leftist parties dig in

FROM PAGE 12

most issues at a meeting today and submit the complete implementation process by tomorrow. However, he noted that the draft texts cannot be shared with a single party in advance, as that would require extending the same to all political groups.

Asked, Rasin said the NCP will not change its decision unless all three of its demands are met.

A commission source, seeking anonymity, said the NCP's position now seems to be a ploy to delay the process.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Socialist Party of Bangladesh (BSD), BSD (Marxist), and Bangladesh Jasad said they will

not be part of the charter unless the four state principles -- nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism -- are retained in the constitution's preamble.

"We cannot compromise on the four founding principles of the country," CPB General Secretary Abdullah Al Kafi Ratan told The Daily Star.

Commission member Prof Ali Riaz said one of the key demands of these parties has already been addressed by retaining the Declaration of Independence in the constitution. "We have discussed their concerns, but they remain adamant. It's not possible to accommodate every demand," he said.

## Dhaka air turns unhealthy even before dry season

FROM PAGE 1

Quality Index (AQI) in these areas hovered between 150 and 200 -- well above the threshold of 50, which is considered healthy.

The DoE website issued a warning, "People are advised to wear masks when outdoors, while those belonging to sensitive groups are urged to stay indoors."

Sensitive groups include children, the elderly, pregnant women, and individuals with pre-existing heart or lung diseases, who are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollutants.

The AQI is a standardised system used globally to measure air pollution levels. It assesses the concentration of particulate matter (PM2.5), an extremely hazardous substance for human health, along with other pollutants.

In Dhaka city, the level of PM2.5 -- particles smaller than 2.5 micrograms -- ranged between 64 and 79.7 micrograms per cubic metre from October 14 to 20 -- more than double the national standard of 35 micrograms and over 12 times the threshold of 5 micrograms set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Though the WHO threshold for PM2.5 is 5 micrograms, Bangladesh has set the benchmark at 35 micrograms, considering that it would be almost impossible to achieve the global standard in the near future.

Between 1998 and 2023, the country's PM2.5 pollution surged by 66 percent, said the global annual report of the Air Quality Life Index (AQI), published by the Energy Policy Institute of the University of Chicago.

In 2023, the annual average PM2.5 concentration across the country was 60.8 micrograms per cubic metre. In Dhaka city, it was between 90 and 100 micrograms.

The high level of air pollution

reduces the average life expectancy of Bangladeshis by five and a half years, making it the country's deadliest external health risk, said the report.

A recent global study has revealed that in Bangladesh, more than 19,000 children under five died due to air pollution in 2021, meaning two children died per hour.

Dhaka city and its suburbs at times top the global list of places with worst air quality. This year, Dhaka or other cities of Bangladesh had the worst air quality in the world for a total of 16 days from January to August this year; 29 days last year; 17 days in 2023; and 19 days in 2022, according to DoE data.

When asked, Ziaul Haque, director of the Department of Environment (DoE), said, "We observe a sharp deterioration in air quality between October and March each year, when brick kilns become active and wind patterns shift, carrying pollutants into the city from the northwestern region of the country."

"Around 25 percent of fine particulate [PM2.5] pollution originates from transboundary sources, which are beyond our control. Air pollutants generated in Lahore, Punjab, New Delhi, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal drift into Bangladesh," he added.

He further said the government has taken some initiatives in recent times to curb air pollution but those appear to be insufficient.

"If we truly want to curb air pollution, different government agencies, such as city corporations and the roads and highways department, must work together."

He said city corporations must stop burning solid waste at dumping grounds and take steps to check pollution at construction sites. "But they are failing us all."

Regarding recent government

initiatives, Ziaul said Savar upazila has been declared a "degraded airshed", prohibiting operations of all brick kilns, except for environment-friendly units, and the burning of solid waste and garbage from next month.

"We will not allow any of the 106 conventional brick kilns in the upazila to resume operations."

Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, professor of environmental science at

### REGIONAL SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION

Greater Dhaka area **56%**

Transboundary **21%**

Other region within country **15.9 %**

Natural sources (solid dust) **7.1%**

BANGLADESH NATIONAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN (2024-2030)

Stamford University Bangladesh, said the authorities have not been able to enforce any of the measures to contain dust pollution at construction sites, remove polluting vehicles from roads or stop operations of illegal brick kilns.

"After the interim government took office, I was included in a taskforce on preventing air pollution. But it became inactive after holding a couple of meetings."

### HEALTH IMPACTS

Exposure to air pollution leads to a wide range of health complications -- from respiratory diseases to impaired cognitive performance -- and children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects.

Children in developing countries like Bangladesh are 94 times more likely to die from air pollution than those in developed nations, according to a study titled "Structural Dependencies Perpetuate Disproportionate Childhood Health Burden from Air Pollution" released on October 16.

Earlier, a World Bank report published in 2023 said more than 159,000 lives were lost and 2.5 billion days were lived with illness in 2019. The cost of these health effects was estimated to be equivalent to 8.3 percent of Bangladesh's GDP that year.

### PERSISTENT SOURCES, LIMITED SOLUTIONS

Air pollution in Dhaka stems from a combination of industrial activity and urban mismanagement. More than 7,000 traditional brick kilns operate across the country, most of which lack modern emission controls.

At least 56 percent of emissions originate within the greater Dhaka area, while 15.9 percent come from other regions, nearly 21 percent from other countries, and 7.1 percent from natural sources such as soil dust, according to the National Air Quality Management Plan 2024-2030.

The plan aims to achieve two key targets -- reduce the annual concentration of ambient PM2.5 by 15 microgram per cubic metre across Bangladesh, and by 30 microgram per cubic meter in the greater Dhaka area, and increase the number of days with "good" or "moderate" AQI across the country.

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said, "Even with full action, it will take years to reduce air pollution."

"We also need quality fuel, otherwise the air will remain polluted," she told The Daily Star recently.

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



The demarcation pillars are meant to mark the boundary of the river. However, illegal establishments have been built beyond these pillars, encroaching on the Buriganga's land. The photo was taken near the Babu Bazar Bridge in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Protection against workplace violence to get stronger

Govt set to ratify ILO Convention 190 today, says labour secretary at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to ratify the long-awaited ILO Convention 190 today, which addresses violence and harassment in the workplace, said Sanwar Jahan Bhuiyan, secretary to the labour and employment ministry, at a roundtable yesterday.

Adopted in 2019, Convention 190 recognises every worker's right to a workplace free from violence and harassment, including gender based violence.

"Signing this convention is a matter of great pride for us. It will also increase our responsibilities," Bhuiyan said.

He made the remarks at an event titled "Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Address Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in the World of Work", organised by Gender Platform Bangladesh, a coalition of 14 gender rights organisations, at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

He said gender-based violence must be understood in context and addressed sensitively.

The complaint process should be women-friendly, and awareness must be raised at all levels -- from families to workplaces. Public support, alongside

**Adopted in 2019, Convention 190 recognises every worker's right to a workplace free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence.**

state action, would make efforts more effective," he added.

Speakers also emphasised the implementation of the 2009 High Court directive mandating the formation of committees to prevent sexual harassment in workplaces and educational institutions.

They also highlighted the importance of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Inside colleges where no one passed

Teacher shortage, weak supervision, dropouts plague 'zero-pass' institutions

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

In Chattogram's Chandgaon, two students sat for this year's Higher Secondary Certificate exams from Meron Sun College. Both failed.

One retook the exam after failing last year but again failed English. The other failed in two subjects, including English.

The student who failed two subjects is married and has a child. She rarely attended classes. The other was also irregular," said Vice-Principal Rajesh Kanti Pal.

He said the college faces an acute teacher shortage and a steep decline in enrolment since admissions went fully online.

At Chatogram Zilla College, two irregular students appeared -- both failed English for the third year in a row. The college's Mirzapur address was found occupied by another institution.

"Admissions have been suspended for two years. The college has effectively shut down," said Nandita Chowdhury, a lecturer. Chattogram board is just

the list with 43 such colleges, followed by 35 in Rajshahi, 34 in Dhaka, 15 in Mymensingh, and smaller clusters in Cumilla, Sylhet, and Barishal.

Another 37 technical and 22

colleges where teachers go unpaid and classes often do not take place.

The same pattern -- empty classrooms, unpaid teachers, and students entering exams

Kisholoy High School and Girls' College, all 25 examinees failed despite a 100 percent pass rate in 2022.

"We have no English teacher at the higher secondary level. Our ICT teacher was also unable to conduct classes," said Acting Principal Ayesha Akter.

District Education Officer Md Atikur Rahman called it an administrative failure. "The college did not recruit teachers for years," he said.

In Mymensingh's Trishal Ideal College, most classes are taken by part timers. "We can't pay competitive salaries, so teachers leave frequently," said Principal Abdul Quaiyum.

At Kurigram's Rashed Khan Menon College, teachers have not received salaries in seven years. "Last year one of our seven students passed. We expected at least a few this time," said Principal Fakhrul Islam.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

**202 colleges recorded zero pass rates this year, a threefold rise from 65 last year**

**Dinajpur board topped list with 43 zero-pass colleges, followed by 35 in Rajshahi and 34 in Dhaka**



one example of a nationwide crisis. Across Bangladesh, 202 colleges had zero pass rates this year -- a threefold jump from 65 last year.

Dinajpur board topped

madrasa institutions also saw all examinees fail.

The failures reflect a system crippled by teacher shortages, weak supervision, and neglect -- especially in non-MPO

poorly prepared -- was found in colleges across regions.

Absence of teachers is a common scenario in nearly all zero-pass colleges.

At Narayanganj's Naba

## CARGO VILLAGE AT HSIA

Fire likely started in import courier area: CAAB chief



FILE PHOTO  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fire that gutted the cargo complex at Dhaka Airport likely originated in the import courier area, said Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Mostafa Mahmood Siddiq yesterday.

"The incident is being investigated by several teams to determine the exact cause," he said at a press briefing at the CAAB headquarters in Kurmitola.

He said the fire spread rapidly due to the large volume of stored goods but was contained before it could damage aircraft or the main terminal. The airport's fire response team acted within 30 seconds, and the Fire Service and Navy soon joined the operation.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Over 1.16 lakh killed on roads since 2014

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 1,16,726 people were killed and 1,65,021 injured in 67,890 road crashes between January 2014 and September this year, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

However, the organisation said the estimate was based on media reports and that hospital records suggest the actual number of casualties is several times higher.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Road Safety Network, a platform of eight organisations working for road safety, said the absence of a safe and people-friendly public transport system, weak and inadequate road infrastructure, lack of coordination among agencies, and deficits in transparency and accountability have led to a worrying rise in road crashes across the country.

Both organisations placed several recommendations, including the formation of a road transport reform commission and the development of multimodal transport systems to reduce pressure on roads, improve road safety, and reduce fatalities.

They organised separate press conferences at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday as the country prepares to observe National Road Safety Day today.

In his written speech, Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of Jatri Kalyan Samity, blamed the previous Awami League government for widespread irregularities, corruption, mismanagement, extortion by transport owners and workers, and collusion with corrupt



Although rickshaw-vans are banned on highways, these two are plying the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, carrying steel rods secured only with a rope -- posing a serious risk to other vehicles. The photo was taken from the Signboard area in Narayanganj yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## UK MPs call for swift democratic transition in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A roundtable at the UK parliament called for the urgent need for a credible democratic transition in Bangladesh.

"The democratic process must begin without delay," said Baroness Pola Uddin, who hosted the event themed "The Future of Bangladesh -- How to Ensure a Smooth Handover of Power to a Democratically Elected Government?" at the House of Lords.

She urged all stakeholders to commit to a peaceful and participatory transition, underscoring the need for an inclusive political roadmap that reflects the will and aspirations of the Bangladeshi people.

Participants voiced deep concern over the direction of Bangladesh's political landscape and called on the "caretaker administration" to urgently prioritise the groundwork for a credible general election.

Labour MPs Rushanara Ali and Rupa Huq, featured speakers at the event, delivered strong appeals for greater focus on protecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Bangladesh.

Both MPs emphasised that only a transparent and inclusive electoral process can restore public confidence and ensure

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Dengue death toll crosses 250

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four dengue patients died, while 814 others were hospitalised, in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

According to the DGHS, among the deaths, three were reported in Dhaka South City Corporation areas, while one was in Barishal.

The total number of deaths rose to 253 while total cases rose to 61,605.

Currently, 2,831 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals, 1,864 of which are from outside Dhaka.

The number of dengue patients in Dhaka city has increased sharply in recent weeks. DGHS data shows a significant rise in cases in the Dhaka division compared to other regions.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, recommended early hospital admission for high-risk groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, and people with comorbidities, and advised dengue patients under home care to drink plenty of fluids, including oral saline, green coconut water, rice starch, soups, and fresh fruit juices.



Zubayer Islam sells betel nuts for a living. Every morning, he collects betel nuts from trees and rides his bicycle through nearby villages to sell them. He said he sells one kuri (a bundle of 233 pieces) for Tk 250 to Tk 450, depending on size and quality. The photo was taken at Nonadanga village in Bagerhat recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Over 1.16 lakh killed on roads

FROM PAGE 3  
police officials for the poor road safety situation.

He said even after the change in government following the July uprising, the policies and strategies of the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, and Traffic Police Division have remained unchanged.

Consequently, there has been no visible progress in curbing road fatalities, reducing congestion, or restoring order, he added.

Meanwhile, Pahari Bhattacharjee, coordinator of Bangladesh Road Safety Network, said the failure to implement a sustainable transport strategy over the past 54 years has prevented the establishment of discipline in the road transport sector.

As a result, many lives are lost in road crashes every day, and countless individuals suffer serious injuries. This massive loss of life is not just a statistic but reflects the suffering of thousands

## Protection against

FROM PAGE 3  
passing sexual harassment prevention laws and implementing the recommendations of the National Women's Affairs Reform Commission and the Labour Reform Commission.

Max Tunon, director of the ILO Dhaka Office, said Convention 190 is the first international treaty recognising everyone's right to a workplace free from violence and harassment. It applies to all sectors, formal and informal, and covers violence in public spaces, during commutes, and online.

He said Bangladesh has made significant progress toward ratifying the convention and that laws must clearly define all forms of violence – physical, psychological, sexual, and economic.

Definitions should include gender based violence and harassment related to sex, gender identity, or expression, as well as behaviours such as abuse of power and hostile work environments, he added.

MD Aurongajeb Akond, associate professor of Criminology at Mawlawi Bhashani Science and Technology University, said clear legal and social language helps victims and offenders recognise harassment and violence, encouraging reporting and accountability.

Julia Jesmin, deputy inspector general of DIFE, said over 2,500 factories have formed committees, but many remain weak due to a lack of external members and clear

punishment guidelines, causing delays in action.

Naimul Ahsan Jewel, an advisory council member of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), said protection needs to extend beyond RMG workers and include employees in hotels, tourism, clinics, domestic work, and migrant sectors.

He urged the government to take action in this regard.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, BILS executive director, said Bangladesh has laws against violence and harassment, but their enforcement remains limited, one sided, and weak. Ratifying Convention 190 would strengthen and expand their scope.

He said forming committees alone is not enough -- active participation of unions and workers' organisations is crucial so workers can speak up without fear.

He also called for a national platform, awareness campaigns, and research to develop policies and a code of conduct based on real experiences.

BILS Director Nazma Yasmin presented the key points on behalf of Gender Platform Bangladesh, while BLF Executive Director AKM Ashraf Uddin chaired the session.

PRAYER  
TIMING

OCTOBER 22

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-50 12-45 4-00 5-36 7-15

JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-39 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## UK MPs call for swift democratic

FROM PAGE 3  
sustainable political stability.

Anwara Ali, a former Conservative parliamentary candidate, and Reza Ahmed Faisal Chowdhury, president of the UK Bangla Press Club, both reiterated that democratic legitimacy is essential for long-term

economic growth and social cohesion.

Jahin Ahmed, political adviser to the Labour Party, reaffirmed the party's solidarity with the people of Bangladesh in their pursuit of democratic reform.

Press Minister Akbar Hossain said the Bangladeshi

government remains committed to holding fair elections and is working actively towards that goal.

The event brought together cross party delegates, journalists, business leaders and members of the British-Bangladeshi community.

## INVITATION FOR TENDER

**Pubali Bank PLC**, the largest Private commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers, who can participate in any or all of the following tenders. But, in separate envelope as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned works as per terms & conditions as stated below:

1. Civil, Electrical and Networking works at proposed premises (1st floor) of our **Bhaluka Branch, Mymensingh**.
2. Civil, Electrical and Networking works at present premises with **extended floor area of our Tushbander Branch, Lalmonirhat**.
3. Supply, installation & Commissioning of **67 (sixty seven) nos. Display Board** for displaying the rate of buying & selling of foreign currency at our different 67 (sixty seven) Branches.

Please visit our web site, <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.aspx> for details. Interested Parties may collect the Tender document by **30 October 2025** duly filled up all requirements and submit their offer by **02 November 2025** before 11.00 AM. Tender will be opened on **02 November 2025** at 11:30 AM.

**Md. Kamruzzaman**  
General Manager & Division Head

**মুন্সুলী ব্যাংক পিএলসি**  
Establishment & General Services Division  
Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000



MUNSUULI BANK PLC

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ

অধিবাদক কর্মসূচী

ব্যাপিং এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-১

বরায়া উত্তরভাগ, চেতিমালা সেতু টেল প্লাজা সলাম্প বাইপাস সড়ক

গোলাপগঞ্জ, সিলেট



তারিখ: ২১ অক্টোবর ২০২৫ ত্রিশ

"নিম্নাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি (যানবাহন)"

এতদ্বারা সৰ্বাঙ্গিক জনাবাদী যাইতেছে যে, এইএফআইসি ব্যাংকে প্রক্রিয়ার মালিকানাধীন তফসিল বর্ষিত সম্পত্তি বিক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে নিম্ন বাস্তিশ শর্ট মোটোরে প্রযুক্তি ক্রেতারে সীলনোহরণুক দরপত্র আহাম করা যাইতেছে।

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# INTERNATIONAL



Sarkozy begins  
5-yr prison  
sentence

REUTERS, Paris

Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy began a five-year sentence yesterday for conspiring to raise campaign funds from Libya, arriving at La Sante prison in Paris in a stunning downfall for a man who led the country between 2007 and 2012.

The former conservative president, 70, left his home for the car journey to the prison, walking hand in hand with his wife Carla Bruni and cheered by a crowd of supporters.

Sarkozy, who was convicted and sentenced last month, is the first former French leader to be jailed since Nazi collaborator Philippe Pétain after WWII.

Sarkozy's conviction capped years of legal battles over allegations that his 2007 campaign took millions in cash from Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who was later overthrown and killed during the Arab Spring uprisings.

## Touhid refutes Asif's scrap list

FROM PAGE 1  
zone (Mireshrai and Mongla), and tugboat purchase agreement with Indian defence company, GRSE.

Asif further said the water distribution project on the Kushiara has been suspended and that Bangladesh is reconsidering the import of power from Adani and Ganges water-sharing agreements and is discussing the Teesta water-sharing treaty.

While explaining the deals, Touhid said only one agreement made with the Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers for purchase of tugboats has been cancelled because it was deemed not very profitable for Bangladesh.

Several agreements mentioned by Asif are under review, he said, but did not go into details. He said it is better not to talk about the matters under negotiation. A few of the remaining agreements are at various stages and not exactly under that name, he said.

For example, he said there are no projects named "Tripura-Chattogram rail

## US VP in Israel to shore up shaky Gaza truce

Trump issues fresh warning to Hamas; Qatar says Israel violating ceasefire

AGENCIES

US Vice President JD Vance landed in Israel yesterday to shore up a fragile Gaza ceasefire deal, after President Donald Trump warned Hamas it would be wiped out if it breached the truce.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner were already in Tel Aviv, where they met Israeli hostages released by Hamas after two years of captivity in Gaza. "Welcome to Israel, Vice President Vance," Israel's foreign ministry posted on social media, along with a photo of Vance and his wife stepping off the plane.

"Together, the Promised Land and The Land of the Free, can secure a better future, including the release of the remaining 15 hostages," it added.

Vance is to meet Witkoff, Kushner and US military experts monitoring the truce. According to Israeli media reports he will meet Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu today in Jerusalem.

After Israel said Hamas killed two soldiers on Sunday and accused the group of stalling the handover of hostages' bodies, it unleashed a wave of strikes on the territory -- later saying it had "renewed enforcement" of the ceasefire.

The US is now redoubling efforts to cement the fragile Gaza deal Trump helped to broker.

"The dynamic keeps going back and forth," Mairav Zonszein, senior analyst on Israel for the International Crisis Group (ICG), told AFP.

"Trump is on the one hand letting Israel do what it wants, and on the other hand, at the end of the day, he wants the ceasefire to hold," she said.

"Netanyahu is playing both approaches... He's talking about peace and giving peace a chance... And at the same time, he's bombing Gaza and he's trying to condition aid again,"



she added.

Trump says he believes the deal is still holding and that Hamas militants understand what will happen if they breach it. "They'll be eradicated, and they know that," he told reporters at the White House.

Later, Trump threatened to "straighten out" Hamas with allied forces.

"I told these countries, and Israel, 'NOT YET!' There is still hope that Hamas will do what is right. If they do not, an end to Hamas will be FAST, FURIOUS, & BRUTAL! I would like to thank all of those countries that called to help," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Hamas has denied any knowledge of Sunday morning's deadly violence in the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Israel responded after the soldiers' deaths with an intense wave of bombings, which the

Hamas run territory's health ministry said killed 45 Palestinians.

Egypt's intelligence head Hassan Rashad was also in Israel yesterday to reinforce the truce, according to Netanyahu's office and Egyptian state-linked media.

The spy chief will also meet with US envoy Witkoff, Extra News reported.

US ally and fellow truce mediator Qatar accused Israel of what its leader called the "continued violation" of the now 11 day-old ceasefire.

Hamas's Gaza leader, in Cairo for talks with Egypt and Qatar, issued a statement expressing confidence that the truce will hold.

"What we heard from the mediators and from the US president reassures us that the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip has ended," Khalil al-Haya said.

DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 22, 2025  
KARTIK 6, 1432 BS  
The Daily Star 5

## Russian strikes cause black out in Ukraine city

AFP, Kyiv

Russian strikes caused widespread blackouts and cut off phone networks in the northern Ukrainian city of Chernigiv, with repairs stalled by ongoing drone attacks yesterday.

Ukraine has restricted electricity consumption across the country in recent weeks following systematic Russian strikes on energy sites and the rail network.

The Chernigiv region, which was briefly occupied when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, has come under particularly heavy bombardment in recent weeks.

The Ukrainian energy ministry said repair crews were unable to begin restoring damaged facilities due to "relentless" Russian drone attacks.

Meanwhile, European leaders issued a joint statement with Ukraine yesterday backing US President Donald Trump's call for peace talks to begin based on the current frontline with Russia.

"We strongly support President Trump's position that the fighting should stop immediately, and that the current line of contact should be the starting point of negotiations," said a statement signed by Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky, EU chiefs Antonio Costa and Ursula von der Leyen, France's Emmanuel Macron, Germany's Friedrich Merz, Britain's Keir Starmer and Italy's Giorgia Meloni.

"We remain committed to the principle that international borders must not be changed by force," said the leaders, who also included those of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Poland.

EU leaders are set to close ranks in support of Ukraine at a Brussels summit on Thursday.

Trump has announced his intention to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Budapest in coming weeks, but it was not clear whether Zelensky -- who was shut out from the previous meeting in August in Alaska -- would attend.

### ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

#### আইন বিভাগ

কক্ষ নং-৪৩৫, নগর ভবন  
ফুলবাড়িয়া, ঢাকা-১০০০

### আইনজীবী প্যানেলভুক্ত করণের নিমিত্তে দরখাস্ত আহবান

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন (ডিএসসিসি) এর পক্ষে/বিপক্ষে উচ্চ আদালত ও নিম্ন আদালত সমূহে মামলা পরিচালনার নিমিত্তে আইনজীবী প্যানেল তৈরীর লক্ষ্যে আইন পেশায় নিয়োজিত নিম্নোক্ত ঘোষ্যতা ও দন্তকাতসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	প্রয়োজনীয় পেশাগত ঘোষ্যতা
১.	ক) উচ্চ আদালতের তালিকাভুক্ত আইনজীবী	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>শীকৃত বিশ্বিদ্যালয় হতে এলএলবি, এলএলএম/বার-এট-ল ডিপ্রী।</li> <li>আইনজীবী হিসেবে মহামান সুন্নিম কোর্টের হাইকোর্ট বিভাগে ১০ (দশ) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতাসহ ঢাকা শহরে নিজস্ব বা ভাড়ায় চেম্বার থাকতে হবে। তবে সুন্নিম কোর্টের আপীল বিভাগে তালিকাভুক্ত আইনজীবীগণকে অধিধিকার দেয়া হবে।</li> </ul>
২.	খ) নিম্ন আদালতে তালিকাভুক্ত আইনজীবী	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>শীকৃত বিশ্বিদ্যালয় হতে এলএলবি/এলএলএম/বার-এট-ল ডিপ্রী।</li> <li>আইন পেশায় নিম্ন আদালতে ১০ (দশ) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতাসহ ঢাকা শহরে নিজস্ব বা ভাড়ায় চেম্বার থাকতে হবে। হাইকোর্ট বিভাগে তালিকাভুক্ত বিভাগ আইনজীবীকে অধিধিকার দেয়া হবে।</li> </ul>

**শর্তাবলী**

ক) প্যানেল আইনজীবী ডিএসসিসির স্বার্থ আছে এমন কোন মামলায় ডিএসসিসির বিপক্ষে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করতে পারবেন না।

খ) নিয়োজিত প্যানেল আইনজীবীকে মামলার হালনাগাদ অগ্রহণ প্রতিবেদন মামলার তালিকাসহ ডিএসসিসির নির্দিষ্ট ছকে প্রতিমোসে আইন বিভাগে আবিশ্যিকভাবে দাখিল করতে হবে।

গ) কোন মামলার রায়/আদেশ ডিএসসিসির পক্ষে/বিপক্ষে হলে তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে পরবর্তী করণীয় বিষয়ে জরুরী ভিত্তিতে মতামতসহ আইন বিভাগকে অবহিত করতে হবে।

ঘ) প্যানেলভুক্ত আইনজীবীগণ ডিএসসিসির বিদ্যমান নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী স্মার্নী (সরকারী ভাট্ট ও ট্যাক্স ব্যাটাইট) প্রাপ্ত হবেন।

ঙ) বিভজ্য প্যানেল আইনজীবীর পেশাগত কার্যক্রম সন্তোষজনক না হলে কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে তাঁর নিয়োগ বাতিল/স্থগিত করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

চ) আবেদনপত্রের সাথে ২(দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সন্তোষজনক না হলে কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে তাঁর নিয়োগ বাতিল/স্থগিত করার ক্ষমতা প্রদান করে। কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সন্তোষজনক না হলে ট্যাক্স পরিশোধের কপি দাখিল করতে হবে।

ছ) অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আবেদন বাতিল করতে পারবেন।

জ) অন্য কোন প্রতিটানে তালিকাভুক্ত থাকলে তার বিবরণ/প্রমাণাদি দাখিল করতে হবে।

ঘ) আবেদনকারীগণ ক্রমিক ১ ও ২ এ উল্লিখিত পদের যে কোন ১(এক)টি পদে আবেদন করতে পারবেন। আবেদনপত্রে স্পষ্টভাবে পদের নাম উল্লেখ না থাকলে আবেদনপত্র অসম্পূর্ণ মর্মে বিবেচিত হবে।

ঙ) গত ১২/০৮/২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই।

ঁ) আইনজীবী তালিকাভুক্ত করণের বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।

ঁঁ) আবেদনকারীর নাম, (স্পষ্টভাবে বাংলায় ও ইংরেজিতে), পিতা/মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, জন্ম তারিখ, শিক্ষাগত ঘোষ্যতা, আইনজীবী হিসেবে বাংলাদেশ বার কাপিসিলে তালিকাভুক্তির সনদ ও সহিতে আইনজীবী সমিতির সদস্যভুক্তি সনদ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি, ট্রেড লাইসেন্সের কপি, চেম্বারের স্পপক্ষে ভাড়ার চুক্তি/নিজে মালিক হলে ট্যাক্স পরিশোধের কপি দাখিল করতে হবে।

ঁঁ) অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আবেদন করার প্রয়োগ করতে হবে।

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/৮৮/২০২৫-২৬

জড়ি-২২৩

আইন কর্মকর্তা  
ফোন নং-০২-২২৩০৫০৬৬  
কক্ষ নং-৪৩৫, নগর ভবন  
ফুলবাড়িয়া, ঢাকা-১০০০  
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

21.10.2025

## Persistent rights concerns demand scrutiny

Joint letter by rights groups raises critical questions

The joint appeal by six international human rights organisations to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus—calling for an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions—deserves a proper response from the interim government. The letter urges immediate action to prevent such arrests and to review and withdraw cases deemed politically motivated or infringing on freedom of expression and other fundamental rights. It is worth recalling that the law adviser has, on multiple occasions, acknowledged that individuals have been falsely implicated in criminal cases, often as a result of political vendetta or personal disputes. He assured us that the government would review these cases and release innocent individuals. However, no significant progress has been made in this screening process, and a substantial number of people, including journalists, continue to languish in prison without due process.

We, therefore, fully endorse the rights groups' observation that the government should uphold press freedom and protect journalists from arbitrary arrests and detention, regardless of their perceived political affiliation. Of particular concern here is the continued detention of journalists on fabricated charges, including murder, amid scant progress in investigations conducted over the year. Charging individuals without credible evidence and repeatedly denying them bail on flimsy grounds undermine the core principle of justice that everyone has a right to be treated as innocent until proven guilty.

The joint letter also emphasises the need to strengthen state institutions to guarantee free and fair elections and to prevent democratic backsliding. It aptly calls for not restricting freedoms of association, assembly, and expression. These propositions are simple yet essential for holding any credible electoral process.

It should be mentioned that these leading rights groups have long supported the people in their struggle against autocracy and in pursuit of a just and democratic society. During the previous autocratic regime, these organisations stood in solidarity with them despite obstructions, including travel bans, surveillance of their partner organisations, and defamation. Some met Professor Yunus at home and abroad, expressed their support for his government's reform initiatives, and encouraged ensuring accountability for abuses committed by state and non-state actors both before and after the August 5 political changeover.

Their joint letter reiterates their support for the accountability process initiated by the interim government and calls on the military to respect the authority of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT). It also urges security-sector reforms, including the disbanding of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the exclusion of military personnel from civilian law enforcement, and the clear limitation of the DGFI's role to military intelligence with defined operational boundaries.

We hope the government will treat these constructive suggestions with the seriousness they warrant and critically assess its human rights performance over the past 14 months. It must also disclose the outcome of its review process and clarify how many innocent individuals, if any, have been released from wrongful detention.

## Reduce preventable deaths and injuries

Alarming rate of road crash injuries, deaths needs urgent intervention

It is deeply concerning that road accidents remain one of the leading causes of injury-related deaths across all age groups in the country. According to a recent government survey, the annual number of road crash fatalities is 24,233, meaning that 66 people die from road traffic injuries every day. In addition, more than 30 lakh people suffer non-fatal injuries in such crashes each year, among them 38,028 left permanently disabled. The survey, carried out between May 2023 and February 2024, came up with these findings after analysing data from 4.43 lakh participants. Three other leading causes of mortality include suicide, accounting for 20,505 fatalities annually; followed by drowning, with 18,268 deaths; and falls, with 14,167 deaths. The survey thus highlights the increasing number of injury-related deaths in the country.

These findings come at a time when our transport sector remains in complete disarray. According to an estimate by Bangladesh Jati Kalyan Samity, at least 116,726 people were killed and 165,021 injured in 67,890 road crashes over the last 12 years. While corruption and flawed policies of successive governments are largely to blame for this, the situation has not improved under the interim government either. A large number of unfit vehicles continue to plague our roads. The shortage of skilled drivers, sharp rise in motorcycles, unsupervised operation of battery-run rickshaws and slow-moving vehicles, and poor enforcement of traffic laws also serve as major barriers. Unfortunately, the Road Transport Act 2018 has failed to address the prevailing indiscipline in the sector, as it remains largely unimplemented. Influential transport associations continue to make the rules on our roads. The interim government's failure to enforce its directive to withdraw date-expired vehicles from operation is a case in point. This situation must change.

The increasing number of injury-related deaths also highlights a public health crisis that demands urgent response. Going forward, the government must prioritise injury prevention by implementing the survey's recommendations, such as developing and executing an injury prevention strategy, forming a national committee for necessary interventions, and building capacity for on-site injury prevention. As road crashes remain a major cause of deaths and injuries, it is crucial that all political parties commit to prioritising road safety and modernising public transport systems before the next election to ensure safer roads for all.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Cuban missile crisis

On this day in 1962, President John F. Kennedy alerted Americans to the Cuban missile crisis, declaring a naval blockade to prevent further missile shipments to the island country 145 km off the coast of the US.

# NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY DAY 'Road deaths cannot be reduced without BRTA reform'

**Dr Md Shamsul Hoque**, professor of civil engineering at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), talks to **Monorom Polok** of **The Daily Star** about the role of systemic failures and corruption behind the alarming rate of traffic fatalities in Bangladesh, and the critical structural reforms required to curb it.

**Why do we have so many deaths and injuries from road crashes in Bangladesh every year and how can these be reduced?**

Motorcycles and buses are responsible for the majority of road fatalities in Bangladesh and these casualties cannot be reduced unless the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is reformed. For example, route permits are issued by passenger and cargo transport committees at regional and metropolitan levels. However, non-technical persons, including police, labour leaders, transport owners and general bureaucrats often dominate these committees. Since public transport is a specialised branch of transportation, it must be run by people who understand the system. If we keep allowing unqualified people to make these decisions, chaos will continue. A majority of accidents occur because buses race each other for passengers, and in recent years, this chaos has grown to a dangerous level.

Another major problem is the boom of motorcycles—a two-wheeled vehicle with an inherently high level of risk. Often, the riders are mostly young and thrill-seeking. They enjoy speed and tend to ignore the law. On the other hand, large buses, while competing for passengers, cannot even notice these small vehicles, which leads to accidents.

The unregulated route permits given to buses and the reckless behaviour of motorcycle riders together contribute to the indiscipline on our roads. The latter is difficult to control, but if the government wants, the former can be addressed. By introducing a professional system of bus route management, like the one in Hatirjheel, a non-competing, organised environment can be created. That requires planning, not necessarily heavy spending.

At present, the system is rooted in ignorance and unethical practices. If we do not change this, we can never sustainably reduce the risk of accidents. Random accidents may still occur, but what we are facing now is a man-made hazard that keeps increasing day by day.

**How does the rapid rise of battery-run rickshaws and other small vehicles fit into this picture?**

Yes, battery-run vehicles, such as easy bikes, are part of the problem, apart from buses and motorcycles. Although they are fewer in numbers compared to motorcycles, they are still a major source of road disorder. Most easy bike drivers do not know basic road rules. Besides, these unstable three-

wheeled vehicles move at high speed, often driven by untrained people, creating risk both for themselves and others. Until recently, their numbers were under control, but they increased drastically last year.

What's more problematic is some police and special forces members are now directly involved in the transport business, according to various media reports. When law enforcers become transport owners themselves, indiscipline becomes impossible to

wheel. You are saying the problem is structural. How did this structure become so corrupted in the first place?

Historically, BRTA was born out of a movement in the 1980s led by transport owners and labour leaders. Shahjahan Khan used to say proudly that BRTA was the fruit of that movement. But when an institution that should operate based on scientific evidence is created through a political movement, its leadership



Dr Md Shamsul Hoque

control. For example, many CNG-run autorickshaws, owned by police officials, do not follow metre rules. Thus, others follow their example. This same theory applies to buses that run illegally. When the enforcers of the law are themselves part of the system's corruption, how will order be maintained?

BRTA is a totally incompetent organisation. It does not know how to regulate. The situation on our roads reflects BRTA's poor performance. Other countries can maintain discipline on their roads because their regulatory bodies are professional, accountable, and competent. In our country, those who have taken charge of the transport system lack capacity, professionalism, and accountability.

Let me give an example. Who allowed motorcycle numbers to multiply like this? BRTA did. They even reduced the registration fee by 40 to 50 percent, encouraging people to buy more motorcycles, even though a two-wheeler is 30 times riskier than a car. The result is that motorcycle registration is now higher than that of four-wheelers. This reflects BRTA's complete lack of professionalism and policy understanding.

Today, bus owners and transport leaders are present on every committee—whether it is the National Road Safety Council, the committee that issues route permits, or accident investigation panels. The result is that the so-called "regulatory authority" has turned into a clique. When those who are supposed to be regulated become the regulators themselves, no government can fix the system unless it tackles this issue.

Many countries have done the opposite. Look at Dubai's Road and Transport Authority, for instance. They have separate professional units for public transport, signalling, and vehicle fitness. The government does not directly provide these services because it cannot keep pace with increasing demand. Instead, they outsource fitness checks and training to specialised private centres, while the government acts purely as a regulator.

**What lessons can Bangladesh take from the other countries where road fatalities are low?**

First, the entire value chain of vehicle maintenance and safety must

be regulated. In many countries, workshops and service centres are licensed and can be held liable for faulty repairs if a vehicle involved in a crash is found to have defective components. The government's role is more supervisory; it does not issue fitness certificates itself.

In Bangladesh, BRTA tries to do everything with very limited staff and a few outlets across the country. This creates long delays, which open the door for corruption. The solution is to adopt a partnership model where private centres carry out the technical checks and BRTA acts as a regulator.

The government should be slim, not bulky. It should focus on regulation, policy, enforcement, and oversight, while letting the private sector handle services. However, those in the BRTA who enjoy the benefits of the current system will resist such reforms as they profit from the organisation's inefficiency.

If we truly want to escape this vicious cycle, we must implement structural reforms in BRTA, and ensure independent road crash investigations. In many countries, road crashes are investigated by independent bodies that examine every possible factor—the road design, maintenance, enforcement, vehicle fitness, and driver behaviour. Responsibility is shared, not dumped on the driver alone.

In Bangladesh, when an accident occurs, BRTA, the police, and Roads and Highways officials form a committee. But these are the very institutions that share the blame. So, even if they investigate a road crash a hundred times, they will end up blaming the driver. As long as this approach continues, the road crash issue will not be solved; it will only grow more complicated over time.

Finally, if you could give one clear message on National Road Safety Day, what would it be?

My message is simple: without structural reform of the BRTA, we cannot reduce road deaths. We have been independent for 54 years, yet we have not implemented any lasting structural change in the transport sector.

BRTA must become a truly professional regulatory authority, not a service provider. Until then, accidents will continue to rise, and every campaign raising road safety awareness or symptom-oriented treatment, such as improving roads, training drivers, or giving radar guns to the police, will only be a temporary patch on a deep-rooted disease.

## New data regulations warrant urgent rethinking



Fahim Ahmed  
is the CEO of Pathao.

FAHIM AHMED

We are at a critical crossroads in our digital journey in Bangladesh. The Personal Data Protection Ordinance, 2025, and the National Data Governance Ordinance, 2025, ostensibly designed to safeguard privacy and data security, instead risk constraining the country's digital economy with outdated, restrictive and counterproductive regulations. Far from fostering innovation and trust, these ordinances threaten to isolate Bangladesh from the global digital ecosystem, deter investment and ultimately harm the welfare and interests of citizens.

At the heart of the problem lies the ordinances' aggressive data localisation mandates. By de facto mandating companies to store multiple categories of personal data within our borders or risk non-compliance penalties, these laws impose a costly and technically impractical burden on global service providers, including social media

and content platforms such as Meta (Facebook, Instagram), Google (YouTube) and others. The result would be that companies may be forced to duplicate infrastructure, driving up operational costs and degrading service quality for the users.

Worse still, a strict data localisation requirement can fragment and weaken cybersecurity defences, reduce the resilience of operations, make data more vulnerable to local and foreign threats by creating centralised targets and undermine privacy protections by concentrating data in a single jurisdiction, thereby increasing surveillance and censorship risks.

Countries that have embraced such localisation have seen digital markets shrink, innovation stall, and foreign investment dry up. We are faced with the risk of large, global service providers suspending services in Bangladesh, where social media platforms provide the backbone for

our local digital commerce sector, which generates \$1.5 billion (based on e-commerce logistics providers' transaction volume) in annual transactions and supports at least two lakh young entrepreneurs.

Equally troubling is the ordinances' sweeping extraterritorial reach. By asserting jurisdiction over companies worldwide, the laws create a legal minefield of conflicting obligations. This legal uncertainty raises compliance risks, discouraging cross-border partnerships and digital trade. In an era where harmonised, predictable data protection frameworks are the global norm, Bangladesh's approach is a regressive outlier that threatens to erect trade barriers rather than facilitate commerce.

The punitive enforcement regime compounds these risks. With fines reaching up to five percent of turnover and criminal penalties including imprisonment, the laws cast a long shadow over innovation. Ambiguous definitions and unchecked government access to private data further exacerbate the threat, undermining business confidence and due process. This is not a regulation that nurtures a vibrant digital economy; it is a recipe for stymying innovation and our economic development.

Even well-intentioned provisions

aimed at youth safety fall short. Blanket bans on behavioural tracking and targeted advertising ignore the nuanced realities of protecting children online. Responsible use of behavioural data can enable age-appropriate experiences and direct vulnerable youth to critical safety resources. Denying these tools outright risks exposing young users to age-inappropriate and culturally irrelevant content, as well as missed opportunities for protection.

The stakes could not be higher. In their current form, these ordinances will isolate Bangladesh from the global digital economy, deter investment and most importantly, harm local businesses and users alike. There is a real and present danger that global platforms will cease services in Bangladesh, cutting off access to vital digital tools and opportunities.

Bangladesh needs to urgently rethink these ordinances. The country requires data protection frameworks that balance privacy with innovation, align with international standards and enable cross-border digital trade. Only through inclusive stakeholder engagement and a commitment to interoperable, forward-looking regulation can Bangladesh secure a prosperous digital future. The current ordinances are not the answer. They are a straitjacket that Bangladesh cannot afford to enforce.

# EDITORIAL

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY DAY

## 'Road deaths cannot be reduced without BRTA reform'

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Motorcycles and buses are responsible for the majority of road fatalities in Bangladesh and these casualties cannot be reduced unless the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is reformed. For example, route permits are issued by passenger and cargo transport committees at regional and metropolitan levels. However, non-technical persons, including police, labour leaders, transport owners and general bureaucrats often dominate these committees. Since public transport is a specialised branch of transportation, it must be run by people who understand the system. If we keep allowing unqualified people to make these decisions, chaos will continue. A majority of accidents occur because buses race each other for passengers, and in recent years, this chaos has grown to a dangerous level.

What's more problematic is some police and special forces members are now directly involved in the transport business. Shahjahan Khan used to say proudly that BRTA was the fruit of that movement. But when an institution that should operate based on scientific evidence is created through a political movement, its leadership

wheeled vehicles move at high speed, often driven by untrained people, creating risk both for themselves and others. Until recently, their numbers were under control, but they increased drastically last year.

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## Uniforms do not outrank the constitution



Barrister Khan Khalid Adnan is advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, fellow at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and head of the chamber at Khan Saifur Rahman and Associates in Dhaka.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

Recently, the army detained 15 officers following formal charges in three cases filed with the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) over enforced disappearances committed under the Awami League government as well as killings during the July 2024 uprising. The arrest warrants issued by the tribunal have since seen the revival of a familiar claim that soldiers answer only to court martial, and that a civilian-style tribunal cannot touch them. This claim fails both on the text of the constitution and the text of relevant statutes. It also misreads the limited purpose of military discipline and the special status of laws on crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law, including enforced disappearance.

Let's start with the constitution. Article 47(3) gives laws on genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other crimes under international law a remarkable shield: such laws cannot be struck down for inconsistency with other provisions of the constitution. The clause expressly mentions members of the armed, defence, or auxiliary forces as possible subjects of those laws. Article 47A then restricts access to certain fundamental rights and to remedial jurisdiction for persons to whom those laws apply. These are not cosmetic flourishes. They are a constitutional declaration that international crimes law enjoys primacy, and that the uniform of an accused does not move them outside that legal architecture.

Next comes Article 45, which modifies the operation of the Fundamental Rights chapter for any disciplinary law relating to members of a disciplined force. But its purpose is limited to ensuring the proper discharge of duties and the maintenance of discipline. Article 45 is not a grant of exclusive military jurisdiction over every wrong that a soldier may commit. It is a shield for internal discipline, not a sword that carves international crimes out of the reach of parliament or the courts.

Let's turn to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act (ICTA) now. As updated in November 2024, the Act made two decisive moves. First, it empowered the tribunal to try any individual or group—as well as any member of a disciplined force—for crimes



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

under the Act, whether committed before or after the Act and within or beyond Bangladesh. Second, it modernised the list of crimes against humanity and expressly included enforced disappearance, with definitions cross-referenced to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The statutory text is plain on both points. The UN rights chief has already noted that the law now recognises enforced disappearance as a crime in domestic law, underscoring that the drafters intended contemporary reach, not only historical cases.

The Act also speaks to hierarchy and forum. Section 24 bars other courts or authorities from questioning tribunal orders

except through the appeal route set in the statute. Section 26 states that the Act prevails over any inconsistent law in force. These two provisions close the backdoor for arguments that military law should displace the tribunal in this field. Bangladeshi jurisprudence has long described the tribunal as a domestic court of law under the Act, a characterisation that matters because it frames the tribunal as part of the national judicial order.

triable both by a criminal court and by court martial. That concurrency does not reach crimes against humanity as defined by the ICTA, because such crimes are not triable by an ordinary criminal court. They are triable by the special tribunal created for that purpose.

Some points regarding section 549 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, dealing with the delivery to military authorities of persons liable to be tried by court martial, also need

the service of the republic until discharge or acquittal (section 20C). Second, there has been public debate about enacting a separate statute for enforced disappearance outside the context of crimes against humanity. That is a welcome track for the many cases that do not meet the threshold of a widespread or systematic attack. But when that threshold is met, the ICTA remains the correct vehicle.

So, if investigators frame charges invoking section 3 of the ICTA, then the proceeding belongs in the tribunal, even when the accused is a member of a disciplined force. Military authorities must cooperate on arrest and custody but cannot claim exclusive forum. Declaring a part of a cantonment as a sub-jail under the Prisons Act changes the place of lawful custody; it does not change the judicial forum or the duty to produce the accused before the tribunal when ordered. The tribunal issues production and remand orders, and the designated superintendent must obey. Legal geography cannot be used to avoid legal accountability. Moreover, the declaration of Dhaka Cantonment's MES building as a temporary jail was made by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which expressly sought its empowerment under section 54(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. This is a mistake as CrPC is inapplicable to ICTA proceedings thanks to section 23, and as such needs to be corrected.

Having said that the proceedings against the army personnel under the ICTA have been initiated following due course as the law currently stands, any solutions must protect fairness without draining accountability. The amended ICTA already provides for defence counsel and public observation of proceedings, among other fair trial guarantees. These safeguards should be applied rigorously to avoid the easy slur of political theatre. At the same time, the tribunal must insist on punctual production of detainees and full documentary transparency about arrest and custody.

Let's end by answering two blunt questions directly. First, can crimes of enforced disappearance or crimes against humanity be tried under the Army Act? No, not as the international crimes defined under the ICTA. The Army Act can punish service offences and some ordinary crimes as civil offences, but it cannot transform international crimes into disciplinary breaches. Second, is the ICTA the proper forum even when the accused belongs to a disciplined force? Yes. The constitution gives that law primacy. The ICTA gives the tribunal jurisdiction over members of disciplined forces. And the ICTA overrides inconsistent laws. That is the end of the jurisdictional story.

## Aparn Orna Koi: How identity politics targets women



Kanak Kanti Saha is an urban researcher, architect, and university lecturer.

KANAK KANTI SAHA



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

Let me start this piece by recalling a few separate incidents that went "viral" on social media in the recent past. In one, an agitated young man was seen shouting angrily at a woman somewhere in Dhaka, "Aparn orna koi?" (Where is your scarf?), implying that in this country her clothes are deemed inappropriate. I also recall a recent post from the Facebook page of UNICEF Bangladesh promoting female education as a means to stop child marriage. Within hours, the comment section was flooded with hate speech and online attacks against UNICEF, opposing female education and defending child marriage. In May, two young girls were brutally beaten by a youth at Munshiganj launch terminal for what he called "indecent dress." Similar incidents of harassment of women in Lalmatia, Dhaka University, and Banasree had also spread like wildfire online.

What followed was even more telling. In most cases, the harassers were celebrated and supported both in person and virtually. Some were greeted with flowers and cheered as if they had done something noble.

These are just a few examples, but many in Bangladesh have likely heard of, seen, or even experienced such incidents in recent months. It's easy to dismiss them as separate acts of harassment. But I'm afraid they are signs of a deeper and more concerning shift—one where women's physical appearance has once again become a battleground for cultural and political power.

Since the 2024 July uprising, when Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian government fell, Bangladesh has been in political transition. Power is more fragmented now. In that vacuum, conservative groups have gained new confidence. They are no longer talking only about elections or state structure—they are talking about cultural "reform" and the "true" identity of Bangladesh as a nation.

cultural projects."

But this is not a neutral rethinking of identity. It is an attempt to build a new majoritarian cultural order—one where the loudest voices decide who belongs.

Although female harassment has always been a common issue in Bangladesh, the recent incidents show a known pattern. Partha Chatterjee, political theorist, writing on nationalism

this. Arjun Appadurai, in his book, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on The Geography of Anger*, wrote about the anxiety majorities often feel toward minorities, pluralism, or any difference.

Even when dominant, majoritarian movements act from insecurity. In Bangladesh today, a handful of religious groups frame everything they dislike—concerts, festivals, cultural hybridity, feminism, queer visibility—as a threat to the nation's moral fabric.

In their eyes, women are both the symbol and the target of this imagined threat. They must be disciplined for the nation to remain "pure."

These incidents are not merely individual acts of harassment; they are performances, public spectacles meant to claim ownership of space. When a man harasses a woman on the street and a crowd rallies behind him, the message is clear: this space belongs to us and to our version of culture. If you don't follow our rules, you're an outsider.

And that is precisely why these campaigns for "cultural reform" are so concerning. They aren't only trying to erase specific traditions—they're trying to erase the idea that Bangladesh can be plural at all. They aim to define a single way of being a citizen of Bangladesh and make everyone else shrink or disappear. The interim government's passivity, or inappropriate responses, only deepen the crisis.

The revolution last year promised change. But a year later, a new form of control is taking shape—not just political, but cultural. And cultural authoritarianism can be as dangerous as political authoritarianism. It is often more subtle, more intimate, and harder to resist.

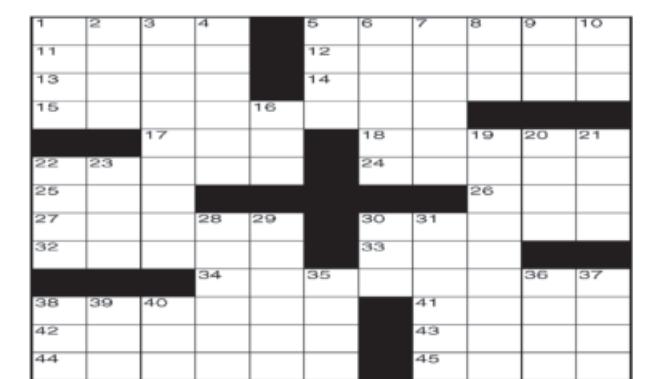
Women stand at the frontline of this battle—not by choice, but because their beings have once again been turned into symbolic terrain where nations imagine their purity. Defending their right to walk, to wear, to live without fear is not just their struggle. It is central to the fight for a plural, democratic Bangladesh and must be joined by everyone who dreamt of equality and an end to authoritarianism during July 2024.

If we lose that fight, we lose far more than cultural festivals or personal freedoms. We lose the real identity of the country.

CROSSWORD  
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 1 Plucked instrument
- 5 Words from JFK's inaugural address
- 11 Lotion additive
- 12 1965 TV western
- 13 Fly catchers
- 14 Small crown
- 15 Didn't panic
- 17 "Evil Woman" band
- 18 Thompson of "Creed"
- 22 Played a role
- 24 Spoken tests
- 25 "Cheers" setting
- 26 Atlas page
- 27 Spots for tots
- 30 Scout settlements
- 32 Get some shuteye
- 33 Thurman of film
- 34 Emmy-winning police drama
- 38 Infant outfit
- 41 "Damn Yankees" role
- 42 "Bye!"
- 43 Taverns
- 44 Playground fixtures
- 45 Tidy
- DOWN
- 1 War backer
- 2 Out of the wind
- 3 Emmy-winning role for Dick Van Dyke
- 4 Mortar's mate
- 5 Alan with Emmys
- 6 Reach by boat
- 7 Emmy-winning role for Michael Richards
- 8 Homer's neighbor
- 9 Lyric poem
- 10 Selleck of "Blue Bloods"
- 16 Atlantic catch
- 19 TV role for Ted Danson
- 20 Open-handed hit
- 21 Nile snakes
- 22 Basics
- 23 Lenny's pal on "The Simpsons"
- 28 Emmy-winning role for Robert Guillaume
- 29 Bond activity
- 30 Cow's chew
- 31 Spielberg's production company
- 35 Violin parts
- 36 Arm bone
- 37 Sunrise site
- 38 CIA forerunner
- 39 Right away
- 40 Yale student



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

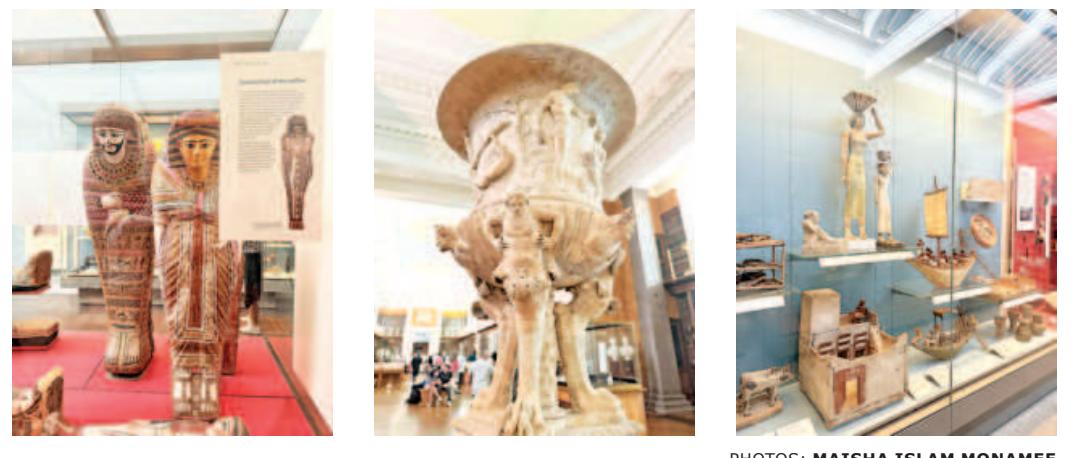


WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

# Gods, graves, and gallery lighting: A love letter to looted civilisations

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

**The British Museum is a thief's scrapbook, but it is also a mirror held up to our shared history, flaws and all. I left thinking not just about what I saw, but about what I did not: restitution, accountability, and perhaps someday, return.**



PHOTOS: MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

They say you cannot see the world in a day, but they clearly haven't been to the British Museum. After five hours of exploration, I came out questioning three things: time, empire, and how exactly one steals a whole monument without anyone noticing. Spending the entire day willingly trapped in this paradox of beauty and theft, walking through civilisations neatly tagged and sealed behind glass. It is hard to describe the feeling of seeing cultures you grew up reading about suddenly standing before you intact, labelled, and suspiciously far from home.

I started with Egypt. I was greeted by a towering statue of Ramesses II, that loomed like a stone sentinel, his chipped mouth still smug, as if daring me to question why his torso was in London and his legs, presumably, still sulking somewhere in Egypt. The galleries sprawled from there; rooms full of painted coffins so intricate they looked like divine contracts, their surfaces covered in hieroglyphs—prayers, invocations, instructions for the soul's journey.

And then the mummies, wrapped in linen, impossibly old, heartbreakingly human. You expect something ghostly, but what hits you is how real it is.

Brown, leathery skin stretched tight over cheekbones, eyelids still shut, and fingernails visible.

The next ones were Greece and Rome. If Egypt was enchanting, the Greek and Roman exhibits were pure drama. The Parthenon Marbles (or as Greece likes to call them, "Our National Trauma") sat imposingly under diffused skylight, displayed as if they were British born. Gods in motion, horses in mid-gallop, muscle and divinity carved into cold marble. Just a few steps away was the Nereid Monument, an entire Lycian tomb from the 4th century BCE, now reconstructed like a divine LEGO set.

Rome, of course, offered grandeur with a touch of smugness. Augustus with his propaganda busts. Julius Caesar, forever stern. Roman generals who once led legions are now reduced to torso sculptures, missing arms but not ego. The utensils, board games, keys, and makeup were all proof that Romans really were the blueprint for modern life: organised, efficient, and narcissistic.

I ended my tour in the Reading Room. A dome of knowledge, designed to be silent and reverent. Books everywhere, mostly in English. The room felt like a monument to a version of history

curated, cropped, and colonised.

I exited the British Museum after nearly five hours, intellectually bloated and morally conflicted. I had spent a day time-travelling, witnessing humanity's finest artistry and worst greed. The contradiction is unbearable, but also unmissable. Because while I was angry about how these pieces got here, I was also grateful I got to see them. The British Museum is a thief's scrapbook, but it is also a mirror held up to our shared history, flaws and all. I left thinking not just about what I saw, but about what I did not: restitution, accountability, and perhaps someday, return.

## Kheyali marks 50 years with a two-day festival at Shilpkala

Dhaka's long-standing theatre group Kheyali Natya Goshthi will mark its 50th anniversary with a two-day festival at Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy's Studio Theatre Hall on October 24 and 25.

Founded on February 21, 1975, in memory of Sirajuddin Khan and on Language Martyrs' Day, Kheyali

has spent five decades blending theatre with social and cultural activism.

The festival opens with *Kangaler Joto Kotha*, featuring songs, poems, and plays by founder AKA Kabir. The second day presents the musical and dance drama *Manush Hobo*, exploring

humanity and compassion.

Guest troupes—Maitri Theatre, Rongpeeth Nattyadal, and Shoukhine Theatre—will perform *Bir Angona*, *Sadakalo*, and selected scenes from *Arek Falgun*.

"This celebration is a call for dignity and a humane society through art," said Shahin Ahmed.



## NEWS

### Takaichi makes history

FROM PAGE 12

making her the latest leader in tune with the broader rightward shift in global politics. She received 237 votes in the election in parliament's 465-seat lower House yesterday and then won a similar vote in the less powerful upper House.

Her victory was secured after her Liberal Democratic Party, which has governed Japan for most of its postwar history, agreed on Monday to form a coalition with the right-wing Japan Innovation Party, known as Ishin.

Together the parties are two seats short of a majority in the lower house. That means Takaichi's success will

depend on her winning the cooperation of more opposition lawmakers, said Tadashi Mori, a professor of politics at Aichi Gakuin University.

"The two parties do not command a majority in either chamber and to ensure a stable government and gain control of key parliamentary committees, they will need to secure more than half the seats," he said.

Takaichi takes over when Japanese politics appears more fractured than at almost any other time in recent memory, thanks in part to the rise of the smaller, hard-right Sanseito Party, which has siphoned voters away from the LDP.

"While we won't hesitate to oppose her when necessary, we intend to maintain a friendly working relationship," he said.

The LDP's former coalition partner, the more moderate Komeito, broke up their 26-year-old alliance this month after the LDP chose the right-wing Takaichi as its new leader.

Political changeover.

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Act 2017 specifies the formation of an advisory council under the leadership of the road minister. The law stipulates seven terms of action for the advisory council, four of which are directly related to ensuring road safety and bringing discipline to the road transport sector.

The council held its first and, so far, the last meeting in May 2024.

Since 1997, the government has been preparing strategic action plans for improving road safety.

The National Road Safety Council approved the National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan (2021-2024) in November 2022 to reduce road crash fatalities and injuries by 20 to 25 percent by the end of 2024.

The tenure of the action plan

expired, but the authority neither assessed the plan's outcome nor took steps to update it, the BRTA official said, seeking anonymity.

Abu Momtaz Saad Uddin Ahmed, chairman of BRTA, denied allegations that the interim government has failed to take visible steps to improve road safety.

He said mobile court drives are being conducted to remove vehicles that have exceeded their economic lifespan and rejected allegations that the initiative had lost momentum due to pressure from transport associations.

"We are actively working, and you will see changes soon," he told this correspondent.

When asked about the inactive committee, he said efforts are underway to reconstitute them.

### 243 citizens, Mahila Parishad seek probe

FROM PAGE 2

that the editor-publisher and the HR head could not evade moral and administrative responsibility for their inaction.

They also urged that workplace harassment prevention policies be strictly enforced across all institutions to ensure women's safety and dignity.

Among the signatories were poet Nirmalendu Goon; lawyer ZI Khan Panna; TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman; educationist Abdul Bayes; Dhaka University professors Dr Zobaida Nasreen, Samina Luthfa

and Dr Kaberi Gayen; Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua; poet Gultekin Khan; writer Nasreen Jahan; actor Kochi Khondokar; lawyer and journalist Manzur Al Matin; writer and researcher Sushmita Preetha; and filmmaker Dipankar Dipon, among others.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, in a separate statement signed by its President Fauzia Moslem and General Secretary Maleka Banu, said, "We have observed that most media organisations have not yet formed or activated any effective

committees to address sexual harassment and abuse, as directed by the Honourable High Court.

"The Bangladesh Mahila Parishad is therefore calling for departmental action against those involved in the recent incident of sexual harassment and urging all media houses to form and effectively operate complaint committees against sexual harassment and abuse in accordance with the Honourable High Court's directives, to ensure the safety of women employees in the workplace."

### IMF's sixth tranche

FROM PAGE 12

scraped by the political government.

"We have ensured them whichever government comes next will continue the reform programme."

The delayed authorisation of the sixth instalment will not pose any negative impact on the economy as the balance of payments and reserves are in a strong position, he said, adding that both the IMF and the World Bank praised Bangladesh's reform initiatives during the meetings in Washington.

So far, Bangladesh has received \$3.6 billion of the \$5.5 billion loan programme.

### Defence denies

FROM PAGE 12

deaths was relatively low.

The tribunal said, "About 1,500 people were killed and 25,000 to 35,000 seriously injured. Is it a small number?"

Amir replied, "These were individual actions."

In response, tribunal Chairman Justice Golam Mortuza Momin said, "Many have said shots were fired from helicopters. The bullet trajectories were downwards."

The chairman referred to Hasina's alleged phone conversation – "Use the helicopter this time, fire from above".

Tribunal member Justice Md Shofiqul Alam Mahmood added, "The prosecution said that in the audio recording, Hasina is heard ordering the use of lethal weapons and gunfire from helicopters."

Amir then said, "Such a claim can only be proven if the bullets retrieved from the bodies match the weapons used on the helicopters."

### MPO-listed teachers, staff call-off strike

FROM PAGE 12

Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar termed the government's move "a truly historic moment" for the education sector, saying it reflected the state's recognition of teachers' demands and contributions.

"Teachers deserve far greater respect, and it is the state's responsibility to help improve their living standards," he said in a press statement.

He added that the education ministry, along with the advisory council and Chief Adviser Muhammed Yunus, had worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that teachers' voices were heard and understood.

While the government's decision met the first of the teachers' three major demands, it decided to keep

the medical allowance and festival allowance unchanged, for now.

At the entry level, a teacher in an MPO-listed institution receives a monthly salary of Tk 12,500, along with Tk 1,000 as house rent allowance and Tk 500 as medical allowance. Teachers had demanded that the medical allowance be raised to Tk 1,500, and the festival allowance from 50 to 75 percent of their basic salary.

The movement began on October 12, when MPO-listed teachers and employees started a sit-in in front of the Jatiya Press Club. As they attempted to march towards the Secretariat, police used batons and sound grenades to disperse them, leaving several injured. The protesters regrouped at the Central Shaheed Minar the next day

and continued their sit-in, suspending classes nationwide.

On October 17, the teachers launched a hunger strike unto death, saying it would continue until the government met their demands. On October 19, the Finance Division approved a 5 percent increase in house rent allowance (minimum Tk 2,000), which the teachers rejected as "disrespectful and inadequate." They then issued a two-day ultimatum on October 20, demanding a 20 percent rise.

On September 30, the finance ministry had approved a Tk 500 increase in house rent allowance, which the teachers also rejected, calling it "insufficient."

Currently, around 3.8 lakh teachers and 1.7 lakh staff members work at more than 26,000 MPO-listed institutions across the country.

### US appeals court lets Trump send troops to Portland

REUTERS

A divided US appeals court ruled on Monday that Donald Trump can send National Guard troops into Portland, Oregon, despite objections by the leaders of the city and state, giving the Republican president an important legal victory as he dispatches military forces to a growing number of Democratic-led locales.

A three-judge panel of the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals granted the Justice Department's request to put on hold a judge's order that had blocked the deployment while a legal challenge to

Trump's action plays out.

The court said that sending in the National Guard was an appropriate response to protesters, who had damaged a federal building and threatened US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers.

The unsigned majority opinion was joined by Circuit Judge Bridget Bade and Circuit Judge Ryan Nelson, who were both appointed by Trump in his first term. Nelson also wrote a concurring opinion saying courts have no authority to even review the president's decision to send troops.



### Bapparaj, Dighi pair up for the first time in 'Biday'

Director Mehedi Hassan Hridoy, who gained fame with *Borbaad* starring Shakib Khan, has begun shooting his new film *Biday* in Taherpur, Sunamganj. After months of speculation about his next project, producer Shahrin Akter confirmed that the *Borbaad* follow-up featuring Siam Ahmed has been postponed. *Biday* instead stars Bapparaj and Prarthana Fardin Dighi in their first on-screen collaboration. Shooting began last Friday, with Bapparaj—returning to cinema after a long break—joining on Monday to portray a chairman. He noted that cast members were asked not to reveal details until filming concludes later this month. *Biday* is slated for release next year.



### 'Darkaa' selected for Minsk International Film Festival Listapad

Bangladeshi filmmaker Zayed Siddiki's *Darkaa* (RAVEN, 2024) has been selected for competition at the 31st Minsk International Film Festival Listapad, running from October 31 to November 7.

It is Bangladesh's sole entry in the short film category and one of just 13 chosen from over 2,200 submissions. The festival's competition features 157 films from 41 countries.

Inspired by Shahidul Zahir's short story, Siddiki wrote the screenplay and dialogue. *Darkaa* follows an elderly man grappling with an existential crisis and his fading role within the family.

Screening is scheduled for November 2 at 3 pm at Minsk's Moskva Cinema.



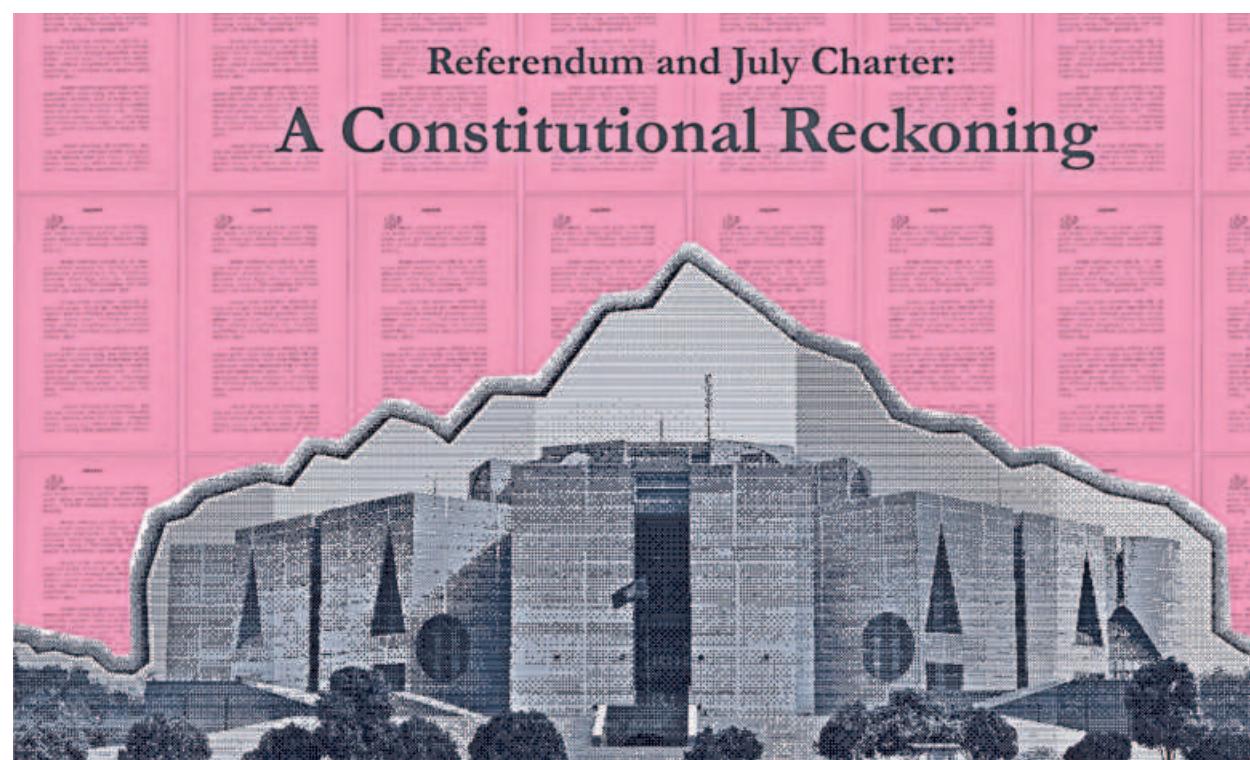
## LAW OPINION

# Referendum and July Charter: A constitutional reckoning for Bangladesh

MD. IMAMUR RAHMAN

In the crucible of Bangladesh's political evolution, the July National Charter 2025 has emerged as a transformative document one that seeks to fundamentally recalibrate the nation's democratic architecture. With eighty-four reform proposals, half requiring constitutional amendments, the Charter has ignited a national debate about the very mechanisms of popular sovereignty. Central to this discourse is the vital question: should Bangladesh hold a referendum to ratify these monumental changes? The argument that a referendum is both legally feasible and constitutionally desirable offers a rare, momentous opportunity to re-anchor the state's legitimacy in the direct will of the people, invoking the foundational principles of constitutionalism and democratic theory.

The July Charter proposes reforms (electoral reforms, redefining checks on executive power, introducing safeguards against parliamentary overreach etc.) that are not merely statutory tweaks,



**Critics argue that referenda can be manipulated or oversimplify complex issues. While these concerns are valid, they are not fatal. With robust procedural safeguards- including independent oversight, transparent question-framing, and extensive civic education- a referendum can be a deliberative exercise. The ballot must present clear, segmented questions, allowing voters to express nuanced, informed preferences.**

but implicate entrenched provisions of the Constitution. Under Article 142 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority in Parliament. However, the current political climate marked by deep fragmentation and persistent democratic deficits makes such a consensus elusive and politically insufficient. In a polarised democracy, an amendment passed solely by a supermajority risks

being perceived as partisan, thus failing to achieve necessary political legitimacy. A referendum, therefore, becomes a pragmatic and principled alternative, enabling direct democratic endorsement and effectively immunising the reforms from future partisan challenges.

A principal critique is that the Constitution of Bangladesh does not explicitly provide for referenda. Yet, critically, it does not prohibit them either. This silence is a space for constitutional imagination. Legal scholars distinguish between constitutional silence and constitutional prohibition. The normative foundation for a referendum lies in Article 7(1) of the Constitution, which unequivocally declares that '[all] powers in the Republic belongs to the people...'. If sovereignty resides in the people, a mechanism that directly engages them on supreme law is necessarily an operationalisation of that sovereignty. Furthermore, the Preamble and Article II enshrine democracy as a fundamental ideal of

the Constitution and a fundamental principle of state policy respectively. A referendum being a quintessential tool of direct democracy perfectly aligns with this principle. It operationalises the idea that citizens are not mere subjects of the law but co-authors of the constitutional order.

Referenda offer a crucial bridge between representative institutions and direct participation, especially in moments of constitutional renewal. The July Charter being a constitutional manifesto responding to a sustained national demand for fundamental reform, ratifying it solely through parliamentary procedure risks deepening the democratic deficit. A referendum, by contrast, re-legitimises the state structure through broad, participatory consent. Moreover, the other formal legal pathways via presidential ordinance or parliamentary legislation are currently unavailable due to the dissolution of Parliament and the extra-constitutional nature of the interim authority itself. This

inability elevates the question to one of foundational constitutional theory.

The July Uprising in 2024 created a Kelsenian constitutional rupture. A new legal order was established, validated by the revolution's success and popular consent. However, the path for the interim authority remains constrained by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Monzur Ahmed Bhuiya v Adilur Rahman Khan* (2021), which explicitly curtailed the application of the doctrine of necessity in constitutional issues. Therefore, the interim authority cannot rely on the 'doctrine of necessity', rather issue a proclamation or a foundational law that derives its force directly from the sovereign will of the people which validated the July revolution. The referendum itself then serves as the crucial bridge: the formal, explicit process by which the people sanction the specific reforms of the July Charter, legitimising the new constitutional order.

Critics argue that referenda can be manipulated or oversimplify complex

issues. While these concerns are valid, they are not fatal. With robust procedural safeguards- including independent oversight, transparent question-framing, and extensive civic education- a referendum can be a deliberative exercise. The ballot must present clear, segmented questions, allowing voters to express nuanced, informed preferences. Crucially, the referendum must be framed not as a plebiscite on government performance, but as a sacred constitutional moment. The focus must be squarely on the principles of reform.

The debate over timing whether the referendum should precede or coincide with the national election is ultimately a matter of political prudence and constitutional integrity. Holding both simultaneously offers efficiency and a maximum turnout, ensuring the incoming government reflects the electorate's constitutional preferences. However, a pre-election referendum may offer cleaner legitimacy, avoiding the conflation of constitutional reform with partisan mandates. What matters most is that the process is conducted in absolute good faith, with complete procedural fairness and institutional neutrality, thereby honouring the electorate's ultimate authority.

The July Charter and the ensuing referendum debate mark a true constitutional reckoning for Bangladesh. They compel a confrontation with foundational questions. In fact, the referendum is not a threat to constitutionalism; it is its fulfillment. It embodies the spirit of Article 7, operationalises the democratic promise of Article II, and revives the possibility of a truly participatory republic. Bangladesh must seize this moment- not with haste, but with courage, wisdom, and an unwavering commitment to the sovereign will of its people. The referendum is not merely a procedural device; it is the democratic ritual that affirms the Constitution as a living covenant with every citizen.

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## LAW VISION

## Artificial Intelligence and the court

RAISUL SOURAV

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising human functions across different industries. Legal industry is not an exception to that and is already affected by AI fever in many countries to bring positive changes to the traditional legal profession. It applies to streamlining legal processes in courts, analysing legal instruments, and is even being used in certain jurisdictions to predict and prescribe judicial outcomes. Apart from these positive features, there are some limitations of using AI in legal proceedings which are ignored but should be shed light upon.

First of all, we need to understand that AI is actually a prediction tool by nature. Huge historical data are used to train AI powered tech tools and from them it learns to identify probabilistic patterns. It means, it does not actually reason, think or question like human beings although its output looks convincing and it can also mimic human style of reasoning. What is appalling is that it sometimes generate false information which apparently looks authoritative.

It does not even understand human language. Rather, it merely forecast the next token in a given sequence of words. Therefore, it cannot rectify previous human error but comes with its own set of biases, which stem from the training data, and subsequently reinforce them.

Law, legal proceedings and legal profession are not just about rules, rather they are about people as well, as they have to deal with the problems people face. Moreover, law is not to be understood as a mathematical formula to be mechanically inserted into a scientific system. Instead, it is a living and evolving organism that changes with societal values, cultural norms, and ethical considerations. Contrarily, AI systems do not have the emotional empathy, ethical judgment, human intuition, authority, and/or experience that reflect societal values and are mandatory for the legal profession.

AI also lacks the ability to assess a situation at a particular moment, which human beings champion. Human lawyers do not only apply law in court cases, but they also have skills to adopt with the judges and court environment. They adjust their responsibilities to the court, respond to the mood, tone, and dynamics of the moment accordingly.

Alongside, every case is different, and there is valid justification why every case ought to be judged on its own facts cautiously. Public need to see and feel that law is being applied justly and putting people's problem to algorithm

may create a barrier between the public and the judicial process.

Furthermore, self-represented litigation with the help of AI chatbots is gaining popularity as it saves the cost of lawyer. However, such AI chatbots cannot argue in favour of its client when the judge asks a question or seeks clarification during a hearing. In addition, it will not be able to object to improper cross examination or unfair treatment in the court. Apart from these, court is like a playground where the other side might pull a manoeuvre suddenly. Hence, one needs to think promptly and make judgment calls on the spot which AI is not able to do in self-represented cases.



Additionally, since AI or its programmers or deployers are still free from any criminal responsibility, the court will penalise the human person even if it is the AI's fault. Recently, the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) of the UK warned the lawyers about the use of AI, after finding a fictitious judgment generated by ChatGPT being cited in the court. The lawyer is also referred to the Bar Standards Board of the UK for investigation. Several other lawyers across jurisdictions also faced criticism and punishment from courts and regulatory bodies for referring to ChatGPT generated false information in real cases to the court.

The role of the judiciary is not just to process cases efficiently but to weigh moral consequences, to ensure fairness, and to uphold the rule of law in a way that no machine can replicate. Therefore, we must draw a line between the application and use of AI generated outputs and our own conscience in complex, sophisticated and incidents having impacts on human lives, that play out in the courtroom.

*The writer is doctoral researcher on the use of AI in judicial decision-making at the School of Law, University of Galway, Republic of Ireland.*



## ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

## Protecting our climate-induced displaced population

SYEDA SHAIMILA NAHIN

Every year, thousands of families from coastal districts such as Bhola, Satkhira, Barguna, and Khulna are forced to abandon their homes not because of war or persecution, but because of rising tides, eroding riverbanks, and increasingly violent cyclones. They flee to cities like Dhaka, Khulna, or Chattogram in search of safety and survival. Yet, upon arrival, they have to face a new kind of disaster: the absence of legal recognition, housing rights, and social protection. They are climate induced internally displaced people, and in Bangladesh, they remain largely invisible to the law.

'refugees' under international law, nor as 'internally displaced persons' (IDPs) with special legal status under national law. The Disaster Management Act 2012 and the National Plan for Disaster Management do emphasise response and recovery, but they remain silent on long term rehabilitation or legal entitlements for those displaced permanently. As a result, IDPs often end up living in informal settlements, without secure housing, access to clean water, education, or healthcare.

Many families from coastal areas like Shyamnagar or Charfasson arrive in the capital after losing their land to river erosion. With no formal proof of residence, they cannot access national ID registration,

**Climate induced displacement is not just an environmental issue, but a question of rights, dignity, and recognition. The people fleeing the coast are not mere victims of fate. Being citizens of Bangladesh, they are entitled to the full protection of its laws. If we fail them, we fail the very spirit of justice that our Constitution promises.**

Bangladesh is recognised globally as one of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), nearly 13.3 million people could be displaced within Bangladesh by 2050 due to climate related impacts. Despite this growing crisis, there is no specific legal or policy framework that recognises the climate induced displaced or protects their rights.

Currently, the displaced families fall into a grey area where they are not classified as

social safety nets, or even basic services. Their displacement is environmental, but their suffering is legal.

To ensure justice, Bangladesh needs to recognise climate induced displacement as a human rights issue. This means expanding existing legal frameworks to include the right to resettlement, livelihood protection, and access to justice for the displaced populations. The Constitution of Bangladesh, under Article 15 read with Article 32, already provides the moral foundation for such recognition.

Strengthening these constitutional

promises through legislative initiatives is both urgent and necessary.

Moreover, the government could consider establishing a National Climate Migration Policy, aligned with the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and National Adaptation Plan (NAP), to guide planned relocation, land allocation, and social integration of climate affected people. Such a policy should clearly define responsibilities among government bodies ranging from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to the Ministry of Land and Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives to ensure that displaced citizens are not left in bureaucratic limbo.

At the local level, community-based organisations and NGOs have shown what legal empowerment can achieve. Initiatives that help IDPs obtain legal documentation, access microfinance, or engage in participatory urban planning demonstrate that inclusion is possible. However, these efforts must be backed by law, not just as charity.

Bangladesh has long been a global symbol of resilience in the face of natural disasters. Yet, resilience should not mean forced adaptation to injustice. Climate induced displacement is not just an environmental issue, but a question of rights, dignity, and recognition. The people fleeing the coast are not mere victims of fate. Being citizens of Bangladesh, they are entitled to the full protection of its laws. If we fail them, we fail the very spirit of justice that our Constitution promises.

*The writer is student of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies at the University of Dhaka.*

## 'Heartbreak no more'

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh women's team appear trapped in a familiar cycle: showing promise only to unravel at the finish, their struggles with composure and match awareness mirroring those of their male counterparts.

After letting it slip while defending against England and South Africa earlier in the ICC Women's World Cup, Nigar Sultana Joty & Co once again found themselves on the brink of victory in Navi Mumbai on Monday, only to lose by seven runs to Sri Lanka and, with it, go out of the semis race.

Having restricted Sri Lanka to 202, Bangladesh appeared to have cracked the code in their chase. Yet, despite 12 runs needed off 12 balls and six wickets in hand, with Joty still set in the middle, the scoreboard froze; the dugout sank.

Bangladesh's game plan has traditionally centred on putting runs on the board and defending with spin. When forced to chase, they tend to take matches deep; often to their detriment.

"It's not heartbreak anymore; it's a complete failure," a team official told The Daily Star, lamenting how the batters "dragged the game till the 50th over".

The pattern has become an all-too-familiar one. In the 2022 World Cup in Dunedin, Bangladesh needed 43 off 30 balls against South Africa, but still lost four wickets for 10 runs to fall



**“It was a new experience for us, the first-ever Super Over. I think it was not an easy surface to bat on. Rishad [Hossain] is doing very good at this moment. All batsmen were struggling but he was confident and batted really well. In the Super Over, we needed 10 [11] and one boundary could have changed things.”**

Bangladesh captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz

**Rishad Hossain (C) thought he had done enough to win the game for Bangladesh with an all-round display, scoring an unbeaten 14-ball 39 before taking three wickets with the ball in hand in the second ODI in Mirpur on Tuesday. However, the West Indies showed fight, taking the game deep. Yet, Bangladesh had chances to close the game out but Nurul Hasan Sohan's (Inset) drop cost them big as the visitors won the game by a single run in Super Over.**

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



short by 32. Later that year in the Asia Cup, they failed to chase 41 in seven overs against Sri Lanka, ending with 37 for seven.

Former women's wing chief Habibul Bashar believes the roots of the problem lie in inadequate preparation. Before the World Cup, the team played only a handful of practice games against under-15 men's sides and intra-squad matches, with no international series after April.

"Other teams had already planned ahead," Bashar reflected. "If we'd played smaller teams like Thailand, built a winning habit, it would have helped."

Even so, he credited the side's effort. "They've played their best cricket in this World Cup, even if the results [one win in six matches] don't show it. The belief is missing as they create chances but can't cash in."

Joty's 77 -- Bangladesh's highest-ever innings in a Women's ODI World Cup -- deserved a happy ending. She admitted as much after the defeat, acknowledging the team's struggle to "calm our nerves and find ways to get runs in those moments".

As Bangladesh prepare to sign off on October 26 against India, their campaign has underlined that their biggest battle remains psychological.

## Windies outspin Tigers as Mirpur witnesses history

SPORTS REPORTER

Three hours and 18 minutes of uninterrupted spin were on offer from the West Indies yesterday. If that sounds dull, it probably was for most viewers. Neither in the stands at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium nor in the press box was there much focus on cricket during Bangladesh's innings. Yet, by the end, the second ODI shattered all expectations -- even the stoic press box turned raucous after a tense Super Over saw the Windies level the series, their adaptability dismantling Bangladesh's plans.

West Indies scored 10 in the Super Over, and batting second, Bangladesh fell one run short as Saif Hassan failed to find the ropes off the final delivery. Still, Bangladesh's innings had given the match its own peculiar flavour.

When a cat wandered onto the field, it drew the loudest cheer of the innings, the crowd finding amusement amid Bangladesh's struggles against spin. Having learned from the



first ODI, West Indies quickly adapted, and though their spin potency lagged behind Bangladesh's, their batters caught up faster.

At one stage, many wondered if the home side had enough runs, given the slow surface. The only moment of excitement during Bangladesh's innings came from Rishad Hossain's 14 ball 39, which injected life into an otherwise stagnant effort.

A reinforced Windies spin attack set up their comeback, restricting Bangladesh to 213 for seven.

Known for their fearsome fast-bowling quartet in the past, West Indies cricket may have declined in recent years, but pace remains their pride. Even now, the likes of Shamar Joseph, Jayden Seales and Alzarri Joseph form the backbone of their attack. Yet, coming into the second ODI, West Indies had to abandon that identity.

For never before in men's ODI history had a team bowled all 50 overs of spin. That a side once synonymous with express pace would do so says much about the Mirpur surface.

While the visitors fielded three pacers in the first ODI, they learned their lesson and went all-in with spin for the second. Bangladesh, meanwhile, dropped Taskin Ahmed for Nasum Ahmed, with Mustafizur Rahman being the lone quick option.

Bangladesh, well-acquainted with these conditions, stuck to their familiar template despite their batting woes. Nearly half of Bangladesh's runs came in boundaries, underlining their struggle for rotation.

With less sharp turn on offer in the first match, the Windies adapted smartly. Shai Hope's composed 53 under pressure anchored their chase and set up a dramatic finish.

Much has been said about these pitches, reminiscent of those used against Australia and New Zealand in 2021. After that series, Shakib Al Hasan warned that "14-15 games on such surfaces can ruin a batter's career". What this series will do to Bangladesh's batting remains to be seen, regardless of the final result.

## The return of the long throw

REUTERS

'Sticking it in the mixer' is a time-honoured tactic in recreational soccer where technically-challenged Sunday morning players punt high passes or hurl long throws into opposition penalty areas.

It used to be a thing even at the top level with Wimbledon's fabled 'Crazy Gang' taking the route one approach to winning the 1988 FA Cup and more recently Stoke City's Rory Delap terrorising defences in the 2000s with his 40-metre throw-ins.

Those days, at least in the Premier League, seemed finished as Pep Guardiola's Manchester City won four successive English titles with an intricate possession-based game and others tried, and failed to, copy the blueprint.

But it appears tactics are coming full circle. On Monday, the sight of Brentford's Michael Kayode or Kevin Schade drying the ball with a towel before winding up a long throw caused palpitations among West Ham United's defenders.

Neither of Brentford's two goals came directly from long throws but the tactic unsettled West Ham's defence to such an extent that panic broke out every time a corner, free kick or long pass went anywhere near them.

When Brentford equalised after a long throw against Chelsea last month it was their seventh goal from that routine since the start of the 2024-25 season. No other team had more than two.

The tactic, still scoffed at by the purists,



is back with a vengeance. On the opening weekend of the Premier League season 11 of the 20 teams used long throws, up from four teams on the opening day of the 2024-25 campaign.

Opta analysis of the opening 50 games of the Premier League suggested route-

one tactics, including long throws, were increasingly part of a coach's armoury.

According to Opta, passing was at a 15-year low in that sample while the likes of Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester City and Newcastle United are all getting the ball forward faster using fewer passes. Some clubs are even kicking deep into touch straight from kickoff to gain territory.

It is long throws that are the big talking point, though.

Throughout last season there were an average of 1.5 long throws (20 metres or more) per game into the penalty area. This season that has more than doubled to 3.85, according to Opta.

At least six goals have been scored as a direct result of a long throw, compared to

15 in the whole of last season.

Former Wolverhampton Wanderers and Bournemouth manager Gary O'Neil, analysing Brentford's win over West Ham for Sky Sports, said the rise of long throws is data driven.

"I've spoken to a lot of set-piece coaches and the data is so far in favour of throwing it in the opposition box, you are far more likely to score than trying to work something in from the side, because they're so hard to clear and you can get all your big defenders up," he said.

"Managers are not embarrassed now."

The rise of the high-press in recent seasons and subsequent turnovers in possession in dangerous areas may have also prompted goalkeepers and defenders to hit long balls.

From a peak of 16.7 high turnovers per game in 2023-24 that figure has dropped to 11.5 in 2025-26, the lowest in 10 seasons.

Not everyone is a fan of the new trend though, including former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher who believes there has been a reaction against the Guardiola-inspired short game.

"If the data tell you there's more chance to score a goal, you're doing it, I would do it as a manager," he told Sky Sports.

"But it bores me. We've gone back too far. Not just throw-ins, even from kickoffs, it feels like rugby and playing for territory. Graham Taylor got slaughtered 30 years ago for kicking for touch, now PSG are even doing it."

## High-flying Mbappe in focus as Real host Juve

REUTERS

Real Madrid manager Xabi Alonso praised Kylian Mbappe for his stellar form this season, as the French forward tops both the LaLiga and Champions League scoring charts ahead of Wednesday's home clash with Juventus.

Mbappe, 26, has scored 10 goals in nine LaLiga matches and five in two Champions League appearances, alongside three goals for the French national team this term. His form has helped Real make a strong start under Alonso, winning 10 of their 11 games across all competitions. The Spanish side lead LaLiga with 24 points, two ahead of Barcelona, and have secured maximum points in the Champions League.

"It's not just the goals," Alonso told reporters on Tuesday. "His influence is almost as important in terms of his teammates following him with and without the ball. He's helping us. He's scored goals everywhere. The influence, as well as the goals, is what the team needs."

Real face a struggling Juve side who have not won in more than a month and sit seventh in the Serie A standings, four points behind leaders AC Milan. However, Alonso warned against taking the Italians lightly.





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## BNP to finalise 200 candidates by this month

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP will finalise candidates for 200 constituencies within this month ahead of the national polls in February, party insiders said.

The party said there are no major problems in about 150 constituencies where candidates are mostly settled, while around 100 remained "problematic" due to internal rivalries and multiple nomination seekers.

Meanwhile, BNP will decide through discussions how to handle the remaining 50 seats.

These issues were discussed at a Standing Committee meeting on Monday night at the party chairperson's Gulshan office, attended by senior leaders.

Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman joined the meeting virtually from London.

Several members urged the party to announce the list soon to end grassroots confusion, warning that delays could weaken campaign preparations. Multiple aspirants are still competing for nominations in nearly every constituency, they said.

To expedite the process,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## MPO-listed teachers, staff call off strike

Accept govt's decision to increase house rent allowance to 15%

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of MPO-listed non-government educational institutions yesterday called off their 10-day strike after the government agreed to increase their house rent allowance to 15 percent of their basic salary.

According to a Finance Division order, they will receive 7.5 percent, with a minimum of Tk 2,000, from November 1, rising to 15 percent, also with a minimum of Tk 2,000, from July 1 next year.

Later, the Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar handed over copies of the official order to protesting teacher leaders at a meeting at the Secretariat.

At a rally around 2:00pm at the Central Shaheed Minar, Delwar Hossain Azizi, member secretary of the Alliance for Nationalisation of MPO Institutions, said, "We have decided to withdraw all our programmes from today. From tomorrow [Wednesday], we will return to classrooms."

Delwar said teachers could not hold classes for eight days during the protest and announced that educational institutions would remain open on Saturdays until the annual exams to make up for lost class time.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## JULY CHARTER NCP, 4 leftist parties dig in

Say they won't sign unless all demands met

STAFF REPORTER

The National Citizen Party and four leftist parties yesterday reiterated that they will not sign the July Charter unless the National Consensus Commission meets their respective demands.

The NCP has three demands – resolving the notes of dissent through a referendum and sharing the full texts of the charter's implementation process and the draft referendum order before submission to the government.

"Our demands are clear. If these three issues are not addressed, we will not sign," NCP Joint Convener Javed Rasin told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the party is preparing an amended proposal to submit to the commission.

In response, a member of the commission's legal experts' team, requesting anonymity, said the notes of dissent would be included in the referendum. The proposed question is likely to be: "Do you support the agreed-upon proposals [including notes of dissent] related to the constitution that have emerged from the National Consensus Commission?"

The dual role of the next parliament will also be part of the referendum, he added.

The official said the commission expects to finalise



Pedestrians scale a high central reservation to cross the Airport Road in the capital's Khilkhet area. A banner put up at the site states that the footbridge will remain closed from October 17 to 25, for emergency repairs and urges pedestrians to use another footbridge, some hundred yards away. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Roads deadly, committees silent

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Until the change of government following last year's mass uprising, at least four key committees or task forces had been entrusted with overseeing road safety – a critical issue long neglected, costing hundreds of lives annually.

They met occasionally – mostly after major road crashes or when protests erupted over road safety issues. In those rushed meetings, they would arrive at nearly identical conclusions about reforming the road sector. But for years, little ever changed.

As a result, road crashes kept rising, claiming thousands of lives and leaving many more with life-altering injuries.

Since the change of government, none of these committees has held a single meeting. They have not even been reconstituted.

There had been a "National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan" for reducing road crashes, which, though never effectively implemented, expired last December, and it was not renewed in the last 10 months.

The only visible step this government has taken regarding road safety was limiting the economic lifespan of the commercial vehicles. But the drive lost momentum allegedly due to pressure from transport owners and workers – the same old story from the last regime.

As a result, the roads remain deadly. Citing media reports, Bangladesh

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY DAY



Road safety committees inactive since Aug last year

Strategic action plan expired and was not renewed

There has been no visible reforms by interim govt

Jatri Kalyan Samity said 1,16,726 people were killed and 1,65,021 others injured in 67,890 road crashes between January 2014 and September 2025. Of them, 5,323 people were killed in 5,171 road crashes this year till September, it said.

Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of Jatri Kalyan Samity told a press conference yesterday that severe shortcomings in strategic transport planning and the failure to address indiscipline led to a sharp rise in road crashes and fatalities under the

previous government.

He added that despite a change in the government following last year's July uprising, the policies and strategies of the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, and Traffic Police Division have remained largely unchanged.

"As a result, there has been no visible progress in curbing road crashes, reducing traffic congestion, or restoring order on the roads."

Against the backdrop, the National Road Safety Day is being observed today in its ninth annual iteration, with the theme "Standard Helmets, Safe Speed to Reduce Loss of Life and Property".

The National Road Safety Council (NRSC) was formed in 1995. Road minister is its chairman, while several other ministers, including those of home and railways, top government and police officials and transport leaders are its members.

The council, a top policymaking body on road safety, is supposed to sit every six months or as called by the chairman.

After the change in government, the committee was supposed to be restructured, especially since many members from the transport association had already been replaced. However, that revision was not carried out, a senior BRTA official said.

In February 2014, the government

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Waste being dumped by Savar municipality trucks into a wetland beside the Dhaka-Aricha highway in the Boliapur area. Despite a landfill in Aminbazar nearby, garbage continues to be dumped there. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## IMF's sixth tranche to come after polls

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and AHSAN HABIB

The sixth instalment of International Monetary Fund's (IMF) loan programme of \$4.7 billion may not arrive by the end of the year, as the donor agency wants to work with the new political government for smooth continuation of reform programmes.

"The next instalment might come around March or April -- this will have no negative impact on Bangladesh. In fact, it will be good," Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, who is in Washington, DC to attend the annual meeting of the World Bank-IMF, told The Daily Star over the phone.

The instalment's release will be decided when the IMF mission comes to Dhaka on October 29 for a two-week review of the progress made until June.

The IMF wants to defer the sixth instalment and provide both sixth and seventh instalments amounting to about \$800 million at once.

Earlier, the third and fourth instalments were provided together in June due to failing to meet the prior conditions for the third instalment.

The review for the sixth instalment may not be completed by December, Ahmed said, adding that all the conditions for unlocking the tranche have been fulfilled except for the revenue collection target.

The reason for delaying the instalment came up as the donor agencies want to be reassured that the reform activities placed by the interim government will not be

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## ICT CASE AGAINST HASINA Defence denies crimes against humanity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and ex-home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal are not personally liable for offences committed during the July uprising, Amir Hossain, their state-appointed defence counsel, told the International Crimes Tribunal 1 yesterday.

Placing closing arguments for the second consecutive day, he also dismissed the prosecution's charges as unproven and said the prosecution's call for maximum punishment is unacceptable.

Former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who has turned approver, is the third accused in the case.

As the tribunal referred to the killings of 1,500 people and the wounding of over 25,000 during the July uprising, the lawyer said, "It was the personal responsibility of police personnel. The prime minister cannot take responsibility for individuals' actions."

He also claimed that his clients did not commit any crimes against humanity.

The lawyer argued that drones were used to identify large crowds to prevent destruction and loss of life, and deployment of helicopters does not mean that those were used to shoot protesters.

"There is no evidence to suggest people were specifically targeted and killed from helicopters," he said.

On Hasina's phone calls, Amir questioned its authenticity, noting that the CID's forensic test lacked international validation. The tribunal cited a BBC report confirming the call's authenticity, but Amir insisted, "The CID report should have been cross-checked."

He also cited official records stating that 3,11,000 bullets were fired nationwide during the uprising, including 95,313 in Dhaka. Thousands of police personnel were deployed against protesters, yet the number of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Takaichi makes history as Japan's first female PM

REUTERS, Tokyo

Hardline conservative Sanae Takaichi was elected Japan's first female prime minister yesterday, shattering the political glass ceiling and setting the country up for a decisive turn to the right.

An acolyte of former prime minister Shinzo Abe and an admirer of Britain's Margaret Thatcher, Takaichi is expected to return to Abe-style government stimulus as she attempts to jumpstart an economy saddled with slow growth and rising prices.

While her victory marks a pivotal moment for a country where men still hold overwhelming sway, she named just two women to her cabinet, far fewer than what she had promised.

Takaichi is also likely to usher in a sharp move to the right on issues such as immigration and defence.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 6