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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

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# 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 Chattogram 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.

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**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.

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# 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

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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

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