



'MEDITATIONS IN ENTROPY'

Three decades of Kashef Chowdhury's architectural prowess



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NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

Architecture, for Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury, has never been about spectacle. He says, "The last thing the world needed was another architecture book." He wanted to focus on what feeling this book could arouse within people and thus, the journey started in 2019. That philosophy came into sharp focus at the launch of *Meditations in Entropy: The Work of Kashef Chowdhury / URBANA*, a comprehensive monograph reflecting on nearly three decades of architectural practice.

The book was launched on Saturday evening at the Crown Plaza Ballroom in Gulshan 2, Dhaka, at an event organised by Archiconnect and attended by architects, academics, planners, students, cultural figures and members of the media, marking a significant moment for contemporary architectural discourse in Bangladesh.

The evening opened with introductory remarks from Md Abrar Masum, co-founder of Archiconnect. He was followed by Dr Salahuddin Ahmed, founder of CARSA Foundation, who spoke about the cultural and scholarly value of recording architectural practices from the



PHOTOS: ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY

Global South within a global framework. Wahiduzzaman Ratul, senior architect at URBANA, then provided insight into the firm's evolving design philosophy and long-term engagement with context driven architecture. Speaking at the event, Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury, the Aga Khan Award-winning architect and principal of URBANA, reflected on nearly thirty years of practice shaped by ecological vulnerability and social responsibility. He noted that in regions such as Bangladesh, architecture must move beyond form and aesthetics to respond meaningfully to climate pressures, human resilience and place.

"This book is not a celebration of objects, but a reflection on

processes—on how architecture emerges from restraint, context and empathy," Chowdhury said, briefly outlining the ideas that informed the publication.

He added that the book opens with an image by Hélène Binet, one of the world's most influential architectural photographers, setting the tone for a publication rooted in human experience rather than architectural self-assertion.

Published by Park Books of Zurich, "Meditations in Entropy" is the first full monograph on Chowdhury's work. The 500-plus-page volume documents thirty years of practice through sketches, drawings, photographs and reflective texts, featuring eighteen realised projects across

diverse typologies. Photography by internationally renowned architect Hélène Binet anchors the book visually, while critical essays by leading architectural thinkers including Kenneth Frampton, William J R Curtis, Robert McCarter, Ainun Nishat, and Philip Ursprung situate the work within broader global conversations.

Professor Dr Chowdhury Rafiqul Abrar, honourable adviser to the Ministry of Education, attended the programme as Chief Guest, while Reto Renggli, Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh, joined as Guest of Honour.

Guest speakers including Dr Ainun Nishat, Professor Shamsul Wares and Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed highlighted the publication's significance as a critical architectural document—one that positions Bangladeshi practice within global discourse while remaining firmly rooted in local realities.

At a time when environmental uncertainty increasingly defines the built world, *Meditations in Entropy* offers an important reminder that architecture's most enduring strength may lie not in excess, but in attentiveness, humility and care.

Emmy-winning actor Catherine O'Hara dies at 71

Catherine O'Hara, the Emmy-winning actor best known for her roles in *Schitt's Creek* and *Home Alone*, died on January 30 at the age of 71. Her death was confirmed by a representative from the office of her manager, Marc Gurvitz.

According to the BBC, citing Creative Artists Agency, O'Hara passed away on Friday at her home in Los Angeles after a brief illness.

She was widely loved for playing Moira Rose in the hit TV series *Schitt's Creek*, a role that earned her the Emmy Award for best actress in a comedy series in 2020. The show also achieved major success at the 2021 Golden Globes.



Bhoirobee brings 'Gitranga Festival' to Dhaka

To showcase Bengal's indigenous theatrical traditions, musical drama and folk cultural heritage in a renewed form, the Bhoirobee group has organised the Gitranga Festival.

The festival began on Saturday with programmes at multiple venues across Dhaka, including film screenings, musical evenings and Gitranga performances. On the opening day, Satyajit Ray's *Heerak Rajar Deshe* was screened at the Bhoirobee office in Dhamondi. A musical evening titled *Gitol Shondha* will be held today at 7 pm at Stage 2 (Chilekotha) of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

The festival will conclude on February 2 with the Gitranga production *Sonai*, written and directed by Eleas Nobi Faisal, at 6 pm at the Studio Theatre Hall of BSA. All events are open to the public free of charge.



NEWS

Misinformation rose by 30pc in 2025

FROM PAGE 12

Other political figures who were subjected to disinformation are the now slain Inqilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, National Citizen Party (NCP) leader Hasnat Abdullah, US President Donald Trump, Bangladesh Army Chief General Waker Uz-Zaman, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alangir, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and BNP's late chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

AI IN DISINFORMATION

Of all the distinct instances of misinformation fact-checked in 2025, 10 percent, or 417 cases, were created using AI. In other words, one in every 10 pieces of misinformation involved AI-generated content across almost all topics including politics, disasters, and international conflicts.

The use of AI in political misinformation was particularly striking. For example, on December 25, multiple AI-generated images circulated claiming that Tarique Rahman returned to the country, showing him at the airport with family members or stepping off a plane and touching Bangladeshi soil.

In addition, AI generated videos were circulated claiming to show Sheikh Hasina delivering a speech in the Indian parliament. Elsewhere, images were shared purporting to show students holding placards reading "We want Hasina" or painting similar slogans as graffiti on walls.

POLITICAL MISINFORMATION
Throughout the year, misinformation related to politics circulated consistently and was fact-checked in greater volume compared to any other topic. In every quarter, politics ranked first among all other issue-based false information.

However, the volume was highest between September and December as elections approached. While an average of around 200 political misinformation items were fact-checked each month, the number more than doubled to 408 in December.

One of the main contributors to the rise in political disinformation from September onward was the student union elections at different public universities across the country. In the following months, false information began circulating about the timing and method of the national parliamentary election and party nominations.



Top 10 individuals who appeared most frequently in disinformation headlines in 2025. Dismislab prepared the list after analysing the headlines of more than 4,000 distinct fact-check reports published in 2025.

SOURCE: DISMISLAB

In December, the killing of Osman Hadi and Khaleda Zia's illness and subsequent death were two top drivers of political disinformation.

Following the announcement of the parliamentary election and referendum dates, at least 55 instances of election-related misinformation were identified within just one month, most of them centering on various political alliances and fabricated survey results.

Overall, there was a persistent tendency to spread fear and anxiety about the country's law and order. Analysis shows that at least 90 fact-check reports had headlines related to rape, more than 100 focused on murder or killings, and 45 involved cases of abuse or torture.

In the religious category, false information about attacks on or persecution of Hindus or other minority communities in Bangladesh circulated throughout the year.

In 2025, nearly 52 percent of all false information circulated through video, including old and unrelated as well as AI-made clips. Graphic cards accounted for 21 percent of all misinformation fact-checked.

Rybakina wins

FROM PAGE 12
time but lost the French Open and Melbourne title deciders.

She was into her fourth Australian Open final in a row and had been imperious until now, with tears in her eyes at the end.

"Let's hope maybe next year will be a better year for me," Sabalenka said ruefully.

The finalists were familiar foes having met 14 times previously, with Sabalenka winning eight of them.

Sabalenka came into the final as favourite but Rybakina has been one of the form players on the women's tour in recent months.

She also defeated Sabalenka in the final at the season ending WTA Finals. Rybakina second seed Iga Swiatek in the quarterfinals and sixth seed Jessica Pegula in the last four in Melbourne.

Draft media, broadcasting

FROM PAGE 12

an enabling environment for the development of free media and independent broadcasting in the country, he added.

Meanwhile, the Broadcast Journalists Centre (BJC) said it does not support rushing such an important law by allowing only four days to review public opinion at a time when the entire country is busy with the upcoming election.

In a statement, BJC Chairman Rezwanzul Haque and Member Secretary Ilias Hossain said the draft ordinance uses some vague terms such as "against public interest", "hate-motivated" and "a threat to national security".

Because of such phrases, any critical content could easily be labelled as a crime, it said.

"The clauses regarding suspension and cancellation of television and radio licences are framed in such a way that any media outlet could be shut down through administrative decisions alone."

The provision of fining broadcasting institutions for "failing to comply with government directives in the public interest" carries a risk of misuse, the BJC said.

Several other provisions would also allow the government and bureaucracy to control and dominate the broadcast media.

The BJC has called for an authority like a Broadcast Commission that would address ongoing deprivation regarding broadcast journalists' salaries, benefits and fair opportunities and ensure good governance in broadcast media, but this draft makes no mention of those issues.

Important issues such as net neutrality, digital content regulation, cybersecurity and internet governance need to be included within the scope of the ordinance.

It would be appropriate to leave the enactment of this law to an elected government after holding dialogue with all the stakeholders, the statement added.

He urged the political parties to immediately proceed through a participatory process following the formation of the new parliament.

They should establish a genuinely independent and impartial unified media commission that would be capable of ensuring the highest professional standards and creating

sleeping. We found their bodies in the street", Samer al-Atbash, a relative of the family, told AFP.

"What truce are you talking about? Everyone is deceiving everyone else," added Nael al-Atbash, another relative.

One strike hit the police station in the Sheikh Radwan district of Gaza City, the territory's largest urban centre.

Gaza's general police directorate said seven people were killed in that attack, while Bassal said the dead included four women police officers.

Separatist attacks

FROM PAGE 12

footing in some districts, officials said.

In Gwadar, militants attacked a camp accommodating migrant workers, killing 11 people, Atta ur-Rehman, a senior police officer said, revising an earlier death toll of five. Those killed included five men, three women and three children.

Security forces killed six militants in Gwadar after responding to the attack, he said.

Officials said the situation was critical in Noshki, a district of Balochistan, after militants abducted the area's top civil administrator. He said in a social media video that he was in the custody of the militants. Reuters could not independently verify the video.

Armed men briefly blocked roads in parts of Quetta, and a blast was heard near a high-security area, authorities said, though they later said the situation had been brought under control.

Security officials said in text messages that forces had responded effectively to the attacks and that clearance operations were still underway.

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest but poorest province and has faced a decades-long insurgency by ethnic Baloch militant groups. Pakistan says the violence is backed by foreign actors, a charge denied by India.

Mob killings double

FROM PAGE 12

The number of unidentified individuals accused in political cases skyrocketed from 110 in December last year to 320 in January.

Rights activists argue that this tactic allows law enforcement to make blanket arrests and create a climate of fear.

The report flagged a "severe human rights crisis" regarding women and children.

In January, 257 incidents of violence against women and children were recorded, including 34 rapes and 11 gang rapes.

Attacks on minority communities also saw a sharp rise, with theft or vandalism of temples and idols increasing to 21 in January from just six in the previous month.

The MSF called for an immediate, impartial investigation into the violations and urged the authorities to ensure the protection of all citizens to restore confidence in the justice system.