

LAW & RELIGION SPEAKER SERIES

"THE REPUBLIC OF HURT SENTIMENTS": PLACING RELIGION IN A CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

SPEAKER:



PROFESSOR MASUM BILLAH
JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY

MODERATOR:



**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DIAN A H SHAH**
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
SINGAPORE

**Thursday 6 March 2025
3.00PM TO 4.30PM (SGT)
Zoom Webinar**

Register here:

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"THE REPUBLIC OF HURT SENTIMENTS": PLACING RELIGION IN A CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

ABSTRACT

What should be a suitable approach to place religion within the constitutional framework and how to deal with the excessive exposition of religious sentiments peacefully?

The place of religion in a constitutional design has globally been a contested issue. The necessity of religious ethos is omnipresent in Asian societies, however, the panorama of secularism cannot be ignored either. The pluralistic goals of democracy cannot be attained unless the relationship between religiosity and public law gains a solid ground. The talk will focus on how effectively a *religio-secular* developing democracy may come to terms with cases of hurting religious sentiments. The talk will draw examples from leading South Asian jurisdictions with a focus on Bangladesh.

SPEAKERS' BIO



PROFESSOR MASUM BILLAH (JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY)

S M Masum Billah is a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Law at Jagannath University Dhaka. Earlier, Dr Billah served as the Jagannath Law Dean from 2022 to 2024.

A graduate of Bangladesh's Rajshahi University, Professor Billah did his PhD from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Dr Billah held visiting positions in South Africa and Turkey. He wrote the Bangladesh chapter of Li-ann Thio and Jaclyn L Neo (eds) *Religious Offences in Common Law Asia: Colonial Legacies, Constitutional Rights and Contemporary Practice* (Hart, 2022).



ASSISTANT PROFESSOR DIAN A H SHAH (NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE)

Dian A H Shah is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore, where she teaches Constitutional Law and Comparative Law in Asia. She is also the Deputy Director of the Centre for Asian Legal Studies and the Co-Convenor of the Law and Religion research cluster. Her research interests span the fields of law and religion, comparative constitutional law and politics, and human rights, and her work focuses on the interaction between law and politics in plural and divided societies. She is author of *Constitutions, Religion and Politics in Asia*, in addition to various publications in the *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, *Constitutional Studies*, and *Journal of Comparative Law*. She is currently working on her second monograph, which examines the fragility of democratic constitutional commitments and political change in Asia's younger democracies. Outside academia she served as a member of Malaysia's Consultative Council on Foreign Policy.