

Splash out billions

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Thursday, Annan urged that such concerns be set aside, saying "the long-term challenge of reconstruction has to be faced by all of us."
Security remains a primary constraint "both now and into the foreseeable future," he said.

"But a start to reconstruction cannot be deferred until that day," he said. "It demands our urgent attention now. I appeal to donors to give and give generously."

Ahead of the meeting, Annan and Secretary of State Colin Powell sought to lower expectations that Washington would come away with the entire \$35.8 billion through 2007 it hopes to raise to jump-start Iraq's economic recovery.

Powell acknowledged "it may take time to meet the goal" of more than \$55 billion set by the World Bank, which includes the Bush administration's nearly \$20 billion pledge.

"I don't expect governments to announce everything they are going to do for Iraq in the future tomorrow," Annan said Wednesday night. "But tomorrow and the day after will be an important beginning."

France and Germany, leading opponents of the US-led war, have both cited concerns about the slow pace of restoring Iraq's sovereignty for their refusal to pledge any new money now.

In London, a British aid group charged Thursday that the US-run body governing Iraq has failed to account for billions of dollars allocated for rebuilding the country.

Christian Aid said in a report that the Coalition Provisional Authority had only explained publicly how it had spent \$1 billion of the \$5 billion it has been given for Iraqi development.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said his country was looking for "serious contributions in funds and not loans" when pledges are announced Friday, adding "the sooner the better."

Talking to reporters as he flew to Madrid from Egypt, Powell also set his sights on Iraqi assets held in Syrian banks, saying he may take

the matter up with Syrian delegates at the meeting.

An estimated \$3 billion is reported to be in Syrian banks, but Powell said he had not "heard a number quite that high."

Although pledges announced so far total just a few billion dollars, the host of the conference, Spain, tried to sound upbeat.

"The Iraqi people are looking to us," said Foreign Minister Ana Palacio in her opening remarks. "We won't let them down"

So far, Japan has pledged \$1.5 billion for 2004; South Korea has agreed to \$200 million, and Canada, \$150 million. The World Bank has said it will lend Iraq \$3 billion to \$5 billion over the coming five years.

Spain pledged \$300 million through 2007 and Britain \$439 million for 2004-2005. Both were firm supporters of the war.

The European Union's head office has limited its contribution to one year, promising \$233 million.

A separate \$20 billion package is now before the US Congress, and will go mainly toward security in Iraq and resurrecting its oil industry.

Ward-level BNP leader shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An armed gang shot a ward-level leader of the ruling BNP at his residence at East Jurian in Dhaka yesterday.

Masud Karim, 35, joint secretary of the BNP unit in Ward No. 89 of the Dhaka City Corporation, suffered bullet wounds in his thigh and knee.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). "The gang of about eight shot me as soon as I opened the gate of my residence in the morning," Masud told newsmen at the DMCH.

The attackers held his mother, younger brother and daughter at gunpoint, he added.

A few days ago, a 15-member gang demanded toll from the owner of an under-construction building in the locality, Masud, also former private secretary to the local MP, chased them away, his relatives said.

The gang most likely attacked Masud in response to that incident, one relative said.

The gang also fired blank shots in front of an under-construction building before fleeing, locals said.

The duty officer at Shyampur Police Station said till last night no case had been filed.

BSF hands

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a senior official said here.

Besides Ulfa and NSCN (I-M), the list shows National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) having 14 camps, Meghalaya's Achik National Volunteers' Council (ANVC) nine, Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA) five and three camps each of the People's Liberation Organisation (PLA) and a little-known outfit Islamic United Reformation Protest of India (IURPI).

The list also showed two camps of Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) and one of Manipur's Khanglei Yavol Khnna Lup (KYKL).

The official said other "frontiers may also have separate list of underground camps like this frontier."

He said the list was handed over to BDR team to buttress India's position (of militants camp in Bangla soil) since "Dhaka has all along been denying this".

The Daily Star could not contact the BDR director general for his comments on the issue despite repeated attempts.

12 JS bodies

FROM PAGE 1
tee is not called in accordance with the rules, the speaker may direct the secretary to call a meeting of that committee and the secretary shall convene a meeting of the committee at a date, time and place fixed by the speaker," the rules of procedure states.

The committees at fault are on ministries of law, justice and parliamentary affairs, foreign affairs, planning, commerce, information, expatriates welfare and overseas employment, textile, labour and employment, jute, social welfare, civil aviation and tourism, and women and children affairs.

Of them, the committees on foreign, planning, jute and information ministries failed even to hold a single meeting since their formation in July.

Eight other committees did not hold the regulation meeting since their last sittings 30 or more days ago. The committee on commerce ministry held its last meeting on September 3, expatriates and overseas on September 23, textile on September 6, labour and employment on September 3, women and children on September 4, law on September 13, civil aviation on August 30, and social welfare on September 4.

The case of the law ministry committee is however quite interest-

ing. The hyperactive JS body went into an apparent hibernation as soon as it received the much-talked about independent anti-corruption commission bill for scrutiny.

The committee sat for the first time on July 19 after its formation and then went on to hold a remarkable seven meetings before it received the graft bill.

Women teachers

FROM PAGE 1
cadres who tried to thwart the concert by teasing women and shouting abuse.

Afia Sultana, a lecturer of the philosophy department, and Hazera Begum, a lecturer of the marketing department, who were sitting in the front row as guests, went behind and joined the students to dance together.

The hecklers became desperate and teased the teachers unknowingly. But when the lecturers revealed their identity, the Shibir cadres intimidated them into stopping dance and threatened to kill them if they did not do that.

Vice-chancellor Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that he did not know the incident. The lecturers could not be reached for comments.

Abdul Awal Mamun, general secretary of the CU ICS, denied the allegation, saying: "Those who

Tk 6.5 lakh snatched at N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Armed muggers took away Tk 6.5 lakh of a garment factory at Godnail in the town yesterday.

Project Manager of Knit Concern Limited Khairul Enam Dalim along with some of his colleagues went to a branch of IFIC Bank in the town at about 11:30am and withdrew Tk 14 lakh. After paying Tk 7.5 lakh to a construction firm inside the bank, they started toward the factory at Godnail in a microbus with the remaining amount.

As they reached near the factory, a gang of six riding two motorbikes intercepted the microbus, snatched the bag containing the money at gunpoint and fled.

A case was filed with Siddhirganj Police Station. No-one was arrested till filing of this report at 6:30pm yesterday.

Tigers back

FROM PAGE 1
eight, had scored 12 runs in 3.4 overs in their second innings.

Hannan Sarker was batting on four and Habibul Bashar was unbeaten on zero when an absorbing day's play ended due to bad light with ten overs remaining.

Saleh had to come out to open the innings after Javed Omar pulled a hamstring while fielding on Wednesday. Resuming on 111 without loss, England opens Trescothick and captain Michael Vaughan were cruising along until they reached 137.

Then the tourists suddenly lost their way after a four-over magical display by Mohammed Rafique and Mushfiqur Rahman.

After signing the minutes with Sheka Mansaray, secretary to the Sierra Leone president,

Shamsher told reporters that a two-member Bangladesh delegation would visit Freetown in December to

explore the prospects of cooperation in food and agriculture.

"Besides, a business delegation will visit Sierra Leone shortly to explore opportunities in trade and investment," Mansaray expressed deep gratitude for what the Bangladeshi peacekeepers have done for his country, recovering from an 11-year civil strife.

"We have food deficit. We've observed that despite having a large population Bangladesh has achieved food security," Mansaray said. "So we are willing to have low-cost technologies and equipment from Bangladesh to augment our food production."

Only a fifth of the land in Sierra Leone is used for agriculture.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim presided over the function. Former vice-chancellors of the Dhaka University Emajuddin Ahmed and Moniruzzaman Mia, Chairman of the Ministry of Education Abu Alam Shahid Khan, former joint secretary of the women's affairs ministry and incumbent Member of the Public Service Commission Sirajuddin Ahmed, Senior Assistant Secretary of the establishment ministry Rabiul Alam Mohammad Obaidul Mukhtar Chowdhury, former DIG of police Prokriti Ranjan Chanda (PR Chanda) and former president of Secretariat Karmachari Sangjukta Parishad Syed Mohiuddin.

Of the accused, Mohiuddin Alamgir and six others, now on bail, were present in the court yesterday.

Locals claimed that the miscreants were members of Aziz Bahini of Raozan, while police alleged that three to four indigenous criminals kidnapped the driver for ransom.

No case was filed till filing of this report yesterday afternoon.

This is the 18th abduction in Chittagong since magnate and BNP leader Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury was abducted on July 24 this year.

Former chief justice Mostafa Kamal asked the government to form the ACC with no delay in an impassioned plea: "Please announce the commission soon or indemnify all corruption."

"It is not proper to keep two judges nominated by the chief justice in the selection body. When the chief justice recommended the appointment of judges, you ignored him. Then why have you now become too broadminded when it came to instituting an anti-corruption commission?"

"Do not undermine the post of the chief justice seeking his opinion. Leave him alone. Avoid controversy. The far he is kept away, the better it is for the country," the former chief justice says.

He demanded that the government broadens the jurisdiction of the ACC.

Responding to Kameal's statement, Moudud said, "Whoever is made member of the selection body, there will be criticism. The judges have been included in the ACC because they are least controversial."

State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar said, "Most surprising is that when you are in power, there is no corruption case against you."

He dismissed a suggestion that two lawmakers should replace the ministers and said, "If ministers are not there, there is no reason to keep MPs."

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Chief Whip of the Opposition Abdus Shahid expressed doubts about the neutrality of the ACC, arguing, "The bill has been designed to serve the purpose of the ruling party."

He suggested selecting nominees from the ruling and opposition parties but pointed out, "If there is any political representation to the commission, it is likely to be partisan."

Supreme Court Bar Association President Rokanuddin Mahmud said, "The constitution should be consulted to see if judges can work outside their judicial responsibilities."

"All appointments are being made on political considerations – even the chief justice. I am doubtful about the neutrality of the commission," Rokanuddin adds.

The speakers called on the government to build an image of an independent commission, first by taking action against those in power. "It's easy to take action against those in the opposition. When the government can take action against its own men for corruption, only then it will create a good image," one of them said.

They also demanded repeal of the Official Secrecy Act, 1923, saying it stands in the way of free access to information.

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Kabbah leaves capital

FROM PAGE 1
At the luncheon, he urged the local businesses to invest in his country and tap the unexplored natural resources, including gold and diamond, there.

At the Grameen Bank headquarters, he expressed keen interest in replicating microcredit programme in his country for cutting poverty and improving the social conditions of poor women.

Managing Director of Grameen Bank Mohammad Yunus briefed the visiting dignitaries on various aspects of the bank and the microcredit programme.

Yunus also illustrated the process and requirements for introducing microcredit in a country.

A four-member delegation from Sierra Leone visited Grameen Bank in September for gathering information.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda received Kabbah at Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge at Sirajganj in the morning. The minister briefed the delegates on the infrastructure and technical aspects of the over 4.8 kilometer-long bridge.

Kabbah arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday on his way home from Kuala Lumpur.

A high-powered Bangladesh delegation will visit Sierra Leone very soon to find out the ways and areas of cooperation between two countries, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury said.

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Janatar Mancha case Hearing on charge framing Nov 16

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed November 16 for a hearing on the framing of charges against former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and seven others in the Janatar Mancha (sedition) case.