

Country should adopt pragmatic defence policy

BISS seminar told in city

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said Bangladesh should adopt a pragmatic defence policy for meeting its national security needs and handling crisis management.

They also observed that the country remained divided over various vital defence issues even after 30 years of its independence.

The seminar called for an approach based on consensus on vital policy issues by the politicians, the government, the opposition and academics for forging national unity.

These views were offered on defence, foreign policy, role of women and other national aspects at a seminar centering the country's Victory Day, which was organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium.

Coordinated by Prof Anisuzzaman of the Dhaka University, it was participated by former advisor Major General (rd) Moiful Hossain Chowdhury, former chief of army staff Major General (ret) Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Siddiqui, Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin

Chowdhury, journalist Shah Hussain Imam, Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, Ambassador QAMA Rahim, women activist Maleka Begum, Brigadier Safayet and freedom fighters Col (ret) Shafiqullah and Major (ret) Kamrul Hasan Bhuiyan.

The newly appointed Chairman of BISS Board of Governors MR Osmani chaired the seminar while newly appointed Director General Major General Sikdar Muhammad Shahabuddin welcomed the guests.

Major General Chowdhury observed that there is no defence and national security policy of Bangladesh like that of China and India.

He said the country should shun ad hoc policies and work for long term plans and programmes. He said for crisis management, the country should have an intelligence committee.

In India, he said, there is a coordination body among intelligence agencies headed by a bureaucrat to this end.

The foreign secretary said efforts are being made to boost the image of the country.

He recalled the role of Bangladesh in the formation of

SAARC, which he said is poised to play a vital role once again in regional cooperation.

Dr Kamal Siddiqui, speaking about the local governments, said multiple-tiers in administration should be reduced for effective governance.

Citing an example, he said there were duality and anomaly in governance. Some tiers of administration are run through the legislative system while others are through the presidential form. He said while the prime minister was elected by a constituency of four to five lakh voters, the mayor of Dhaka was elected by 70 lakh citizens.

Maleka Begum regretted that participation of women in national activities has so far been far from satisfactory despite the lofty pledges made by the prime minister and the leader of the opposition.

She said women were not taken into policy level meetings even during the War of Independence. Women, who got raped during the war, were allowed to have abortion, but they are still not being given abortion rights.

Forced retirement

FROM PAGE 1 service.

The sources said forced retirement is being given to officials who allegedly participated in the Awami League sponsored "Janatar Mancha" in 1996 and "behaved like AL men" during the tenure of the immediate past Awami League government.

Three of the 12 officials retired on November 29 have filed writ petitions with the High Court challenging the action, alleging that it is politically motivated.

Official sources said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia signed the file on retirement of the 20 officials, send by the establishment ministry on Saturday. The file was then send to the President for final approval. The approved file was returned to the establishment ministry on Saturday.

A notification was issued and the circular regarding their retirement were handed over to the 20 officials yesterday, the sources said.

The 20 officials retired yesterday include additional secretary of information Ministry Sarwar Hossain and four deputy secretaries. All of them joined the cadre service in 1973.

The joint secretaries are Sailendra Nath Majumder of agricultural ministry, Gias Uddin Ahmed of relief ministry, Chief Executive Officer of Dhaka City Corporation Khan Mohammad Nurul Huda, Director of RAJUK Mahbubur Rahman, Director General of IMED Muhammad Abdus Salam, Director General of BSTI Dewan Afsaruddin, Sazzad Hossain of environment

ministry, Shamsul Haq and Sheikh Shafi Ahmed of health ministry, Hatem Ali Khan, Tanit Kanti Roy Chowdhury and Nuruzzaman Bhuiyan of education ministry, Mahbubul Alam Khan of housing and public works ministry, Maksudul Haq and Shamsul Haq of industries ministry.

The deputy secretaries are Farhad Hossain of civil aviation and tourism ministry, Director of National Museum Enamul Kabir, Abdus Sattar Khan of health ministry and Deputy Principal Information Officer Rabindra Gope.

It was learnt that Abdus Sattar Khan was given forced retirement for giving arms licence illegally and for corruption.

Rob murder

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The first IO of the case was OC of Sonadanga thana Mohammad Shurawady. Later, the case was transferred to DB appointing AC Abdul Matin Bhuiyan as second IO. The last IO was ASP Khasrul Huq of CID who submitted chargesheet on last June 13 accusing 15 persons.

Complainant Mithu submitted a petition to CMM for rejecting the chargesheet. But CMM did not accept the narajji petition. Nine out of 15 chargesheeted accused are now in Jail custody. They are Rangulal Biswas, Rafiqul Islam Hitler, Tapan, Kana Babu, Bitu, Khura Saeed, Mohon, Motaleb and Dulia Parveen alias Dolly. All of them are activists of PBCP.

Exports on tail spin

FROM PAGE 1

The frozen food sector was the worst victim, witnessing as high as 32.84 per cent decline in earning in relation to the same period of last fiscal.

On the other hand, none of the major export items could achieve their respective targets. Raw jute was 31.46 per cent behind target to become the worst performer.

"Exports in October were hit hard as the country could fetch only \$399.11 million against the average monthly target of \$597.5 million. The target for the current fiscal year has been set at \$7170 million," said an EPB official.

"Our exports have been seriously hit after the September 11 terror attacks in the US, and earning went down significantly," he maintained.

The country's export earning in the first two months (July and

August) of FY02 amounted to \$1162.47 million while for the next two months, the earning was only \$842.62 million. (September 443.51 million and October 399.11 million)

The export volume and price index also received a beating and dipped by 9.74 per cent and 0.32 per cent respectively during the time under review. The price index of primary products dipped 27.21 per cent while export volume 2.09 per cent. On the other hand, export volume of industrial products declined by 8.19 per cent while price index dipped 0.16 per cent.

RMG exports fetched \$1047.13 million, down by 15.10 per cent from the target and also 9.47 per cent lower than the corresponding period of last financial year.

(Detailed story on Business Page)

No memorial yet

FROM PAGE 1

The Museum authorities is are still looking after the site, which costs them about Tk 5,000 a month, sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Director of the Museum Akku Chowdhury said that they had provided the government plans and other details for the Jalladkhana project, which included a museum, exhibition gallery, auditorium, seminar room, library, research archive and office.

He however said "Although the progress is very slow, I am hopeful that the project would be completed someday as the relevant files have started to move."

He also stressed the need for a genocide research centre in the country as it experienced one of the worst genocide in human history.

Chowdhury also said if the government hands over the Jalladkhana site to the Museum, the only of its kind set up at private initiative, it would implement the project on its own.

The Museum authorities, follow-

ing press report on July 27, 1999 initiated excavation at the site and Bangladesh Army assisted them.

The excavation continued till November with cooperation from the mosque committee and police.

But at one stage, the process came to a halt due to non-cooperation from various quarters concerned, the museum director recalled.

The mosque authorities said there is a possibility of displeasure among local people if any memorial is built on the mosque premises.

Joint secretary of the mosque committee Md Abdur Razzaq said, "No memorial should be built on the mosque premises as it is religious institution. But we have renamed the mosque after the liberation war martyrs."

Jalladkhana killing field was found on November 19, 1999.

The Museum authorities in cooperation with the Army recovered 70 skulls and 5392 pieces of bones from the sites.

Memorial

FROM PAGE 1

December 12, sources said. About 80 people are working to complete the job in time.

The DCC looks after the Memorial and six security guards are on duty there. A large number of people visit the Mausoleum everyday, which remains open for the public from 6 am to 9 pm.

Residents of the area alleged that the Memorial is not maintained properly except in this month. As the Martyred Intellectuals Day and the Victory Day approach, DCC officials start visiting the spot regularly, they mentioned.

The Memorial was inaugurated on December 22, 1972 by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in remembrance of the supreme sacrifice of a large number of top intellectuals of the country to free the motherland. These worthy sons of the soil were brutally massacred by the occupation forces and their local collaborators at the fog end of the nine-month war of independence.

PM leaves

FROM PAGE 12

three services, and other high civil and military officials saw her off at the ZiaTarmac.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to return home at midnight on Friday.

Robbers loot

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worth over Tk. 1 crore from some sixty shops of the market.

The robbers then opened indiscriminate fire creating panic in the area. Fifteen people were injured seven of whom were admitted into Satkania Hospital in critical condition.

The injured include businessman Moulana Aslam, Abdus Shukur, Khuliyi Mia, and Saiful Haq Master and his staff Sadek Hossain and Abdul Gani.

A case was filed in this connection. Police carried out raids here throughout the day on Monday but no one was arrested.

Trader killed

FROM PAGE 12

Hospital (DMCH) when attending doctors declared him dead. The injured were sent to local clinic in the city.

The victim was third of four brothers and three sisters. His brother Sarifullah filed a case with Pallabi police station in this regard. Nall was arrested till last night.

The duty officer at Pallabi thana said that they are yet to find the reason behind the attack.

Ashok Kumar

FROM PAGE 12

He told the court that the High Court on Sunday extended the stay order on Shahriar's remand till January 15.

The court does not have the right to grant remand violating the High Court order, the lawyer said.

Advocate Mamtaz Uddin Mehedi argued that placing a freedom fighter on remand was violation of the Constitution.

He said, as per a blue print, the government, backed by razakars and al-Badar, is conspiring to destroy the pro-liberation forces as was done in 1971.

Metropolitan PP Abdullah Mahmud Hasan and Additional Metropolitan PP Golam Mostafa Khan told the court that Shahriar went to Kolkata on November 6 and gave an interview to BBC Radio in which he claimed that many Hindus crossed over to India following recent attacks on minority community members in Bangladesh.

Shahriar also took snaps of Hindus who left Bangladesh after the October 1 election. The writer does not believe in the boarder between the countries, they claimed.

Pre-Eid ordeal at Sadarghat terminal

FROM PAGE 1

soon as I got off the taxi and they started to fight over my bedding and mattress, finally agreeing to split the money. I refused to pay what they demanded and paid them Tk 150 to leave me alone and let me carry my stuff."

"Thousands of passengers at the launch ghat regularly face such harassment before Eid but none dares to interfere as share of the money goes all the way to top officials here at the Ghat," said one police constable.

Meanwhile, vendors ruled the pontoon occupying almost a third of the platform area and there was no sign of measures to evict them as per an earlier BIWTA directive.

During a visit to the terminal, this correspondent found the terminal building and the link bridges in a shambles and there was no preparation to deal with the upcoming huge rush.

The passenger waiting rooms were dirty, benches there desperately needed repair and the entrance gates other than the main one were still under lock and key.

Meanwhile, cabin tickets for almost all the passenger launches were sold out forcing thousands of passengers to seek alternative routes to their reach destinations. Officials at the Eagle Transport said all their cabin tickets were already sold out.

Launch owners, however, denied allegations of blackmarketing saying that most tickets were sold to passengers.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) called an emergency meeting yesterday to

check overloading of launch decks and harassment of passengers at the Sadar Ghat prior to Eid, and announced stern punishment for overloading.

Leaders of Sadarghat Launch Mailk Samity (private launch owners association), police officials and union leaders attended the meeting held at the Sadar Ghat terminal. BIWTA Director, Port and Traffic presided.

A three-member committee, headed by Md Sharif Afzal Hossain, Senior Deputy Director of BIWTA stationed at Sadarghat, has been formed to monitor the situation.

"A special drive will be launched from today (Monday) until Eid day to maintain law and order at the Sadarghat. We have sent official letters to all concerned including police administration for coordinating the efforts," said Hossain while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

The meeting also decided to move all vendors out from the 1000-foot-long pontoon area. Special force will be on duty to check this. In addition, the approach road to Sadarghat launch terminal will be made one way to facilitate smooth flow of traffic, sources said.

Another meeting on river transport safety headed by AKM Fakhru Islam, Ship Surveyor, was held at Sadarghat yesterday.

"Our goal is to ensure discipline among passengers and ensure safety of all passenger vessels leaving the terminal. We have formed a three-member committee to check overloading. Anyone violating will be punished right away," said Islam.

As many as 110 big launches

carrying about 75,000 passengers leave the terminal everyday but authorities expect the number to rise by at least four times during Eid.

Shahidul Islam, Vice-president of Bangladesh Launch Owners Association said, "Overloading is a big problem and is very risky indeed, which we truly want to avoid but the problem is we cannot refuse passengers and throw them out."

"The authorities concerned are responsible for checking this and they can expect our full cooperation."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) sent a letter on Sunday to the launch owners association asking it to take measures against overloading.

"We will take legal action against operators of passenger vessels carrying passengers beyond their capacity," said Rizwana Hasan, director of programmes of BELA.

The High court on February 22 last year directed BIWTA and BIWTC and other authorities concerned to take necessary measures to prevent overloading of passenger vessels, especially before Eid.

The directive came following a writ by consumers association of Bangladesh (CAB) with legal assistance from BELA.

At least 204 people were killed in the night before Eid-ul-Fitr in December last year as an overloaded passenger launch Rajhangshi sank in the river Meghna after being hit by another passenger launch.

Convention on 'HR violation

FROM PAGE 1

Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan for the convention.

Other members of the sub-committee are Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas and State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman Patal.

At the convention, the government will release for public display photos and videos on incidents of violation of human rights,

killing, political persecution, repression and harassment of opposition leaders and activists during the AL rule. Information on arrest and filing of "false cases" will be displayed, according to a Cabinet member.

He said necessary instructions have been given to all ministries concerned and departments to collect such documents.

The Cabinet had a lengthy discussion on the recent campaigns at home and abroad by Awami League and some other organisations against alleged violation of human rights since takeover by the BNP government on October 10.

Moreover, publication of a newspaper supplement yesterday by AL on alleged violation of human rights

in the last two months embarrassed the government.

The campaigns tarnished the image of the country and the government, the sources said.

The government is facing questions abroad and the international community is inquiring into the alleged incidents, they said.

The convention has been planned to inform the countrymen and the international community that the AL propaganda is only to discredit the government, the sources said.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal for reorganising the Cabinet committee for formulation of a law for setting up a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The committee is headed by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed.

Other members of the committee are Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haq, Education Minister Dr Osman Faruque and Information Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan.

The committee has been asked to submit its report within a month or at its convenient time.

The proposed NHRC will be headed by a retired or sitting judge of the Higher Court. The President

will appoint the chairman and members of the commission.

The NHRC will be an independent body that will investigate violation of human rights and incidents of repression and suggest remedies.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal for ratification of the Technical Cooperation Agreement on Manpower, signed between Bangladesh and Kuwait. The accord aims at developing technical skills of workers for employment in the gulf state.

Contractor

FROM PAGE 12

Ahmed on payment of Tk 20,000 by his family following negotiations.

Rahat, president of the Zahurul Haq Hall unit of JCD, along with Murad and Azam carried out the abduction, sources said. They are said to be cadres of 'Asad group', led by Asaduzzaman Asad, organising secretary of the DU unit JCD.

When contacted, Asad said he was not aware about the incident. He added that stern action will be taken out against the persons concerned if such an incident had indeed occurred.

Campus sources said Rahat has recently also tried to collect toll from the Dhaka University Snacks (DUS) owner.

EC orders legal steps

FROM PAGE 1

expenses," said an official, adding that the EC has no mechanism to determine whether the statements are correct.

None of the successful candidates exceeded the official ceiling of expenditure. They have rounded up their election spending to the officially permitted amount of Tk 500,000 or close to it.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury spent Tk 5 lakh while former finance minister SAMS Kibria spent Tk 498,124. Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, who contested from two seats, spent Tk 5 lakh in each constituency.

S A Khaleq of Dhaka-11 showed only Tk 326,268 expenses while Kamrul Islam of Dhaka-5 spent Tk 499,112, according to the statements.

JP leader Rawshan Ershad, who was defeated in Mymensingh-4 constituency, stated that her expenditure was Tk 498,424. Zahed Ali Chowdhury of BNP who defeated former agriculture minister Motia Chowdhury spent Tk 498,240

However, many election observers believe that the top candidates spent around Tk 2 to Tk 5 crore on an average in this year's election.

In many cases, the candidates submitted their statements even after the deadline by 'managing' the officials concerned. The law stipulates election expenditure statements have to be returned to the EC within 15 days of the gazette notification of the official result.

According to the law, the authorities would file cases against the return defaulters within six months of the expiry of deadline for submission.

Shahriar remanded

FROM PAGE 12

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Shahriar also took snaps of Hindus who left Bangladesh after the October 1 election. The writer does not believe in the boarder between the countries, they claimed.

Such activities might destroy communal harmony and worsen the country's law and order. So we oppose his bail petition and pray for his remand, the prosecutors said.

After hearing both sides, the court rejected the bail petition and placed him on a four-day remand.

About 200 lawyers were present at the court to assist Qumrul Islam, the chief defence counsel.

A large number of people including family members of Shahriar crowded the court since the morning. The family members and relatives burst into tears when he was brought to the court. Police were seen struggling to control the crowd.

Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Zia International Airport (ZIA) thana on Saturday filed a complaint case on sedition charge against Shahriar Kabir with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Dhaka.

Shafiqul Azim Khan Siddiqui had earlier directed the OC of the airport thana to take the complaint as a regular case and to go for legal action against the accused after investigation.

The airport thana on Sunday took

the complaint case as a regular case and sent a forwarding report to the CMM's court to allow police to show Shahriar arrested in the sedition case. He had also prayer for a 10-day remand for interrogation.

The court granted the petition for showing Shahriar arrested and fixed December 10 for hearing on the remand prayer.

Meanwhile, the government directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to investigate the case.

As per the directive Munshi Atiqur Rahman of CID took the charge for investigation.

Shahriar was detained by the Special Branch police at the immigration department at ZIA on his return from Kolkata on November 22. Later he was shown arrested under Section 54 of CrPC.

No specific case was framed against him till Sunday. Police had also seized Shahriar's passport, 10 audio cassettes, five video cassettes, three audio CDS and his camera.

Human Rights Day observed

Ratify UN convention on migrants' rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government remained indifferent to ratification of a UN convention on migrants' rights while a growing number of Bangladeshis working abroad are facing hardships in foreign lands.

Panelists at a discussion in the city yesterday noted this while appealing to the government to immediately ratify the 'International Convention on Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families,' adopted by the UN in 1990.

Bangladesh became a signatory to the convention in 1998 but has not yet ratified it. Seventeen countries have so far ratified the convention, just three short of the required number which would put the convention in force.

In observance of the World Human Rights Day yesterday, the Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshis Employees (WARBE) organised the discussion on 'Importance of Ratification of ILO and UN Conventions for Migrants' Human Rights,' held at the BCTU-Labour Hall in the city.

Speaking as chief guest, Law Naimuddin Ahmed said that, requested by the immediate past government, he reviewed the convention in 1997 and found it perfectly in conformity with the relevant laws of the land.

"I gave specific opinion in favour of ratification. The ministry concerned also did not point out any difficulties. But it has not yet been ratified," he said.

Terrorists

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Joseph Gomez of Haroa received one such notice signed by one Sanaulah Nur Babu instructing Gomez to meet Babu at the office within December 8. As Joseph didn't turn up, his cadres kidnapped Gomez from his house at Haroa Sunday morning and took him to the afore-said office at Bonpara bazar. There he was beaten up following his refusal to pay toll, before being released at around noon.

Bonpara police told The Daily Star that they didn't receive any complaint in this regard.

Meanwhile, President of the Bangladesh Christian Association Daniel Koraia and its Secretary General Dr. Nevell D Rozario in a joint statement in Dhaka yesterday condemned the repression, threat and abduction allegedly by the so-called armed cadres in Natore.