

PDB ignores review

FROM PAGE 16
compliant bidder CMEC, China to conclude a contract. "The negotiations have to be completed within two weeks for issuance of a Letter of Intent," the panel said, adding that the PDB might take another two weeks for final signing of the contract.

But highly placed sources divulged to The Daily Star yesterday that instead of complying with the panel's decision, the PDB is now questioning the very authority of the panel to dictate decisions to the procuring entity, in this case the PDB, and said that the panel can only 'recommend' or 'Advise', and it cannot take any decision.

The PDB, using the services of a prominent lawyer, has taken a stand with the intention of invalidating the panel decision. It is ignoring that Regulation 53 of the Public Procurement Regulations of 2003 clearly states, "The Decision of the Review Panel shall be final and the Procuring Entity shall act upon its findings," the sources mentioned.

Interestingly, in the case of Chandpur Power Project, the PDB violate the tender rules and is using its lawyer to get an adverse opinion against the findings of the Review Panel.

Four weeks given by the Review Panel to the PDB to complete signing of the contract with CMEC expired on November 15 with no step taken by the PDB, and it also paid no heed to CMEC's October 23 written reminder to the PDB chairman for implementing the panel decision.

Industry sources feared that this would greatly harm the fragile power by discouraging others from lodging complaints in future, paying a hefty registration fee of Tk 5 lakh.

In a way it explains the World

Bank's insistence that the Public Procurement Regulations-2003 have to ensure that defaulting agencies cannot resort to mischievous means to bypass such a Review Panel's decision, meant to be final and binding on the procuring entities.

In his opening remarks during the three-day PRS Forum, now being held in the city, World Bank Vice President Praful C Patel categorically emphasised following the Public Procurement Regulations in all procurements for power generation.

Sources noted that in the worst case, the PDB would have it re-tendered since that has become more of a norm for it than exception until its chosen bidder is awarded the contract for a project. In case of Fenchuganj power project, it was re-tendered more than five times until Harbin was awarded the contract, and all other bidders withdrew protesting the PDB's siding with Harbin.

However, the Review Panel in its report has prohibited any re-tender as there is no guarantee that a re-tender would bring down project cost in the wake of rising global prices of oil, steel, copper and other raw materials for building the Gas Turbine Plant.

Implementation of the decision of the 1st Review Panel has now become a test case for the government's commitment to play fair and transparent in such international procurement.

PDB Chairman ANM Akhtar Hossain could not be reached over phone yesterday as he was attending a prolonged board meeting last night.

When contacted, Secretary of the Power Division Nazrul Islam declined to say anything on the issue.

Extortionist

FROM PAGE 1

According to Joj's June 26 confession before Metropolitan Magistrate Jahangir Alam, top criminals Subrata Bain, Khondoker Tanvir Islam Joy and Molla Masud, and Mukul, Robin, Rana, Shafiqul Islam, Zahidur Rahman and Jesan alias Monti were involved in the attack.

Acting on Joj's statement, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Rana in Moituli village of Ruppaj, Narayanganj, on November 5.

Rana in his confessional statement said Robin asked him and Shafiq over cell phone to come to one "Jiboner mess" at Bata Goli in Moghbazar 10-12 days before August 21. "I saw Anu, Joj, Bokul, Lincoln and Zahid at the place," Rana said.

Robin asked the criminals to throw grenades at the AL rally as per the order of Mukul, Rana's confession said.

Robin also showed them how to release the pin of a grenade and throw it. "But he strongly forbade us to throw any grenade on the dais," Rana said.

On August 20, Rana met Robin and Zahid near a water tank in front of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, where Robin pulled out a layout of the area detailing the points of attack and deployment of all the operatives.

"Robin brought out four grenades from a sweetmeat box and handed me, Shafiq and Joj a grenade each and kept one for him. He also gave us Tk 5,000 each," Rana said in the statement.

On August 21, Robin asked the three to wait on the eastern side of the Bangabandhu Avenue at 4:00pm. "He instructed us to mingle with the crowd after receiving phone call from him," Rana said.

After doing his part, Rana caught a bus for Ruppaj and the next day learnt from the newspapers that many people died in the incident.

According to Rana's statement, Mukul was present at the rally during the attack.

After the attack, Subrata, Joy, Molla Masud, Mukul, Robin and Zahid sneaked into India and Shafiq met them in Kolkata last August, Rana said.

Earlier, Joj Mia also confessed that the Seven Star Group, led by most wanted criminal Subrata Bain, ran the August 21 attack.

Jalil, Maya

FROM PAGE 16

with Maya in the chair. They questioned how the general secretary presides over a meeting when the vice president is present.

They stormed out of the meeting as they failed to make the City Committee Vice President Omar Ali the chairperson of the meeting. The Hanif followers hurled abusive words at Maya in presence of Omar Ali and Sayed Khokan, organisation secretary of the city committee and son of Hanif.

Abdul Jalil came to the spot and tried to calm them down. Agitated leaders and activists laid a siege around Jalil's car for a while but he managed to leave the scene after other leaders of the party intervened.

Charmonai Pir

FROM PAGE 16

Jamaat leaders and activists by the intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

"Using the name of Islam, Jamaat wants to retain power. They are engaged in anti-Islamic activities", he said, adding that if Jamaat was an Islamic party it would not have supported the anti-Islamic political parties. He also criticised the ruling BNP and the main opposition Awami League (AL) for harbouring terrorists.

The BNP-Jamaat led four-party coalition government has no right to remain in power as it completely failed to protect the lives and property of the people of the country.

Al Mokhtar Hossain, Abdul Hadi, Prof Shafiqur Rahman, Syed Nesaruddin, Mostafa Al Mamun and TM Mafiz addressed the meeting, among others, with Maulana Abul Bashar in the chair.

Sylhet bomber

FROM PAGE 16

Akhtar Hossain, another JMB operative, who was caught red handed just after the bomb attack in the evening on October 18, police said. He also claimed that he had never been to Sylhet before. But he admitted that his brother-in-law is from Sarishabari of Jamalpur, the same place where Akhtar is from.

Obayed's arrest however was based on the confessional statement of Akhtar. Akhtar claimed that Obayed gave him the bombs in a lunch box to throw at the judge.

Kotwali police will submit charge sheets soon in the two cases filed in connection with the attack, accusing four persons including Akhtar as the prime accused, said the police official. The other prospective accused are Moulana Saifuddin, Imam of the city's Bhangatikor mosque, Delwar Hossain and Obayed. Saifuddin is in detention while Delwar is still at large.

The judge came under attack in front of his residence at the city's Kamarpura area, as he was returning from office.

Panicked judges

FROM PAGE 1

According to the rule of law, the constitution and the judicial system against the backdrop of a 'deteriorating and anarchistic situation.'

He pointed out that the government has not allocated quarters for all his colleagues who have to stay in rented houses at different places of the city.

The judges of the Special Courts for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, who are equivalent to district judges, have no vehicles and are exposed to attack, he said.

The meeting held at the judges' conference room at the Dhaka Judge Court was addressed, among others, by Metropolitan Sessions Judge Momin Ullah, District PP Mohsin Miah and Dhaka Bar Association General Secretary Khureshed Alam.

Dhaka Deputy Commissioner Abdul Bari also attended the meeting.

Two senior assistant judges -- Sohel Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey -- of Jhalakathi were killed and a court employee and two pedestrians were injured in a bomb attack by a member of the Jama'at al Mujahideen Bangladesh suicide squad on Monday.

LAWYERS BOYCOTT
As part of their protest against the killing of two judges, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) will boycott the Supreme Court and all other courts across the country today. The lawyers will wear black badges, hoist black flags and stage demonstrations.

The SCBA leaders yesterday urged all lawyers, irrespective of opinion and party affiliation, to make the programme a success.

The SCBA leaders at a press conference said the chief justice is the guardian of the constitution, the judges and the lawyers. So the lawyers and the judges expect that he would play a courageous

role to uphold the rule of law, the constitution and the judicial system against the backdrop of a 'deteriorating and anarchistic situation.'

SCBA President advocate Mahbubey Alam and Secretary advocate M Enayetur Rahim in a written statement said the repeated attacks indicate that a certain quarter within the government has strong link with the bombers and the extremists.

They said the lawyers hoped that the government would take effective steps to root out the patrons of the bombers after the August 17 serial bomb blasts, the attacks on courts in Chittagong, Chandpur and Laxmipur on October 3 and the attack on a judge in Sylhet.

But the government has absolutely failed to fulfil the expectation, they alleged.

The SCBA leaders also alleged that the terrorists were carrying out the deadly bomb attacks without any hindrance since the government has made the law enforcement agencies inactive by using them to serve their political purposes.

They urged the chief justice to take necessary steps without waiting for the government measures to ensure the security of the judges, the lawyers and the litigants.

Former SCBA presidents Abdul Baset Majumder and barrister Shafique Ahmed, advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, advocate Rahmat Ali MP, Khondaker Mahub Hossain, Sirajul Haque, Shah Zahurul Alam, MAMannan, Bashir Ahmed, Sheikh Akhterul Islam, Mainul Islam Chowdhury and Shahidul Islam were present at the press conference.

Failure to try attackers

FROM PAGE 1

militants has reached an alarming level," Babar said, despite all the militant attacks, including the August 17 countrywide serial blasts, attacks on courts in three districts and the recent killing of two judges in Jhalakathi on November 14.

Howells mentioned that Babar assured him of all-out efforts to track the culprits. He also assured of the UK government's cooperation to work with Bangladesh on militant issues.

Democracy is not secured where the judges are attacked, the British minister said.

"We're certainly very keen to exchange what information we have," he said, referring to evidences like the fingerprints of bomb makers on bombs or the technology of bomb making.

Misguided people are killing the innocent ones in the name of religion, and those who preach Islam need to be engaged to motivate people against this, he noted.

Babar's denial of the strong network and large number of the Islamist militants came in continuation of the government's earlier denials although the countrymen as well as the world community have witnessed country-wide stronghold of the militants.

The intelligence agencies submitted reports to the government on militant organisations and their activities a few years ago and many were arrested with firearms and explosives in different parts of the country, but the authorities kept on denying their existence.

After Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai and his Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) launched self-styled vigilante operation, killing 27 people in Naogaon-Rajshahi-Natore region last year, the government and the state minister denied his existence.

Even when Bangla Bhai and Abdur

Rahman, chief of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), gave interview to newspapers, admitting to their action, the government said Bangla Bhai is the "creation" of the media.

Meanwhile, the JMB grew larger and equipped itself with a strong network and launched the nearly-simultaneous bomb attacks in 63 districts on August 17, killing three people.

The government under international pressure then banned the JMB but took no major step to arrest him or his militant cadres.

However, determined to establish Islamic rule in the country, in total opposition to democracy and judicial system, in the second phase of their attacks, the militants blasted bombs on courts in Chittagong, Chandpur and Laxmipur on October 3, killing two people.

On October 18, a JMB activist hurled bomb on a Sylhet judge and in the recent attack on Monday, a member of the JMB suicide squad killed two judges in Jhalakathi.

Barbar, who is now at the helm of the home ministry, however, refused to be complacent over the situation. "We cannot neglect the matter. The action against militants is a continuous process and we'll have to stick to the process," he said.

The British minister expressed satisfaction on the steps taken by the government, he said.

On government steps, Babar said, "We've taken short-, mid- and long-term policies and the progress is quite good. Immediate trial of the arrested militants and completing the trial in the shortest possible time is the most important. Besides, we are conducting motivation programme."

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury was present at the meeting.

5 killed in Rab, cop

FROM PAGE 1

gunrunners and members of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party. They were wanted in several criminal cases for murders, abduction and extortion in Batiaghata and Dumuria upazilas.

The Rab also seized one foreign-made revolver with five bullets, one LG, one locally made gun and 12 bullets of .303 rifle from a brick field in Phultala upazila following confessional statement of Kamruzzaman Jamal, 38, president of Khulna district unit Jubo League. He was arrested along with the other two on Tuesday.

The Rab was interrogating Jamal at the Khalishpur Headquarters at 7:30 last night.

HARTAL
Meantime, Awami League and its youth wing Jubo League jointly enforced a half-day hartal in city yesterday in protest against the arrests. The traffic was normal in the city, but shops were closed during the hartal hours.

The AL, Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League, AL's student wing, jointly brought out a procession at 11:00am and a rally.

Speakers warned the government of severe consequence for using the Rab in extra-judicial killings. They demanded immediate release of the three Jubo League leader.

FARDPUR 'CROSSFIRE'
The Rab arrested BNP activist Selim alias Lengra Selim in Shantinagar in the capital on Monday and handed him over to the Rab-8 in Fardpur.

Following his confession, a Rab team took him to Ainagar in the Sadar upazila to seize firearms and came under fire around 3:30am yesterday.

The Rab said Selim tried to escape and died in 'crossfire' during the shootout. The elite force seized two shutter guns, one light gun and 22 bullets.

Govt warned

FROM PAGE 1

in front of his residence in Sylhet on October 18. After analysing residues from the explosions and the unexploded bomb recovered from the scene the experts warned the government about the possibility of suicide bomb attacks in the future.

The spate of bomb attacks has made the experts believe that the terrorist outfit responsible for the attacks possesses a stockpile of explosives.

Sources quoted from the report that said, "It is a clear alarm for every one that the terrorists have a plan for suicide bomb attacks."

"The terrorists can attack at their desired time with desired devastation as it is evident in preparation of the bombs that they possess the expertise," sources quoted from the report that was submitted to the home ministry on October 20.

Among the three bombs used in the attack on Goshwami, two exploded while one was recovered unexploded. The first exploded bomb was aimed at the judge and the second one was used to make way for escape.

After examining the unexploded bomb the experts apprehended that it had been most likely reserved for committing suicide.

They also found that the unexploded bomb did not have a delay mechanism with an electric detonator, it was 'most likely a suicide weapon', which the attacker, identified as Akhtar Hossain, did not get the opportunity to explode, said the sources.

The report also pointed out that except for electric detonators and power gel (explosive) all other bomb making materials are available on local market.

Detonators used in the Sylhet bomb attack were similar to the ones used in the August 17 countrywide blasts. The type of detonators used in the attacks is usually used for military and industrial (oil exploration, mining etc) purposes and is not available on local market. Experts however could not identify the country of origin of the detonators.

The power gel used in the Sylhet attack was identical to the one used in the bombs that were exploded on court premises in Chittagong, Chandpur and Laxmipur on October 3. The bombs law enforcers recovered from Kishoreganj, Rajshahi, Munshiganj and from the capital's Goran area also carried the same variety of power gel.

Experts observed that the country of origin of this particular type of power gel is 'most likely India' and is used in seismic surveys by mining companies in Bangladesh.

A highly placed source in a law enforcement agency said in the wake of the suicide bomb attack in Jhalakathi on November 14 that killed two judges, the government has now issued a special order to take necessary measures to prevent further attacks by suicide bombers.

Howells for free

FROM PAGE 16

"We want to see Bangladesh as a vibrant country with strong economy and democracy," Howells said. "The democratic process should be an universal one in Bangladesh."

Asked about the matters discussed with Hasina, he said that they had discussion on how Bangladesh can progress economically and politically.

"I understand from Sheikh Hasina that they would be competing in the next election, which is a very good news for us. The election should be conducted fairly and there has to be security for everybody taking part in it," he said.

"There is no room for anybody to be threatened. They must be allowed to compete in the election freely and safely," the UK minister said. He stressed that all the political candidates are protected properly in the election.

The Awami League chief's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told the newsmen that they had conveyed to the British minister that without electoral reforms, it is impossible to hold free and neutral election in Bangladesh.

"The objective of the reform is not to provide facilities for one political party. It is the expectation of the countrymen," he said, adding that those who are the friends of Bangladesh want electoral reforms to ensure accountability and good governance.

During the meeting with the British minister, they also expressed concern over the killing of judges, journalists and members of the parliament, Saber said. A quarter inside the government has been harbouring the criminals, he added.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Head of the South Asia Group Anthony Stokes, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Kazi Jafarullah MP and former ambassador Ziauddin, among others, were present at the meeting.

JMB vows to keep

FROM PAGE 1

Enayet Kabir in Rajshahi. AC (Land) Ananda Kumar Biswas and UNO Satendra Kumar Sarkar also received the death threats in Bhola yesterday.

PABNA
The JMB yesterday sent a 'warning letter' to Sub Judge Karim, threatening to blow him to bits if he does not conduct his court proceedings according to shariah, reports Our Pabna Correspondent.

The handwritten letter jointly sent by JMB and outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party's (PBCB) Janajuddha faction termed the judges 'Islam's enemy'.

It reads, "If you do not deliver your verdict according to Islamic shariah, you and your court will be blown up with a remote control bomb."

A black shroud was tagged with the letter sent by the government postal department.

Panicked, the judge informed the matter to the local administration and the superintendent of police through the district judge.

Ignoring the situation, two judges in the district however gave their verdicts yesterday, handing down life term imprisonment on 11 people in separate cases.

KHULNA

In a separate letter, the JMB threatened Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Samad to terminate him.

The judge received the handwritten letter on November 9, but did not disclose it. He yesterday informed the matter to the police commissioner in the wake of the killings of the judges.

This letter says: "The JMB does not believe in laws formulated by humans; those who conduct court proceedings by these laws would be killed for the sake of Islam."

Four policemen have been deployed at the judge's residence and four others are on hand for his personal security.

Besides, police forces have been deployed for the judges of the Court of District and Sessions Judge and Women and Children Repression Prevention Court. But the judges did not get special gunmen.

RAJSHAH

The Islamist outfit yesterday asked two judges in the district -- Senior Assistant Judge Tarik and Assistant Judge Kabir -- to resign if they want to escape death.

The judges yesterday received the threat letters by post and informed the local police and the administration.

Each of the letters asked the recipient to resign in 15 days; otherwise, they will be killed.

"Join our group and help establish Islam or resign and leave Rajshahi. If you don't, make ready your shroud," the officer-in-charge of Rajpara Police Station quoted from the letters.

Panic gripped the judges and other lawyers as the news spread. Authorities have mobilised additional forces in the court areas.

The letter sent to Judge Kabir says: "We are warning you that we are leaders of the suicide squad of Bangla Bhai and JMB. We want Islamic rule in the country."

"We are alerting you to leave the anti-Islamic occupation and return safely to your home in Bogra. If you don't, we will kill you at your home."

BHOLA

Anonymous callers yesterday threatened UNO Sarkar and AC Biswas in Bhola with death and blowing up their offices, writes Our Barisal Correspondent.

A person called AC Biswas at 10:49am, threatening to blow up his office by November 25. A similar caller gave the same message to UNO Sarkar at 10:53am.

The officials held separate meetings at their offices and discussed measures to ensure their security.

ARRESTS MADE

China confirms 3

FROM PAGE 16

say might be spreading the virus.

The fatalities were a 12-year-old girl in Hunan and a 24-year-old female poultry worker in Anhui, said Roy Wadia, a WHO spokesman in Beijing. The third case was the girl's 9-year-old brother, who fell ill but recovered.

China initially said the girl, her brother and a schoolteacher who fell ill at the same time were negative for the virulent H5N1 strain of bird flu. But the government later reopened the investigation and asked WHO for help.

Agency experts traveled to Hunan this week.

Wadia said China recorded the girl as a bird flu death, but WHO could not reach a conclusion because her body was cremated. He said Chinese investigators based their decision on the girl's shared background with her brother and the circumstances of her illness. There was no official word on the teacher's status.

The government had not previously disclosed there were any suspected human cases in Anhui, where an Oct. 20 outbreak in the city of Tiancheng killed about 550 birds.

Wadia said the poultry worker did not live near the site of that outbreak. "She apparently had close contact

Police arrested two people including a madrasa student as suspected JMB cadres in Mathbaria and Barisal in the last two days.

Mathbaria police in Pirojpur arrested a boarder from Bismillah Boarding on Tuesday, suspecting his links to the JMB.

The arrestee identified himself as Sahjahan of Fuljhuri in Barguna, but later said he is Ilias alias Sah Alam of Kaliganj in Satkhira.

Police are investigating his real identity.

In Barisal, Kotwali police detained Mizanur Rahman, 18, at a residential boarding hotel, Galib, yesterday.

The arrestee said he is a student of Faizul Ulum Dharmadi Madrasa in the Sadar upazila and hailed from Gorla village in Uzirpur upazila, Barisal.

Mizanur claimed he came to Barisal for some personal purpose and had to book in the hotel as he failed to reach his destination on Tuesday night.

Sheikh Zillur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said they are interrogating him and investigating his claims.

Another suspected JMB cadre was picked up on Kurigram District Judge's Court premises yesterday.

Kurigram police arrested Noor Hossain, student of Rangpur Dhap Hazipara Madrasa and son of Bashir Uddin of North Sarkarpar village in Begumganj, Ulipur upazila.

HARTAL OBSERVED
Jhalakathi unit Awami League and its front organisations yesterday enforced a half-day hartal and brought out processions in the town to protest against the assassination of two judges.

The protesters chanted slogans against militants and slammed failure of the government to ensure safety and security of the people.

Earlier, the district and police administration failed to convince the AL leaders to call off the programme.

ARRESTEES REMANDED

Jhalakathi police arrested Sultan Hossain, 38, on Tuesday night for helping the assassin, Mamun, who claimed to be a member of the JMB suicide squad, rent a house in the district.

Sadar upazila Magistrate Sultan Ahmed of Jhalakathi yesterday gave remanded him for seven days. Eleven others arrested on Tuesday were placed on a one-day remand.

CONDOLENCES
Separate condolence and protest meetings were held at the Jhalakathi and Barisal District Judge's Court offices, where the district judges, officials and other staff of the judiciary attended.

Speakers expressed deep concern, condemned the killing and demanded special security for other judges. They also demanded compensations for the families of the slain judges.

Meanwhile, Md Fazlul Karim, registrar, and Md Dail Uddin, deputy registrar, of the Supreme Court, met the families of the slain judges in Barisal as representatives of Chief Justice JR Mudassar.