

Why probes shouldn't

FROM PAGE 1
The respondents are secretaries of the law and home ministries and the inspector general of police.

Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, Dr M Zahir, Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Tanjib Ul Alam moved for the petitioner while Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal and Deputy Attorney General Adilur Rahman Khan for the government.

...the respondents have failed to protect the fundamental right to life of the persons within the court premises by their failure to conduct adequate, impartial and ineffective investigations into the said bomb blasts, the petition said.

It appealed to the court for directing the government to carry out their constitutional duty to protect the security and the right to life of judges, lawyers, police personnel and court-users on the court premises by taking immediate and effective actions on the basis of statements of surviving assailants and ruling party lawmakers.

The petitioner blamed the government for its failure to discharge their obligations to ensure the safety and security in the courts despite being fully aware of the declared threats to the security of people, the lawyers and certain citizens in particular.

...the impugned omission has

Free medicare

FROM PAGE 1
The doctors may prescribe more medicines, depending on the progress of healing of the wounds. But, we have no way to get more money," said Nurjahan, now in Ward 33.

Some attendants of the bomb-injured also said similar stories. "We have been asked to fetch a number of antibiotics, injections and sedative capsules, as doctors cannot start treatment until we gather them," reported a poor patient lying in a Casally Ward bed.

Only the Casally Department head Dr Feroze Quader on the other hand said in the evening, "We received an order yesterday that directed us to take special care of the bomb injury patients, providing all medicines required for their treatment. The state will bear all costs of the treatment."

He, however, admitted that, due to a chaotic situation on Tuesday, the on-duty doctors at Ward 33 could not treat the female bomb victims in privacy. Meanwhile, 20 of the bomb attack victims who suffered burns, fractures and splinter injuries are recovering fast, except for a few who may have to stay a little while for complete recovery.

Advocate Nurul Huda, 32, with bones of both legs shattered by splinters, is undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit (ICU). Doctors described his condition as grave but refused to comment on the chances of his survival.

Huda, who was sitting near the explosion spot, also suffered burns and splinter injuries in his face and hands. Most of the rest of the victims, now in Ward 31, have injuries from flying shrapnel embedding deep into their body below the hip. Some of them were also severely burnt, which the doctors said would take in some cases weeks or even months to recover.

Hospital sources said they discharged two patients yesterday and the day before. One of them, Mahbub Alam Shaheen, 30, was taken to the Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday morning for interrogation, while the other was released late Tuesday night.

Hundreds of visitors, mostly relatives, have been crowding the wards since the incident on Tuesday. The police said they are unable to check the influx of anxious visitors. The authorities yesterday deployed six police constables on a round-the-clock duty at the entrance to Ward 31 to check the thronging.

"At least fifty people visited Advocate Anwarul Azim yesterday at the ward, already swarming with visitors, and leading to a chaotic situation," said a staff member of the ward. Meanwhile, the bodies of four people killed in the attack in Gazipur were handed over to their relatives yesterday and the day before. The dead are Shamsul Huq, 35, Marjina Begum, 40, Advocate Amjad Hossain and Advocate Golam Faruk.

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resulted in a failure to ensure the right to access to justice of ordinary citizens by seriously undermining people's confidence in the security of the sites of justice delivery, namely the courts, and instilling fear and panic among the population," reads the petition.

The petition also said BNP lawmaker Abu Hena was expelled from the party on November 24 for giving a press statement that the rise of Islamist militancy in the country was taking place under the patronage of some ministers and lawmakers of the ruling four-party alliance.

He had specifically named Posts and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque for harbouring militants in Rajshahi, it added.

After Hena's expulsion, BNP's standing committee member and former minister Oli Ahmed also gave statements holding elements within the alliance responsible for the rise of militancy. Besides, BNP Whip Ashraf Hossain gave press statements 'directly naming Jamaat-e-Islami as being implicated in the rise of militancy', the petition said.

The petition also mentioned that BNP International Affairs Secretary Syed Najibul Bashar Maizbandari resigned from party on September 23 protesting government failure to act against its coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami.

It added that the Rapid Action Battalion arrested Mahtab Ali Khamaru, alleged close aide of JMB leader Bangla Bhai, at Bagmara in Rajshahi on November 26 and released him after several hours. "It was reported that elements within the government had ordered the release of Khamaru after he was detained."

The petition said effective measures to address the declared threats by militant forces to the life and security of the judiciary, legal professionals and other court-users and personnel cannot be faced effectively only by enhancing security measures. "[I]t requires comprehensive efforts to undertake effective and adequate investigations regarding those responsible, and also regarding the alleged patronage extended to the perpetrators of such violence by certain persons holding high office," it added.

ROKAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE: Bar Council Vice chairman Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud yesterday urged the Supreme Court judges to refrain from discharging all judicial functions voluntarily until adequate and effective steps are taken to ensure the security of judges, lawyers, litigants, police personnel and court-officers.

"The judges of the lower courts have already become victims of suicide bomb attacks. They expressed concern at the incidents of bomb attacks on the judges and court premises. The Supreme Court judges can also be victims of such attacks any time," he said speaking at a press conference at the Bar Council auditorium.

Supporting today's haral called by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), the former SCBA president said the government will not be able to face this current situation as the patrons of the bombers are hiding inside the government. He demanded that the government should provide compensation for the victims of the bomb attacks and make public the probe reports on all the attacks.

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14-party

FROM PAGE 16
national programme.

They said the opposition movement will force the proposed reforms in the caretaker government and in the election commission to ensure a free and fair election next year.

Abdur Razzak, AL presidium member, said no election would be allowed in this land without reforms in the caretaker government and the election commission.

"We achieved our independence by sacrificing blood. If necessary, we'll sacrifice blood again to protect the independence," he said. The senior opposition leader accused the government of providing protection to the militants.

He urged the countrymen to build resistance against the 'bomber government'.

Motia Chowdhury, AL presidium member, said, "The killings, the bombings and the increasing prices of essentials are the main success of the alliance government. This government has announced their fight against the common people."

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Syed Jafar Sazzad said, "Our enemies are taking direct action so we also have to take direct action. It is not possible to topple the government through mere speeches."

Benjir Ahmed, district AL president Dhaka, presided over the rally. AL leaders Obaidul Quader, Abdul Mannan, Mukul Bose, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Sultan Mohammad Mansur, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Gono Forum leaders Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Kazi Hanif and Jamal Uddin Ahmed, JSD leader Shirin Akhter, Anisur Rahman Malik of Workers Party and MA Gani of National Awami Party (NAP) also spoke.

Leaders and activists of the 14-party opposition coalition laid siege to the DC office in Narayanganj yesterday morning, over Narayanganj correspondent reports.

A procession of the 14-party alliance headed towards the deputy commissioner's (DC) office but it was stopped near the DC office's main entrance by the police. The activists, locked in a brawl with law enforcers, demanded entry to the DC office premises. Failing to enter the office compound, the opposition men staged a sit-in near the entrance.

Central AL's Relief and Social Welfare Secretary, Nazma Rahman, District AL Convener SM Akram, City AL President Anwar Hossain, Gono Forum leader Delwar Hossain Chhunu, JSD leader Mohor Ali, and Workers' Party leader Shafi Uddin Ahmed led the demonstration.

The AL lawmaker however said, "We have to be united, but we must exclude Jamaat-e-Islami, which has links to militancy."

The committee members except ruling BNP lawmaker and State Minister for Expatriates Welfare Quamrul Islam questioned the existence of the AFD under the Prime Minister's Office.

"The AFD is not fit to function properly under the present parliamentary system of the government," the committee chairman told reporters.

Shawkat Ali added that all the responsibilities should be transferred to the defence ministry from the AFD.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Fakhru Alam told the meeting they have already asked for restructuring the AFD.

"The air force chief however did not elaborate their appeals in restructuring the AFD," Mahbubur Rahman, also BNP lawmaker, said.

Defence Secretary Mejbah Uddin Ahmed and other top officials of the ministry also expressed their confusion when the committee asked them to explain the term 'defence of Bangladesh' mentioned as the first task of the ministry.

"The defence secretary could not explain the term. He is not clear about his responsibilities due to the anomalies," Mahbubur said.

The defence secretary told the meeting he had asked his predecessor and a former cabinet secretary to explain the term. "But no-one of them could explain it; rather the cabinet secretary told me to carry out the work as it was," he said.

The parliamentary body asked the defence secretary, the chiefs of army, navy and air force and the principal staff officer of the AFD to find out the anomalies and submit a report to it in a bid to clear the confusion.

It also asked the government to immediately fill the vacant post of the chief of general staff of army.

necessary instructions," he said. Although Hossain had no idea about the real identity of some of the visiting JMB leaders, he said two of them might be Cox's Bazar region Mizan and bomb expert Mehedi.

Hossain and Rana led the hotel Monday morning and rented a room at Hotel Eden on the Railway Station Road.

"During our two-day stay in Chittagong, JMB cadre Taslim took us to the court building area to give us an idea about the entire court premises and adjoining areas," sources quoted the bomber as saying.

Hossain went to the old building of Bangladesh Bank adjacent to the court building at around 8:30am on Tuesday and waited for a few minutes. At 8:44am he went to the Annex Building premises and detonated the bomb as per instruction, Hossain told the investigators.

He said he has no regrets for what he has done. "My only regret is being still alive," he said.

Hossain became angry when told that he was recovered from near-death and said he does not want to be alive. "I don't need any help from anybody. My Allah will help me always," he said.

SECURITY BEEFED UP: The authorities have meanwhile wrapped the entire city under a heavy security blanket following Tuesday's deadly suicidal blast Hossain Ali also gave important information on the blasts that took place at different places of the country.

The extracted information has been sent to the higher authority concerned while some has already been verified, he said.

"It is essential to keep him alive to get more concrete information about the JMB and its activities," said the commissioner.

ATAUR IN CHARGE OF ALL BLASTS: During the interrogation, Hossain said Aatur Rahman Sunny planned all the bomb blasts, including the August 17 countryside serial blasts, October bomb attacks on courts in Chittagong, Chandpur and Laxmipur, November 14 bomb attacks that left two judges dead in Jhalakathi, and the November suicidal blasts in Chittagong and Dhaka.



Prof Muhammad Yunus



Nafis Sadik



NR Narayana Murthy



Hisashi Owada



Graca Machel



Gro Harlem Brundtland



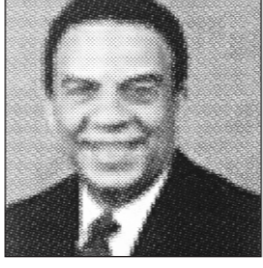
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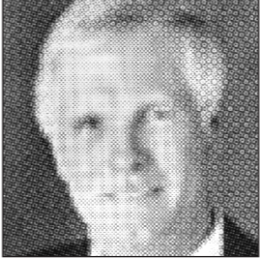
Timothy E Wirth



Ruth Cardoso



Andrew Young



RE Turner



Emma Rothschild

Rise of militancy

FROM PAGE 1
and the ministry.

Members of the committee at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban also decided to sit with the intelligence agencies to review the present situation in the wake of a spate of bomb attacks.

"We'll invite the intelligence agencies in charge of national security affairs to discuss the issue with us," Committee Chairman Mahbubur Rahman told reporters after the meeting.

"We want to know how the intelligence agencies are planning to face the militants and to protect our people, committee member and Awami League lawmaker Shawkat Ali told The Daily Star.

The chairman urged all political and social forces to unite like the times during the Liberation War to face militancy.

The AL lawmaker however said, "We have to be united, but we must exclude Jamaat-e-Islami, which has links to militancy."

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Additional forces from the CMP, Rapid Action Battalion and other intelligence agencies were also put on high alert in different parts of the city. They were instructed to search any suspected person or vehicle, police sources said.

Dhaka hosts

FROM PAGE 1
The UN Foundation was created in 1998 with the historic \$1 billion gift by the American entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner to support the UN causes and activities.

Chairman of the UN Foundation and founder of the TV channel CNN, Robert E Turner (Ted Turner) and President of the foundation, Timothy E Wirth are coming to Bangladesh on this occasion along with other directors of the foundation's board who are also world renowned dignitaries.

The big names include Director-General Emeritus of World Health Organisation (WHO), Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway), Chairman of Infosys Technologies Ltd., N R Narayana Murthy (India), Judge of the International Court of Justice, Hisashi Owada (Japan), Director of the Centre for History and Economic, King's College, University of Cambridge, Emma Rothschild (UK), Chair of Comunidade Solidaria, Brazil's anti-poverty organisation, Ruth Cardoso (Brazil), Director of Investment and Technology Promotion at the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Liang Dan (China), Chair of Foundation for Community Development, Graca Machel (Mozambique), Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General, Nafis Sadik (Pakistan), Chairman of Good Works International, Andrew Young (USA) and founder of Grameen Bank, Prof Muhammad Yunus (Bangladesh).

The UN Foundation holds three board meetings in a year. At least one meeting is held in a country other than USA. Previous board meetings were held in Brazil, Mozambique, South Africa and the UK and the next one will be held in Japan in 2006.

The activities during their visit will include: board meeting, visit to Grameen Bank, river cruise and discussions with the representatives of the government, civil society, NGOs and UN bodies in Bangladesh.

They will also meet the members of the press at Hotel Sonargaon at 2:00pm on December 12.

The UN Foundation is a public charity, engaged in four primary areas of work in pursuit of its mission: grant making, strengthening UN institutions, conducting outreach efforts for educating public about UN's role and raising new funds to support UN programmes.

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