

# Control small arms to stop threat by militants

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday urged the government to form an independent national commission to control small arms.

They also called for steps to control availability of small arms so that militants cannot pose threat to general people.

The view-exchanging meeting titled 'Importance of United Nations Programme on Small Arms (Control) in Eradicating Militancy and Terrorism' was organised by Bangladesh Development Partnership Centre



Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Dr ATM Shamsul Huda, second from right, calls on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday. Election Commissioners M Sohul Hussain, extreme right, and Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain, extreme left, were also present.

## 7 percent of population suffer from thalassemia

Says health adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Thalassemia Day was observed yesterday as elsewhere in the world with a view to raise awareness about the preventive measures of Thalassemia.

Different social and private organisations organised various programmes including rally, discussion and seminar on the occasion.

Bangladesh Society of Haematology, Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation,

## Time not right for lifting emergency

Says Mainul

UNB, Dhaka

Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday said no-one is considering that an environment is now in place for lifting the state of emergency.

He made the remark when journalists wanted to know about the timing of withdrawal of the emergency promulgated on January 11.

The adviser said many changes have taken place by this time and there is no parliament in existence. "To whom we will hand over power?" he posed a question.

Mainul declined to make any comment on how Awami League could bring out street procession to welcome Sheikh Hasina's homecoming while a state of emergency is still in force.

Earlier, the adviser presided over a meeting of the National Committee on Prevention of Smuggling held at the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Replying to a question, he said instruction has been given to update the list of smugglers to effectively combat the crime.

The home secretary, directors-general of BDR, Coast Guard and Rab, divisional commissioners and chairmen of Chittagong and Mongla ports and senior officials of the departments concerned attended the meeting.

(BDPC) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity Auditorium in the city.

The speakers said the proposed commission would monitor illegal trade and smuggling of small arms and their use, and place necessary suggestions to the government.

They also stressed the need for preparation and preservation of complete database of legal arms and improving their maintenance system.

Speaking at the programme BDPC Director Sharif A Kafee said along with controlling the availability and use of small arms, the

government should also take steps to eradicate poverty and unemployment which precipitate militant ideology.

Former president of Bangladesh Medical Association Dr Rashid-e-Mahbub said only modern education can help eliminate militant elements.

He also underscored the need for strict enforcement of law so that nobody go unpunished after committing crime.

Manira A Khatun of Bangladesh Development Initiative and Dr Wazed ul Islam Khan also spoke on the occasion.

## SC VANDALISM CASE Proceedings suspended for a year

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday suspended for a year the proceedings of the case filed against some eminent lawyers, including Dr Kamal Hossain, in connection with the violence on the Supreme Court premises over the caretaker government.

A division bench, headed by Justice MA Wahhab Mian, upon a petition, passed the order.

Earlier, the court had stayed for five weeks the case proceedings and issued a rule upon the government to explain why the case should not be quashed.

On November 30 last year, violence erupted on the SC premises as the then chief justice stayed the proceedings of three writ petitions minutes before a High Court bench was to issue a rule on one writ challenging the legality of the president's takeover as chief adviser to the caretaker government.

Barrister Omar Sadat, son-in-law of BNP leader and former minister Shahjahan Siraj, had filed the criminal case with the CMM Court.

In the case, eminent lawyers, including Dr Kamal Hossain, M Amir-Ul Islam and Rokanuddin Mahmud, have been accused of vandalising the offices of chief justice and attorney general and thereby disturbing court proceedings.

SADARGHAT TRAGEDY

## 5 more arrested for quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detention Branch (DB) of Police nabbed five people on Sunday in connection with the Sadarghat tragedy on Friday night.

They are Pankaj Mandal, owner of Love Touch Band Show (LTBS), Jamal, Shafeen and Sunny, three members of LTBS, and Hasan, a friend of picnic organiser Jamal.

Police nabbed them raiding different parts of the capital including Farashganj and Gandaria.

They are being quizzed and not shown arrested till yesterday.

"Interrogation is going on and none is shown arrested as yet," said Ibrahim Fatemi, police superiof Dhaka.

Police is also looking for family.

Meanwhile, the deadline for the probe-body to submit its report has been extended.

The body formed on May 5 by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) quizzed twelve people including picnic-goers and witnesses yesterday.

"The report will be submitted next week," said Sayed Lokman Ahmed, head of the four-member committee.

Sources said the committee in its report has mentioned that the incident was the outcome of luring youths to anti-social activities.

"Anti-social activities caused the Friday night chaos at Sadarghat," said Motahar Hossain, director of BIWTA.

In the report, the role of Ansar on the night was defined as a move to calm down the feuding situation, the sources added.

It also recommended punishment for persons responsible for the incident, and cautionary measure prior to granting permission to picnic organisers in future.

"We have no option but to go ahead with these projects because the country has been pushed into such a grim power situation that we cannot sit on power projects."

Prof Patwari went on, "We have given observations about each of the power deals and we have strongly recommended that in future there should be two separate tender committees -- one will prepare tender papers and the other will evaluate these. This should end scopes for manipulating bids."

Small tender bodies had given rise to many controversies, he pointed out.

The committee chief said they have recommended that in future, the government would fix a time limit for project implementers to complete those. This area should



Artistes of Nandan Kala Kendra perform at a cultural programme at Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday organised on the occasion of the 146th birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore.

## 'Involve urban planners to solve urban problems'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Involve urban planners at policymaking level to help solve different urban problems, said the speakers at a book launching ceremony yesterday.

They also stressed the need for formulating a national policy to control unplanned urbanisation.

Edited by Dr Sarwar Jahan, professor of urban and regional planning department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), and Dr KM Maniruzzaman, another professor of the same department, the book titled 'Urbanisation In Bangladesh' contains 17 articles on different urban issues.

Taking part in the discussion on the book, Planner Akther Hossain Chowdhury said it deals with different issues including nature of urbanisation in the country, price of land, car parking system, unplanned kitchen markets and urbanisation in Khulna city.

He said the book will help urban planners and the students of the related subjects.

Speaking as chief guest Dr Safiullah said urban planning is a vast thing as it deals many areas.

"Urbanisation is expanding rapidly in the country and we cannot afford to neglect proper planning," he said.

Speaking as special guest, Ataus Samad said the country is now run by the officers of former Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), and welfare of the country is not possible by them.

He said long term planning was never taken in the country where urban facilities must be extended to rural people in order to develop the rural areas.

BIP President Dr Toufique M Seraj said it is the high time for the planners to move forward with their writings for the sake of the next generation.

## Trader robbed of Tk 2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of muggers shot a trader and looted Tk 2 lakh from him at Shyampur in the city yesterday.

The victim, Russell Ahmed, 25, is one of the owners of Sohel Enterprise, a distributor of Eurocola, at Shyampur in the Uzala Match Factory area.

Russel said five muggers riding on two motorcycles intercepted him in front of his office when he was returning by a rickshaw after withdrawing Tk 2 lakh, wrapped in papers, from Shyampur branch of the Janata Bank at about 10:00am.

Witnesses said the muggers tried to snatch a packet from Russell. As he tried to resist the muggers, they fired at his leg and fled away.

Locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sohel Ahmed, elder brother of the victim, filed a case with Shyampur Police Station.

## Nizami

FROM PAGE 1

ing, Nisso disappeared from the bid and Obaedul Karim brought in German company Steag as the lead sponsor. But Steag is nowhere in the scene in reality.

"Regarding this, we have observed that when the tender was floated, the Private Sector Guideline (that bars change of lead sponsor) was yet to be introduced. Again, the then economic affairs committee of the cabinet okayed change of the lead sponsor. That way transparency was ensured," Prof Patwari said.

With a daily load shedding hovering around 2,000 megawatt, the cost of not having power has now become all time high. And this is due to lack of proper leadership of the past alliance government, and the corrupt nexus of dishonest officials and political beneficiaries who made sure that either they get the power deals or none gets those.

"We have recommended that BON consortium will have to implement the project with a levelised price tariff of 0.78 cents..." he added.

In case of Harbin's Chandpur deal, where Power Development Board grossly violated its own tender rules to favour Harbin over other bidders and triggered a serious conflict with the government's implementation and monitoring department, the experts committee members at a meeting had observed that Harbin's performance and dealings were dubious.

They also observed that in other tenders, Harbin resorted to trickery to show low prices during the tender and then increase that or delivered substandard equipment.

The committee concluded that Harbin's implementation of Chandpur plant would be strictly monitored, and cost of the project will not be increased.

## Not a question of 'clean chit' but of urgency

FROM PAGE 1

The five projects are 450 MW Meghnaghat phase-two power plant, 150 MW Chandpur plant, 20 MW Bogra rental power plant, maintenance work of Ghorasal unit-1 and 2 and Karnaphuli hydropower unit-3. Of these, there were widespread allegations against Meghnaghat and Chandpur deals.

The experts' committee members felt that if they recommended cancellation, these power projects would fall at least one year behind the schedule.

"We have found some irregularities in them but their bids were substantially responsive," says Prof Abdul Matin Patwari.

"We have no option but to go ahead with these projects because the country has been pushed into such a grim power situation that we cannot sit on power projects."

Prof Patwari went on, "We have given observations about each of the power deals and we have strongly recommended that in future there should be two separate tender committees -- one will prepare tender papers and the other will evaluate these. This should end scopes for manipulating bids."

Small tender bodies had given rise to many controversies, he pointed out.

The committee chief said they have recommended that in future, the government would fix a time limit for project implementers to complete those. This area should

not remain open for delays as delays give rise to corruption.

The committee also felt that the government should have a clear policy about how to deal with different types of projects. "We see that some deals are for three years and some are for 15 years. There should be a clear cut policy to avoid confusion," Prof Patwari said.

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The Meghnaghat deal went to BON, which is a joint venture of Obaedul Karim, the Oriental Bank Scamster, and the UAE's Belhass group. But none of them is the lead bidder. BON qualified to participate in this tender, which sought an experienced power company, by showing Japanese company Nisso Eiwi as the lead bidder (thus acquiring the name BON Consortium). Then after qualifying

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