

# 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

(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 issue.

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

Detective 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, Shaheen and Sunny, three members of LTBS, and Hasan, a friend of picnic organiser Jamil.

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 superintendent of Dhaka.

Police is also looking for Jamil. 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.

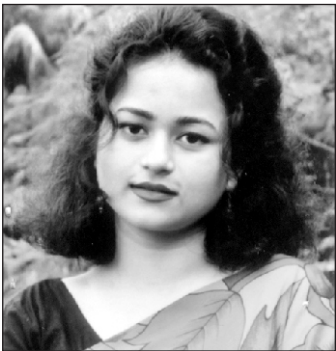
"The report will be submitted next week," said Sayed Lokman Ahmed, head of the four-member committee.

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.



## Novera Deepita Memorial Scholarship

Novera Deepita Memorial Trust has instituted a scholarship programme in memory of Novera Deepita, a reporter of The Daily Star, says a press release.

The 'Novera Deepita Memorial Scholarship' will be awarded every year to a student achieving the highest marks in the BA (Hons) examinations under the mass communication and journalism department of Dhaka University. The nominee will receive Tk 15,000.

The scholarship programme comes into effect on July 27, the first death anniversary of Novera Deepita, a bright journalist with shining academic records.

## Obituary

Rowshan Akhter Begum, wife of late A T M Abed, former deputy secretary, passed away yesterday at the age of 79, says a press release.

Rowshan, only daughter of late Johur Ahmed Khan of Barisal, left behind her four sons and five daughters to mourn her death.



PHOTO STAR

Artists 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.

Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) organised the book launching ceremony at the National Press Club in the city.

Buet Vice-chancellor Prof Dr AMM Saifullah and eminent journalist Ataus Samad unveiled the cover of the book.

Taking part in the discussion on the book, Planner Akhter 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 Saifullah 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.

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

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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."

Single 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.

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 make sure that either they get the power deals or none gets those.

The alliance government awarded Meghnaghat project deal to BON Consortium while Chinese Harbin Power Engineering got the contract for Chandpur 150 MW plant. The 20 MW Bogra project deal was awarded to local firm GBB Ltd. The restricted tender bid for rehabilitation of Karnaphuli hydropower project unit 3 will be held soon.

The Meghnaghat deal went to BON, which is a joint venture of Obaedul Karim, the Oriental Bank scamster, and the UAE's Belhasa 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 quality-

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 (which 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," noted Prof Patwari.

"We have recommended that BON consortium will have to implement the project with a levelised price tariff of 02.78 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.

## 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, Russel Ahmed, 25, is one of the owners of Soheli 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 Russel. 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

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Court granted the bail to the accused till May 22 after Nizami and nine others surrendered to the court and sought bail.

Nine other accused are former minister and Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Qamaruzzaman, Central Nayab-e-Ameer Mokbul Ahmed, Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam, Dhaka City Unit Ameer Rafikul Islam, Paltan Unit Ameer ATM Sirajul Islam, Islami Chhatra Shibir President Shafikul Islam Masud, General Secretary Zahid Hossain and President of Dhaka University Unit Shishir Monir.

Earlier on April 24, the court accepted the charge sheet of the case and directed them to appear before it on May 8 (yesterday).

On April 11, investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector AKM Idris Hossain of Detective Branch of Police pressed charges against the 10 Jamaat and Shibir leaders.

The IO showed 45 people as prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet.

Activists of Jamaat and Shibir on October 28 last year had gathered in front of the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque and launched an attack on a procession of Awami League-led 14-party alliance. The attack sparked a fierce street battle between the two sides. Shibir activists were seen firing shots while their rivals launched a counter-attack with paddles and sticks.

Following a case filed by Workers' Party leader Kamrul Ahsan, charges were brought against the accused for organising unlawful assembly, inflicting injuries to people, murder, and aiding and abetting criminal activities.

Case against Shahidul

Another Dhaka court placed Khelafat Majlish Naye-e-Ameer and former member of parliament Mufti Shahidul Islam on a five-day remand after Mohammadpur police produced him before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) at 2:30pm yesterday.

In the forwarding report placed before the court, the IO of the case Sub-Inspector SM Shibli Noman mentioned that Shahidul had links with militant activities in the country.

Moreover, while he was an MP, he had made an enormous amount of money and wealth through abuse of power and authority. Therefore, he needed to be remanded so that he could be quizzed for vital clues about his militant ties and source of his wealth, the IO said.

The defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking cancellation of the remand prayer saying that their client had no involvement with militants.

After hearing both the sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza placed Shahidul on a five-day remand for interrogation.

On February 8, Shahidul surrendered to joint forces after his name was included in the government's second list of corruption suspects.



PHOTO: PID

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,

Thalassemia Welfare Society (TWS) and Thalassemia Foundation Bangladesh (TFB) jointly organised a rally that paraded different city streets near Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) in the morning.

A discussion followed at Birdem Hospital auditorium that Health Adviser Dr ASM Matur Rahman attended as the chief guest.

Expressing concern over the increasing rate of thalassemia patients in the country the adviser said that around seven percent of the country's total population are suffering from thalassemia.

"The number of thalassemia patients is increasing day by day due to lack of proper knowledge about the disease," he said adding "Every year about 6000 children are born in Bangladesh with thalassemia."

The adviser urged all to check blood before marriage as children of parents having abnormal haemoglobin composition in their blood are at higher risk of thalassemia.

While presiding over the discussion, Prof MA Rashid, president of Bangladesh Society of Haematology, emphasised on taking preventive measures and asked for establishing well-equipped Haematology department in all medical colleges and hospitals to ensure early diagnosis of the disease.

Dr ABM Yunus, a member of Bangladesh Society of Haematology,

underscored the need for eliminating superstitions and suggested to consult specialist doctors.

Prof Dr MA Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Society of Haematology and its member Dr Masuda Begum, Dr Md Abdur Rahim of Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation and Prof Dr Md Jalilur Rahman, president of TWS, also spoke on the occasion.

Bangladesh Thalassemia Society, Medicine Club and Gramophone jointly organised another discussion at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) in the city. Although almost 1.5 crore people in the country are thalassemia carrier, there is no national policy to combat thalassemia, speakers said at the discussion.

They also pointed out the insufficiency of thalassemia diagnosis mechanisms, prenatal diagnosis mechanisms and absence of countrywide database and baseline research.

While presenting the keynote paper, Prof Abid Hossain Mollah recommended formulating thalassemia support groups in national level and compliance of the administrative, political and professional bodies to combat the disease.

The speakers also urged people to donate blood regularly as 13 percent of the professional donors are found suffering from Hepatitis B and C that could be hazardous for the patients.

# 48 city shops gutted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 48 shops were gutted in a fire at a market at city's Maddhiya Badda in the early hours of yesterday.

Fire broke out from electric short circuit at the back of tin- and wooden-shed Khan Super Market in Pragati Sarani road at around 12:05am.

Eight units of fire brigades from different fire stations in the city

doused the fire at 1:35am.

A total of 48 shops containing readymade garment, sari, cosmetics and cookeries were completely burnt, fire brigade sources said.

Shop owners claimed that the losses were estimated at around Tk 1 crore.

No goods of the shops of the market could be saved as fire spread all over the market in a moment, the shop owners said.

WEATHER TODAY

## Thundershowers unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 35.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Faridpur and lowest 22.2 degree Celsius at Rajshahi.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:31pm today and rises at 5:19am tomorrow.**

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town   | Temperature in celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |         |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
|             | Max                    | Min  | Morning                | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 34.9                   | 25.0 | 68                     | 51      |
| Chittagong  | 33.5                   | 25.1 | 61                     | 69      |
| Rajshahi    | 34.2                   | 22.2 | ---                    | ---     |
| Khulna      | 34.5                   | 24.6 | 75                     | 61      |
| Barisal     | 33.2                   | 24.3 | 75                     | 64      |
| Sylhet      | 33.2                   | 23.5 | 94                     | 58      |
| Cox's Bazar | 33.4                   | 25.5 | 66                     | 70      |

### Prize distribution ceremony

The prize distribution ceremony of HSBC Young Entrepreneurs Awards 2006-07 (YEA) will be held. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 4:15pm.

### Seminar

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) organises a seminar on the encroachment threats city playgrounds and parks face. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Time: 10:30am.

### Photo exhibition

Anti-Genocide Organisation organises a photo exhibition titled 'Genocide and crime against humanity'. Venue: Fine Arts Institute. Time: 11:00am.