

No scope for armed forces to go back without completing present task

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called for setting up of National Security Council to help government resolve any external or internal problem.

They said coordination between the government and the armed forces should be visible in the prevailing situation of the country.

"There is no scope for armed forces to go back without completing their present tasks," they added.

The discussion titled 'Role of the Armed Forces in Upholding Democracy' was organised by Bangladesh Heritage Foundation at Bilia auditorium in the city.

Moderated by Ambassador Wali Ur Rahman, the discussion was participated by Major General (retd) KM Shaifullah, Brigadier General (retd) Shahedul Anam Khan, Major General (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Barrister Harun-Ur-Rashid and Nadeem Qadir.

Wali Ur Rahman in his paper said, "The nation enthusiastically welcomed the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11. Our valiant defence forces responded to the need for defending democracy and protecting the constitution."

"I am convinced that through their action, a slow but steady progress will be made for ultimate restoration of democracy with the strengthening of democratic institutions," he added.

KM Shaifullah said the country felt the need for somebody like the armed forces to save the country from the chaotic situation.

"We must have a body which will be able to take control of any situation," he told the reporters, adding that involvement of army will not be necessary if there is a National Security Council.

When asked about the initiative to keep pressure on two top leaders to go into exile, he said it would be fair to work by keeping them in their own position.

In reply to another question he



Farid Hossain speaks at a workshop on 'Disaster preparedness in the educational and medical institutions and the role of media' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Catelyne Mittendorp and on his left are Hasan Shahriar, Dilrose Hossain and Wahida Bashar Ahmed.

WORKSHOP ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

'Enhance capacity building in hospitals, educational instts'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for enhancing community capacity building, especially in the hospitals and educational institutions, on disaster preparedness in the event to save lives in the event of earthquake and floods.

The government should also ensure that the building code is strictly followed during any construction work and that the vulnerable structures are demolished and re-built, they said.

Actionaid Bangladesh and Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) in association with the European Commission organised the workshop titled 'Disaster preparedness in the educational and medical institutions and the role of media' at the National Press Club in the city.

"If a major earthquake takes place, all the multi-storey buildings in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet will collapse, as most of them are not constructed in line with the building code," said CJA President Hasan Shahriar.

Most of the buildings being used as garment factories are not meant for use as factories, he said, urging the government to check such practice and take action against the rule violators.

He also suggested including the disaster preparedness issue in the school textbooks.

CJA Bangladesh President Farid Hossain said several earthquakes have already jolted Chittagong and Mymensingh, giving a hint of future threats, but "We are not prepared for it."

A survey should be conducted to see whether the building code is being followed in the cities, he said, adding: "We are really vulnerable and not prepared and this became evident when a fire broke out at the BSEC Bhaban."

The print and electronic media should also highlight the issue as part of a campaign to raise awareness about disaster preparedness, he said.

Presentation a keynote paper, Farhana Ferdous, consultant (policy advocacy), Disaster Preparedness Activities of European Commission Humanitarian Office, said preparedness in the schools and hospitals is more important, as more people are concentrated there.

Every school should regularly conduct mock exercises on disaster management and have fire extinguishers and whistling system, and should train the teachers and students on first aid, she said.

"The authorities should check vulnerability of all such institutions, rectify the comparatively less vulnerable ones and gradually demolish the more risky school and hospital buildings," Farhana added.

She also said medical students should be given orientation on mass casualty management. Such lessons could also be included in the syllabus of the medical colleges.

Hospital-based mass casualty management committee could be formed so that it could make coordinated efforts during any disaster, the consultant suggested.

Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Qaiyumi suggested strengthening regional information system so that they can help each other in preparing for managing disasters.

The speakers also said that the authorities should construct more shelter centres, maintain them regularly and develop the signalling system.

Catelyne Mittendorp, project manager of DPECHO, Wahida Bhuiyan, secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, moderated two sessions of the workshop.

Farid Hossain and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, moderated two sessions of the workshop.

Shaheed Matiur's mother passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Suratunnesa, mother of Shaheed Matiur Rahman, passed away at her Sabujbagh residence in the city yesterday at the age of 76.

She left behind her husband, five sons and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

According to her last wish, Suratunnesa was buried at the grave of her valiant son Matiur at the Narinda graveyard after namaz-e-janza at Sabujbagh Jame Mosque after Asr prayers.

Awami League leaders Tofail Ahmed and Saber Hossain Chowdhury attended the janza.

Matiur was killed in police firing during the anti-Ayub mass upsurge on January 24 in 1969. The martyrdom of Matiur, then a student of Nabajamuna Institution, intensified the movement ending the dictatorial rule of Pakistan President General Ayub Khan.

Tofail, a hero of 1969 mass upsurge, said the day Matiur was killed, his mother told him (Tofail) to carry on the movement so her son's blood does not go in vain.

"We have kept our promise by gaining independence in 1971," Tofail said. On a personal note, he said Matiur's mother loved him like a son.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and General Secretary Abdul Jalil in separate messages yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Suratunnesa.

They prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

Bullet-hit robber held after gunfight with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A robber with bullet wounds was arrested after a brief gunfight with the police in the city's Mirpur area early yesterday.

However, three of his accomplices managed to escape with booties they looted from a mobile phone shop.

The arrestee, Mozaffar Hossain, 30, received bullets in his abdomen and in his right hand during the gunfight that erupted after the robbers fired on a police patrol team who intercepted their microbus in Ahmednagar area at around 5:00am.

Police sources said the gang of four robbers was speeding away after looting valuables from a nearby mobile phone shop.

A police team patrolling the area challenged the microbus as they became suspicious of the men in the vehicle.

When the robbers fired shots, the patrol team retaliated with fire, injuring Mozaffar, the sources added.

Three other robbers fled the scene with the booties leaving behind the microbus.

Police recovered three machetes, two screwdrivers, two hammers, a calculator and a number of SIM cards from the microbus.

Later, the police took Mozaffar to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

During interrogation, Mozaffar said they committed a robbery at a mobile phone shop in Ahmednagar.

A case has been filed with the Mirpur Police Station.

Local BNP leader held in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested a local leader of BNP from Court area in the district town on Wednesday night.

The arrestee Anisur Rahman Anis is the organising secretary of Delduar upazila unit of BNP and former chairman of Deolee Union Parishad (UP).

Anis is a top terror of Delduar upazila and there are 10 criminal cases against him with Delduar Police Station, police said.

Police is quizzing Anis after taking him in seven-day remand yesterday.

Three firearms, 19 bullets recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and coastguards recovered three firearms and 19 rounds of bullets from Nandabala area in the Sundarbans early morning yesterday.

According to a press release issued by Rab-6 last evening, the recovered arms and ammunitions were left by a group of criminals following a shootout with the elite forces on Wednesday.

During their raid in the Nandabala area of the forest, the criminals opened fire on them, prompting the elite forces to retaliate. However, the miscreants were forced to flee away under severe attack.



PHOTO: PID

Road accidents kill 5, injure 17

STAR REPORT