

REPORT ON 'COUNTERING TERRORISM' LAUNCHED

Call to increase vigilance against terrorism from outside

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday called for greater vigilance against terrorism coming from outside the country.

"There is no known sure and certain cause within the country for terrorism to pose a serious problem. But there is a need for us to be vigilant mainly against terrorism coming from outside," he said at the launching ceremony of a report on 'Countering terrorism in Bangladesh: A strategy paper' by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) at its auditorium.

"In Bangladesh, so far, we have found our existing laws adequate to deal with the kind of terrorists we faced," he said, adding that "But the fight against terrorism does not necessitate the denial of human rights."

British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury, who was also

present at the launching ceremony, regretted that Bangladesh had taken a long time to break out of 'denial' but did so when the country was on the brink of a much larger terrorist problem.

He commended the government actions and backed the report's findings.

The report found that radicalised groups are using a 'distorted version of Islam' to justify violence and being fed by the global Islamist agenda, but in Bangladesh, the terrorist threat is exacerbated by political support for terrorism without considering its consequences.

The report proposes four-stand national counter-terrorism strategy, alongside a series of steps to implement the programme, which they said should be implemented by the government over the next two years starting immediately.

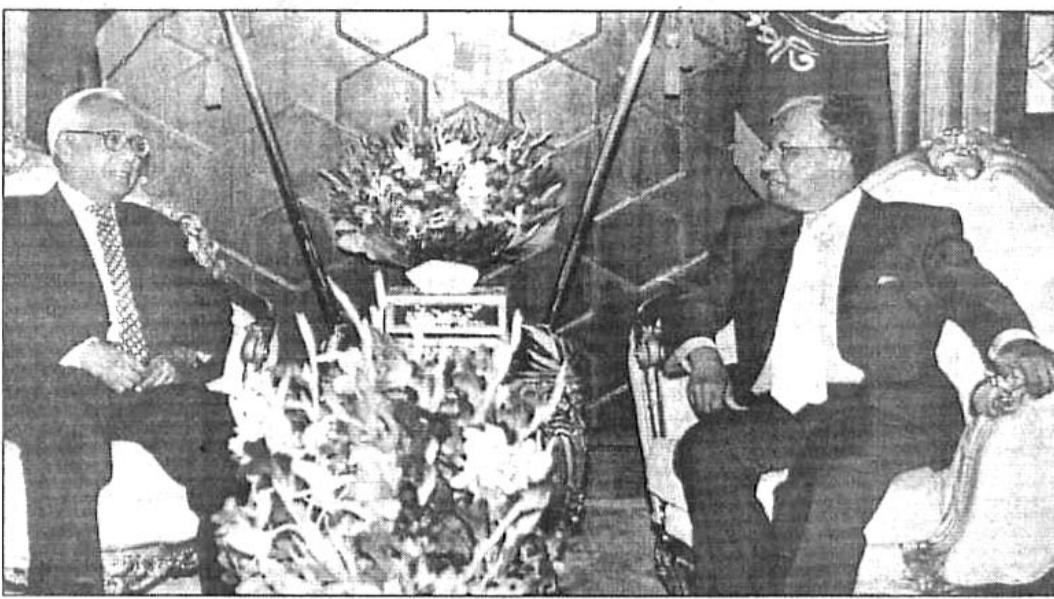
The report was authored by a

counter-terrorism core group set up by the BEI, chaired by BEI President Farooq Sobhan, and the members included security experts and government and intelligence officials.

The strategy includes the prevention of terrorism by blocking the process of radicalisation of individuals and groups through long-term programmes to address the 'root causes' of terrorism, and simultaneous improvements in governance.

The madrasa system was said to have no significant links with terrorism, but the report recommended the modernisation of its curriculum as 19 percent of those arrested in connection with terrorism attended the religious schools.

The report proposed that terrorists and those who sponsor them and provide sanctuary should be pursued through an aggressive and coordinated effort by law enforcement agencies.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed calls on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Poverty issues of ethnic minorities ignored: People's Report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Country's 38 percent households, which are headed by uneducated parents, have no education at all, revealed a report yesterday.

But the households, where the heads are non-poor persons, have no children without education, it added.

Unnayan Shamannay published the report titled 'People's Report 2004-2005: Bangladesh Environment' at a programme at the National Press Club in the city.

The report said 92 percent of their respondents thought that land productivity has been reduced due to industrial pollution.

Ninety percent slum dwellers do not boil drinking water while, 49 percent of them said the drains of their slums are not cleaned, the report added.

Speaking at the programme Chairman of Unnayan Shamannay Prof Atiur Rahman said poverty and environmental degradation are mutually reinforcing.

Sometimes poverty causes environmental degradation while in other occasion environmental disaster or degradation causes poverty, he added.

Prof Atiur said although different measures are taken to address issues like rural and urban poverty, policy makers and development agencies have ignored poverty issues of ethnic minorities.

About the poverty pattern in char (river island) areas, he said though

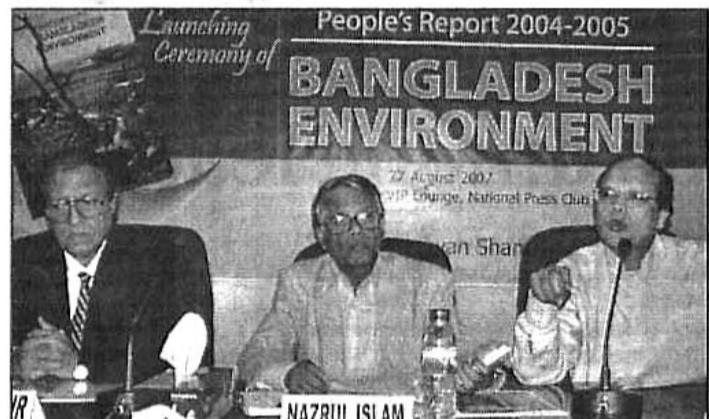


PHOTO: STAR

Chairman of Unnayan Shamannay Prof Atiur Rahman speaks at the launching ceremony of a report titled 'People's Report 2004-2005: Bangladesh Environment' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam and Environment and Forests Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir.

the average rate of ultra poor in the country is 25 percent, its concentration in the char areas is about 74 percent.

To address the issues of poverty and environmental degradation, Prof Atiur suggested poverty alleviation measures after taking due care of sustainability, encouraging greening of the environment and setting environmental standards for industrialisation.

Addressing the programme, Secretary to environment and forest ministry AHM Rezaul Kabir appreciated the report and said they would consider it as a fact-finding report.

GRENADE ATTACK ON UK ENVOY Four cops give depositions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The recording of statements of prosecution witnesses in a case filed in connection with the grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury continued in the Speedy Trial Tribunal of Sylhet division for the second day yesterday.

The grenade attack took place at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) in Sylhet after Juma prayers on May 21 in 2004, killing three people and injuring 70 others.

Four policemen, who were on duty at the place of occurrence at that time, gave their depositions yesterday. With them, a total of five witnesses, out of 57, gave their statements in the court.

Statements of some other witnesses will be recorded today and tomorrow, court sources said.

On July 31, Additional District & Sessions Judge Ferdous Ahmed framed charges against four accused in the case. Later, the case was transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal.

The accused are Harkat ul Jihad chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, his brother Mofizur Rahman and Huji operatives Dewar Hossain Ripon and Sharif Shahedul Alam alias Bipul.

Foreign adviser greets new Japanese FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has greeted newly appointed Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura.

"Bangladesh and Japan have always enjoyed strong and friendly relations. I am confident that these bonds will gain strength and expand in dimension through our mutual cooperation," said the foreign adviser in a message of congratulations yesterday.

Machimura has been appointed to this office in a cabinet reshuffle by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

'Release 5 varsity teachers immediately'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More professional bodies and youth organisations yesterday demanded an immediate and unconditional release of five teachers of Dhaka and Rajshahi universities who have been arrested by the joint forces.

In a statement, Peshajibi Sonmonoy Parishad called on the authorities concerned to release the teachers in no time without imposing any condition and to punish the real culprits.

In another statement, 350 members of the Supreme Court Bar Association said the arrest of five university professors was a deplorable and shocking incident that had tainted the image of the present caretaker government.

The signatories to the statement urged the government to release the arrested teachers immediately and to ensure that innocent students are not targeted or victimised.

In a separate statement, leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree (Students' Unity) condemned the incident and said it was a senseless act that would lead the nation to a mass uprising.

They urged the government to ensure an unconditional release of five teachers and demanded a stop to indiscriminate arrest by police and army officers.

A press release of Bangladesh Awami Juba League said its Chairman Advocate Jahangir Kabir Nanok and General Secretary Mirza Azam have expressed their concern over the safety of five teachers and demanded their immediate and unconditional release.

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