



Mahbubul Alam speaks at a dialogue at the BEI auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are Abul Kalam Azad, Farooq Sobhan, Matiur Rahman and Shahedul Anam Khan.

Political consensus a must to combat militancy

Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cooperation between the government and the opposition and coordination with the mass media are vital to combat militancy in the country, speakers at a dialogue said yesterday.

They also called for a cautious role on the part of the media covering militancy and terrorism issues.

The speakers also urged the government to allow intelligence agencies to function independently within their respective ambit, instead of using them for political gains.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organised the dialogue on 'The role of the media in preventing terrorism in Bangladesh' at the institute in the city, with BEI President Farooq Sobhan in the chair.

It is an urgent need to have political consensus and ensure coordination

with the media to combat militancy and terrorism, said Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, while speaking as the special guest.

But there is a lack of cooperation between the government and the opposition, he added.

Coordination with the government and its cooperation is crucial for the media in dealing with terrorism issues, said Mahbubul Alam, editor of The Independent.

It becomes difficult for the media to play its role in covering the militancy issues if the government and the media have different perspectives on the issue, said Alam, also a former adviser to the caretaker government.

Calling upon the media people to remain cautious while covering the militancy issues, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said both the electronic and print media have been tools of publicity of

terrorism.

"Militancy and terrorism pose a serious threat to the national security," he said, adding: "We must fight it collectively with national consensus."

Commenting on the massacre of army officers at the BDR headquarters, he said all the intelligence agencies, including DGFI and NSI, have failed in this regard.

"The failure of all the intelligence agencies is surprising," said Brig Gen (retd) Shahedul Anam Khan, editor, Defence and Strategic Affairs, The Daily Star. "Intelligence has long been used in other purposes than what they are mandated to do."

Intelligence agencies must be allowed to function within their respective ambit, he said.

The BEI student forum presented three papers at the working session moderated by former ambassador and BEI Vice-President Tariq Karim.

HYDROPOWER GENERATION

Russia offers financial, technological help

Pilot project study next month

UNB, Dhaka

Russia, already on negotiation with Bangladesh for building a nuclear power plant, now offered to provide both technical and financial support for setting up small hydropower plants for catering area-based demands.

As per proposal, the hydropower plants, each having 10-20-megawatt capacity, will be built through creating small dams on different rivers.

Under the concept electricity will be generated through utilizing the streams of rivers.

This new Russian offer came when Ambassador Dr Gennady P. Trotsenko yesterday met Prime Minister's Adviser Dr Taufiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury Birbikram at his office in Power Ministry.

After the meeting, Dr Elahi, quoting the Russian envoy, told reporters that the nuclear-power-rich country

showed keen interest in providing technical support for such schemes.

The Ambassador apprised the adviser that a Russian delegation would visit Bangladesh next month for the feasibility study of a pilot project for generating hydropower.

Local private entrepreneurs can also invest in such projects if found to be viable.

"It is possible to establish a

number of small power plants with 10-20-megawatt capacity, each utilising river currents by constructing low-height dams," the Russian envoy said.

The adviser sought Russian assistance in setting up a similar generation unit beside the existing 210-MW Siddhirganj power plant, which was built by Russia few years back under its supplier's credit scheme.

He also sought cooperation

in rehabilitation of the power plants, particularly located in Ghorasal power hub, which were built by Russia with its technology.

Dr Elahi said the government is determined to ensure diversification of energy resources.

"That's why the government wants to generate power utilising all kinds of renewable energy resources, including gas, coal and nuclear power," he said.



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