

Trial of war criminals should not be politicised, used as political weapon

AI Asia Pacific Programme Director Sam Zarifi tells The Daily Star

EMRAN HOSSAIN

The government, people and the media should ensure that the trial of war criminals is not politicised and not used as a political weapon, Amnesty International (AI) Asia Pacific Programme Director Sam Zarifi said.

He also expressed deep concern as no resolve of the investigation into the mutiny by BDR jawans has been made public yet.

The Amnesty official said this in an interview with The Daily Star last week during his visit to Bangladesh.

Zarifi also called on the government to ensure right kind of education for all to combat militancy.

The government should also ensure human rights of both BDR jawans and militants when they are in custody, he said.

BDR Mutiny

Sam Zarifi said the rights of the people who are accused of mutiny should be ensured and it's important to ensure that the resolve of the investigation is credible.

"The resolve has to be real justice," he said.

We, Amnesty International, do not want to see this trial as a court martial. International law doesn't really favour court martial. So, we would like to see these things done as a legitimate civilian process," Zarifi noted.

"And I think it's up to the government to make sure that the judicial process it comes up with is serious and transparent and conforms with the international standards."

Mentioning that there are allegations of abuse of BDR detainees and a number of them died in custody, Zarifi said, "The government must ensure that all detainees are treated properly."

War Crimes Trial

As the government considers moving forward with war crimes tribunal, the government should look closely at the War Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973 to see if it conforms to the international law and whether it needs to be updated or amended or reformed anyway.

the Amnesty official said. The Amnesty International encourages the government to get the best advice and expertise for the trial of the war criminals, he added.

"We may or may not comment on the process as it develops, but it's for the government to decide who the best sources of expertise are. As international law has developed a lot of experience since 1973 and those can usefully be incorporated into the 1973 law," said Zarifi.

One of the key things to see is that the process of trying war criminals is not political, he added.

"Political status of the

for consultation with experts not only from Europe and America, but also from Guatemala, Cambodia, Indonesia or East Timor who can tell how things should be done.

The Amnesty International would certainly monitor the development of the trial process very closely, he added.

Role of Media in War Crimes Trial

According to Zarifi, media has to play two very important roles.

"One is that media should ask people, who are talking about the war crimes tribunal, whether they have asked the right people the right questions,

ment's duty to curb it, Zarifi said. "The government should ensure that everyone, whether in public, secular or religious high schools, is getting right kind of education, and that is very important."

"Again we go back to the notion that we need a very strong judiciary and a very strong security forces operating within human rights parameter to combat militancy," he added.

Sharing the experiences of Amnesty International around the world, Zarifi said very often the government creates an environment in which militancy thrives.

Sam Zarifi expressed deep concern as no resolve of the investigation into the mutiny by BDR jawans has been made public yet. He also called on the government to ensure right kind of education for all to combat militancy. He said the government should also ensure human rights of both BDR jawans and militants when they are in custody.

people involved in the crimes should be irrelevant," Zarifi said, adding that the issue of political status should not make a difference in the trial process.

"The political issues are something beyond the human rights issues. But except that we want to be absolutely clear that there would be no politicisation of the process and that it would not be used as a political weapon," he added.

Zarifi explained that these are the most complex criminal cases imaginable and the events of 1971 war involves millions of people.

He also stressed the need for training for judges, prosecutors and defence as the trial process involves dealing with specialised branch of law.

"There are some basic training that should be necessary for judges, for prosecutors and for defence. So, good training is absolutely necessary."

He also stressed the need

he said, adding, "The key function of media is to act as watchdog of people in power."

The second role of media is to inform the people of Bangladesh about the experiences of other peoples across the world by telling that there are widespread support for real justice process," he added.

Zarifi also urged media to ensure that criticisms about war crimes trial are not political and they are not designed to prevent the people of Bangladesh from having justice.

Media should also tell the people of Bangladesh that there are different models of war crimes tribunals and some of them have worked and some of them haven't, and let the people have a will in deciding what would be the shape of this process, Zarifi explained.

Militancy

With regard to rise of militancy in the country and the govern-

ment's duty to curb it, Zarifi said, "The government should ensure that everyone, whether in public, secular or religious high schools, is getting right kind of education, and that is very important."

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Inhabitants of Dhanmondi residential area form a human chain in front of the Dhanmondi Eidgah Masjid in the city yesterday demanding steps to free the area from traffic jam. Dhanmondi Abasik Elaka Kalyan Samity organised the programme.

Install nuclear reactors to meet growing energy crisis

Physicist Prof Harun urges govt

DU CORRESPONDENT

The government should take a bold stand on the installation of nuclear reactors in the wake of the growing energy crisis in the country, eminent physicist Prof AM Harun ar Rashid said yesterday.

"Bangladesh must have nuclear energy since we do not have any other sources of energy except the dwindling reserves of gas... And we must have it now," he said.

Prof Harun, also a UGC professor, said this at the inaugural session of the three-day international physics conference at Buet as the chief guest.

Bangladesh Physical Society (BPS) has organised the conference on 'Physics for sustainable development in the 21st century'.

BCL cadres hit journo with bricks on CU campus

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two cadres of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) injured Chittagong University (CU) Correspondent of the Daily Amar Desh Rashed Khan Menon by hitting him with bricks at CU Railway Station yesterday.

Rashed was getting on the Chittagong city-bound shuttle train to return home at around 3:30pm when BCL cadres Rakib and Sakib, both third year students of Zoology department, called him aside and swooped on him with bricks for some of his reports on BCL activities, sources said.

Rashed was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) with severe head injuries and he was bleeding heavily.

Chittagong University Journalists' Association (CUJA), Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) and Chittagong Metropolitan Union of Journalists (CMUJ) condemned the attack on Rashed and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Meanwhile, the university authorities sat in a meeting in the afternoon to take a decision regarding the incidents that took place on the university campus on Thursday night.

The meeting was going on till filling of this report at 5:45pm.

State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafes Osman in the session called on physicists, scientists and experts to utilise their knowledge to bring technologies close to common people.

"Technology is a must for the empowerment of people," he said, adding, "If people can accept technology, of course, they will see the signs of various development activities."

"Technology can change the people's minds and we have to feel it inside," the minister said as the special guest.

Osman assured the scientists of providing all-out cooperation to do anything good for the people as well as society.

"I don't think anything good would happen for himself or herself and society if someone keeps his or her merit hide," the minister said, urging the scientists to come forward with their researches for the well-being of the people and society.

Addressing the ceremony, Buet Vice Chancellor Prof AMM Safiullah urged the government to ensure that physicists get the required financial support to carry out researches in the particular field.

BPS President Dr CS Karim chaired the session which was also addressed by Prof Md Abu Hashan Bhuiyan.

Around 400 physicists from home and abroad are participating in the conference, which will end tomorrow.

Farakka Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The Historic "Farakka Long March Day" will be observed today with holding various programmes by different organisations.

On May 16 in 1976, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani led a massive long march from Rajshahi towards India's Farakka barrage, demanding demolition of the barrage constructed by the Indian government to divert flow of Ganges water inside its territory.

Thousands of people participated in the long march and staged demonstration protesting construction of the barrage.

National Awami Party (Nap) will organise a discussion at the National Press Club at 10:30am today.

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Former president Gregorian AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury inaugurates the three-day debating competition by releasing balloons on the school premises in the city yesterday.

Eastern Bank-St Gregory School Debate kicks off

DU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day 'Eastern Bank-St Gregory National School Debating Competition 2009' began in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Former president Gregorian AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury inaugurated the competition on the school premises as the chief guest.

Debaters from different reputed schools in the capital and district-level schools are participating in the contest organised by St Gregory's High School in association with its former debaters.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafiqul Islam is expected to be present at the concluding ceremony of the competition tomorrow.

Established 125 years ago, St Gregory's High School has become one of the most prominent education institutions in the country.

Some noted national and international personalities, including Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen, Bangladesh's first premier Tajuddin Ahmed, former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, educationist Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, CEC ATM Shamsul Huda, Brae University VC Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, ex-education

minister Dr Osman Faruq, ex-foreign adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury, economist Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, cricketer Raqibul Hasan and country's first neurologist Dr Rashid Uddin Ahmed were the students of the school.

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



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