

Step up regional cooperation to combat terrorism

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a regional workshop yesterday stressed the need for an institutional and sustainable form of regional cooperation to combat terrorism, saying that global terrorism risk is now increasing.

They also called for facilitating capacity-building of investigators and prosecutors and sharing information on terrorism among regional countries.

"Bangladesh will strictly ensure that its territory is not used by terrorist elements or organisations for activities against neighbouring countries," Home Minister Sahara Khatun told the inaugural session of the three-day workshop at a city hotel.

She also said Islamist extremism is a key aspect of the anti-liberation forces in Bangladesh. It is a tool to discredit and destroy the very idea of independent Bangladesh, which is that of a progressive, secular, liberal democracy.

In Bangladesh, the threat posed by Islamist extremism embodies the danger and risks posed by terrorism to any free society although the level of violence in Bangladesh is fortunately lower than in other countries, she said.

The government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism

Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED) jointly hosted the workshop titled 'Regional workshop for senior police officers and prosecutors in South Asia for effectively countering terrorism'.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organised it with the support of the governments of Australia and Denmark. Eighteen participants from eight Saarc-member countries are taking part in the workshop.

The home minister also said the political roots of terrorism have caused great mistrust and misunderstanding among South Asian countries.

"Extremist influences have, at times, polarised our societies to the extent of hostility towards neighbours," she said, adding that the countries of South Asia, therefore, have to urgently realise the need for a sincere commitment and engage in regional cooperation to counter terrorism.

Sahara Khatun also said the present government has advocated the formation of a South Asian Joint Taskforce to foster regional cooperation in combating terrorism.

Chaired by Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, the workshop was also addressed by Executive Director of UNCTED Mike Smith, Danish

Ambassador Einar Hebogaard Jensen, Australia's Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism Bill Paterson, BEI President Farooq Sobhan and Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes.

Mike Smith said since explosives and money used by terrorists knows no boundary, it needs cooperation among countries in the region and proper investigation into terrorist incidents.

Danish envoy Einar Hebogaard Jensen said, "South Asia is probably more vulnerable to terrorism than other region in the world. So, the countries in the region need concerted efforts to tackle terrorism."

He said the terrorists use one country for training, another for funding and the other for their safe haven, so regional cooperation is vital to combat terrorism effectively.

Bill Paterson said, "Terrorism is trans-national problem and it require trans-national solution."

He also suggested not acting against terrorism reactively, and stressed the need for more effective cross-border guarding among the countries.

BEI President Farooq Sobhan said terrorism topped the agendas of last three Saarc summits. Home ministers and secretaries and even police chiefs of the member countries held meetings,

SC stays HC order on Uttara plots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for a week a High Court order that directed the government and the Rajdhan Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) authorities to keep plots at Uttara 3rd phase project reserved for 130 people whose allotment were cancelled during the caretaker government.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Muzammel Hossain passed the interim stay order upon a petition filed by the government.

The Judge also asked the government to file a regular petition for leave to appeal against the High Court order.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, representing the government, told The Daily Star yesterday that there is now no bar to giving allotments of the 130 plots following the Supreme Court order.

Rajuk had allotted 4599 plots during the BNP-Jamaat government. Later, the caretaker government had cancelled the allotments and invited fresh application for allotment of 897 plots.

Some 130 litigants whose allotment of plots was cancelled filed writ petitions challenging the validity of Rajuk's action.

On November 4, following five applications filed by five writ petitioners, the High Court directed the government and the Rajuk authorities to keep 130 plots at Uttara 3rd phase reserved for 130 petitioners.



Gono Forum forms a human chain in the city yesterday demanding steps to ease traffic jam, control price hike of essentials, curb crimes and corruption and to resolve the power crisis.

Mamun's bail petition rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a bail petition of controversial businessman Gasuddin Al Mamun in connection with a money laundering case filed against him in October this year.

Third Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani passed the order after Mamun's lawyer submitted a petition seeking bail in the case.

Earlier on November 2, Mamun was shown arrested in the case after Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) submitted a petition.

ACC on October 26 filed a money laundering case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's eldest son Tarique Rahman and his business partner and associate Gasuddin Al Mamun.

The case statement said Tarique and Mamun are accused of laundering Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore between 2003 and 2007.

The joint forces arrested Mamun from his house at Banani DOHS on March 26 in 2007.

Later, police seized a 22 bore pistol and eight bullets from his house.

'Ensure participation of persons with disability in planning'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said involvement of disabled persons' organisations (DPOs) should be ensured in planning and projects for the persons with disabilities (PWDs) to facilitate the overall development of this community.

They said as DPOs are run with the participation of persons with disabilities, these organisations know the core crises of the disabled persons and they can fix proper steps for their own development.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) organised the discussion titled 'International cooperation and donors' support to disabled peoples' organisations in Bangladesh' at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) in the city.

Representatives from different DPOs across the country participated in the programme and described their crises and sufferings there.

Attending the function as the chief guest, Health Adviser to Prime Minister Dr Sayed Modasser Ali said ensuring dignity to persons with disabilities is a must for their development.

"If the persons with disabilities do not get their due rights, it

will be a betrayal of the electoral pledge of Awami League," he said, adding that the government is very sincere for the development of people with disabilities.

Dr Modasser stressed the need for involving the persons with disabilities in the decision-making level.

Rabeya Sultana, head of Rights and Social Justice of ActionAid Bangladesh, said the rate of education among children with disabilities is still not satisfactory.

Terming the government a friendly one for the people with disabilities, she said it is the time of taking some affirmative steps for the persons with disabilities in the country.

Pradip Ranjan Chakravarty of Jatiya Probandhi Unnayan Foundation said the foundation is going to introduce two hostels for the migrated male and female persons with disabilities.

Representatives of DPOs demanded that the existing act for the persons with disabilities and their participation be ensured in all committees and decision-making bodies.

Director of Harvard Project on Disability Michael Stein presented a keynote paper on the occasion moderated by ADD Country Director Mosharraf Hossain.

Announcement for distribution of uncollected Refund Warrants & Allotment Letters of Grameenphone Ltd.

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