

War trial

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huge manpower, the whole process might fail. We will advance gradually and the manpower is adequate for the current volume of work," he said.

He also mentioned that the government has already received evidence from abroad and many pieces of evidence were collected through diplomatic efforts.

The war crimes tribunal currently has about 40 staff in total including three judges, seven prosecutors, 15 investigators and 10 administrative people.

"The work has to be done in the same spirit that our people fought the Liberation War with. It is not everyday office, it has to be done with utter dedication," Shahrir Kabir said.

The War Crimes Tribunal does not have a research cell or library yet even though the main work of the tribunal is based on research.

The entire matter of the trial should be knowledge-based and maintaining international standards requires study of international literature about such trial.

While rumours and controversies are everywhere in the national and international arena about the trial and its historical background, the tribunal is still to get a fully-fledged public relations department, let alone a website and online archive containing all documents and papers related to relevant laws, history and government decision on the issue.

Investigators and prosecutors at the tribunal said the issue of war crimes trial is unique even in this sub-continent and they will need more time, as they want to ensure international standards of the trial.

Meanwhile, experts on such tribunals demanded formulation of witness protection act, sufficient training for the tribunal staff and holding of mock trial and discussions to get well prepared for the legal battle against experienced and world-reputed lawyers the anti-liberation war forces are planning to bring in.

Against this backdrop, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee is planning to take to the streets if the government does not solve the problems of the tribunal by this month.

Shumon Zahid, son of Akbarul Haque, who is a member of the evaluation committee, said, "The allegation was unfounded, there was no influence whatsoever."

Ron Haque Sikder, managing director of Sikder-KCC JV, told The Daily Star that they met the financial requirements and had sufficient work experience.

Communications minister Syed Abul Hossain in a letter to the finance minister yesterday said the allegations made by Sikder-KCC before opening the financial offer was baseless, and holding the press conference was intended to create misconception among people.

Abul Hossain told The Daily Star that if the bidder had had any grievances, it could have sought remedy from the Central Procurement Technical Unit, a government organisation responsible for carrying out the public procurement reform project.

3 army units to tackle quake crisis

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to form three separate teams within the Bangladesh Army to make the post-earthquake search and rescue operation quick and effective.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced the plans to deal with possible calamities after any strong earthquake at the equipment handing over ceremony at 14 Independent Engineer Brigade Training Ground to the Armed Forces Division, Fire Service, City Corporation and Coast Guard.

The three teams -- heavy, medium and light -- will be formed from the engineering corps, artillery, infantry and others considering their work ability and assets.

The prime minister said these teams would be provided with equipment and training for better operation.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque presided over the function addressed among others by Home Minister Sahara Khatun and Army Chief Gen M Abdul Mubeen.

Referring to the past rescue operations, Hasina said, "We have opted for procuring modern and effective rescue equipment as the present equipment is not sufficient to tackle any big disaster."

She said most of the multi-storyed buildings in the country are not constructed in compliance with the building code to absorb the earthquake.

The prime minister urged all concerned to strengthen their coordinated efforts in extending emergency services to the people hit by natural disasters.

In the petitions, they also sought bail from the court.

MK Rahman said the HC did not fix any date for giving order on the petitions of Mojahid, Kamaruzzaman and Kader Molla.

Five Jamaat leaders -- Nizami, Mojahid, Jamaat Nayeab-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayeede, Kamaruzzaman, and Quader Molla -- are now in prison with links to crimes against humanity.

The investigators and prosecutors have been probing their alleged involvement in the crimes.

The HC bench of justices Moeayeenul Islam Chowdhury and AKM Abdul Hakim rejected Nizami's petition on grounds that the tribunal has not formally started trial proceedings against him.

The HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain came up with the directives following the petition filed on December 12.

Bela filed the petition as supplementary to the original writ petition upon which the HC on March 17 last year directed the government to frame specific rules considering the relevant laws to prevent import of toxic ships.

In the recent petition, Bela alleged the government disregarded the earlier court order, allowing the ship breakers to continue their business by illegal means and that led to the death of 30 workers and maiming of 25 others in the last 18 months since the judgment was passed.

In yesterday's ruling, the HC bench also directed the government and the ship breakers to implement last year's HC verdict.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Iqbal Kabir Lyton appeared for Bela, while Rokanuddin Mahmud, Anisul Huq and Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh argued for the ship breakers.

He reiterated that the RTI should be included in the curricula of class eight, nine and ten.

"Students will play the role of a representative to spread message of the RTI to people," said Zamir. He further urged the media to come forward to create awareness about RTI.

Barrister Monzoor Hasan presided over the lecture while Jamil Ahmed, chief of JATRI, also addressed the gathering.

Claims Jamaat

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was in," he said, adding, "If he is not called a razakar after serving as a government employee during the war, why should we be called razakar although we speak for the people?"

The Jamaat secretary general was addressing a discussion marking the Victory Day. The Dhaka city unit of the party organised the discussion at the Jatiya Press Club.

"If Kabir Chowdhury is now called a freedom fighter then we also deserve to be called the same," the Jamaat leader said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Azharul Islam alleged that National Professor Kabir Chowdhury had links with the then Pakistan government in 1971.

He also claimed that the government has started trials of war criminals to hide their failure, divide the country and facilitate India in many ways.

"We also demand the trials of war criminals but don't get the wrong impression. We demand trials of the 195 identified Pakistani army personnel who killed three million people in the war," said the Jamaat leader.

The top brass of Jamaat-e-Islami, including its chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, are now being tried for crimes against humanity in 1971.

Terming the trial an ill motive to divide the country, Azhar yesterday said it would lead to a conflict and anarchy in the country.

On the Jamaat leader's remarks, Prof Kabir Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "It [Azhar's claim] is totally false. I worked for the liberation of Bangladesh even though I was a government employee then and such examples are not scarce in the history."

"The Pakistani army wanted me to sign a statement that said the situation of the then East Pakistan was calm and no genocide took place here. But, only Sufla Kamal and I kept from signing the statement although our lives were on the line. They [Pakistani occupation army] then printed a statement putting our names on it but there were no signature of us two," said Prof Kabir Chowdhury.

On the audacious comments by the same Jamaat leader on one of the sector commanders, Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiqullah, commander of S Force, yesterday told The Daily Star that the Jamaat leaders always try to confuse the people of the country, including the freedom fighters, with such comments.

"They can claim themselves freedom fighters if they want to. But they were the fighters on the Pakistani side and we accept that. That is why, I am for putting them behind bars," he said.

"I hope the market will cool down in a week," said Khan.

The state-owned commercial and Islamic banks were the lenders and private banks were the borrowers in yesterday's market.

Most NGOs

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said Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir yesterday.

"I will write to the NGO Affairs Bureau to cancel registration of those NGOs which are yet to appoint RTI officers," he said while addressing a gathering at a public lecture on Right to Information and Mass Media organised by Journalism Training and Research Institute (JATRI) at the city's Karwan Bazar.

About the challenges of implementing the RTI act, he said the grass-roots people do not have access to information because of the designated RTI officers not cooperating with them.

Besides, the corporate houses are not made accountable to people for their corporate social responsibilities by the act.

The corporate houses should be brought under the act, the information commissioner noted.

He also said 6.5 crore cellphone users will be made aware of RTI through short message services (SMS). An agreement will be signed with private mobile phone operator Robi very soon in this regard and agreement with Grameenphone is in the pipeline.

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Afghan attack kills 3 kids, Nato soldier

AP, Kabul

A bicycle bomb killed three children and wounded six civilians in southern Afghanistan yesterday at a camp for returning Mecca pilgrims, as it emerged that a civilian died in a Nato air strike.

The dead children were selling plastic and paper flowers when the blast struck at a camp near Kandahar city, the spiritual home of the Taliban, police told AFP.

Most of the wounded were taxi drivers waiting at the camp, which was clear of pilgrims at the time.

"Three children were killed and another six elders were wounded," provincial police chief General Mohammad Khan Mujahid told AFP.

Missing claim

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Tuesday's fire at the factory left 26 dead and at least 100 injured.

Relatives of a few were also seen looking for their loved ones at the factory gate and at hospitals and clinics in the area.

Ha-Meem Group Deputy General Manager Lt Col (ret'd) Delwar Hossain yesterday morning said they have so far found the bodies of 23 employees. And 52 workers have been injured.

He assured the demonstrators of searching hospitals and clinics to locate the missing ones. He also asked for specific information on the missing persons.

However, according to the registers kept at hospitals and clinics in Dhaka, Savar and Ashulia, the fire claimed the lives of at least 26 workers and injured over 100 others.

The Dhaka district administration handed over the bodies of 21 deceased from Dhaka Medical College morgue to their relatives through Magistrate Abul Bashar Md Fakruzzaman yesterday.

The fire-ravaged factory has been closed for two days to mourn the loss of the employees. A notice hung at the gate asked all employees to join work at 8:00am Friday.

Friday is the weekend and also a public holiday for the holy Ashura.

This sparked more protest from the workers. Ha-Meem Group Managing Director AK Azad said, "Production will resume although this Friday is a public holiday. The workers will work overtime with pay."

Azad, also the president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said they might face problems of delayed dispatch of deliveries to foreign buyers due to Tuesday's fire that swept through the ninth and 10th floors of the 11-storey factory.

He said, "The origin of the fire is still a mystery. I cannot yet say exactly where and how the fire began. Investigation is still on."

However, Delwar Hossain said they are guessing the fire began from a short circuit. He said the probe bodies would ascertain if it was an act of sabotage.

Three separate committees have been formed so far to probe the fire.

Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said a general diary has been lodged in connection with the fire at the Ha-Meem Group factory.

Green fund

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Most vulnerable countries like Bangladesh will be given priority to get access to this fund.

Under the long-term finance, the developed nations would contribute \$100 billion every year until 2020. This amount is additional to annual development aid.

The Bali Action Plan will be given priority in the use of the money.

The Green Climate Fund will be operated by a 24-member board with equal representation from the developed and developing countries. The World Bank will be working as a trustee of the fund for an interim period, said the state minister.

Activities of the World Bank will be reviewed within next three years and later on a decision would be taken whether to keep the World Bank as trustee or not, he added.

A 40-member Transitional Committee was constituted to make the Green Climate Fund effective. Fifteen from the developed countries and 25 from the developing nations would remain members of the Transitional Committee.

Of the 25 members from the developing nations, two members must come from the LDCs. Bangladesh has already gained its membership.

EC asks govt

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copies of NID cards for access to any service.

"But some departments, without any consultation with us, have already made it mandatory for people to show or submit copies of NID cards for access to their services. It led to a rise in the tendency for preparing fake NID cards," Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda told government officials.

He alleged that people are being harassed for failing to produce copies of NID cards to get services.

According to the EC, many banks have made submission of copies of NIDs mandatory for opening bank accounts. It is also a prerequisite for buying SIM cards of mobile phones.

Different departments including the Passport Directorate and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) have asked people to submit copies of NID cards with applications to get their services.

The EC has already prepared a database of about 8.50 crore voters and it can be used in 25 sectors, said, CEC Huda, flanked by election commissioners Muhammed Sohul Hussein and Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain.

He said the database is useful for identifying people and would help prevent criminal activities and forgery in many areas such as opening of bank accounts or purchase of

24 kids vie for 1 seat

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Students of class II to IX, however, will be enrolled through a 100-mark admission test.

The lottery system received a huge response from the guardians with 72,416 forms being sold against 7,551 seats in the city's 24 schools. Thirteen of the 24 schools have class I. Each form was sold at Tk 100.

According to the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), 36, 301 forms have been selected for the lottery against 1,500 seats in the 13 schools.

"This means, 24 students will have to try their luck for a seat in city schools that are on the priority list of limited income parents," said a DSHE official preferring anonymity.

Some 58,980 admission forms of class I to IX were sold last year.

"Since it's a luck test, everyone went for it. Even some guardians brought forms for their kids who are not eligible for class I in terms of their age," said a teacher of a city school.

Of the total selected, 7,544 forms have been selected in Government Laboratory High School, 6,530 in Motijheel Govt Boys' High School, 6,127 in Dhanmondi Govt Boys' High School, 1,230 in Mohammadpur Govt High School, 1,530 in Government Bigyan College High School, 2,356 in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Govt Boys' High School, 2,202 in Banglabazar Govt Girls' High School, 1,010 in Narinda Govt High School, 1,993 in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Girls' High School, 2,575 in Tejaon Govt Girls' High School, 753 in Gonobhaban Govt High School, 1,024 in Khilgaon Govt High School, and 1,367 in Tejaon Govt High School.

For the lottery, the DSHE divided the 13 schools in three groups.

Rejoinder

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Jamaat's publicity secretary Tasneem Alam, the party yesterday claimed that its secretary general did not accuse any country of killing intellectuals in 1971.

The statement also said that the remark The Daily Star used as of the secretary general's is the respective reporter's own opinion.

OURREPLY The Daily Star has the record of the speech made by ATM Azharul Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami acting secretary general.

We quoted him as saying, "The intellectuals had stayed in the country till December 14, 1971 as they felt safe here. They were against a war being fought from India. That big power realised that they won't become its agents."

"So, it cannot be said that the big power [India] was not behind the killings of intellectual as the trial for the crimes was not held."

The intellectuals were killed on December 14 but the Indian Army had already captured the entire capital on December 12, said Azharul Islam.

We stand by our report.

Tender sees

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But the ADB found flaws in NWPGC's bid evaluation related to a vital peaking power plant component called Hot Gas Path Inspection (HGPI), which is required for quick start of the plant.

As per the ADB's instruction to properly evaluate the bid by adding the cost of HGPI with other cost outlays, the lowest bidder turns out to be the Spanish company Isolux.

But the NWPGC is reluctant to award the contract to Isolux. It argues that if Isolux is given the job the upfront cost of plant construction would be higher than that of Shandong by \$56.5 million.

Most part of this extra fund will have to be arranged by the government which is the project's cosponsor anyway.

However, the NWPGC notes that the per kilowatt power generation cost in the two-decade plant life of Isolux is the lowest with Tk 5.63 lakh, while that of Shandong is the fourth lowest with Tk 5.69 lakh.

This means in the long run the NWPGC will gain significantly from Isolux's plant, which achieves the lowest price by giving the most efficient equipment, among others.

As per the bid evaluation criterion, the NWPGC is supposed to evaluate the lowest bidder on the basis of per kilowatt power generation cost, not just the plant construction cost.

The NWPGC on September 23 wrote to the ADB that Isolux's cost of project is \$160 million, and Shandong's around \$114 million. Shandong's project cost is close to that of the Sirajganj 150 MW peaking power project, which is also funded by the ADB and has

been awarded to another Chinese company on October 12.

However, the ADB found that argument to be flawed as well because the Sirajganj project will be gas-fired, while the Khulna project is dual fuel.

To avoid the ADB's evaluation dictates, the power ministry through the Economic Relations Division (ERD) in September in a letter to the ADB sought to relocate its financing for the Khulna project to the Sirajganj 150 MW project.

The ADB is financing \$110 million for both these projects under one package.

If the ADB accepted this idea, the NWPGC would have gone ahead with its own evaluation and award the contract to Shandong, as the ADB would not have any say on this tender.

The ADB rejected the idea and asked the NWPGC to send its evaluation report for its review.

Following its review, the ADB on Tuesday wrote to the NWPGC, "We have reviewed your submission and note that the evaluation of the recommended bid, with regard to the HGPI spares, was not consistent with the technical bid. We are therefore unable to concur with your proposal to award the contract to Shandong Electric..."

"We further note that when re-evaluated by NWPGC, Isolux Ingeneria ... was found as the lowest evaluated bidder. We would therefore advise you to declare Isolux Ingeneria... of Spain to be the lowest evaluated substantially responsive bidder and award the contract to this bidder," the ADB said.

The NWPGC is expected to make its announcement soon, sources say.