

DU syndicate
polls today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The syndicate election of Dhaka University will be held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban from 10:00am to 1:00pm today.

A total 1,950 teachers will elect five representatives for the provost, professor, associate professor, assistant professor and lecturer categories to represent them in the university syndicate for two years.

Since two faculty deans were yet to be elected, as per the university rules, election in the dean category will be held later this year.

DUTreasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman will conduct the election where the pro-Awami League Blue panel and pro-BNP White panel are contesting.

The Blue panel comprises Prof Muhammed Akhteruzzaman (provost), Prof Sahid Akhtar Hussain (professor), Muhammad Aftab Ali Sheikh (associate professor), Akram Hossain (assistant professor) and Rezwana Haque Khan (lecturer).

Meanwhile, Lutfar Rahman (provost), Prof Tasmyr SA Islam (professor), Dr Hasanuzzaman (associate professor), Dr Muhammad Mainul Islam (assistant professor) and Mazarul Anwar (lecturer) comprise the White panel.

The academic council polls will also be held under two categories -- three representatives each for associate professor and assistant professor.

The Blue panel associate professors are Sheikh Hafizur Rahman, Chandranath Paddar and Tazin Aziz Chowdhury and assistant professors are Muhammad Bahauddin, Muhammad Mainul Karim and Suriya Begum.

On the other hand, the White panel associate professors are Dr Muhammad Aslam Hossain, Dr Muhammad Kamruzzaman and Dr Muhammad Abdul Karim and assistant professors are Muhammad Abdus Salam, Muhammad Daud Khan and Kazi Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman.

The last syndicate election was held on March 4, 2010.

Defamation case against ETV chairman, four others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A defamation case was filed here yesterday against the chairman of private television channel Ekushey Television (ETV) and five others demanding Tk 200 crore in damages.

Director of Sanowara Group of Companies Mujibur Rahman, also son of Awami League (AL) lawmaker Nurul Islam BSc, filed the case with the court of First Joint District Judge Md Bahauddin Ahmad on charges of telecast of a report under a programme titled 'Onusandhan' on March 2 and 3 this year.

Mujibur in his complaints said the report was based on false, frivolous, manipulated and concocted information on the housing project titled 'Sanowara City' at Dhalipara at North Chandaon in the port city.

Four other accused were Major (Retd) Rezaul Karim, General Manager (HR & Administration), Mahatir Faruqi, senior reporter, Faruk Hossain, staff reporter and Md Osman, reporter of ETV.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

Bangladesh Electronic Merchants Association will organise a discussion; Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel; Time: 4:30pm.

Discussion

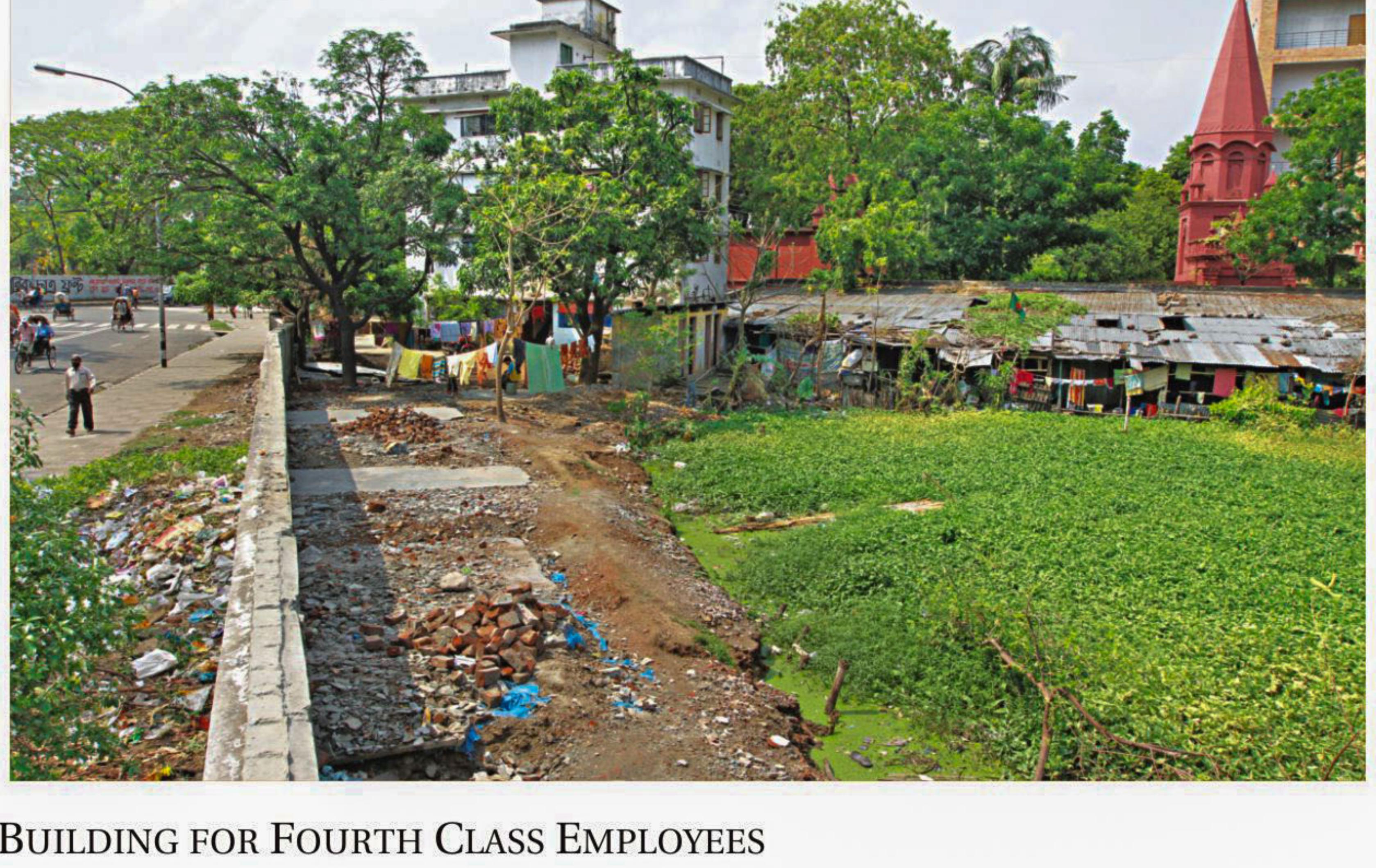
Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation will hold a discussion; Venue: Ruposhi Bangla Hotel; Time: 2:00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies will organise a discussion; Venue: Hotel Lakeshore; Time: 3:00pm.

Protest rally

Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh will organise a protest.



Water hyacinths and garbage litter this century-old pond, right, situated behind the Dhaka University medical centre and next to Shivbari Staff Quarter. A major portion of the pond is being planned to be filled for the construction of a 20-storied building. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

**AUG 21 ATTACK CASES
MK Alamgir, Yusuf to give deposition May 27**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and CID Inspector Abu Hena Md Yusuf will give their statements on May 27 as prosecution witnesses before a Dhaka court in connection with August 21 grenade attack cases.

Earlier in the day, the court completed recording cross-examination of Sharif Faruque Ahmed, a former sub-inspector of Motijheel Police Station, also a complainant of the cases.

Fixing the date, Judge Shahid Nuruddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 yesterday asked former state minister for planning MK Alamgir and Yusuf to give their deposition in connection with the cases on the day.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) included MK Alamgir and Yusuf in the charge sheets as the prosecution witnesses on July 3 in 2011 since they were present at the rally on Bangabandhu Avenue when the grenade attack was carried out in 2004.

So far, the court recorded the statements of 61 prosecution witnesses in the cases.

Twenty-six of 52, including former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahed, now in custody, were produced before the court while seven other accused including former Dhaka City Corporation ward councillor Ariful Islam Arif, now on bail, were also present at the court.

Twenty-four people, including Awami League leader Ivy Rahman, were killed and around 200 others injured in the grisly grenade attack on an AL rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004. The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

BUILDING FOR FOURTH CLASS EMPLOYEES

DU plans filling of century-old pond

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY AND PALASH RAHMAN

Defying environmental laws, the Dhaka University authorities are planning to fill up a major portion of a century-old pond at Shivbari Staff Quarter on the campus to construct a multi-storied residential building for DU fourth class employees.

Experts have opined that erecting high-rises on marshy land instead of regular ground makes the structures more vulnerable to earthquakes.

As per a DU syndicate decision taken in December, 2011, the 20-storied building, to be named "Bangabandhu Tower", will be constructed on a 3,550 square feet of land.

The Daily Star correspondents, visiting the proposed site recently, found a large portion of the pond adjoining the site, behind the university medical centre and next to Shivbari Staff Quarter, already encroached upon by DU employees.

At least six tin-shed houses were standing on land which was once the north-west and northern part of the pond, the water of which was rendered useless with years of negligence and came to be covered with

water hyacinths and aquatic plants.

Ten more houses formerly stood at the southern end of the pond but they were taken down following the construction decision, said the area's residents, adding that the fourth class employees were extensively pressing for the building.

DU Fourth Class Employees Union General Secretary Toffazzal Hossain said the building would be constructed on the pond's west end, a portion of which has already been filled up.

"Only four or five yards of the pond might be used up," he added.

But the area's residents and these correspondents thought it would be impossible to construct a 3,550 square feet building on the available land without encroaching upon a major portion of the pond.

Mohammad Mostafa, President, Employees Welfare Association of Shivbari Staff Quarter, said the association submitted a letter to the vice chancellor a year ago requesting the authorities not to fill up the pond for a building as the employees were cultivating fish in it.

"But the university authorities did not pay

heed to our prayer," he said.

Requesting anonymity, one association member said they were refraining from protesting against the decision on the construction site as it might take away their chances of suitable residences. Moreover, they are no longer cultivating fish there, he said.

The Environmental Conservation Law 1995 (amended in 2010) says that filling up any water body without taking prior approval from the Department of Environment is a punishable offence, subject to fine and jail.

As per the Wetland and Open Space Conservation Act, 2000, no structure can be erected by filling up wetlands, said Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon General Secretary Dr Abdul Matin.

He blamed the absence of a master plan for constructing structures on the campus.

Without piling deep into the ground, the building will not be stable on the marshy land, said architect Iqbal Habib, adding that such construction hikes costs by up to 25 to 30 percent.

DU Superintendent Engineer Mofizul Islam said, "A small portion of the pond will be used up in building the tower and we will

preserve the rest of the pond with due care."

On whether the authorities had an environmental clearance certificate, he said, "It is not a pond actually but a pile of waste. It is rather harming the environment."

Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, over phone on April 10, termed the pond "a ditch".

"The ditch remains unused and dirty. So the university authorities are going to construct a building on it and surround it with a scenic landscape which will enhance the aesthetic appeal of the entire area," he said.

The building would be constructed recalling the contributions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the movement of the fourth class employees in 1949, added Prof Arefin.

DU officials said the building would cost Tk 23.50 crore to build, around 50 percent of which will come from the government while the rest will be had from the university fund.

The tender for the construction had already been floated and they expect to begin work by June this year. Initially, 10 floors will be constructed for 72 families, added the officials.

Kuwait cracks down on errant foreign workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kuwaiti police have arrested hundreds of foreign workers, including Bangladeshis, for violating residency laws, links with prostitution and involvement in illegal businesses in the last few days.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait has confirmed that there were a few Bangladeshis among the arrestees, Begum Shamsunnahar, director general of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), told The Daily Star yesterday.

Yesterday only 149 expats, including 65 women, were arrested in raids against suspected prostitution dens in the oil-rich Gulf emirate, reported emirates 247.com, an online newspaper.

The crackdown on vice will be intensified to end such illegal practices in

apartments and houses, a police source said.

Meanwhile, Arab Times on Saturday reported that police had arrested 703 expatriates during raids over a few days

Kuwait had deported 44 Bangladeshis two weeks ago for overwriting on handwritten passports

against illegal residency, non-compliance with domestic law, illegal international telephone booths, drug addiction and theft of electricity and other public facilities. The arrestees

also include those accused in different cases.

There are around four lakh Bangladeshis in Kuwait, a state that froze recruitment of workers from here in 2006, citing malpractices in the recruitment system. Later, it said it would resume recruitment only after enacting strict laws, but is yet to open the market.

Shamsunnahar said Kuwait had deported 44 Bangladeshis two weeks ago, for overwriting on handwritten passports.

"Kuwait is getting stricter and modern in tracking forgeries. It recently installed machines to detect forgery," she said, adding the 44 had been advised to get machine readable passports to go to Kuwait.

Lift ban, recruit manpower from Bangladesh

Dipu Moni urges Kuwait

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has urged Kuwait to lift its ban on manpower recruitment and recruit skilled manpower from Bangladesh.

She made the request when a three-member Kuwaiti delegation, led by Director General for Asian countries of Kuwait Foreign Ministry Mohammad Ahmad Al-Mejren Al-Rumai, called on her on May 17 during their three-day visit to Bangladesh.

In response, the Kuwaiti director general assured full cooperation and said Kuwait would encourage skilled manpower, especially in the technical fields including professionals like doctors, engineers and nurses.

Dipu Moni also requested Kuwait to invest in infrastructure projects in Bangladesh and import products such as readymade garments, pharmaceuticals, jute items, leather, and others from the country.

She invited the Kuwait foreign minister to visit Bangladesh, said a foreign ministry press release yesterday.

In response, the Kuwaiti delegation assured her of actively considering the issue.

During their visit from May 17-19, the delegation also called on Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Engr Khander Mosharraf Hossain and discussed issues relating to manpower and labour.

During another meeting, Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi told the delegation that investment-friendly opportunities prevail in Bangladesh, particularly in the fields of power generation, exploration of gas and oil in the offshore, education (establishing international level universities) and other mega infrastructure projects.

Earlier on May 17, the delegation had a bilateral meeting with Director General (West and Central Asia) of Bangladesh Foreign Ministry Nazrul Islam.

Hold trial of law enforcers who attacked teachers

Demand eminent citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifteen eminent citizens of the country yesterday demanded trial of the law enforcers who took on an "attacking attitude" to stop a recent rally of primary school teachers and suggested proper training on human rights for law enforcers.

In a statement, they also demanded formation of a "permanent salary commission" for the teachers and a gradual increase of their financial benefits.

Expressing shock over the "violent methods" used on the teachers, they said everyone knows about the financial constraints of teachers, especially of primary schools.

Bangladesh is accountable to the international pledge over ensuring primary education. There is a law making primary education compulsory in the country and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman nationalised the country's primary education system, they said.

The present Awami League government,

during the election, pledge to nationalise the jobs of primary school teachers, they said.

Though the nationalisation process requires a huge amount of money and the country suffers from inflation, the government should consider implementing the pledge as quality teachers and primary education are essential in shaping up human skill, they said.

They also requested the teachers to refrain from taking any steps, in their attempts to press home their demand, which might adversely affect students.

The statement's signatories are Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Prof Anisuzzaman, Dr Kazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Prof Ajay Roy, Prof Hayat Mamud, Prof Nazrul Islam, Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, Ramendu Majumdar, Prof Mahfuz Khanam, Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Prof Syed Manzur Islam, Prof Sadeka Halim, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Rasheda K Chowdhury and Prof Shafiq Ahmed.

Bookshop looted

UNB, Dhaka

A group of miscreants allegedly took away Tk 7 lakh from a bookshop after dragging one of its employees at Kadamtoli in the capital yesterday.

Hospital sources said Matiur Rahman, an employee of Kazi Library near Kadamtoli Police Station, was found unconscious inside the shop at noon.

He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 1:45pm.

Kazi Mostafa Kamal, owner of the bookshop, told reporters that the criminals looted Tk 7 lakh from the shop.

Miscreants might have fed him food with sedative drugs to make him unconscious. Later, they decamped with the money, Kamal said.

"We do not want that media would speak in favour of us. Rather, we want that they would speak right things," said Mainul.

Coordination between armed forces and media stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lt Gen Md Mainul Islam, chief of general staff of Bangladesh Army, yesterday said there will be no scope of "misunderstanding" between media and the army if they maintain coordination.

Mainul Islam said, "Every organisation has more or less faults. If there is coordination between what we want and what media demand, there will create no scope of misunderstanding."

He was speaking at a seminar titled "Armed Forces and Mass Media" organised by the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) at the Trust Auditorium of the Dhaka Cantonment.

Officials from Army, Navy, Air Force and journalists from different print and electronic media took part in the daylong seminar aimed at developing relationship between media and the armed forces as well as to develop defence journalism.

"We do not want that media would speak in favour of us. Rather, we want that they would speak right things," said Mainul.

He, however, admitted various weak-

nesses in providing right information on time after any incident takes place. But he said their higher authorities are trying to recover from the "flaws."