

No support to anti-liberation forces: Acting Indian envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India will never give support to the anti-liberation forces in Bangladesh, said acting Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sandeep Chakravorty yesterday.

He conveyed this as a decision of the Indian government's highest levels in support of the liberation war spirit of Bangladeshis.

The Indian envoy was addressing a discussion organised by the ruling Awami League (AL) at Suhrawardi Udyan in the capital.

He said, "We had commitment for the independence of Bangladesh and we have commitment that Bangladesh will emerge as a developed country."

India highly appreciated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's move to honour those Indian people who had helped Bangladesh during its Liberation War in 1971, he added.

Addressing the discussion, Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir said the government will take strong action against those who will resort to vandalism or bomb blasts in the name of hartal today.

He also urged all to remain united against the anti-liberation forces and the BNP-led 18-party alliance which, what he said, might try to foil the ongoing war crimes trial.

Former Bangladeshi home minister Mohammad Nasim chaired the discussion while Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander A Nikolaev also addressed it.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with graduates of the National Defence Course-2012 and guests at the graduation ceremony held at Mirpur Cantonment in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

13 women freedom fighters honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a terrible time--her motherland was attacked and thousands of women were facing extreme tortures. So the 19-year-old girl rose against the Pakistani army and went to the battlefield vowing to protect her motherland as well as herself.

The teenage girl who took arms in hands to liberate her homeland in 1971 is now a 50-year-old woman, Dr Nibedita Daspurkayasta. She was honoured yesterday for her contributions in the Liberation War.

Speaking at her reception programme, Dr Nibedita said, "Whenever a child is born, it has an obligation to its mother and motherland. It was that obligation and spirit that drove me into the Liberation War."

"At every instant, we faced dangers and thought it to be the last moment of my life," she recalled.

Hundreds of women, who fought the battle against the Pakistani army, went through similar experiences as Nibedita did during the nine-month war.

Jatiya Mohila Sangstha yesterday accorded reception to 13 of those women freedom fighters, two of them posthumously, in the capital's Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib auditorium on the occasion of Victory Day.

Addressing the function as chief guest, Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury called for publishing a book compiling the experiences of women freedom fighters, which, she said, would inspire the young generation.

State Minister for Women and Children Affair Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Jatiya Maohila Sangstha Chairman Prof Momtaj Begum, among others, spoke on the occasion.

The other honoured freedom fighters are Nurunnahar Zahur (posthumous), Begum Amina Mansur (posthumous), Rawshan Ara Shiri, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Nasibun Ahmed, Prof SM Anwara Begum, Sultana Ferdous Ara Khanam (Doly), Rekha Shah, Rasheda Islam Mahua, Sapna Dutta, Begum Fazilatunnesa, and Zobeda Khatun Parul MP.

Two trust funds set up at DU

UNB, Dhaka

Two trust funds -- Mustafizur Rahman Khan-Saleha Khanam Memorial Fund and Prof Mahfuza Khanam-Barrister Shafiq Ahmed Trust Fund -- have been set up at Dhaka University (DU).

DU senate and syndicate member Prof Mahfuza Khanam, also daughter of late Mustafizur Rahman Khan, handed over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to DU Treasurer Prof Kamal Uddin at a ceremony in the Vice-Chancellor's office recently for setting up of the two trust funds.

The trust funds will support scholarships for four male and four female highest scorers from the Departments of Banking, Women and Gender Studies, Physics and Law.

PADMA BRIDGE GRAFT CONSPIRACY

ACC orders arrest of 4 accused Bangladeshis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has ordered its investigating team to arrest four Bangladeshis who have been sued along with three Canadian nationals for their alleged roles in a graft conspiracy in the Padma bridge project.

ACC Commissioner Mohammad Shahabuddin yesterday announced the arrest order to journalists at the commission's office in the capital.

The commissioner said they have already sent copies of the case statement to the World Bank Headquarters yesterday for their perusal.

"The investigation team has been directed to take necessary steps so that no accused can leave the country," he added.

However, a source in ACC told The Daily Star that the commission will soon hold a meeting to take a decision regarding arrest of Mosharraf Hossain, an accused in the case and former secretary of the Bridges Division.

The source said another accused, Mohammad Mostofa, is currently residing in the US.

Mostofa is the deputy managing director of Engineering and Planning Consultant, a local agent of Canadian firm SNC Lavalin.

The other two accused -- Kazi Mohammad Ferdous, superintendent engineer of Bangladesh Bridge Authority, and Reaz Ahmed Zaber, executive engineer of Roads and Highway Department, - are on the run.

The three Canadian nationals accused in the case are SNC Lavalin officials Mohammad Ismail, Ramesh Shah and Kevin Wales.

Regarding steps against the three Canadians accused, an ACC high officials said the commission will take steps through the foreign ministry.

The WB cancelled its US\$ 1.2 billion funding on June 29 this year, saying it had proof of a "corruption conspiracy" involving Bangladeshi officials, executives of a Canadian firm and some other individuals.

The global lender on September 21 decided to revive the loan after the Bangladesh government agreed to its terms and conditions.

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