

# Govt won't use DGFI for political purpose: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her firm stance of not using the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) for political purposes.

She asked the DGFI men to protect the constitution of the country in the face of all kinds of threats.

"You have to keep yourselves always ready to protect the sovereignty of the country," she said while speaking at the PM's Darbar at DGFI headquarters in Dhaka.

Talking about the use of the force for political purposes, she said a vested quarter which had seized power illegally used this force rampantly to cling to power.

As a result, the reputation of the DGFI got tarnished, she said, adding: "People have lost their confidence and trust in the organisation."

After going to power in 1996, the Awami League-government had decided not to use the DGFI politically and took steps to have its lost glory restored.

"But after 2001, unfortunately the BNP-Jamaat government again used the organisation politically," she told her audience.

At the Darbar, Hasina appreciated the role of the force in containing the activities of various militant organisations through providing intelligence reports.

"We want to maintain good relations with all our neighbours. Like other forces, the DGFI should be well-equipped to launch counter attacks if we are attacked by others," she added.

Amid applause by the audience, the premier announced a 30 percent

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Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, Gazipur district administration and police deploy a handful of workers to evict Turag river encroachers near Ashulia yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Turag drive proved farcical

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became apparent during the drive. The executive magistrate and on-duty police official differed with the BIWTA officials on encroachment.

Sub-Inspector Mannan of Dhaka range police was heard arguing with the BIWTA officials, saying: "The High Court ordered the eviction (of illegal structures) and not anyone's arrest."

When this correspondent pointed out that an HC judgment in 2009 had ordered the police to keep rivers under constant surveillance, Mannan said, "Did any such order reach the hands of police?"

Mohammad Abdus Salam, executive magistrate of Gazipur, said "It is not possible to get the exact location of a river or wetland without a survey."

The authorities began the drive by removing earth filling on a nearly one acre area in the middle of the river. There were also reinforced concrete pillars and strong timber fencing in the area owned by some Major Alam.

A single excavator was deployed to carry out the task without any proper technical plan that paved the way for contradictory statements among the officials involved in the drive.

At one stage of the drive, BIWTA

Director Md Abul Bashar began shouting at BIWTA assistant director Bashir Ali Khan for giving wrong directives to the excavator driver and delaying the work.

"I will never come to conduct such farcical drama in the name of eviction," said an angry Bashar. "I was told that 50 labourers equipped with heavy hammers were hired but I do not see even five of them."

About the inadequacy of equipment and manpower, BIWTA Joint Director Saiful Islam told The Daily Star, "We need a tugboat to pull down reinforced concrete walls built on the river. But we cannot mobilise such a

boat due to several low-height bridges across the river."

He said the BIWTA had targeted three major encroachments, including the sand filling area, a 16,000-square feet concrete wall erected by the East West University authorities and Shajid Washing Ltd in Machhimpur mouja.

The authorities, however, could only break the concrete pillars on the sand filling area yesterday.

Earlier in 2009, the joint authorities carried out an eviction drive in the Gazipur part of the Turag. Most of the evicted encroachers along with many new ones have come back, said Saiful.

### GRENADE BLAST

## 9 army men hurt during training

STAR REPORT

At least nine army personnel were injured when two grenades went off accidentally during a training session at a cantonment in Dinajpur yesterday. This was the second military accident in a little over three months' time.

Four of the injured were flown to Dhaka Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in a critical state, reports our Dinajpur and Rangpur correspondents, quoting sources.

Captain Mursalin Haque, staff officer at Shaheed Mahub Army Cantonment in Parbatipur, confirmed the incident.

The other injured were admitted to

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## Muhith blames Khaleda for lower growth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday blamed BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her party for this fiscal year's lower economic growth.

He said private investment faced serious setbacks at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 2013) due to frequent hartals and violence.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a workshop, "Development Challenges of Bangladesh: Where are the news stories?" jointly organised by the World Bank (WB) and Economic Reporters' Forum at Sonargaon Hotel.

"Hartal is intolerable; it must be prevented at any cost," said Muhith, "Otherwise, there won't be investment."

The WB has projected this fiscal

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## Green energy

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"The numbers are set to increase further due to higher installation rate," said the Dubai based intergovernmental organisation in its latest annual review.

The increase is expected despite the fact that 62 percent of the population have access to the national power grid as of September 2013. In 2009, only 47 percent had this access, according to data from the Power Division.

Solar power is increasingly becoming a way to leapfrog the need to build a bigger power grid.

Bangladesh was able to generate those jobs mainly due to a growing popularity of solar home systems, said Mahmood Malik, chief executive of the Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (IDCOL).

The IDCOL's programme of solar home systems has itself created around 50,000 green jobs directly and indirectly in the country, he said, adding that a strong backward linkage industry has already developed centring their programme.

IDCOL, with financial support from the World Bank, started the programme in 2003.

"Regional shift from developed to emerging countries continued in wind and solar technologies, predominantly in the manufacturing and installation segments of the value chain," the IRENA report stated.

Solar photovoltaic and wind power remain the most dynamic renewable energy technologies.

Solar energy accounted for 2.3 million of the world's 6.5 million renewable energy-related jobs in 2013, which was 5.7 million jobs in 2012, according to the report.

China remains the largest employer in the renewable energy sector with 2.6 million people working in renewable energy.

In 2013, the installation of 13 gigawatts of solar photovoltaic cemented China's position in solar power globally. The Chinese solar photovoltaic value chain employed 1.6 million people that year.

Brazil is the second largest green job generator with 894,000 people employed in renewable energy jobs in 2013. About 70 percent of those positions are related to biofuel production.

The United States came in third with 625,000 renewable energy jobs. Solar, wind and biofuels accounted for most of those jobs.

India employed nearly 400,000 people in green-energy jobs.

Germany remains the dominant force in Europe, despite having suffered some job losses. The latest statistics from 2013 indicate that the country has 371,000 direct and indirect green jobs.

Once a renewable energy pioneer, Spain has been hit hard by the economic crisis, and adverse policy changes continue to damage employment prospects there.

Spain employed 114,000 people in green-energy jobs. Altogether, the country lost about 23,700 jobs in the renewable energy sector between 2008 and 2012.

## Witness testifies against Subhan

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During his 32-minute testimony, Israil, a resident of Uttar Baghair village under Ishwardi in Pabna, said the Pakistani army accompanied by Subhan had entered their village in the morning on April 13.

"The Pakistan army started torching the houses [in the village] upon direction of Moulana Subhan. They also opened fire [at that time]," said Israil.

The 57-year-old witness said his mother Tulu Begum had earlier shown him Subhan when the latter went to their locality to seek votes for 'scale', the symbol of Jamaat, in the 1970 election.

Israil said like other villagers, he, his mother and paternal uncle Taizuddin had tried to escape, but Subhan caught them and boarded them into a Pakistani army vehicle.

Three other people were also boarded on the same truck, which had taken them to Juktitala Primary School, said Israil, adding, they found

three other detainees there and all nine were lined up on the school premises.

"I saw Subhan discussing something with the Pakistani soldiers," said Israil.

At one stage, two men had suddenly run, said Israil, adding, "Subhan Moulana fired at them with his pistol, leaving one dead on the spot and hitting the other, who collapsed in a ditch."

Two Pakistani army men had approached the second victim and shot him dead, added Israil.

"The Pakistan army then opened fire on us upon instruction from Subhan Moulana. I fell down on the ground and fainted," said Israil, who was bullet-hit in the abdomen and left thigh and showed the injury marks to the judges yesterday.

The witness said a bullet also hit his mother in the leg, but she survived.

He had regained consciousness around 4:30pm and seen his cousin Korban Ali, who told him that he took Israil, his mother and one Rustam Ali

to Dr Tariqul in Ruppur village, said the witness, adding, his cousin had told him that others were killed in the shooting.

Israil said he had recovered completely, but his mother had become physically disabled.

"... I want his [Subhan] execution," said Israil as he identified Subhan, who, as usual, was frequently watching a computer monitor set up inside the dock showing the recording of the testimony.

Defence lawyer Asadul Islam asked the witness a single question before the three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahinur Islam adjourned the proceedings until today.

Israil is set to face cross-examination today.

Earlier, the tribunal completed recording the cross-examination of Rustam Ali and Gour Prosad Roy, the latter being the 12th prosecution witness in the case against Syed

## Widen inquiry against Rab

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"After years of refusing to investigate Rab, the government has changed course and reacted quickly to the Narayanganj murders," said Adams.

"This is welcome and hopefully marks a shift away from years of impunity for the Rab and other security forces," he added.

The rights organisation has long been documenting the Rab's responsibility for extrajudicial killings and torture, the HRW claims.

Most recently, the HRW docu-

mented the deaths of 11 opposition activists before, during, and after the January 5 national elections. The Bangladesh media reported several more. In six of the cases documented by the organisation, the authorities admitted security forces had initially detained the victims, and that the victims had been shot dead while in custody, the letter mentioned.

Disbanding the Rab is now being openly discussed in Bangladesh, the organisation said, adding that BNP

Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who established the Rab while in government, has now called for its elimination.

"This is a good opportunity for Bangladesh to deliver on its longstanding promise of zero-tolerance for human rights violations by security forces," said Adams.

"Rab should be disbanded and replaced with a fully civilian force that operates under the rule of law and has external oversight. Death squads have no place in a democracy," he concluded.

## 274 dead in Turkey coal mine fire

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figure could be far higher.

Erdogan said enquiries would be launched into the causes of the disaster, but insisted that "such accidents happen".

He also appeared to downplay the seriousness of the accident, comparing it to other mining disasters elsewhere, saying "204 people died in the UK in 1862 and 361 people in 1864".

"There is something in literature called work accidents."

But hundreds of distraught family and friends gathered near the building where Erdogan gave a press conference were outraged, with some kicking his vehicle and calling for his resignation as he left.

Public anger also erupted on the streets over the accident which had claimed at least 245 lives -- most by carbon monoxide poisoning.

Police used tear gas and water canon to disperse between 3,000 and 4,000 protesters in Ankara's downtown Kizilay Square on Wednesday evening.

Riot police also clashed with thousands of protesters in Istanbul who were chanting anti-government slogans as they marched along the city's main

shopping street Istiklal.

Earlier in the day, they also used tear gas against around 800 students marching on the energy ministry, and 50 protesters who threw eggs at the mining research directorate in Istanbul, AFP photographers reported.

The disaster risks adding to the political pressure on Erdogan, who faced mass protests last summer and a huge corruption scandal involving his family and key allies in recent months.

"If the claims of negligence at the mine prove true, it will have a political price. Such a development would render corruption allegations targeting Erdogan's government more convincing," Professor Ilter Turan of Istanbul's Bilgi University told AFP.

'NO MORE HOPE'

Three days of national mourning have been declared, while at the scene of the accident, fires and toxic gases were complicating increasingly desperate efforts by 400 rescue workers.

A miner from a different site who joined the effort, Murat Kurkoglu, told AFP: "We will try to save those who are still stuck one by one, but you know very well that there is no more hope.

It's finished for them."

Earlier reports said 787 workers were underground when the blast occurred. By late Wednesday, "close to 450" workers had been rescued, according to the mine operator, Soma Komur Inc, but accounts from rescue workers cast doubt over the numbers.

"There are pockets of air, but it's only a glimmer of hope because so far ... it's mostly the dead that we are bringing out," Erdem Bakin, a doctor with the Search and Rescue organisation, told AFP.

"We don't go more than 100 metres from the bottom of the mine. It's impossible to go right to the bottom because of the risk of asphyxiation from the gas."

Bakin said they found the transformer that exploded, triggering the collapse. Those between the transformer and the entrance of the mine -- around 70-80 people -- survived.

"But those who were beyond were taken by the fire and they are all dead," he said.

Harun Unzar, a miner at the site, said: "We are a family and today that family is devastated. We have had very little news

## Danger of mobile

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of developing glioma and meningioma tumours compared with people who rarely used their phones, they found.

The study, appearing in the latest issue of British journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine, is the latest in a long-running exploration of mobile-phone safety.

Over the past 15 years most investigations have failed to turn up conclusive results either way, although

several have suggested a link between gliomas and intensive, long-term use.

"Our study is part of that trend, but the results have to be confirmed," said Isabelle Baldi, of the University of Bordeaux in southwestern France, who took part in the study.

The new study looked at 253 cases of glioma and 194 cases of meningioma reported in four French departments between 2004 and 2006.

involving in business with the government."

On behalf of the TIB, Dhaka University professors Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman and Sumaiya Khair conducted the study. They jointly presented the summary of the study at the press conference.

The report said the ruling parties almost always focus on establishing hegemonic control over the use of public resources to further partisan interests under the facade of public interest.

"Despite an elaborate legal framework that provides the basis of democratic functioning of political parties, compliance is weak," it said.

The political system has undergone a process of "criminalisation and commercialisation". Devoid of transparency, political party funds are collected under duress or by extending favour.

The public administration faces serious challenges, including poor remuneration, weak accountability and corruption. It has been politicised over the years. Many civil servants have been made officers on special duty by successive governments on political considerations.

The report said the judiciary has been

increasingly subjected to political manipulation under successive governments. Its independence is often found compromised by controversial appointments, promotions, removals, and conduct of judges.

The local government has also been under direct or indirect control of parliamentarians, and its leadership is also politicised and suffer from an image crisis for alleged corrupt practices.

Over the years, the police have drawn flak for their failure to protect citizens. Governments and major political parties have used the force indiscriminately for serving their interests.

According to the report, structural, institutional and political factors have affected the overall performance and effectiveness of the Anti-Corruption Commission, dubbed as a "toothless tiger".

The ACC lacks strong political will. Besides, it has been inactive in respect of allegations against ruling party men, and also unwilling to initiate suo moto enquiries, it said.

Largely owned by big business houses, the media has become politicised over the years. It is evident from biased reports and analysis that reflect corporate