Uphold spirit of Liberation War

Say speakers at Indo-Bangla seminar, call for fighting terrorism, extremism

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh and India yesterday called for upholding the spirit of the 1971 Liberation War to take the bilateral ties to newer heights and combat the menace of terrorism and religious extremism.

The spirit and values of the Liberation War were essential for continuing Bangladesh's journey along the path of non-communalism, said Bangladesh's visiting Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq.

The previous government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina embarked on that path after assuming power in 2009, he said while addressing a seminar on "Indo-Bangladesh Multi-Sectoral Cooperation". He said during the three decades

of Ziaur Rahman-HM Ershad-Khaleda Zia rule, efforts had been made to take Bangladesh back to communal politics by resorting to anti-India tirade. "Begum Zia had carried out a

campaign misguiding the people that if they vote for Awami League, Bangladesh will become a part of India and Islam will be threatened, much like the West Pakistani rulers had done after the 1947 partition," Hug said. However, Hasina changed that and

brought Bangladesh back on the path of non-communalism, he added. He said the main reason why

terrorism has become a major threat to South Asia was that the terrorists were trying to resort to communalism to whip up an atmosphere of hatred and divide the society. The terror attack on Holey Artisan restaurant in Dhaka in July last year was a clear example of that, according to Huq. In his speech, India's Minister of

State for External Affairs M J Akbar said Bangladesh's birth as an independent country represented "liberation from a false idea that religion could be the basis of nationalism." Sripriya Ranganathan, joint secre-

tary in Indian External Affairs Ministry, said an ambitious energy cooperation programme was on the cards between the two countries including a cross-border gas pipeline, proposed LPG facility in Chittagong and Liquified Petroleum Gas terminal in Kutubdia.

Trump moves

FROM PAGE 16

on the back foot.

WHITE HOUSE PILLORIED The Republican leader is looking to shift attention firmly back onto his policy agenda after a first few days

that put his incoming administration

"Busy week planned with a heavy focus on jobs and national security,'

he tweeted early yesterday. Since he was sworn in on Friday, Trump's White House has been pilloried for lying to the public about inau-

gural crowds and over a campaign-style speech by the president before a memorial to fallen CIA officers. On Saturday several million

Americans poured onto the streets for women-led demonstrations against Trump, the scale of which were unseen in a generation, in a potent rebuke to the president. Trump has upbraided top aides

over unfavorable media coverage on everything from crowd sizes to suggestions he has ruled out releasing his taxes. He is the first presidential candidate in recent memory not to do so.

On Sunday the president vowed to swiftly start renegotiating NAFTA in upcoming talks with the leaders of Canada and Mexico.

Trump has already moved to curb Obama's health care reforms and more quick legal tweaks -- in the form of executive orders -- are expected on immigration and limit-

ing environmental legislation. But more substantive changes will need buy-in from the Republican

controlled Congress. MASSIVE' TAX CUTS?

Yesterday, Trump was hosting sepa-

rate meetings with business leaders, unions and members of both houses of Congress.

He will also meet the speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul Ryan. Tax reform is likely to be high on

the agenda. "What we're doing is we are going

to be cutting taxes massively for both the middle class and for companies, and that's massively," he said. "A bigger thing, and that surprised

me, is the fact that we're going to be cutting regulation massively."

Reform of Obama's health care laws is also likely to be on the menu.

No police action FROM PAGE 2

the role of police.

Aminur Rahman, secondary education officer of Singra upazila, said

several men beat up the headmaster

at the school. "I have visited the spot and I will submit a report to the higher authori-

ties in this regard," he added.

AL lawmaker sued

FROM PAGE 16 International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka, said Nawjesh Ali Miah, Mymensingh court inspector.

Twenty-four people including Religious Affairs Minister Principal Motior Rahman and veteran freedom fighter Bangabir Kader Siddiqui were made witnesses in the case.

Muslem, lawmaker from

Mymensingh-6 (Phulbaria) constituency, is the first ruling party MP against whom a case has been filed for allegedly committing offence in 1971. Contacted, the lawmaker refuted

the allegations terming it "absolutely false and fabricated." "He filed the case against me being influenced by the anti-liberation forces," he claimed. Other accused in the case are Fayzol

Bari, Abdus Samad Master alias Tikka Khan, Abdul Mondol, Mofiz Uddin alias Mofe, Reaz Uddin Fakir, Muksed Ali, Ebadullah, Wahed Ali Munshi, Mukshed Ali, Sohrab Ali, Abul Hossain, Musa, Abdul Halim, Abdul Quddus, and Giasuddin.

All the accused hail from Phulbaria. MUSLEM FACED SIMILAR CASE IN 2010

In April 2010, Jalal filed a case against

Muslem and 13 others on similar

charges. Most of the accused of that case have been made accused in this case. A Mymensingh court quashed that case in May 2010 and asked him to file a complaint with the International

Crimes Tribunal, Jalal told The Daily Star vesterday. Following the court order, he filed a complaint with the tribunal's investigation agency the same year, but the agency did not take any initiative, Jalal alleged. "For this reason, I filed the

ronment and forests secretary of the ruling party's Phulbaria upazila unit, of which Muslem is the president. Contacted, Abdul Hannan Khan, the agency's coordinator, said, "As far as I can remember, we received a complaint in this regard."

case again," said Jalal, also the envi-

They received a large number of complaints from across the country and have been carrying out probes prioritising them by the gravity of the offences, he added.

"We will investigate the case if we find it important in terms of offences."

At a press conference in Mymensingh in December last year, Kader Siddiqui also demanded trial of Muslem for "committing war crimes".

Muslem came to the limelight of the media after a case was filed against him and six others in connection with the killings of two people including a college teacher during an agitation programme in Mymensingh on

November 27 last year. YESTERDAY'S CASE

According to the case documents, which The Daily Star obtained copies of, Muslem was elected as a member of the provincial assembly in 1970 general elections with AL ticket.

But after the war broke out, he joined hands with the then Muslim League leader MA Hannan and became the treasurer of Greater Mymensingh Peace Committee, the case reads.

MA Hannan, alleged general secretary of Mymensingh district Peace Committee and now Jatiya Party lawmaker from Mymensingh-7, is now in jail and facing similar charges.

Muslem, staying in the house of Khorshed Uddin Talukder, another Muslim League leader of the town's Chhoto Bazar area, got involved in antiliberation activities in 1971, the case says.

He used to deliver speeches at dif-

ferent rallies in favour of undivided Pakistan and also worked as an informant of the Pakistan army. The accused attacked the house of the complainant at Jorbaria village on June 27, 1971, and looted all the belongings before burning the house down, it reads. According to the case, the accused and Pakistan army men killed one

also killed Basu Chowdhury, freedom fighter Abdul Majid and a number of Hindus in Phulbaria Bazar. The accused also killed Taleb Ali, Sekander Ali, Altab Ali, Achim Uddin, Ismail Hossain Master, Abdul Quader, Abdul Karim, Abdur Rashid, Nayeb

Malaya Khatun after raping her in

Koyerchala village in the upazila and

Ali, Sahidullah Master and Sabed Ali, and many bodies were thrown into the Akhalia river, it adds.

MP REFUTES ALLEGATIONS

Muslem said he had filed defamation and damages suits against Jalal after his previous case was quashed and those were pending with two Mymensingh courts.

In 1972, the constituent assembly (Gono Parishad) was formed with all the members of the national and provincial assemblies elected in 1970, except 23 members who were against the Liberation War. "I was a member of the constituent

assembly ... So, the allegation that I took a stance against the Liberation War is not true," said Muslem. Jalal filed the case out of political

rivalry and being jealous of his popularity, said Muslem, an allegation Jalal "I have only one rivalry with him...

He is a Razakar and I am a freedom fighter," Jalal said.

TIB finds mishandling

FROM PAGE 1

Local Government Institutions: Good Governance in Project Implementation" was conducted on six of the 108 projects that involve Tk 353 crore.

Financed by Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF), the projects are being implemented by local government institutions such as city corporation, district council and municipality. Political influence plays a significant

role in allocation of budgets from the BCCTF for initiating climate change resilience projects by local government institutions, according to the study.

And irregularities and corruption are major challenges in implementing the projects.

In most cases, political consideration, nepotism or illegal underhand dealings are key factors in awarding contracts for implementing the projects, it says.

The six projects involve dredging of water bodies, and construction of a waste management plant, disaster resilient houses and drains. The TIB, however,

didn't disclose the names of the projects. The data was collected between March and November last year, TIB Senior Programme Manager Abu Said Md Juel Miah said while presenting the

findings. The TIB took into account some indicators, including rationality, public participation, transparency, accountability, fair distribution and efficiency for conducting the study. The study aims to find out the chal-

lenges in ensuring good governance in implementation of the projects and the consequences of lack of good governance.

All six projects were initiated without proper feasibility study and public participation. In one of the projects, the authorities illegally charged people Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000 each for constructing disaster resilient houses, it says.

E-tender process was not followed in any of the projects. Moreover, in a bid to evade tax, the contractor in one of the projects was changed without following due process.

The authorities concerned didn't make public information on four of the six projects. Besides, construction of one of the projects remained halted as the authorities didn't pay compensation to the land owners.

Lack of monitoring and evaluation by the higher authorities concerned is one of the major challenges in ensuring good governance in the implementation of the projects, the study says.

TIB Trustee Board Chairperson Sultana Kamal said, "We don't want to see any corruption and irregularities in implementing the projects, which are run with public money."

She demanded that public participation is ensured at every stage of implementing the projects.

Several TIB officials were also present at the press conference.

No efforts yet to salvage

Md Waliullah, harbour master of Mongla Port, said, "The channel is now safe. But silt accumulation over the vessel could result in the blockage of the channel. "We've instructed the owner to recover

it by a specific time. If he fails, the authorities will recover it and consider the ship as their own property," he said. However, the Mongla Port

Authorities have no rescue ship. It depends on Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) in such cases.

In the last three years, many coaland fertiliser-laden vessels have capsized in the channel of the Pasur and forest areas of the Sundarbans.

1,235 tonnes of coal on March 19, 2016, in the Shela river. MV Ziaraj sank near Chilla area with 510 tonnes of coal on October 27, 2015. In recent years, cement clinker

laden vessel MV Sea Horse had gone

down near Harbaria area of the Pusur,

MV Diamond of Narisha sank with 1,000 tonnes of coal near Fultala area of the Bhairab river, and MV Tungipara capsized with 800 tonnes of clinker in the Rupsha. Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said during high tide, the water would carry toxic and heavy metal pollutants to the Sundarbans from the capsized vessel at the estuary of the Pasur. "Coal inside the vessel along with

the fuel and other waste will be highly damaging to the sensitive plant species and insects. It will impact the food chain and damage the Sundarbans. It may not be visible overnight but the long-term impact is an obvious outcome of such an accident," he told The MV Jabale Nur went down with Daily Star from London yesterday.

This accident and government's indifference again deepens the concerns over the construction of the Rampal Power Plant and management of this global heritage, observed Jamil, also a council board Member of Waterkeeper Alliance.

Solma returns

FROM PAGE 2

"Her story reveals the tragic plight of many innocent civilians caught in the quagmire of bureaucratic tangles on both sides of the border," read a statement issued by CHRI yesterday. It took over a year and persistent

advocacy by CHRI and its partners, along with government officials, civil society and the media to bring her case to this juncture, the statement added. After Solma told the staff of the

shelter home about her family, the head counsellor managed to contact her family and procure all the requisite documents. Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) then contacted the CHRI. After following up with the Bangladesh Deputy High

Commission in Kolkata and various

visits by rights bodies to the West

Bengal Home Department, her

nationality was verified and a repatriation order issued last month. Citing the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) of India, CHRI said there were 6,185 foreign prisoners in India as of December 31, 2015. West Bengal's prisons housed more than half of the foreign prisoners and 98 percent of them were Bangladesh

nationals. "NCRB data does not take account of the numbers of foreigners whose prison terms are over, but remain in prison for want of assistance and means to return to their own countries. They continue to remain illegally incarcerated well past the official date of their release," it said.

Solma's story is not unique. There remain many like her still in custodial institutions solely dependent on bureaucratic initiatives on both sides of the border for their release, it said.

"Authorities in both countries need to put official mechanisms in place to identify people and send them home," it stressed, "Otherwise, as in the case of Solma, unnecessary confinement would continue to grow, dividing families and harming lives."

AL man held FROM PAGE 16

Ahmed Kabir, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said villagers of Beltola were constructing a road on their own on Sunday. One Abdul Karim of the village

obstructed the construction work as the road was being built on his land. He also informed Salam, who is his relative, of the matter. Salam came to the spot with his

licenced shotgun and was locked into an altercation with the villagers.

At one stage, he fired shots and then left the spot. On information, Daulatpur police

arrested Salam at his house around 6:30pm that day. Police also seized his firearm. Yesterday, police produced Salam before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's

Court in Kushtia after two cases were filed against him with Daulatpur Police Station. Abu Yusuf, general secretary of Piarpur union unit AL and also chair-

man of Piarpur Union Parishad, confirmed that Salam is an AL activ-Eleven of the wounded who suffered bullet injuries were undergoing treatment at Daulatpur Upazila

Health Complex and Kushtia General

2 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 16 planning to join Dr Mahmud's terror

Hospital.

cell, according to the report. Dr Mahmud was a former lecturer at University Malaya who had joined

IS militants based in the southern Philippines. Malaysian Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said

the arrests meant that police had effectively destroyed a new IS cell which had planned to turn Sabah into a transit station for Southeast Asia and South Asia terrorists to join a Philippines-based IS group led by Dr Mahmud Ahmad and Isnilon Hapilon.

that the cell, led by Dr Mahmud, had combined with an Abu Sayyaf group headed by Isnilon, which had pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi," he said in a statement. Malaysia is a major destination for

"Preliminary investigation revealed

the Bangladeshi jobseekers. Around four lakh Bangladeshis are now work ing in the country.

18-month-old FROM PAGE 2

strangled her, and then dumped the body into a nearby pond, Tauhidur

Rahman, an inspector of Sarishabari Police Station, quoted Indrajit as saying. Indrajit wanted to save the possible expenditure of a sister's marriage,

Tauhidur said, quoting Indrajit. Police recovered the girl's body around 3:00pm and sent it to

Jamalpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police also arrested Indrajit's uncle-in-law Ananda Kumar

the inspector said.

Mahatma at his home in connection

with aiding and abetting the murder,

Police want law

FROM PAGE 1

Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Bill in 2009 in line with Article 35(5) of the constitution which also prohibits torture.

"No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment," reads the article. Yesterday was the first time the

prime minister attended such an event of police and listened to policemen -from constable to Additional SP. Earlier, only officials from SP to dep-

place demands before the home minister that too during indoor meetings. In response to the demand for cancellation of the law, Hasina said it was piloted by a man who was tortured severely during the BNP rule. When he

uty inspector general were allowed to

became a parliament member, he placed the bill in parliament. "I don't know whether it would be right to repeal the law which has been passed by parliament," the prime minister said while speaking on the demands

of the policemen at the welfare parade. She mentioned if anyone lodges any false complaint, the complainant will be equally punished under this law.

Referring to November last year's Supreme Court verdict that directed magistrates to take action against errant police officers for infringement of the anti-torture law, the PM said since the court issued the directive, she would not make any comment.

But, Hasina said, she did not know why the court delivered such a verdict.

Additional SP of Comilla Tanveer Salehin Emon, who demanded cancellation of the act, said as per the law anyone can file a case over mental torture, but it did not say what will be the yardstick for mental torture. So anyone can file false cases against police.

Besides, the High Court ordered the judicial magistrates to accept suo moto cases against investigation officers, officers-in-charge and commanding officers without any investigation into any sort of allegation of torture, he mentioned.

The law is curbing the rights of law enforcers, claimed the official.

It will eventually dampen policemen's enthusiasm to interrogate the accused. They will be demoralised and lose the spirit of work, and public safety will be compromised as a result, he said, seeking the prime minister's intervention in this regard. In the 2015 proposal to the home

ministry, police wanted the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Branch (SB) and Detective Branch (DB) of police excluded from the purview of the anti-torture law.

In defence of the proposed changes, police argued that the law might cause impediment to the duties of law enforcement agencies to save lives and properties during political instability,

Jhenidah expressed satisfaction for upgrading the post of sergeant to class-

Demanding more staff quarters, he

said they are facing space shortage in police stations and police outposts. Suza Kumar Kundo, sub-inspector

force for dependants of police officials. Keraniganj Police Station, wanted for police modern and unique hospital

event for almost five and a half hours. She listened to the officials in a them and made jokes.

working for me".

after the wellbeing of those "who are

"Police will carry out their duties smartly," she said.

racks, like that in Rajarbagh, will be constructed in Dhaka and the search for locations has begun. Residential facilities will also be built for police

country so that policemen can take

Hasina government as the ball is in India's court.

tion of the Teesta treaty since the signing was stalled in September 2011.

The polls will test Prime Minister tax evasion.

However, an Indian diplomat yesterday told The Daily Star that the visit anytime.

outcome of her India visit which would include signing of the Teesta deal. Dhaka and New Delhi said signing of

relations. ment level. The West Bengal govern-

turing in recent days, you know better about the prospects," an Indian diplomat told this correspondent on condition of anonymity. About the prospect of the PM's visit taking place in March, sources in New Delhi said the Indian government

budget in parliament next month duet to state elections, but it would definitely be placed sometime in March. busy with the budget, the possibility of

especially from arson and other subversive activities. The home ministry had formed a

committee to scrutinise the proposals and made a move to bring amendments. At that time, rights organisations, including Amnesty International and Ain o Salish Kendra, expressed deep concern and denounced the government move and At the welfare parade, Constable

of uniform a year and one full sleeve shirt for winter. She demanded at least three sets of uniform. Sergeant Moshiur Rahman of

facilities. At the beginning of welfare parade, IGP AKM Shahidul Hoque gave the

services that would include the ICU

friendly atmosphere, chatted with Mentioning different steps her government has so far taken for the welfare of police, the prime minister

The PM said the demand for three sets of uniform is logical and asked the home

outside the capital. The PM said she will ensure designated seats at all hospitals across the

Highly placed sources said no visi-

Diplomatic sources in New Delhi said it would be very difficult for India to arrange a schedule for the Bangladesh PM in February and March as the country's key political leaders would be in the midst of the election campaign and watching the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab,

The election in Uttar Pradesh is seen as the main determinant of who would be India's next prime minister. Voting has been staggered over seven days from February 11 to March 8 and the results will be declared on March 11.

Narendra Modi's popularity after he abruptly scrapped currency notes in the denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 in a demonetisation drive that he believes will check black money and

can take place at short notice of maximum 15 days as the Bangladesh PM expressed willingness to visit India According to diplomatic sources in Dhaka, Hasina wants a very positive

the treaty was not a precondition for the PM's visit, it remains the most important issue in Bangladesh-India "Teesta is stuck at the state govern-

won't be able to place the national As the Indian government would be Hasina's visit in March is also very

the police demand. Khairun Nahar, thanked the PM for increasing ration facilities. She, however, mentioned they only get two sets

II from class-III.

of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, demanded at least 10 percent job quota in the Monirul Islam, inspector at

welcome speech.

The prime minister stayed at the

said she thinks it's her duty to look

secretary to take steps in this regard.

Hasina said two or three more bar-

PM's India tour

FROM PAGE 1

ble progress has been made on ratifica-

Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa.

Though the diplomatic sources in

ment has to be on board. But the way the West Bengal chief minister is pos-

of Muslims and it's very emotional". the problem.

of this complex issue."

regional bloc to which both Malaysia key role in working out a solution with Myanmar's leaders.

Hishammuddin said Asean -- the and Myanmar belong -- should play a

treatment in case of emergency.

postponed due to scheduling prob-

lems. "Last time the scheduling prob-

lem was with the Bangladesh side and

now the problem is with the Indian

side," said another Indian diplomat in Dhaka. He pointed out that signing of agreements between the two countries and any possible announcement of a fresh line of credit by India may be cited by opposition parties as violation of electoral code of conduct arguing that it would help spruce up

A Bangladesh foreign ministry official said during the PM's proposed visit the two countries are likely to ink over two dozens of agreements, including those for using Chittagong and Mongla ports by India.

Besides, the two neighbours might

Sources said the Indian side has

already sent a list of 41 proposed MoUs

and deals. The list, however, does not

sign a cooperation document to

the ruling BJP's image ahead of the

India is likely to make a fresh commitment to provide loans of over \$12 billion. A good number of projects have already been identified for implementation with this fund.

strengthen counterterrorism efforts.

Myanmar seeks FROM PAGE 16

include the Teesta issue.

Hishammuddin warned that the situation in Rakhine -- if not addressed

Nations.

elections.

Southeast Asia. "This horrific possibility has the potential to cause death and destruction well beyond the borders of Asean," he added, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian

Answering a delegate's question,

Hishammuddin said the Rohingya

issue "is going to test Asean solidarity...

properly -- could be exploited by the

Islamic State group as it seeks a base in

It needs to be resolved, we cannot sweep it under the carpet, it affects a lot Myint Nwe said both Yangon and the international community should focus on finding a "lasting solution" to

small, added the sources.

"Allowing time and space is essential for the government's efforts to bear fruit in finding a sustainable solution

Hasina was scheduled to visit New Delhi last month, but the tour was