

Radicalisation threat on the rise: CTTC

Terrorist incidents however have come down significantly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of terrorist incidents has come down significantly in the last three years, but the threat of radicalisation is on the rise, according to research by the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Terrorist activities have decreased 90 percent in the country compared to 2016, it says.

However, radicalisation has risen in that time, as the Dawahilallah Forum -- an extremist propaganda tool of banned militant group Ansarullah Bangla Team -- has increased its member base from 550 to 3,000, says the research.

The research also found 82 percent terrorists use social media, and 56 percent of the terror suspects were university graduates.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of CTTC unit, presented the research paper at the concluding session of the two-day long national conference on preventing and countering violent extremism. The conference opened on Monday at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB).

"We should adopt a coordinated set of soft approaches along with the hard approach to counter terrorism at the state level," said DC Saiful while presenting the paper.

He also proposed a counter-violent extremism (CVE) strategy, which has three main objects: prevention, proactiveness and partnership.

Prevention aims to raise public awareness nationwide, proactiveness refers to approaches including identification, and partnerships denotes inclusive participation of all stakeholders to eradicate the threat, said DC Saiful.

Earlier in the day, members of different NGOs shared experiences in working to prevent violent extremism. Abdul Mannan, deputy commissioner of the unit, conducted the session.

Speakers suggested integration of madrasa and general students in sports and cultural



The CTTC unit has proposed a five-tier approach with four strategies to counter violent extremism.

activities, saying they otherwise grow up alienated from the world. They also suggested to create awareness among parents.

At the session, an Imam suggested to bring all "aleem" (Islamic scholars) to one platform, so they deliver same kind of sermons.

At the concluding session, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan was present as chief guest, while the Inspector General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary and DMP Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam were special guests. The session was chaired by Monirul Islam, chief of CTTC unit.

Shafiqul Islam said around 90 percent the militants who were arrested and are facing trial, were found to be believers of Ahle Hadith.

"There is huge support of Ahle Hadith in the southern and northern parts of the country, and we need to work with their scholars to bring them to the right path," said the commissioner.

IGP Javed Patwary observed that there is an

absence of NGOs that can work people arrested and sent to jail. "We need to make more effort for de-radicalisation of militants in prison," he said.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said terrorism and militancy have no place in Islam. Incidents of target killing happened in the country but peace-loving people resisted those incidents, and they do not shelter militancy, he said.

He urged people not to believe everything they read on internet. "We have to use our judgment to be sure which content is believable," he added.

CTTC chief Monirul Islam hoped the conference will show them a right path on countering violent extremism. "All stakeholders have reached a consensus on combating extremism, which we believe will work in the future," he said.

John Allelo, deputy mission director of USAID Bangladesh; and Rafiqul Islam, general secretary of Stop Violence Coalition also spoke.

No minority repression during BNP govt: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday claimed that no incident of minority repression occurred in the country when the party was in power.

"When India passed Citizenship Amendment Bill, it said members of minority communities were repressed in Bangladesh when BNP was in power. We strongly condemn this statement. Minorities' interests were protected during BNP's tenure," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said.

"The scale of repression on minorities during the Awami League government is unprecedented," he added.

Speaking at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters, the BNP leader said violation of human rights continues in the country.

Referring to a report of rights body Ain O Salish Kendra, Fakhrul said in the last 10 years more than 1,500 extrajudicial killings happened in the country.

He also said cases were filed against over one lakh persons who are political opponents of the AL government.

Fakhrul said, "Those who expressed dissenting opinions were either arrested or abducted. Many political leaders, rights activists and journalists were abducted."

The BNP leader alleged that in the last 10 years, human rights violation in the country has been worse than that during the Pakistan period.

He claimed that the Awami League government has been violating human rights in every sphere to stay in the office.

Farewell, Ajoy Roy

UNB, Dhaka

Admirers from all walks of life thronged the central Shaheed Minar yesterday to pay their tributes to Professor Ajoy Roy.

His body was kept at the Shaheed Minar from 11:20am to 12:35pm, where people and organisations paid their last respect by placing remembrance wreaths.

Prof Roy, father of slain writer and blogger Avijit Roy, died at Birdem Hospital on Monday at the age of 85.

He was the founding president of Shiksha Andolan Mancha and the chairman of Shampriti Mancha.

He was also editor-in-chief of Muktanwesa magazine, a Bengali publication for promoting freethinking and secular humanism, and an advisory board member of Mukto-Mona, an internet forum of freethinkers.

Prof Roy was awarded the Ekushey Padak, the highest civilian award of Bangladesh, in 2012.

From Shaheed Minar, his body was taken back to Birdem Hospital as he donated his body to the hospital before death, said younger son Anujit Roy.



National Professor Anisuzzaman pays his last respects to Prof Ajoy Roy at the Shaheed Minar.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'A civilised country can't have division based on ethnicity'

Experts call for Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists and academicians at a conference yesterday urged the government to end division among the citizens based on ethnic and religious identity, which goes against the founding principles of Bangladesh.

They said the division is intensifying gradually as the ethnic minority communities in the country have been deprived of their rights, and the state has failed to protect them.

They also demanded that the government formulate a separate law to ensure rights of the ethnic minorities, who are still lagging behind significantly.

Research and Development Collective (RDC), a non-government organisation, and the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minorities jointly organised the conference on indigenous people's rights at The Daily Star Centre in the



Discussants at the roundtable at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

capital.

Speaking at the event, Dhaka University Professor Mesbah Kamal said the indigenous people of the country have been subjected to various forms of rights violation -- including murder, rape, arson attack and land grabbing -- over the years.

"Although the government pledged to stop violence and ensure security of members of minority communities, it has failed to do so. Besides, a part of the government is involved in the rights violations," he said.

Considering the current context,

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Transition to smart city needed to better serve citizens: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different service providing agencies must work together to learn and engage with technology and formulate appropriate policies that will support smart city solutions in order to serve citizens better, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

Speaking at the seminar organised by Science and Technology Affairs Sub-committee of Awami League at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, they said the transition to smart cities is imperative to improve quality of life, ensure economic growth with better employment opportunities and efficient delivery of basic services.

In Bangladesh, several cities are already enjoying services like strengthening of IT sector, mobile crowd sensing, IT-based transportation services and e-communication -- included in the smart city concept -- with initiation of "Digital Bangladesh" campaign of the present government, said Prof M Habibur Rahman, head of Civil Engineering

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'Bring qualitative changes in their skills training'

Speakers urge govt to ensure female migrant workers' safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to bring qualitative changes in skills training for female migrant workers to ensure their safety abroad.

Female workers face difficulties abroad due to lack of skills and inadequate knowledge on work and language, they added.

WARBE Development Foundation organised the event at Jatiya Press Club.

Speakers also urged the government to ratify two International Labour Organization conventions -- 189 and 190 -- to ensure female migrant workers' protection.

ILO convention 189 offers specific protection to domestic workers. It lays down basic rights and principles, and requires states to take a series of measures with a view to making decent work a reality for them. On the other hand, convention 190 is a commitment regarding elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work.

Manusher Jonno Foundation Programme Manager Sarawat Binte Islam said the government needs to focus on strengthening skills of female migrant workers alongside increasing their number each year.

She said proper training will help workers secure jobs with higher wage. "The training has to be modern and of international standard," Sarawat added.

At the event, Kamola Akter, a Lebanon-returnee worker, said she faced difficulties during her stay in Lebanon as she did not know the country's

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DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST DUCSU VP

Court seeks police report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of Shahbagh Police Station to submit a report by January 8, after a defamation case was filed against Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) Vice President Nurul Haque Nur.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ziaur Rahman passed the order after DU Salimullah Muslim Hall Students' Union Vice President Muzahid Kamal Uddin filed the case yesterday against Nur.

In the complaint, Kamal alleged that Nur was involved with extortion and tender manipulation by abusing the VP post, which has "tarnished" the reputation and image of Dhaka University.

"I came to know the news of Nur's extortion and tender manipulation from

reports in different dailies published on December 5," he said in his complaint.

On December 3, a private television channel aired a leaked audio clip of what is allegedly VP Nur conversing with someone over illegal exchange of money.

Nur claimed the media broadcast only a part of his phone conversation to confuse people. He called upon three media houses to apologise.

Amid this, Ducusu General Secretary Golam Rabbani, who was removed from Bangladesh Chhatra League as its general secretary following extortion allegation, in a press conference on December 6 demanded VP Nur's resignation.

Nur, however, denies all accusations, and has said he would resign from his post if the allegations are found to be true.

Unite to bring rights violators to book

Urges Dr Kamal Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged all to be united to bring human rights violators to book.

Addressing a discussion at Jatiya Press Club, Kamal said those who violate human rights are the biggest robbers and criminals. Bangladesh Manobadhikar Parjabeekkhon Parishad organised it to mark World Human Rights Day.

The convener of Oikyafront said discussions will have to be done at grassroots to uphold human rights.

He said the Liberation War took place to establish democracy, and meaning of democracy is peoples' rights.

Terming Bangalee as a nation that does not accept injustice, he said Pakistan did not understand that, for which they had to pay. Many autocratic rules of independent Bangladesh also had to pay the price, he added.

If anyone thinks they will remain in power unlawfully, they will fail, the eminent jurist said.

'ASSISTING GK SHAMIM' ACC summons PWD engineers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday summoned 11 engineers of the Public Works Department (PWD), including incumbent additional chief engineer Utpal Kumar Dey, to quiz them over their alleged involvement in assisting GK Shamim in getting tenders and amassing illegal wealth.

The other summoned are: superintendent engineers Rakan Uddin and Abdul Momen Choudhury;

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INT'L DIABETES FEDERATION

Dr Akhtar Hussain elected president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi doctor Professor Akhtar Hussain has been elected president of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF).

The election was held at the IDF General Assembly in Busan, South Korea on December 2, according to a press release of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (DAB) yesterday.

Prof Akhtar is also the incumbent president of Diabetes Asia Study Group (DASG) and will take the global body's office for two years from 2022, after the incumbent president of IDF Prof Andrew Boulton's tenure expires.

Meanwhile, another Bangladeshi doctor, Prof AK Azad Khan has been elected chairman of IDF's South-east Asia region. Prof Khan is president of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh.