

Stay prepared to face challenges of 21st century

Army chief asks artillery regiment, thanks PM for modernising the force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed yesterday urged all members of the Regiment of Artillery to remain ever-prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century through modern and contemporary training.



The Army chief was speaking at the 42nd Annual Captain Conference held at the Artillery Centre and School in Chattogram's Halishahar, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release.

At that time, he recalled the glorious past of the Regiment of Artillery and their contribution to serving the motherland.

The chief also thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her contribution to modernising the Bangladesh Army.

Senior officers of the Bangladesh Army, the Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the Artillery Regiment were present during the occasion.

DB CUSTODY Probe body formed over death of lawyer's aide

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday formed a three-member probe body to investigate the death of Habibur Rahman, a lawyer's assistant, in DB custody in Bogura.

The investigation committee was asked to submit the report within the next seven working days.

The probe body will be headed by Additional Superintendent of Police (Administration and Finance) Snigdha Akhtar, said Bogura Superintendent of Police (SP) Sudeep Kumar Chakraborty.

A team from the Bogura Detective Branch of police picked up Habibur, 42, and took him to the DB office. They later admitted him to Bogura Mohammad Ali Hospital around 7:00pm. He died around two hours later.

Habibur, a resident of Chakjora village in Bogura's Shahjahanpur upazila, was the joint secretary of the Bogura Advocates' Assistant Association.



(L) FC Bayern Munich Fans Group of Bangladesh. (R) Madridista Bangladesh members enjoying a game together.

FOOTBALL FANDOM

CLUB-BASED GROUPS

and their craze for the sport

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

Once upon a time, Dhaka used to put on a celebratory face every time Abahani played a game of football against Mohammedan. Those days are long gone but our love for the game remains. There are numerous communities of fans in Bangladesh who follow football all year round and every year during the Champions League games they go crazy in support of their favourite teams.

"FC Bayern Munich Fans Group of Bangladesh" is one such group. Bangladeshi football fans who support the German club, Bayern Munich, run this group and after every match, they discuss the good and bad aspects of the games. It's interesting because Bayern Munich has won the domestic league for the last eleven years consecutively, yet the fans are constantly analysing the games, hoping to find a better solution for a better prospect at the Champions League," said GM Hillol, an admin of the group.

He has been active in the group since the beginning.

"Our journey started in 2013 but the group really gained popularity in 2015. Back then there were not so many people on Facebook so the progress was slower. Our first get-together was in 2017. The deputy minister for youth and sports of that time was present in our first get-together," recalled Hillol.



Members of "Madridista Bangladesh" at a get-together.

PHOTO: COURTESY

He mentioned that even though the group is active, the meetups are not as frequent as he would like them to be. However, the fan club gives away gifts to the most active members of the group.

"Another get-together is in the pipeline. The first one was very festive and memorable and we want to make that happen again," he said, pointing out that official meetups are challenging because there are a lot of arrangements to be made for such events.

Of course, events are more frequent if your club is having a good run at the Champions League and Real Madrid has had an amazing decade in terms of the League.

"Madridista Bangladesh" is one of the groups for the fans of Real Madrid in Bangladesh. The group prides itself as one of the most well-managed and the oldest group of Real Madrid fans in Bangladesh, boasting their inception in 2011.

"We used to have arguments with Barcelona and EPL fans regularly. This led us to think that we need a separate space where just Madrid fans can discuss. That's how the idea was planted," said Sifat Jasim, an admin of

the group, confirming that their first meetup was indeed in Dhaka, as first as 2012.

"Ever since that first meetup, we have had regular events and meetups. In Dhaka we have at least two meetups every year," he elaborated, adding that even if they want to, it's not always possible to arrange meetups because most of the matches are at late night.

However, through much difficulties, the group was officially recognised by Real Madrid as an official group of the club in 2019 and needless to say, they are overjoyed by this. You can tell by their reactions. "Madrid is 8,500km away from Dhaka but I guarantee you this, our passion burns just as brightly as someone standing in Santiago Bernabéu," he added.

Needless to say, there are a number of similar groups. FC Barcelona Fans Group of Bangladesh (FCBB), Liverpool FC Football Fans' Group of Bangladesh, and Manchester United Fans-Bangladesh are some of the other popular and active groups. Facebook groups play a huge part in these communities and meetups and annual events keep them close.



Concern raised over inflation

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depleted due to fulfilling payment obligations for essential imports as well as for loan servicing.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder also gave similar explanations for failing to keep \$24.46 billion of net international reserves in his separate meeting with the IMF mission.

"We informed them that Bangladesh has successfully brought down the current account balance deficit, but there was a big deficit in the financial account, which is the major reason for the decline in reserves," BB Spokesman Md Mezbahul Haque told journalists after the meeting at the central bank headquarters in Motijheel.

The central bank has initiated reform measures as per the IMF's timeline.

Both the finance ministry and the BB discussed banking sector reforms in their meetings with the IMF mission.

Ex-ACC official dies in police custody

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(OC) of Chandgaon Police Station.

Shahidullah's nephew and neighbour Robiul Hasan Faisal told The Daily Star that he witnessed the moment two men in plainclothes forcibly picked Shahidullah up.

"Uncle Shahidullah was taking a walk near his house after dinner around 10:30pm when two policemen dragged him away. His brother, another neighbour and I then went to the police station with his medicines. But the police neither let us enter, nor took the medicines we brought for him. They kept the main gate closed," Faisal said.

"After a while, one of the officers who detained Uncle Shahidullah came out and started looking for a three-wheeler. We then entered the police station and found him unconscious on a chair. We then hired an autorickshaw, and took him to Park View Hospital where he died."

At the mortuary of Chattogram Medical College, Shahidullah's son Nafiz Shahid, said, "We want justice. My

father was fit. He walked to the police station, but came out dead. We will file a case in this regard."

"We received no notice that a case was filed. The officers who picked him up did not show any warrant. Police didn't tell us anything. Our neighbours informed us."

"My father went through an open-heart surgery. Recently, two arteries were found blocked. But due to his health condition, the doctors did not go for another surgery."

Chattogram Metropolitan Police yesterday formed a three-member committee led by a deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch to investigate the allegations and come up with a report in three work days.

OC Khairul said, "Shahidullah was sitting on a chair after two officers brought him to the police station. After a while, Shahidullah complained of chest pain. Police informed his family members and called an ambulance. As the ambulance was taking time, policemen and Shahidullah's brother

got a three-wheeler and took him to a hospital where he was pronounced dead."

The OC added that Shahidullah died around 11:15pm.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, three people died in police custody and one in Rab custody in the first nine months of the year.

US reiterates

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Washington DC and visited the Bangladesh embassy there on September 27. She met Sullivan at the embassy.

On the sidelines of the UNGA, Hasina held meetings with US State Department Under Secretary Uzra Zeya and Counsellor Derek Chollet.

Following the meetings, the US officials said they stressed free and fair elections in Bangladesh – something that the US has been repeating for quite some time at the meetings with top Bangladesh ministers or other officials in Dhaka or in Washington DC.

EC not worried about 'legitimacy'

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The PEC was speaking at a workshop, organised by the EC at its office yesterday, on the role of polling agents in the elections.

Habibul said the EC is concerned whether voters can cast their ballots freely. "Legitimacy is an important aspect from which perceptions are created."

He said the EC will try to conduct a lawful election, and the political parties will fight over legitimacy.

The CEC said the EC would like to hold inclusive elections, but it is not the commission's responsibility to make someone take part in the polls.

"Still, we have invited many [parties] several times to come and have tea with us. We have written demi-official letters also. We cannot do more," he said without mentioning the names of the BNP and other political parties.

The BNP skipped the EC's dialogue with political parties last year. The commission in March this year had invited the party to an informal discussion, but the party leaders did not turn up.

Talking about arrests of polling agents ahead of the election, the CEC yesterday said if the EC have the list of

possible polling agents beforehand and many on the list are arrested, then the commission would realise that it has been done on purpose.

"We hope this won't happen... We will repeatedly ask the government if the arrests are needed. The arrests could be made six months ahead of the polls or after the elections."

Addressing the workshop, former election commissioner Kabita Khanam said there is a "concern" about participatory polls.

She said the commission is holding dialogues aiming to create an environment for participatory polls.

Another ex-election commissioner Md Shah Nawaz said that the EC's first job is to create a situation for all registered political parties to take part in the polls. "The two main parties are poles apart. I don't think the EC has much to do to bring them closer," he said.

Prof Robaet Ferdous of Dhaka University said, "The EC can take steps to hold a political dialogue to bring Awami League and BNP to the table. There is no alternatives to dialogues."

Another DU Prof SM Shameem Reza said positive political commitment is needed from the ruling and major

opposition parties.

"I don't think it is the EC's responsibility to hold political dialogues. However, this can be done if the commission feels that it is a historical responsibility."

Former vice chancellor of National University, Harun-or-Rashid, said that everyone blames the EC. It is not possible for the commission to hold free and fair elections without the concerted efforts by the polls-time government, political parties, and the administration, he observed.

Former EC additional secretary Jesmin Tuli said the commission's first job will be to ensure that the administration, law enforcers, and polling officials remain neutral during the election.

Election Commissioner Rashida Sultana, former EC officials Nuruzzaman Talukder, Mizanur Rahman, journalists Nayeemul Islam Khan, Syed Ishiaque Reza, and Ekushey TV CEO Pijush Bandyopadhyay, among others, spoke at the workshop.

The EC on September 14 held another workshop in which eminent citizens said the next general election will have to be free, fair and participatory.

The cricket carnival begins

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England will continue playing the same way in India as well.

"The team's been mainly together for a long time since 2015, since the start of that sort of revolution that you mentioned, and I think you said right through the game. Now in England, young players coming through play a certain way and are determined to carry on the style, and I think we know it gives us the best chance of success."

"We will get it wrong at times, but we've made peace with that, and it's something we want to continue to strive to do, to keep pushing the boundaries. Other teams will push you and move it on further, so we always want to try and be at the head of that curve as well," Butler said.

New Zealand, on the other hand, come into this tournament as back-to-

back World Cup runners-up.

Kiwi skipper Kane Williamson, who won't be playing in the opening match as his knee is still not hundred per cent, said that his team is looking forward to the fresh challenge that lies ahead in India.

"For us, it's about the style of cricket we want to keep committing to that gives us the best chance at putting out our best performance. It certainly has been full of different challenges over a number of tournaments we have been involved in. We are already excited for the challenges that lie ahead for this one," said Williamson.

Former champions Pakistan will take on the Netherlands on Friday while Bangladesh will begin their campaign on Saturday by taking on Afghanistan in Dharamshala.