

DHAKA

Need effective leadership to address key challenges
Says army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday called for effective leadership and a shared understanding among all stakeholders to address Bangladesh's key challenges related to security, development, and strategic governance.

He made the remarks while addressing the closing ceremony of the Capstone Course at the National Defence College (NDC) in Dhaka.

Highlighting the role of the NDC, Waker said the institution was established as a national centre of excellence for issues relating to defence, security, strategy, and development.

He said the Capstone Course offers a unique platform for senior professionals to develop a

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Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman in a photo session during the closing ceremony of the Capstone Course at the National Defence College in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Must tackle internal divides to navigate global rivalry

Speakers tell CGS dialogue

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign policy experts and politicians have called for addressing divisive politics, economic vulnerabilities, and human rights concerns to safeguard Bangladesh's strategic autonomy in an increasingly bipolar world.

They said many developing countries are struggling to maintain balanced foreign relations amid the growing rivalry between US and China-led blocs.

The observations were made at a dialogue on Bangladesh's foreign policy

SUGGESTIONS

- Build political consensus on foreign policy
- Diversify export basket beyond RMG
- Reduce reliance on imported energy
- Strengthen Bangladesh missions abroad
- Balance relations with US, China, and India

organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital yesterday.

"The world is certainly getting bipolar. How we will navigate it will depend on our internal strength," said Bangladesh Enterprise Institute Chairman and former ambassador M Humayun Kabir.

He said Bangladesh suffers from a tendency toward internal conflict, which hampers the formulation of a strong foreign policy. Political actors often use foreign alliances to undermine their opposition, he added.

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MILESTONE TRAGEDY 'Why would we hide bodies of children?'

Army refutes allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen Nazim-ud-Daula, director of Military Operations Directorate (MOD) at the Army Headquarters, yesterday rejected allegations that army personnel beat up teachers or attempted to hide bodies of the victims during the rescue operation at Milestone School and College following the July 21 fighter jet crash.

"Some say we beat up teachers, or hid bodies. Why would we hide the bodies of innocent children? Their parents were there. Wouldn't they have asked where their children were?" he told reporters during a briefing at Dhaka Cantonment.

He said if anyone was pushed amid the chaos, it was never deliberate.

"We had to clear the way for ambulances. In doing so, some jostling may have happened, but our only objective was to save lives," he said.

Nazim pointed out that the crashed aircraft had created a deep hole in the school building and jet fuel had leaked into the area.

"There was already fuel at the spot where the nose of the plane had hit. If a spark had gone off, those involved in the rescue could have died. Thankfully, that didn't happen. But those who rushed there did so with full awareness of the risk," he said.

He said army personnel were the first to respond and begin rescue operations, as their camp was located just 150 to 200 yards away from the school.

"Our soldiers dropped everything and ran. You'll see in

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In Sylhet's haors, the rhythm of the season beats softly -- farmers transplanting Aman seedlings, others carry them across emerald fields. With the weather in their favour, they labour in hope, hearts set on golden harvests in Agrahayan. The photo was taken in Barni area of Companiganj upazila yesterday.

Political clashes, mob attacks leave 25 dead in July

Says MSF monthly report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least nine people were killed and 584 injured in 48 incidents of political violence across the country in July, according to a report by rights organisation Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF).

Of the nine, three were killed in internal feuds within the BNP, one in clashes involving the BNP and Jamaat, and five during clashes between law enforcers and Awami League members and supporters centring a programme of the National Citizen Party (NCP) in Gopalganj, the report said.

Of the 48 incidents, 27 were related to internal BNP conflicts; two involved clashes between the BNP and Awami League; two were internal NCP disputes; one involved the NCP, AL, and law enforcers; four were between BNP and Jamaat; one between Jamaat and AL; and another between supporters of adviser Asif Mahmud and the BNP.

"The rise in mob violence has raised serious concerns, shaking the public's sense of security, and it is the state's responsibility to identify the culprits and take legal action," said MSF.

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Protesters block Shahbagh, demand July Charter Commuters suffer in daylong traffic chaos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of demonstrators under the banner of "July Warriors" staged a protest at the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday, demanding the immediate finalisation of the proposed July Charter.

The blockade began around 11:00am and was ongoing as of 10:00pm, the time of filing this report.

The demonstration caused severe traffic congestion in the surrounding areas. Commuters were stuck on the roads for hours, while many were forced to walk long distances to reach their destinations.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

"Traffic movement in and around Shahbagh came to a halt, resulting in severe congestion across adjacent roads," said Khalid Mansur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

Saad Ahmed, a private firm employee, said it took him over two and a half hours to reach Karwan Bazar from Jatrabari.

"I went to Jatrabari in the morning for official work but later learned about the Shahbagh blockade through social media. Fearing heavy traffic, I boarded a bus which takes a route via Basabo, Kamalapur, and Malibagh -- but the roads were still jam-packed," he said.

"When I finally reached Karwan Bazar, I realised

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27 more pushed in from India

STAR REPORT

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) detained 27 individuals early yesterday after they were pushed into the country allegedly by India's Border Security Force (BSF) through the borders in Panchagarh and Naogaon.

According to BGB officials, 17 of them were held in Panchagarh and 10 in Naogaon.

Lt Col Monirul Islam, commanding officer of BGB-18 Battalion in Panchagarh, said seven individuals were picked up from near border pillar No. 739/20-S after being pushed into Bangladesh by the BSF.

Maj Kazi Asif Ahmed, deputy commanding officer of BGB-56 Battalion in Nilphamari, said 10 others were detained near border pillar No. 755/2-S.

According to BGB officials, all 17 detainees claimed during primary interrogation that they were Bangladeshi nationals who had illegally crossed into India years ago in search of work and had been living in various parts of the country. Recently, they were detained by Indian police from several locations, including Odisha, and later handed over to the BSF, who then allegedly pushed them into Bangladesh.

Later in the day, the detainees were handed over to Tetulia and Panchagarh Sadar police stations. Police officials from both stations said they were verifying their identities.

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