

## 'Sabotage plan' by fundamentalists Secret agencies put on high alert in Chittagong

BSS, Chittagong

Various secret agencies have been put on high alert to guard the Key Point Installations (KPI) and important personalities learned about "a sabotage plan" by terrorists sponsored by fundamentalist forces to destabilise the country.

"We have definite information about a secret meeting in Chittagong where the plan was finalised to hit KPIs and key personalities," a top intelligence official told BSS yesterday.

A strong contingent of the Special Branch of Police intelligence comprising the officials of Dhaka and Chittagong thoroughly investigated the matter and suggested the government to take precautionary measures in these regards.

As a result, the Police Headquarters issued a circular to all officials holding key positions to take necessary measures regarding the matter, an official in Dhaka has confirmed.

Besides, security measures of the prime minister, some ministers, leading politicians and some other eminent personalities have been enhanced to avert any sabotage activities.

The official said the secret meeting was held in Chittagong late last month where representatives of a number of political parties having links with fundamentalists including Harkatul Jihad and a Rohingya terrorist group and some close relatives of the

killers of the Bangabandhu were present.

The meeting discussed the current political situation of the country and fixed their targets to launch destructive attacks on the KPIs and some leading eminent personalities, he added.

A senior police official said the fundamentalist groups have targeted KPIs like Kapital Hydroelectric Project, power plants, main route of gas supply, airports, Television and Betar stations.

They have also targeted to kill eminent personalities including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, some cabinet members and leading politicians, intellectuals and cultural personalities who nourish the spirit and values of independence and War of Liberation of the country, he added.

The fugitive killers of Bangabandhu, their relatives residing at home and abroad and a foreign intelligence agency are funding and guiding the sabotage plan, the official said without elaborating.

## Tipu leaves

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In the evening of January 25 from Feni sadar and savagely beat him up. The assailants left Tipu for dead. Tipu had undergone treatment for horrendous injuries at Pangu Hospital in the city where the doctors recommended that he be treated abroad.

## EU envoys expect Dhaka, Delhi to resolve border dispute thru' diplomatic channel

BSS, Dhaka

European envoys in Dhaka yesterday said they expected that Dhaka and New Delhi would resolve the border conflicts through diplomatic channel without any further frontier skirmishes.

"We hope the two countries will solve the problem through discussion," German Ambassador in Dhaka Uwe Schramm told the "Meet the Press" programme of Dhaka Reporters Unity.

He appreciated the intervention of the authorities in Dhaka and New Delhi immediately did after the bloody skirmishes. He also said the telephone talks of the two prime ministers helped defuse the tension.

The EU envoys agreed with Schramm, as he commented on the issue following an open question while exchanging views with the reporters.

The envoys of Britain, Sweden, Germany, France, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and head of the Delegation of European Commission joined the programme a day ahead of the "Europe Day" at the DRU office here.

The last month's skirmish left 16 Indian and three Bangladeshi border guards killed.

## Credit card

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used in cell phones. The user of these cards will be able to read and record entries enabling cash deposit and withdrawal.

The POS terminals will also have a smart to record all off-line transactions and at the end of the day, the information from these cards will be transferred to the Grameen Bank through cell phone.

These cards will also act as an ID of the user, which will be secured by three layers requiring different entries.

"We hope to introduce the service around Dhaka city within three to six months which will be spread to all the villages where Grameen has microcredit programmes," said Saifuddin.

He also said that the ITCL is planning to introduce shared Automated Teller Machines (ATM) for the banks in the country.

Once installed and in full operation, there would be an interface between the POS terminals and the ATMs. The interface will enable the bank user to get the GSI-ITCL services in the remote areas, he said.

Regarding cost, Saifuddin said it would be shared by the two companies and the Grameen poor will be nominally charged as the number of users will be greater. "Besides, if we interface the system with the shared ATMs then the cost will come down further."

## Nor'wester

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creating obstacles to smooth flow of traffic.

Our Correspondent from Barguna reported that rickshaw peddler Abdul Khaleque died when a date tree fell on him while he was pedalling his way to Barguna town from Sonakhali village. Siraj was killed when his home collapsed at Sharishamuri village of Betagi upazila.

Heavy rains flooded streets of Barguna town. The storm also snapped the power lines. As a result, reports of any damage from the coastal Patharghata and Taltali upazilas which were also affected were not available.

## Yasmeen

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lic confidence in police. Their high-ups tried to destroy evidence to cover up the rape and murder.

"SP Abdul Motalab along with others at Dinajpur thana did everything to cover up the crime and protect the guilty."

"The SP went all the way to portray Yasmeen as a prostitute and forced other prostitutes at Dinajpur town to make a supporting statement. This has caused an irreparable damage to the image of police."

"Even the SP threatened other police officers to go his way, which led two police officers to appear as hostile witnesses in court during the trial. Police destroyed the clothes of Yasmeen in a bid to conceal the evidence of rape. Her body was buried hurriedly after a false autopsy carried out by a child specialist at Dinajpur. The Investigating Officer was changed twice".

The DAG said the incidents gave rise to public outcry in Bangladesh and abroad. It was raised at the International Women's Forum in Beijing that year. Human rights groups like Amnesty International also took it up. The US State Department also mentioned it in its human rights report, he added.

The DAG was assisted by Haider Hossain and Shob Ahmed Choudhury. The hearing resumes today.

## Govt to allocate 1 to 2 pc GDP for science technology sector: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government attached highest priority to Information Technology sector to turn the population into human resources with IT skills.

"We believe no wealth is greater than skilled human resources," she said at the foundation laying ceremony of a Tk 35-crore building of Bangladesh Computer Council at Agragaoon in the city.

The Prime Minister said for the growth of IT sector her government has taken up a plan to gradually allocate 1 to 2 per cent of GDP for science and technology sector to build a knowledge-based society.

At present only 0.4 per cent of the GDP has been allocated for this sector.

The construction of this 15-storey building of BCC would be a major breakthrough in the development of country's information technology sector.

The Prime Minister said that the nation was deprived of a golden opportunity during the time of previous government because of its lack of vision, as it failed to avail free connection of information superhighway through optical fiber and submarine cable.

"We are now installing this connection at a cost of 40 million US dollars what was once available for the nation free of cost," she added.

Besides, Hasina said, her government has taken up a project for launching the country's first satellite "Bangabandhu Communication-1" and declared IT as a thrust

sector.

Initiatives have been taken to formulate IT policy and IT act, she added.

About the potential future for the nation to earn huge foreign exchange through export of computer software, Hasina said to achieve this objective all taxes on computer hardware and software, have been waived.

She also referred to the allocation of Tk 100 crore for the Entrepreneurship Development Fund in this sector.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Science and Technology Minister Lt Gen (Retd) Nooruddin Khan, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Science and Technology Secretary M Fazlur Rahman and BCC executive director Dr M A Abdus Sobhan also spoke on the occasion.

The Prime Minister said as a result of lifting official control on V-Sat, internet charge has come down to 40 paisa from Tk 2 per minute.

Besides, the Railway fibre optic communication system has been leased out to Grameen Phone for the use of private sector. This created an opportunity for the rural folk to use cellular phones from remote villages to anywhere in the globe.

She said, programmes have been undertaken to produce 1,000 IT programmers every year and for this Tk 15 crore has been allocated for the training of IT professionals in five universities.

Hasina said steps have been taken for the development of IT infrastructures of the BCC. A very powerful computer has been installed in BCC and internet serv-

ices are being provided to the Prime Minister's office and other key government installations.

The Prime Minister said the government had not confined computer education to the urban areas rather extended it to the rural areas.

She said her government has supplied more than 10,000 computer sets to private secondary schools through education and science and technology ministries.

"We are going to reach computer education to the grassroots," said the Prime Minister adding that a national task force under her personal supervision is working for policy decision and coordination.

## West Bengal chief minister regrets border clash

BSS, Kolkata

West Bengal chief minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya yesterday deeply regretted the Bangladesh-India border clash and said someone had engineered it to destroy our friendship with Bangladesh.

"This type of politics is not desirable. However, it is a matter of satisfaction that both countries have agreed to solve the problem through negotiation. We always want to maintain peaceful ties between the two countries," he told a press conference at Kolkata Press Club on the last day of campaign for the state assembly polls in West Bengal.

## DU inter-hall debate competition from May 14

DU CORRESPONDENT

The First Inter Hall English Debate Competition-2001 of the Dhaka University begins on May 14 at the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC).

The Dhaka University Debating Society (DUDS) in association with The Daily Star has organised the eight-day long competition.

Fourteen teams will take part in the competition. The slogan of the competition is 'Miles to go before I sleep'.

Students willing to take part in the competition are requested to send their names to their respective hall authorities or DUDS clubs in their halls by May 10.

## Rafiq's death

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murder case with Motijheel thana on Monday.

Police said the e-mail line was on when the body was recovered. The line was disconnected in their presence, they said.

The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Police said yesterday that they were yet to get the autopsy report.

The investigation officer of the case declined to make any comment before the autopsy report was available and investigation was complete.

Sources concerned said that Islam was preparing papers to submit tender for supply of medical equipment worth about Tk four crore. In this regard, he sent an e-mail to a company at Malaysia at about 4:30 pm on Sunday, they said.

Relatives claimed that Islam did not have rivalry with any businessman. Police said they are investigating.

Namaj-e-janaja of Islam was held after Asar prayer yesterday. He was buried at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard.

## City BNP for stern action against SQ Chowdhury

UNB, Dhaka

An emergency meeting of Dhaka city BNP yesterday unanimously decided to propose to the party high command for taking 'stern action' against Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury MP for his 'filthy' remark against Sadek Hossain Khoka MP.

The meeting presided over by Khoka at the party's city office in the evening criticised Salahuddin for his recent remarks, terming them 'indecent, motivated and devoid of courtesy'.

A resolution adopted in the meeting said the remarks of Salahuddin manifested his 'deep rooted' conspiracy against BNP as well as the four-party alliance, said a press release.

The architect of the conspiracy is the government itself, which is subservient to an alien power, the press release added.

Those who spoke at the meeting included Abdus Salam, Kazi Abul Bashar, Shamsul Huda, Chowdhury Alam, Golam Morshed, MA Quayum, Nabiullah, Abdul Latif, Ariful Islam Arif, Habibul Alam Bobi, Anwar Hos-

sain, Syed Bardul Alam Babla, Jalal Ahmed, Tobarak Hossain Porag, Musharraf Hossain Hossain and M Shahed Montu.

Earlier, 30 pro-BNP commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation in a statement protested the recent remarks of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury about the BNP leadership and asked him to withdraw his comments and apologise.

The commissioners in a joint statement also called upon the BNP policy-makers to take disciplinary action against Chowdhury for his derelict behaviour.

"He is not only polluting the politics of BNP but has also undermined political culture," said the statement.

It said Salahuddin and his followers had stained their hands with the blood of freedom fighters during war of liberation and of the people during the Ershad regime.

The signatories to the statement included Kazi Abul Bashar, Chowdhury Alam, Golam Morshed, MA Quayum, Nabiullah, Abdul Latif, Alhaj Liakat Ali, Sajjad Zahir, ADM Badsha, Kazi Hazrat Ali, Ahsan Ullah Hasan and Liakat Ali.

## Mamun Bahini

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Mamun surrendered before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on Monday morning.

About 60 policemen led by AC DB and AC Panchalaish took part in a three-hour raid started at 11 am. It went in vain as police could not arrest any of the members of Mamun Bahini.

Some police officials yesterday told the newsmen that before going to jail on Monday Mamun reportedly threatened the police personnel for 'their excesses' saying that he would see them after

his release.

Meanwhile, the editors, journalists and newspaper employees in Chittagong have decided to continue their agitation programme.

The agitation programme was launched demanding arrest and trial of terrorist ward commissioner Mamunur Rashid for storming into Purbakone office and assaulting its two senior journalists on the night of April 18.

The decision was taken at a meeting at the local press club chaired by CUJ president Muhammad Idris yesterday. The meeting decided to keep five-inch blank space on the local dailies till April 11. The blank space will now carry the slogan: 'Resist Terrorism'.

The meeting severely criticised the role of the city mayor regarding the incident and the press statement in the name of ward commissioner on Monday evening following Mamun's surrender. The newsmen termed the statement 'provocative and defamatory'.

## Autonomy

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ers' Party.

Menon recalled that giving autonomy to Betar and BTV was one of the main agenda in the joint declaration of the three alliances announced after the fall of Ershad. "We all (AL, BNP and left parties) were pledge-bound to free the electronic media from government control."

Menon said he had piloted a bill in this regard in the fifth parliament during Khaleda's regime, where he suggested that the authority of parliamentary committee concerned be strengthened to run the affairs of Betar-BTV. But the bill was not passed, he regretted.

Menon believes that with the government enjoying the power of recruiting people for the proposed Betar Authority and BTV Authority, these media would never enjoy the freedom of autonomy.

## 15 murdered

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Mostafa, a motor parts trader at Dholaikhal and resident of Lal Mohan Street, was shot by his rivals on May 3. He succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on May 6.

Five people including a businessman were murdered in the city on Monday last.

Doctors should avoid prescribing Voltarin and aspirin. Only paracetamol should be referred. We should treat by applying medicine not by injecting platelets, which might be dangerous.

## Tania

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Barrister Tania Amir on behalf of the Bangladesh Law and Society Trust filed a writ petition on April 22 seeking immediate release of Tania Mostafa from safe custody and the court comprising Justice M A Aziz and Justice Muhammad Shamsul Huda ordered to present the detainee before the court yesterday.

The court after hearing Tania Mostafa ordered the government to release her immediately from the safe custody and said that she can stay anywhere she wishes.

Tania, who was a brilliant student and was looking for admission to medical college, was arrested in a case for marrying her boyfriend.

Tania had to stay in safe custody although no charges were brought against her.

## Confrontational politics

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play in protecting freedom of the press. "You will always find EU as a promoter of democracy and press freedom in Bangladesh."

Identifying good governance as the key to development, British High Commissioner Dr David Carter said the media have a vital role to play in ensuring good governance in the country.

"Enough is enough," he said while condemning political violence and urged the civil society to launch an anti-violence campaign. The British envoy felt that people needed restraint to curb violence.

The EU nations would send a 62-member team to monitor the coming election as they consider the vote very crucial, he told reporters.

German Ambassador Uwe Schramm said in contrast to the general notion that the EU's relations with developing countries only concentrated on economic issues, the partnership agreements have also a political aspect, and its development assistance was largely linked to politics and governance in the recipient countries.

"Under the agreement, the co-operation process can be suspended in cases like severe corruption," he noted.

Schramm also said cooperation contributes to development and SAARC nations could follow the EU model.

Italian Ambassador M F Pini outlined the general EU assistance process. He said it was difficult for the EU to continue development aid in countries that lacked efficiency, transparency and assis-

tance-receiving capacity.

Danish Ambassador Finn Thilsted said that EU wanted more friendship and increased partnership with Bangladesh in peaceful political atmosphere.

To a question, Thilsted said his country would wait until late this year or early next year to resume development project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which was suspended following the abduction of two Danish citizens there by insurgents.

All the European envoys lauded Bangladesh's growing role in the international arena as the spokesman of the developing countries, a member of the United Nations Security Council and a major contributor to the UN peacekeeping forces.

They also said Bangladesh and EU were entering into a greater tier of development cooperation as the EU assistance this year stood at 45 million dollars year compared to 25 million of last year.

The EU mission chiefs also termed Bangladesh a country of high potentials and opportunities.

Their comments came less than a week before the EU-sponsored third United Nations Conference on LDCs to be held in Brussels from May 14 to 20. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be among the heads of state and government to attend the conference.

European Commission Delegation Chief Antonio De Souza Menezes called the next week's LDC meeting as crucial for Bangladesh as spokesman of the developing nations ahead of the next WTO round.

## Meghnaghat plant

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The ministry further observed that PDB needed to clarify several crucial issues including whether the Japanese company would actually give any free electricity at the end of its contractual term and whether its financial evaluation of the power plant after 22 years would actually be worth 31.4 million US dollars as it had claimed.

"Actually after 22 years, the plant is rather a liability and it is not worth a few million dollars even if it is calculated as per Marubeni's evaluation formula," said a source.

He criticised the proposals saying, "Besides the fact that the government policy do not allow PDB to take over a power plant from a private operator, such land based plants do not last for 37 years."

"AES is giving free power in 2002-2003 from Meghnaghat 1. This time is crucial for Bangladesh in terms of payment of power in foreign currency. We cannot measure the benefits of free electricity we will be getting now against a complex package that would be available after 22 years and would be spreading over 15 years. What is the use of free electricity after 22 years? Will PDB exist then?"

"And how can anyone calculate that the plant would require 25 million dollars for rehabilitation on its 27th year of operation? What if it costs more money or that its obsolete? We will have no contract with Marubeni at that time, so who will be accountable then?"

To scrutinise Marubeni's proposals anew, the PDB secretary immediately ordered formation of a new committee along with representation from the Power Cell.

However, no sooner had the order been issued than the secretary cancelled it and reinstated the previous committee.

Then again, before even convening any meeting of the committee, the PDB secretary hurriedly sent a letter on May 2 to the energy ministry repeating its old observations and opinions.

As before, PDB claimed that the plant would have a 35-year life span and that after 22 years of operation it would have the capability to generate 405MW power.

PDB said that there was no chance of Marubeni trying to give any free electricity in the last contract year of its operation as it would give a security deposit against this proposal.

It reiterated its old argument that "Marubeni's free electricity is worth 5.7 million dollars while AES is giving PDB free electricity worth 35 million dollars," a source noted. "But they are saying that their package of benefits would be worth 39 million dollars in total."

Regarding the BOO-BOT problem, PDB weakly argued that the contract was being signed under BOO and Marubeni would transfer ownership "for free" after its contract period. Therefore, it does not fall under BOT.

"It's so contradictory, the contract now is going to be signed on the promise that the plant would be transferred for free to PDB after 22 years. If this clause is absent, the contract should be considered invalid," an official noted.

AES signed a contract with the government to provide electricity for a levelised 2.79 cents for the next 22 years. Marubeni's original offer in the same bid asked for a tariff more than 3.5 cents per unit.

## US envoy on polls

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world will welcome a peaceful and fair election."

In order to make the election transparent, Peters suggested 100 percent coverage of all voting booths by a corps of 165,000 domestic observers who need faith in Bangladesh's democratic institutions and a commitment to observe and report objectively.

The US and other countries are also funding teams of international observers and will support training of domestic and international observers.

Despite all these efforts, she, however, said it would finally de-

pend on the people here to take the ownership of their electoral process, and to ensure that Bangladesh has the kind of free, fair and credible election that the citizens deserve.

And after the election, Peters hoped that the new government and its opposition must find ways to work together if Bangladesh is to defeat poverty and rise from the ranks of LDC to become a middle-income country.

About the agenda of the new government, she said it would be up to the new government, but she thought that two key areas of focus should be enhanced: respect for the rule of law and accelerated economic growth. The new government and its opposition must play their role in charting the nation's path on these cardinal matters.

She expressed optimism that the upcoming election would be free and impartial and all newly elected MPs would take their seats in parliament and spend five years working for the good of the country.

## HSC examinees block traffic on Dhaka-Ctg road at Mirersharai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The HSC examinees of Nizampur College at Mirersharai upazila put up a barricade on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in front of the college yesterday demanding restoration of HSC centre at their college.

The students blocked the traffic on the highway for nearly two hours, from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, causing sufferings to the passengers.

The agitating students however withdrew the barricade around 1:00 pm.

## 'Commission' for doctors

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and CT Scan of each of the organs like pancreas, pelvis and lower abdomen Tk 4,500.

At Lab Aid diagnostic centre CT scan of brain costs Tk 3,500, CT scan for chest Tk 5,000, CT scan for whole abdomen Tk 10,000 and each MRI exposure Tk 6000.

The examination charges also include haematology, clinical pathology, biochemical examinations, histo-pathological, serological and immunological tests and viral hepatitis profile.

Ibn Sina Laboratories claim that they take 25 per cent less for all tests than what other diagnostic centres charge.

The Daily Star probe short-listed diagnostic centres, which have exorbitant rates for tests. These are Lab Aid, Popular Diagnostic, Modern Diagnostic, Medina, Comfort Diagnostic Centre and Compath Laboratories. Some private hospitals also fall into this category.

Dr Shameem Ahmed, managing director of Lab Aid Ltd, claimed that clients pay excessive

charge for quality service.

"To maintain quality of international standard, one has to pay the rates we have fixed. In fact, six other diagnostic centres have almost similar rates and they all are ensuring the best quality. Besides, there are hidden costs involved which is also realised from each of our clients," he said.

Dr Ahmed also admitted that he pays commission to doctors so that they send patients. Management of other diagnostic centres, however, denied the allegation.

When contacted, an