

'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 after authorities 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.

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 had also a political aspect, and its development assistance was largely linked to politics and governance in the recipient countries.

"Under the agreement, the cooperation 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.

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 much more or that it's 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.

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.

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Credit card

FROM PAGE 12

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 GSL-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."

The 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 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.

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Our Correspondent from Bar-

guna reported that rickshaw peddler Abdul Khaque died when a date tree fell on him while he was pedalling his way to Barguna town from Sonakali 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

FROM PAGE 12

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

"SP Abdul Motaleb 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," Manik said.

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 Shobh Ahmed Chowdhury.

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 Agrabad 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.

Abut 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 Entrepreneur 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.

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