

Some strategic choices for the AL

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WHEN I called a friend whose brother was winning a seat easily with an Awami League (AL) ticket on Election Day, his voice appeared tense. That surprised me. When I inquired why he was tense, he told me that he was worried because the AL was winning much more handsomely and decisively than he had expected in the height of pre-election optimism.

provide useful guide. The new generation provided a powerful impetus to the AL's landslide victory. In choosing the Cabinet, the representatives of the new generation must be given an important share in the Cabinet.

with the seriousness it deserves. Still there is a need to do something immediate to bring this very important institution on the rails, for without an effective civil bureaucracy the new government will find it extremely difficult to bring to fruition many of the expectations of the people.



President would be seeking worldwide partners in dealing with the upsurge of international terrorism and militancy. The new government in Bangladesh is coming to office with clear and unequivocal stand on Islamic fundamentalism by standing firmly on secularism.

the new Government to transform Bangladesh in which foreign affairs will play a crucial role in Bangladesh's transformation. The liberal image of Bangladesh must now be made crucial in the country's foreign policy for in an age of globalization, that image will open for Bangladesh more market access for her exports, increased export of manpower and foreign direct investment that are crucial for her sustained economic development.

process. Foreign affairs must not be left with the PMO to be handled at the level of bureaucrats without the ability or the understanding of issues as it has been in the past.

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India's security overhaul plan: Will it work?

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

THE Indian new Interior Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram has recently announced a raft of measures to overhaul the security apparatus after the Mumbai attacks.

The attacks clearly demonstrated how twenty terrorist individuals paralysed sixty-two hours of Mumbai life and how Indian security forces were ill-prepared to cope with such an attack, despite the fact that India has been a victim of terrorist attacks for years.

in favour of major amendments to India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) law in parliament's elected 543-seat lower house to give sharper teeth to the existing legislation. Furthermore in recent days, Interior Minister P. Chidambaram has announced a series of measures to boost security, which are as follows:

UK's MI5 or the US's FBI. The Research and Analysis Wing (Raw) is akin to the UK's MI6, responsible for external intelligence. India's top detective agency - the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has a charter to investigate certain crimes.

terrorism and hostage rescue, taking on heavily-armed criminals. They need to be equipped with the state-of-the-art weapons, communications and body-armor.



of the intended culprits. No wonder Indian people across the country were enraged with the state and the Union governments for their role in not preventing or coping with the attack.

Critics say that these measures will confront problems due to near-insurmountable odds, namely the lack of instructors, police officers, infrastructure, laws and money which will definitely hinder the government's well-meaning plans to make India safer.

Security analysts like Dr Sahni say "Here the government cannot run a 50-officer federal detective agency like the CBI and they are talking about an overarching federal investigations agency which will work on all facets of terrorism," he says.

There is another dimension to India's security, which is political. Some experts say that unless the Indian government leaders take certain concrete actions to root out some causes of terrorism, internal security measures are not enough.

Israel mulls truce but says assault may last weeks

Israel on December 30 mulled a proposed 48-hour truce as world leaders stepped up calls for an end to the violence and warplanes pummeled Hamas targets in the battered Gaza Strip for a fourth day. But Israeli officials warned that the onslaught, which has killed at least 368 Palestinians, could continue for weeks, while Hamas militants remained defiant, firing more deadly rockets into Israel and threatening to step up the attacks.

fired from Gaza, with one slamming into the southern port city of Ashdod more than 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the border. Hamas has threatened to carry out suicide attacks inside Israel for the first time since January 2005.

Chinese Navy on historic anti-piracy mission

An anti-piracy task force of the Chinese navy set sail Friday for Africa, state media said, in the nation's first potential combat mission beyond its territorial waters in centuries.

The three vessels, decorated with colored ribbons, flags and flowers, weighed anchor at the Yalong Bay naval base on south China's tropical Hainan island at 1:50 p.m., heading for Somalia, the Xinhua news agency said.