

PM: Security alert

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and are taking measures to ensure a foolproof security for the prime minister.

"We are always alert, since attempts were made on her life in the past," Sohel Taj said during a telephone interview with The Daily Star last night.

Meanwhile, Hasina and her family yesterday moved into the state guest house, Jamuna, from her Sudha Sadan residence in Dhanmondi, which was being considered unsafe for her by her security officials since her party's landslide victory in the recent parliamentary election held on December 29 last year.

Sources said the prime minister will be staying in the Jamuna for about six to seven months until the Gono Bhaban is renovated and readied for her use.

Security officials, especially of the Special Security Forces (SSF), which is responsible for the security of the prime minister, her family members, cabinet colleagues, and her party leaders, has been suggesting her not to stay in Sudha Sadan.

Government high officials said the fresh threat came after the Awami League-led government expedited its efforts to try the country's war criminals, which was one of the major election pledges of the prime minister's party.

"Trial of war criminals is our commitment to the nation, and it is also the people's expectation. The threat on the prime minister's life was issued after we had initiated the move to try the persons who had committed genocide in the country during the war of liberation in 1971," Faruk Khan said.

A section of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, who are known to have been involved in war crimes during the liberation war, are also said to maintain close connections with Pakistan and some Middle Eastern

Hasina

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Bangladesh to create employment facilities and alleviating poverty.

"During the trip, she is also likely to explain the issue of trying the war criminals and try to seek their understandings," a senior minister told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

"She is expected to request the Saudi government to take special measures so that no militant outfit in Bangladesh get fund from any Saudi organisation or individual," he said, adding that Hasina will also seek cooperation to root out militancy from Bangladesh.

Earlier on February 3, Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will go to Saudi Arabia within a few days and discuss with the Saudi government on the issues related to trade."

Sahara slates

Asked about the measures the home ministry would take in removing terrorism in the educational institutions, Sahara said her ministry is taking necessary steps in this regard.

"We are trying and I said times and again that we want to get to the root of the problems," she added.

Action would be taken against terrorists irrespective of their party affiliation, she said.

Addressing the programme as the chief guest, the home minister sought cooperation from people of all strata of society to build a peaceful Bangladesh by eliminating corruption, terrorism, militancy and extortion.

"We need your cooperation and suggestion. I can promise that I would try to root out terrorism, militancy and extortion even if I have to put my life on the line if you cooperate us," she said.

Every educational institution and even the administration were politicised during the tenure of the BNP-led four-party government, she said adding, "We want everything to be run on the basis of merit."

ASM Ali Kabir, secretary to the establishment ministry, inaugurated the concluding ceremony. He gave prizes to the contestants of over 50 events.

College principal and guardians also spoke on the occasion.

Mashrafe

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but the figures skyrocketed with the Kings XI Punjab also wanting him. They stayed hot on the heels of Knight Riders but the Kolkata side had the last laugh offering 12 times higher than the floor price.

The 25-year-old Bangladesh vice-captain, number eight in the ICC ODI rankings for bowlers, will be playing beside the likes of former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly, Australian captain Ricky Ponting, West Indies' Chris Gayle and New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman Brendon McCullum.

It is the first time Bangladeshi players have been put to the IPL auction after left-arm spinner Abdur Razzaq signed for Bangalore Royal Challengers after negotiations in the first version of the million-dollar Twenty20 competition.

Surprisingly, no buyer showed interest to Tigers' star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, the world's number one all-rounder in ODI rankings, while dashing opener Tamim Iqbal, the other Bangladeshi cricketer in the auction, also remained unsold.

England's Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff were sold for US\$ 1.55 million each making them the highest-paid cricketers in the competition.

AL to offer

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should head a little over three committees. But they can demand four chairmanships, and Jatiya Party too can stake claim to as many," he added.

Out of a total 48 committees, 37 are to be constituted on different ministries and the rest on matters relating to parliament.

The House has already formed two committees on parliamentary affairs.

Shahid also said the BNP-led four-party alliance government did not give the opposition a single chair in the eighth parliament. Still, the AL government has decided to allow four opposition members as standing committee chairmen to make parliament effective.

Asked about the ruling party initiative, Joynal Abedin Faruk, chief whip of the opposition, yesterday told reporters that their parliamentary party will consider the matter only after receiving a formal proposal.

Expressing doubts, he said, "Earlier they [ruling party] had announced they would have deputy speaker from the opposition, but that didn't happen. That's why we don't really trust them to carry out what they are saying now."

Trans-Asian

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said Nurul Amin, general manager (East) of the BR.

Gundam point will be a railway junction from where a track will extend to Cox's Bazar town to facilitate tourist movement and another towards Chittagong.

The TAR would connect Bangladesh at three points from the Indian state of West Bengal, and have a single exit point at Gundam. The track passes through industrial centres in the north and south-west of the country, and through the capital's outskirts of Joydevpur and into Kamrun Haque.

Karnaphuli

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relevant matters would be made after discussing with locals, lawmakers and other beneficiaries. He, however, said the tunnel could be somewhere near the third Karnaphuli bridge.

The process for the tunnel construction would start immediately after the inauguration of the third Karnaphuli Bridge in mid September, he said, adding that the construction of the bridge is set to finish ahead of schedule.

Construction of the bridge started in August, 2006, under a Tk 590-crore project. China Major Bridge Company got the work order to build it within 38 months. The 0.95km long and 24 metre wide bridge is being built with the financial assistance of Kuwait fund.

Chinese Ambassador Zheng Qing Dian accompanied the communication minister during his visit. Roads and Highway Department Chief Engineer Nihar Mia, Bangladesh Railway Director General Belayet Hossain, Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Shamim of Chittagong and Project Director Mohiuddin Ahmed were also present.

But the expenses will now increase as the proposal was submitted seven years ago. The government will implement the project with its own resources, sources said.

The then BNP-led alliance government did not consider the proposal submitted in 2002. Then the interim government took an initiative in this regard but it could not do much about it, the sources added.

The minister also visited some possible sites for the tunnel.

ISI behind attacks

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Pakistan in the name of fighting terrorism, saying it was like selling "whisky to an alcoholic."

The United States has been one of Pakistan's key military backers, including providing F-16 fighter jets in return for political support for its operations in Afghanistan.

Pakistan will announce the results of its investigation into the Mumbai attacks next week, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said Friday.

Gilani said last week his government was investigating what India has called evidence linking "elements" in Pakistan to the November attacks on its financial capital, in which 10 gunmen killed 165 people during a 60-hour siege.

"The investigation report will be presented to me by Monday which will be made public on the same day or the next day," Gilani told reporters in the eastern city of Lahore, where he was on a private visit.

Meanwhile Pakistan's oldest English-language newspaper, Dawn, reported that investigators probing the Mumbai attacks for the government in Islamabad had uncovered evidence implicating a banned Bangladeshi militant organisation, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI).

The report, based on unidentified sources, also mentioned the possibility that one of the gunmen was of Bangladeshi origin.

The probe is likely to indicate that the Mumbai attack was the handiwork of an 'international network of Muslim fundamentalists' present in South Asia and spread all the way to Middle East," Dawn said.

"Although the Bangladesh connection has emerged quite prominently in the investigations, there are also clear indications that some of the planning for the attacks was done in Dubai and there is also an element of local Indian support," it added.

There have so far been hardly any new books of poetry, rhyme and story for children, which reflect the culture and tradition of the nation.

Salesmen at different stalls said these books are not selling well.

Several hundred children took part in an art competition yesterday.

The crowd was the largest in the evening on the sixth day of the fair yesterday, the first weekend of the month.

A total of 232 new titles arrived at the fair yesterday. These include 35 novels, 46 story collections, 11 essay collections, 51 poetry collections, 18 children's books, four autobiographies, three science fictions, three books on politics, four travelogues and six books on the Liberation War.

The new titles include "Ek Tukro Lal Sabuj Kapor" by Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, "Motku Mamar Goyenda Abhijan" by Anisul Haque, "Kabirer Okobita" by Kabir Chowdhury, "Alak Pulak Shiharan" by Al Mahmud, "Shesh Bikeler Chithi" by Syed Shamsul Haq, "Megh Rong Bhalobasha" by Ali Imam, "Bangladesher Chalachitter Ruprekha" by Anupam Hayat and "Megh Roddur" by Md. Rashedul Haque.

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Trade accord

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international communications.

He said if the decision to give India 250 mile corridor in the name of transit is taken without discussion, review and proper scrutiny of security related issues, it would be suicidal and put the country's sovereignty at stake, hamper its economy and create political crises.

Delwar said an atmosphere for discussion on this critical issue could be created after establishing confidence by resolving issues of movement in enclaves, demarcation of maritime boundary, distribution of the Ganges water, growing incidents of killing of Bangladeshi by Indian Border Security Force, and unilateral construction of barbed wire fence along the common border.

The group's chief Mufti Abdul Hannan was sentenced to death late last year after he was found guilty of masterminding an attack on British ambassador to Bangladesh in 2003.

Bangladesh said Friday it was unaware of any evidence implicating HuJI in the Mumbai assault.

"First of all we don't have any information. If anyone has any information, share with us. We are ready to cooperate," Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain told AFP.

More doctors

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spokesman Khalid Al-Mirghani on February 2 reported that there is a demand for doctors in 43 such hospitals in the country.

The spokesman said the recruitment plan of the health ministry is geared to serve the health needs of the Kingdom's increasing population.

General physicians, consultants, specialists and surgeons are required at hospitals across the Kingdom's 20 health regions, he added.

Al-Mirghani said the ministry will appoint a panel to travel abroad to recruit the health staff. The panel, he said, would include medical experts.