

Asian Highway

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"But we cannot close our doors fearing imaginary bogus boos. We do not believe that India will take everything away," Hasina said.

"Asian Highway is an international network of routes and we cannot be in isolation by shutting our doors," said the premier.

She said if anyone checks with Google it will clear the confusion that the highway will not only connect Bangladesh with India it will also connect it with many other countries like China, and the Middle East and Europe.

After signing the agreement there is a scope for further discussion on the alternative route, she said, adding: "It is not that Bangladesh's expectation is everything ESCAP must have a sayaboutit."

In reply to a supplementary question from a Latiya Party lawmaker the premier said, "We got our independence through war. Our patriotism is not so fragile that we will not be able to protect the interest of our country."

Replying to a scripted question from AL lawmaker M A h m u d - S a n a d Chowdhury, the AL chief said the past alliance government scrapped the proposal of linking Bangladesh with the Asian Highway on the excuse that India will get transit facilities through this highway.

The present government, after assuming power, decided

Terrorists shifting focus to 'soft' targets

ANI, Washington

Terrorists are aiming for hotels and other easier-to-hit targets as security measures at military and government facilities continue to improve, says STRATFOR, a global intelligence company.

According to STRATFOR, al-Qaeda is changing from a centralized organization with global goals to regional "franchises" with more parochial aims and strong grass-roots support.

Fox News quoted the STRATFOR report as saying that these smaller cells get less training and less money, so they set their sights lower.

According to STRATFOR, the number of attacks on hotels has more than doubled since the 9/11 attacks in 2001 when compared with the eight years before.

Injuries and deaths caused by those attacks have increased six times over the same comparison period.

A hotel is the ultimate soft target for Islamic extremists: a fixed location, lots of human traffic and shallow security perimeters. Hotels also attract many Westerners, giving militants high probabilities of killing or injuring large numbers of them in a single attack, according to the report.

From a terrorist's perspective, the downside to hitting soft targets is that the attacks don't generate as much "political and ideological mileage" as hitting a hard target such as a better guarded government building or military facility, the report says.

Liberation War

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political leaders who organised Liberation War.

During the question hour, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal lawmaker Majeen Uddin Khan Badal in a supplementary query asked the state minister whether the government would move to honour politicians as organisers of the war.

Replying to the query, the state minister made the remark that annoyed the lawmakers.

They instantly protested his remark and shouted demands for expunging the remark from the House proceedings.

Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, who was in the chair at the time, found it difficult to bring back order.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina, who replied to lawmakers' queries a few minutes ago, was not present in the House at the time.

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury requested the lawmakers to cool down.

Many of the lawmakers shouted saying that they participated in the Liberation War under political leadership, not military leadership.

The deputy speaker repeatedly urged the lawmakers to allow the state minister to complete his reply to the query whether the government would honour the political leaders and civilians who organised the liberation war.

The lawmakers finally allowed Tajul to speak, and he corrected his earlier remark on the Liberation War.

He said organisers of the war should have been honoured long ago. However, a high-powered committee could be formed to work out steps to honour them, he added.

PDB tender

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in principle to link the country with the Asian Highway considering expansion of the country's communications, trade and commerce in the region, she added.

On June 15, the cabinet also approved a proposal in this regard, she kept mentioning.

Hasina said recently

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had agreed to connect Bangladesh with the Asian Highway network.

"A large amount of money will be invested for the construction of the highway, which will create employment opportunity; we do not want to miss that opportunity," she said.

THREE SELECTED ROUTES

Sheikh Hasina informed the House that in the ESCAP proposal three routes of Bangladesh were recommended -- Benapole-Jessore-Bangladesh-Kanchpurng-Sylhet-Tamabil (Route AH-1), Banglabandha-Hatikumrul-Tangail-Dhaka-Kanchpurng-Sylhet-Tamabil (Route AH-2) and Mongla-Khulna-Jessore-Pakshi-Hatikumrul-Dhaka-Kanchpurng-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf (Route AH-41).

"Of them, routes 1 and 2 were included in the ESCAP proposals as international routes and the third route as regional one," she said.

Traffic signal

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Talking to The Daily Star, a traffic sergeant said the existing automated traffic signalling system is fit for controlling vehicular movements from 10:00pm to 8:00am but to make the system effective during busy daytime hours, the time between signals has to be changed.

Requesting anonymity, another senior traffic official said, "A VIP needs 10 minutes to reach his/her destination, but traffic policemen have to keep the road restricted five to 10 times that time."

According to sources, a high-powered meeting of the government on August 20 asked the DMP and DCC to adjust and update the timing of automated signalling.

DMP Commissioner Shahidul last week told The Daily Star: "We have requested the Dhaka City Corporation authority, which owns the signalling system, to take steps in this regard, but it is yet to be done."

When contacted, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, however, said he was yet to be informed of any directives.

Replying to a query, the mayor said, "We must do it considering the need."

Meanwhile, the DMP is no more interested to renovate and update the automated system and is now busy setting up a new system called "command, control and communication system", or 3CS in short.

Joint Commissioner Shafiqur Rahman said, "The new system with closed-circuit television cameras and dot matrix displays will help reduce traffic jam."

Law secy

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Suranjit said the law secretary has been asked to send necessary documents to the committee members to help them prepare for the meeting.

Suranjit said the committee will hold discussions on four issues that include sending two district judges into retirement "unlawfully" and the appointment of judges and public prosecutors to special courts set up at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to try graft cases during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

The government on July 30 sent two district judges into retirement for their involvement in a demonstration of Bangladesh Judicial Service Association at the secretariat on July 27. It however reinstated the judges after two days in the face of strong criticism.

The parliamentary body earlier decided to probe the role of the prime minister's adviser HT Imam, and secretaries of law and establishment ministries in sending the two judges into retirement.

The committee at the next meeting will also discuss the much-talked presidential clemency to Mohiuddin Ahmed Jhantu, convicted for life in a double murder case, during the tenure of previous BNP-led alliance government, said Suranjit.

The committee was scheduled to hear the law secretary on the issues of sending the two judges into retirement and the appointment of judges and prosecutors.

Allegation was raised that due legal procedures were not followed in appointing judges and public prosecutors to the special courts to try corrupt people including politicians, businessmen and civil bureaucrats during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

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NYT reporter

FROM PAGE 16

Afghan officials over the weekend said about 70 people died when US jets dropped two bombs on the tankers, igniting them in a massive explosion. There were reports that villagers who had come to collect fuel from the tankers were among the dead, and Farrell wanted to interview villagers.

The Times reported that while Farrell and Munadi were interviewing Afghans near the site of the bombing, an old man approached them and warned them to leave. Soon after, gunshots rang out and people shouted that the Taliban were approaching.

Police had warned reporters who travelled to the capital of Kunduz to cover the tanker strike that the village in question was controlled by the Taliban and it would be dangerous to go there.

The Times kept the kidnappings quiet out of concern for the men's safety, and other media outlets, including The Associated Press, did not report the abductions following a request from the Times.

A story posted on the Times' Web site quoted Farrell saying he had been "extracted" by a commando raid carried out by "a lot of soldiers" in a firefight.

British special forces dropped down from helicopters early Wednesday onto the house where the two were being kept, and a gunbattle broke out, Yowar said.

Farrell, 46, a dual Irish-British citizen, told the Times that he saw Munadi step forward shouting "Journalist! Journalist!" but he then fell in a volley of bullets. Farrell said he did not know if the shots came from militants or the rescuing forces.

"I died in a ditch," said Farrell. Moments later, he said he heard British voices and shouted, "British hostage!" The British voices told him to come over. As he did, Farrell said he saw Munadi.

"He was lying in the same position as he fell," Farrell told the Times. "That's all I know. I saw him go down in front of me. He did not move. He's dead. He was so close, he was just two feet in front of me when he dropped."

The British prime minister said the operation was carried out after "extensive planning and consideration," and that those involved knew the high risks they faced. Brown called the mission "breathtaking heroism."

"As we all know, and as last night once again demonstrated, our armed forces have the skill and courage to act. They are truly the finest among us, and all of us in Britain pay tribute to them, and to the families and communities who sustain them in their awesome responsibilities," Brown said.

The letter also said there should be a provision to the effect that anyone can drop tender documents in any of the authorised boxes at multiple locations.

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The Public Procurement Rules (PPR) has the provision of submitting tender documents at several spots and through post or courier service, he added.

The CPTU in its letter suggested keeping open all these options, as it has been noticed that almost all contractors come to submit their schedules on the last date of regard.

A high official of the CPTU told The Daily Star that miscreants posing as Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders and workers have been restraining contractors from submitting tender schedules in different areas. This would impede government work and compromise quality.

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