

# Stay alert to any threat, safeguard sovereignty

PM asks army men in Cox's Bazar

UNB, Ramu, Cox's Bazar

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the army men to stay alert to any internal and external threat, and thus safeguard the country's constitution and sovereignty.

She was addressing the flag-hoisting ceremony of seven units of Bangladesh Army at Ramu Cantonment in Cox's Bazar. The units include two infantry brigades of the army's 10 Infantry Division.

Pointing to the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord and winning the maritime boundary cases against Myanmar and India, Hasina said her government set up Ramu Cantonment to protect sea resources as well as maintain peace and stability in the CHT region.

A significant number of modern vehicles, helicopters and arms and ammunition have been inducted in the Bangladesh Army for further boosting its capability and efficiency, she mentioned.

"There's a plan to establish another division of Bangladesh Army at Lebukhali of Patuakhali to keep our southern frontier well-protected... and this is how we'll build Bangladesh Army as a more time-befitting force through speedy and coordinated modernisation Insha Allah."

Describing the Bangladesh Army as a symbol of confidence and trust of people, the premier directed its members to be more efficient and welfare-minded.

Hasina also asked them to discharge their duties by maintaining discipline and keeping trust in senior leadership.

The PM said approval has been given to set up a cantonment public school inside the Ramu Cantonment. "The establishment of the Ramu Cantonment has sparked hope among the people of this region."

Paying rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, she said Bangabandhu had realised the necessity of a developed and professional army.

Earlier, on her arrival at the parade ground of the cantonment, Hasina was received by Chief of Army Staff General Abu Belal Mohammad Shafiqul Huq and Maj Gen Ataul Hakim Sarwar Hasan, general officer commanding of the 10 Infantry Division.

A smartly turned-out contingent of the 10 Infantry Division presented a state salute to the PM.

Ministers, PM's Security Adviser Maj Gen Tarique Ahmed Siddique (ret'd), lawmakers and senior civil and military officials were present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the flag-hoisting programme of seven army units at the Ramu Cantonment in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Target building the builders of modern Bangladesh

Nahid tells GP-Prothom Alo i-Gen function

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The aim of the present education system is to make the new generation the builder of modern Bangladesh, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.

"Many had criticised when computer education was made compulsory in 2010. Now, there is not a single school in the country where there is not at least one laptop," he said.

The minister made the remark while addressing as the chief guest at the Grand Finale of Grameenphone-Prothom Alo i-Gen 2015 at Bashundhara Convention Hall in the capital last night. He was impressed as participants of the final round were quick to answer various questions on information technology and internet.

"It has been proved through the participation of so many students in the i-Gen competition that our new generation is of world class in terms of knowledge and talent. The holding of the i-Gen competition to encourage students deserves thanks," he said.

Grameenphone's Chief Corporate Affairs Officer Mahmud Hasan said his company was not within the confines of telephone service only, but was providing digital service to people.

Faridur Reza Sagar, managing director of Channel i, said, "We want to go forward with the young generation."

Around 8.7 lakh students from 2,000 institutions participated in the competition. Students from four schools survived in the 10-month long training on various issues of internet and information technology. In the end, St Joseph Higher Secondary School of Dhaka became the champion. Five students of this school received prizes worth Tk 25 lakh and a laptop each.

## Iqbal Mahmud new head of ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Iqbal Mahmud, former senior secretary of public administration ministry, was appointed chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday.



He will replace Bodiuzzaman, whose contract ends on March 13. Meanwhile, AFM Aminul, a former judge, has been made an ACC commissioner. He will replace Commissioner Sahabuddin whose contract also expires March 13.

Mahmud was made the acting secretary of post and telecommunications ministry in 2008. He became the secretary of the public administration ministry the following year. He was promoted to the post of a senior secretary in 2012 while working at the Economic Relations Division.

Mahmud was appointed the Asian Development Bank's alternative executive director in November 2012 and went on leave preparatory to retirement (LPR) in 2014.

## Hackers bugged BB system in Jan

FROM PAGE 1

New York Fed account held by the BB.

The hackers chose the weekend in four countries to break into the BB system. The weekly two-day bank holiday in Bangladesh starts at Thursday midnight and a day later in the US, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Knowing that there would be no mutual correspondence immediately, the hackers sent the fake payment orders around the midnight on February 4, a Thursday in Bangladesh.

About \$1 billion of the BB reserves is kept in a current account with the Fed. The money is meant to make government payments against debts and consultancy fees for development projects.

The hackers attempted to steal all of it, but failed although they made it seem like real transfer orders using names of genuine projects, donors and authorities.

Of the \$101 million stolen, \$81 million was wired to two banks in the Philippines. The rest \$20 million was sent to a bank in Sri Lanka in favour of an NGO, whose account was opened just a month ago, according to the BB.

The sum that ended up in Sri Lanka has been retrieved, as the money was not disbursed because the NGO's name was wrongly spelled in the transfer order, BB officials said.

According to the Philippines Daily Inquirer, it appeared that a \$25-million transaction was ordered by the BB on behalf of the government's Kanchpur, Meghna and Gumti second bridges

### TIMELINE

#### Feb 8 (CHINESE NEW YEAR)

The BB requested the RCBC to stop payment and refund the funds, and if the funds had been transferred, to "freeze or put the funds on hold," noting that the payment order was fraudulent. However, this was a nonworking holiday in the Philippines.

#### Feb 9

The RCBC received a Swift message from the BB requesting to stop payment and freeze the accounts for proper investigation. However, withdrawals from the accounts totalling \$58.15 million had already been processed by the Jupiter Street branch of the RCBC.

#### Feb 16:

BB governor sought the assistance of his Philippine counterpart, regarding the loss of \$81 million. The BB said the Feb 4 Swift payment instructions issued in favour of the RCBC were "fraudulent."

#### Feb 19

The Philippines' Anti-Money Laundering Council starts probe of bank accounts relating to Weikang Xu (believed to be a

construction projects.

The amount was remitted to the account of Enrico Teodoro Vasquez, one of the beneficiaries, purportedly for the payment of a "loan" from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica).

A payment for \$30 million to Jessie Christopher Lagros, an IT professional and a beneficiary, likewise under a "loan," was supposedly ordered by the BB on behalf of Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit project.

A further \$6-million payment order on behalf of an IPFF project cell was supposedly to pay for another beneficiary Michael Francisco Cruz's consultancy fees. Another payment worth \$19 million was supposedly from Bheramara combined cycle power plant development project with Alfred Santos Vergara as beneficiary.

Based on documents, officials of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) of the Philippines had no reason to doubt the validity of the remittance from Bangladesh. The branch manager also cited several superiors attesting to the validity of the transactions, which -- on paper -- were backed by underlying infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, reported the Inquirer.

The four beneficiaries opened US dollar bank accounts in the RCBC in May last year.

A central bank official yesterday confirmed that the names of the projects were indeed used.

To prevent further hacking, the BB is

working to install a software programme that will try to neutralise the malware that penetrated the BB system.

The BB probe body believes that the hacking was orchestrated from outside the country. But as the hackers made the fund transfer orders in the name of existing projects, investigators are looking into whether any locals are also involved in the hacking, one of the biggest bank thefts in history.

"We are still in the middle of the investigations and are looking at both internal and external engagements. So, it is hard to rule out anything," said Rakesh Asthana, a cyber security expert working for the BB, and a former director of the World Bank's IT department, on Wednesday.

Based on the findings, the government would proceed to nab the local perpetrators, if any, and would seek help from foreign intelligence to take legal steps against foreign hackers.

On February 16, BB Governor Atiur Rahman wrote to his Filipino counterpart Amando Tetangco Jr, saying the February 4 SWIFT payment instructions issued in favour of the RCBC were fake.

In addition to stealing credentials for processing transfers, the hackers may have spied on Bangladesh Bank staff to get a deeper understanding of the central bank's operations, according to experts in banking fraud.

Kayvan Alikhani, a senior director with US security firm RSA, said that in addition to user names and passwords for accessing SWIFT, the hackers possi-

bly needed to obtain cryptographic keys that authenticated the senders.

Such certificates can be copied and used by impostors if those are not properly secured, he told Reuters.

They siphoned the money through SWIFT after observing how bank employees crafted their messages so they could follow correct protocols, said Juan Guerrero, a researcher with Kaspersky Lab.

Questions have been raised on how the fraudulent orders slipped through the US financial system as the transactions involved the New York Fed and US correspondent banks Citibank, the Bank of New York Mellon and Wells Fargo Bank.

#### CHANGES IN TRANSFER ORDER

In the wake of the cyber attack, the BB has changed the payment order mechanism. The central bank is not relying only on the SWIFT, a system that banks use for fund transfer requests and other secure messages.

While making a fund transfer order involving a significant amount of money, the BB would use verbal advice along with the existing SWIFT service, the BB has informed the New York Fed.

The BB is working with the Belgium-based SWIFT authorities for making the service more secure, said a central banker.

The official said the BB would take assistance from the World Bank and an agency of the US to bring back money from the Philippines.

The primary discussion with them is underway, he said.

## SENDING TROOPS TO SAUDI ARABIA

# Dhaka to consider it only if UN approves

REZAUL KARIM

Bangladesh will consider sending troops to Saudi Arabia only if UN Security Council (UNSC) approves it and in case the two holy mosques face threats.

During a meeting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir in Dhaka on Tuesday, it was made clear that Bangladesh would not participate in any military operation in any part of the world if not mandated by the UNSC, diplomatic sources said.

Hasina, however, gave a positive response regarding extending support to the Arab country in countering terrorism and religious extremism.

She welcomed the Saudi initiative to form a 34-nation coalition of like-minded Islamic countries to fight terrorism but at the same time cited the government's policy that requires UN approval for its participation in any military operation of the alliance.

The Saudi foreign minister paid the visit to Dhaka reportedly to know how Bangladesh could militarily assist the Middle Eastern country. A visit to Saudi Arabia by Hasina is on the cards by May.

At the meeting, Hasina told the Saudi minister that her country joined the Saudi-led Islamic Alliance (Dhaka calls it "Counter-Terrorism Centre") along with other Muslim countries as per its "zero tolerance" policy to fight terrorism and extremist ideology, highly placed sources said.

The Saudi minister did not directly seek military support from Bangladesh, but he expressed the hope that the government would come forward if Saudi Arabia and the custodian of the two holy mosques there were threatened.

The PM in response assured him of Bangladesh's strong support if any such

situation arises.

The People of Bangladesh hold Saudi Arabia and the mosques in high esteem and so would always stand by the people of Saudi Arabia against any threat, sources quoted her as saying to the Saudi minister.

Al-Jubeir said there would be no pressure on any of the alliance members to have military involvement.

The alliance has military and non-military aspects and its members can contribute to any of the areas, he added.

At this stage, the PM said Bangladesh would have an active role in sharing information, intelligence, policies, experiences and best practices with the Muslim countries, diplomatic sources said.

During the meeting, Hasina and the Saudi foreign minister agreed to deepen the bilateral cooperation in all fields, including defence, security, fight against terrorism, trade and investment and manpower, according to highly placed sources.

The Saudi minister appreciated the valiant efforts made by the security and law enforcement agencies to root out "terrorism" from Bangladesh and the government's zero-tolerance policy towards all sorts of terrorism and violent extremism, sources said.

It was also agreed that the two countries would cooperate in developing an effective counter-narrative against the extremist mindset.

Diplomatic sources said the Arab country had launched an aggressive move to mobilise global support, especially from Islamic countries, since the diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Tehran were cut off after Saudi Arabia executed a Shiite cleric in January this year.

## Moosa sued for false info

FROM PAGE 20

Moosa, asking him to submit the wealth statement.

The businessman in his wealth report, filed on June 7, claimed that he has Swiss bank accounts frozen which contain \$12 billion and also owns about 1,200-bigha land in Savar and Gazipur.

Talking to The Daily Star, an ACC official said the accused could not file any document in support of his wealth statement.

Moosa during quizzing by investigators said he was leading a retired life.

Previously, he was involved in manpower business in Bangladesh through his company DATCO, added the official.

Giving false information is a punishable offence under sections 26(2)(a), 26(2)(b) and 27(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004.

If found guilty of the offence, an accused might face a jail term of up to three years or a fine or both.

In June 2014, Moosa in an interview to a local magazine said he owns properties worth over Tk 53,000 crore.

The anti-graft body had launched an inquiry in 2010 following news reports that the businessman from Faridpur allegedly laundered over Tk 51,000 crore abroad.

Bangladesh Bank in June 2011 asked all commercial banks to provide the ACC with information and documents they had on Moosa.

The central bank's anti-money laundering unit in the same year sent copies of a letter to the banks, giving a brief introduction about the businessman.



People gather near a carcass of an elephant in the reserved forest of Kutakhali Purnagram in Cox's Bazar's Chakaria upazila yesterday. A herd of elephants destroyed houses after they crossed into locality in search of food Wednesday night. At least nine shots were fired to scare the animals away. This elephant was shot in the head, said witnesses.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD AIZ ZINNAT