

Govt asked to ensure security at courts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court administration has requested the government to tighten security of judges, lawyers, court officials and litigants at courts across the country in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks at Gulshan and Sholakia.

The SC authorities have discussed the security matters with the lawyers concerned and police officials and requested the government to take necessary measures to that end, SC Registrar General Syed Aminul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha on Tuesday held a meeting with some lawyers including Supreme Court Bar Association President Yusuf Hossain Humayun and Secretary AM Mahub Uddin Khokon at his SC office.

Another meeting was held between the SC officials and the police officials yesterday about the security issues. The meeting held at the SC conference room was presided over by the SC registrar general.

The registrar general said they had decided to tighten security at the residences of the judges of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division and also impose some restrictions on the movement of transports including rickshaws and motorcycles at the SC premises.

A number of scanners would also be installed at the court premises, he said, adding, the SC authorities have decided to send a letter to the local administration and lower courts to ensure sufficient security there.

Criminals hold knife to kid's throat, rob mother

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Muggers yesterday robbed a mother of her jewellery, holding a knife to her 7-year-old child's throat.

Two muggers on a motor bike stopped the mother and her child at around 10:00am when the mother was returning home on foot after picking up her daughter from her school at Mominpara, a residential area in the town.

The victim, Sabina Akhter, 28, is wife of Zakir Khan. Zakir's uncle Faruq Khan described the incident saying that the robbers threatened to kill the young girl unless Sabina gave up all the valuable items on her.

The criminals left the scene within a minute after Sabina handed them a gold chain and a ring, added Faruq.

Although no one lodged any formal complaint, the police are investigating the incident and they already visited the crime scene, said Wali Ullah, officer-in-Charge of Chandpur Model Police Station.

Death toll in Italy train crash now 27

REUTERS, Rome

The death toll from a high speed train crash in southern Italy rose to 27 yesterday after rescuers worked through the night to try to extract bodies from the tangled wreckage and continued their search in the morning.

With Italian media focusing on the antiquated technology on the single-track line, prosecutors have opened an investigation and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has promised that the cause of Tuesday's accident will be quickly identified.

Rescuers were still searching for the driver of one of the trains that collided head-on while travelling down the same stretch of track linking the small towns of Corato and Andria in the southeastern Puglia region in Italy's heel.

The driver of the other train was one of the victims. With dozens of people injured, some seriously, rescuers expected the death toll could rise higher.

It is still unclear whether the accident was due to human error or a technical problem on a stretch of track where safety is dependent on telephone calls rather than computer systems.

Amid allegations that European Union funds available to upgrade the line had been wasted, Transport Minister Graziano Delrio was to address parliament on the accident at 11:00 GMT.

While Italy boasts efficient high-speed train links between its main cities of Naples, Rome, Milan and Turin, much of the country is still dependent on slow, outdated and dilapidated services, especially in the undeveloped south.



Deputy Chief of the General Staff of Saudi Armed Forces Air Marshal Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

May moves in as Cameron bows out

FROM PAGE 1

May, 59 assumed office after an audience with Queen Elizabeth and drove straight to her new home of 10 Downing Street, vacated hours earlier by David Cameron, whose resignation after the vote to leave the EU brought her to power.

"We will rise to the challenge. As we leave the European Union we will forge a bold new positive role for ourselves in the world, and we will make Britain a country that works not for a privileged few, but for every one of us," she said.

Cameron stepped down after Britons rejected his entreaties to stay in the EU last month with a decision to get out that severely undermines European efforts to forge greater unity and creates economic uncertainty across the 28-nation bloc.

May must now try to limit the damage to British trade and investment as she renegotiates the country's ties with its 27 EU partners. She will also attempt to unite her divided Conservative party and a fractured nation in which many, on the evidence of the vote, feel angry with the political elite and left behind by the forces of globalisation.

In comments addressed to ordinary

Britons, she spoke of the 'burning injustice' suffered by large sections of society: poor people facing shorter life expectancy; blacks treated more harshly by the criminal justice system; women earning less than men; the mentally ill; and young people struggling to buy homes.

Acknowledging the struggles faced by many people, May declared: "The government I lead will be driven not by the interests of the privileged few, but by yours. We will do everything we can to give you more control over your lives."

Shortly afterwards, her office announced that Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond would become Finance Minister, replacing George Osborne whose determination to balance Britain's books made him synonymous with austerity.

Former London mayor and prominent "Leave" figurehead Boris Johnson was appointed as British foreign minister.

And she has appointed David Davis, a former junior foreign minister and strong Brexit advocate, to lead the country's negotiations for exiting the European Union.

She spoke of the "precious bond" between the nations of the United

Kingdom, implicit recognition of the tensions generated by the referendum in which England and Wales chose to quit the EU, but Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to stay, raising the possibility of a new Scottish vote on independence.

The United States congratulated May and said it was confident in her ability to steer Britain through the Brexit negotiations.

"Based on the public comments we've seen from the incoming prime minister, she intends to pursue a course that's consistent with the prescription that President Obama has offered," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said.

An official photograph showed May curtsying to a smiling Queen Elizabeth, for whom she is the 13th prime minister in a line that started with Winston Churchill.

She is also Britain's second female head of government after Margaret Thatcher.

EU leaders, keen to move forward after the shock of 'Brexit', want May to launch formal divorce proceedings as soon as possible to help resolve the uncertainty.

But she has said the process should not be launched before the end of year,

WAR CRIMINALS

Govt to scrap allocation of Rajuk plots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to cancel the allocation of Rajuk plots given to war criminals during the last BNP-Jamaat tenure.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) would issue a circular to this end within a very short time, said sources at the city development authority.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mosharraf Hossain disclosed the Rajuk move while talking to reporters at his office in the secretariat yesterday.

"Allocation of plots for war criminals has been cancelled. Some of these war criminals, I will not mention names, gave them [the plots] to real estate developers, who are not at fault here," he said.

He also said if any developer company made buildings on such plots, it would get its share. The rest would be confiscated by the government.

The government would review the matter if anyone purchased from the share of the war criminals. A decision on it would be taken later, he said.

Motiuur Rahman Nizami, chief of Jamaat-e-Islami, a key ally of the then BNP-led coalition government, was first made the agriculture minister and then the industries minister.

Ali Hsan Mohammad Mojaheed, secretary general of Jamaat, was made a technocrat minister and given the charge of social welfare ministry.

Both Nizami and Mojaheed, who were top leaders of Al-Badr, a notorious force mainly responsible for the killings of intellectuals at the fag end of the Liberation War, have been executed for war crimes.

During the BNP-Jamaat government, Nizami was awarded a five-katha plot on Road-18 at Banani for his "vital contribution to the state", according to Rajuk sources.

Mojaheed received a five-katha plot on Road-10 of Sector-11 at Uttara Model Town in March, 2006.

The Rajuk allotted the plot to Mojaheed under Section 13/ka of Land Allocation Rules, 1969. According to the rules, a plot can be allotted to an eminent person, who has no accommodation in the capital, in recognition to his vital contribution to the state.

A source in Jamaat told The Daily Star yesterday that a developer company constructed two buildings on the plots given to the two Jamaat leaders.

"They [Nizami and Mojaheed] have sold all the flats [in the buildings] except two flats where their family members are living in," added the source.

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But she has said the process should not be launched before the end of year,

to give time for Britain to draw up its negotiating strategy.

Although she favoured Britain remaining in Europe, May has repeatedly declared that "Brexit means Brexit" and that there can be no attempt to reverse the referendum outcome.

The shock vote partly reflected discontent with EU rules on freedom of movement that have contributed to record-high immigration - an issue on which May, as interior minister for the past six years, is politically vulnerable.

But EU leaders have made clear that free movement is a fundamental principle that goes hand-in-hand with access to the bloc's tariff-free single market, a stance that will hugely complicate May's task in hammering out new terms of trade.

"My advice to my successor, who is a brilliant negotiator, is that we should try to be as close to the European Union as we can be for the benefits of trade, cooperation and of security," Cameron told parliament in his last appearance before resigning.

Appearing later in Downing Street with his wife Samantha and their three children, he delivered his parting remarks to the nation after six years dominated by the Europe question

and the aftermath of the global financial crisis.

"It's not been an easy journey and of course we've not got every decision right," he said, "but I do believe that today our country is much stronger."

In parliament, Cameron took the opportunity to trumpet his government's achievements in generating one of the fastest growth rates among western economies, chopping the budget deficit, creating 2.5 million jobs and legalising gay marriage.

Yet his legacy will be overshadowed by his failed referendum gamble, which he had hoped would keep Britain at the heart of a reformed EU.

May is seen by her supporters as a safe pair of hands to steer the country through the disruptive Brexit process. Colleagues describe her as cautious, unflappable and intensely private.

"I think around the cabinet yesterday the feeling was that we have our Angela Merkel," said Jeremy Hunt, health secretary in Cameron's team which met for the last time on Tuesday.

"We have an incredibly tough, shrewd, determined and principled person to lead those negotiations for Britain," Hunt told Sky News television.

Scrap Rampal power deal

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Heavy Electricals Ltd to begin construction of the much-debated Rampal coal power plant. The project location is just 14 kilometres upstream the Sundarbans Reserve Forest, the world's largest remaining contiguous mangrove forest and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Challenging the government's presumption that nothing harmful would happen to the Sundarbans, eminent economist Prof MM Akash said India's EXIM bank would only give loan to the project related to the country's export.

"We don't know what items will be exported by India. If we have to import coal from India, then there remains the question of coal's quality," he said. If other countries have good quality coal, why

Bangladesh would import it from India, he asked.

The government's assumption is that fly ash would be transported to a cement factory and no pollution would take place as fly ash would be initially stored in a pond, he said.

Saying that the plant is situated on a low-lying area, Akash said if the pond was submerged by flood, fly ash would spread throughout the Sundarbans and jeopardise the flora and fauna.

Terming it an eyewash, Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Bachao Andolan (Bapa), said cement manufacturing companies promote fly ash-free cement as a good one, so it is not an acceptable explanation.

Quoting tender documents, Sharif

added the aqua life of the nearby Pashur river would be destroyed as fly ash would be channelled through it from the chimney.

Orion has also proposed to set up another coal-based power plant within 14km of the Sundarbans.

Sharif said though Orion has claimed that the US Exim Bank would fund their project, the bank has recently stated that they did not receive any such proposal.

"It means the nation is being made fool," he added.

In a joint statement, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) have meanwhile expressed deep concerns over the agreement and asked the government to stop it immediately.

Nat'l interest first

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consider our national interest," Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali told a press briefing at his ministry ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Mongolia.

He said Bangladesh received an overwhelming response from the friendly countries following the attack and they expressed solidarity with Bangladesh.

Asked about the US offer of help, Ali said the home ministry would work on it and also would make a decision about what type of support Bangladesh would accept from other countries in combating terrorism.

The attack on the Gulshan eatery left nine Italians, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, an Indian, a Bangladesh-born US citizen and two police officials killed.

The minister claimed that Bangladesh's image abroad has not been affected at all, because terrorism is a global problem now and many other countries have been facing the challenge of terrorist attacks.

The government is firm in its resolve to defeat the evil forces, he added.

He said Bangladesh deserves high appreciation from all for the way it

handled the two recent attacks in Dhaka and Kishoreganj. "It's surely a tragedy and a condemnable act. But we should be proud of the way we handled it."

Nobody said they would not visit Bangladesh, rather everyone expressed solidarity with Bangladesh, Ali mentioned. "Even an injured Japanese citizen who worked for Jica said he would come back to Bangladesh to join work."

The families of the Japanese victims said they would travel to Bangladesh again, the minister told reporters.

Asked about a recent US circular, Ali said the family members of the US officials in Dhaka were given an option as per their domestic laws. Similar options were offered to officials' family members in 33 other countries.

The US State Department in the notice said it was authorising the voluntary departure of family members of government officials at the US embassy in Dhaka.

On the prime minister's trip to Mongolia, the foreign minister said the premier will depart for Mongolia this morning to attend the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Ulaanbaatar on July 15-16. The ASEM

leaders would express their resolve to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Sheikh Hasina will lead a 58-member delegation to Mongolia.

The minister further informed newsmen that Japan will host a special anti-terrorism event on the sidelines of the Meeting, for which Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has invited his Bangladeshi counterpart to be the co-chair with him. "Our prime minister has accepted the invitation," he said.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahrar Alam and senior foreign ministry officials were present at the press conference.

Diplomatic sources said the two premiers will hold a bilateral meeting. They are expected to pledge cooperation in implementing anti-terror measures and ensuring safety of Japanese nationals in Bangladesh.

Hasina may also hold bilateral meetings with leaders from Russia, the Netherlands and Switzerland. She is likely to have meetings with the European Council president, German chancellor, Myanmar president, Indian vice-president and Italian foreign minister, the sources added.

PM urges people

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Hasina said the authorities concerned will have to watch over the key installations across the country.

As some war criminals have already been executed, their family members are conspiring to launch more devastating attacks, she added.

"Many of them [family members] are living at home and abroad. They have no lack of wealth and have connections with terrorists at home and abroad. They are patronising militants and terrorists," Hasina said.

The premier said they might launch synchronised attacks in seven to eight districts, different important places or installations. Besides, they might attack people of different professions and classes.

In a span of just one week, the country saw two terrorist attacks - one at the Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital on July 1 and the other near Sholakia Eidgah in Kishoreganj on July 7.

The PM regretted that children of well-off families are getting involved in extremism.

Hasina also warned that the government would not tolerate any activity that threatens peace and security of people.

"We'll have to ensure peace and security in the country. Killing of Muslims by Muslims will only malign the holy religion Islam... this religion is

the religion of peace. We won't tolerate if anyone wants to malign this religion."

She called upon people to build awareness to resist militancy and terrorism on Bangladesh soil. "Those who kill during namaz [prayers] never believe in Islam. They would earn only hatred, nothing else."

Hasina said there would be no place in heaven for these people; they would be in hell.

Mentioning that her government always wants to maintain peace in the country, she said Awami League, after assuming office, took stern actions in this regard.

At a time when the country's image is getting brighter across the world, such terrorist attacks will just tarnish its image, she said, adding that the intention of these attacks was to tarnish Bangladesh's image, obstruct its advancement and push it towards darkness.

Elected public representatives, government officials, businessmen, college teachers, social workers, imams of mosques, Islamic scholars and other professionals took part in the discussions.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, prime minister's advisers HT Imam and Tawfiq-e Elahi Chowdhury, State Minister for Sports Biren Sikdar and the imam at Sholakia Eid congregation were present.

Editors call for unity

FROM PAGE 1

over the attacks and offering condolences to the bereaved family members of the victims, the Council said the goal of the evil force is to send a wrong message to the world by brutally killing the innocent people and creating anarchy in the country.

"Apart from strict measures by the law enforcement agencies, familial, social and cultural awareness has to be raised to overcome the deep crisis," the Council said in the statement.

"We all need to unite against this evil force."

The meeting was attended by The

Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, Prothom Alo Editor Matiuur Rahman, News Today Editor Rezauddin Ahmed, Financial Express Editor AHM Moazzem Hossain, Bangladesh Pratidin Editor Noyeem Nizam, Nayadiganta Editor Alamgir Mohiuddin, Dainik Azadi Editor MA Malek, Sangbad Editor (acting) Khandker Muniruzzaman, New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, Independent Editor M Shamsur Rahman, Jugantor Editor (acting) Saiful Alam, Bonik Barta Editor Dewan Hanif Mahmud and Dhaka Tribune Editor Zafar Sobhan.