

## PM: Crime curb

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"We sincerely expect such unity among the country's political parties in greater interest of Bangladesh," she said in her over 35-minute long speech aired by radio and television.

She noted that a window of opportunities has opened up to turn Bangladesh into a prosperous country, making the most of its development potential.

The prime minister, however, had a word of caution about the activities that prove to be disservice to national interest. She urged the people to stand guard against any such attempt to the development drives.

"Guard against any move that puts roadblocks on to development through discord and chaos in the name of movement."

She outlined the activities and attainment of her government and pointed out the modest progress on her election pledges two years into the office.

"As we don't want to talk big about our success, so we don't hesitate to state that we have lagged behind in some cases to fulfil your hopes," she addressed the people. She said her government believes in transparency and accountability.

On evaluation of the four-party alliance rule, Khaleda said the first year of her government passed off in the reconstruction activities, including revitalising a shattered economy, restoring social discipline and re-establishing chain of command in an unstable administration.

In the second year, alongside implementing development programmes, reforms in various areas were taken up and the foundations for development strengthened and road to development smoothened, she recounted.

The opposition leader termed the election on October 1 'ghostly' and urged them to come forward to 'save democracy', Khaleda said quoting the opposition leader as saying.

Turning to law and order, which was one of her government's top priority set forth in election manifesto, Khaleda alleged that criminal activities amplified during period of the past government in 1996-2001 when 'godfathers' raised their vile heads in different pockets across the country.

"We are not partisan in combating criminal activities and that is why the Operation Clean Heart got your support countrywide. And after that we formed a special force, the Rapid Action Team, which is now engaged in keeping law and order," Khaleda told the people.

She rebutted allegations of her political opponents that the widely acclaimed Speedy Trial Act, enacted to check crime, is being used as a political weapon.

Reaffirming her government's commitment to severe and uncompromising combat against crime, Khaleda reminded that new laws has been introduced and some old ones amended in parliament during the last two years in this regard.

The premier alleged that along with crime another nagging vesicle, corruption, germinated on the nation during the past rule.

She mentioned different deterrent steps, including the initiative to launch an independent anti-corruption commission taken by her government.

Khaleda's speech included a list of development activities carried out by her government during the last two years in all spheres of national life.

She once again asserted that her government believes in free flow of information and that the media in Bangladesh at present enjoys freedom to the nth degree compared to earlier times.

She recalled that her government during 1991-96 term had opened the door for free flow of information by providing permission to broadcast the BBC and CNN. "The establishment of satellite channels is its continuity,"

Reminding the media of their responsibility, she warned that doctored or wrong information and pictures can ramify political disputes in the country.

"You can criticise the faults of the government, point out the mistakes, but keep in mind that the interest of the nation is not hampered," she urged the media.

## Shab-e-Barat

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina have given separate messages on the occasion.

In his message, the president has urged all to make sincere efforts for removing all kinds of injustice from society and establishing peace being imbued with the sense of fraternity and welfare.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, in her message, has called upon all to maintain sanctity and significance of holy Shab-e-Barat and prayed for peace, prosperity and happiness in the national life.

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina in her message has urged all to seek pardon of the Almighty for any misdeeds and sins committed and asked people to give up hatred, jealousy and rivalry.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police have imposed a ban on carrying and exploding any fire-arms, explosives, fireworks and other harmful substances to help observe the holy Shab-e-Barat in due solemnity and to maintain law and order on the night.

tious people of India criticised it."

Referring to India-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission meeting held in New Delhi on September 28-29, Khaleda said Bangladesh water resources minister expressed Bangladesh's concern to his Indian counterpart at the meet.

"We hope ministers of the two countries and top political leaders would reach a solution to water-management problem through discussion."

Khaleda further said Bangladesh stressed economic diplomacy and deepened its relations with Southeast Asian countries under "Look East Policy".

She mentioned that the heads of state and government from Britain, China, Pakistan, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka visited Dhaka in the last two years during the alliance rule.

On Iraq issue, Khaleda briefly said, "We're abiding by the United Nation's opinion on Iraq." She said Bangladesh sent aid of medicines and tea for the Iraqis injured in war.

On the CPA meet underway in Dhaka, she said despite some limitations and mistakes, the 49th conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is going to a successful end.

Khaleda alleged about the Awami League's abstention from the conference that the main opposition set some unjust and illogical demands for their participation. "Though the demands were met, they didn't turn up. For the sake of the nation all should discard such a gesture."

She criticised the opposition leader's statement towards the visiting CPA delegation regarding the October 1, 2001 general election.

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## Storm kills 2, injures 25 in Bogra

UNB, Bogra

Two persons were killed and 25 others injured when a violent storm lashed two unions of Sariakandi upazila Thursday evening.

The dead were identified as Ahmed Ali, 40, of Kantahar village and Goleza Begum, 40, of Kutubpur village.

Locals said the storm hit Kutubpur and Kamalpur unions and razed scores of houses to the ground, uprooted trees and damaged standing crops.

## Graft check

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The Commonwealth on regional or other bases.

CPA Executive Committee Chairman Bob Speller, Secretary General Denis Marshall, outgoing treasurer John Marek, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Khurshid Jahan Haque were present at the assembly, among others.

Peter Milliken, speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, succeeded Sircar as the CPA president while Cheryl Gillian, a British lawmaker, became treasurer replacing John Marek. A representative of Fiji will take over as the vice-president.

Canada will host the 50th CPA conference sometime in late August or early September next year, Sircar told journalists.

The assembly also witnessed placing of the grouping's budget for the fiscal 2003-05, presentation of the chairman's report and reports of CWP, small countries' group and the treasurer.

A proposal for rise in CPA membership fees was also approved.

On the fate of the suspended units of the CPA like Pakistan and Zimbabwe, Marshall told the general assembly that there was no decision as yet on changing their status.

The CPA delegates, who have been attending the 49th conference in Dhaka since October 4, would be accorded a civic reception in the South Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban this afternoon.

The formal close of the conference will be announced at midday today at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

President Iajuddin Ahmed hosted a reception for the CPA delegates at Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon.

## Dead fish

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Be the same chemical discharges from the garment washing and dyeing plants," said a high official of the BFDC.

The lake was declared an ecologically critical area and the Department of Environment (DoE) in charge of monitoring the cleanliness of the lake is alleged to have neglected its duty.

Rajuk that owns the lake and leased it out to the BFDC for five years is equally blamed for skirting its responsibility to keep the lake environmentally clean.

But Rajuk Chairman Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "The manufacturing plants close to the lake discharge toxic chemicals into the water round the clock. Gulshan has no proper sewerage and we can do nothing unless there are efforts to manage and divert the waste."

A Rajuk engineer blamed the BFDC for not monitoring such toxic discharges, saying: "It is clearly stated in the agreement that the lessees will maintain the lake."

A meeting was held on Thursday among several departments, including Dhaka WASA and Dhaka City Corporation, to launch a priority project to construct sewerage lines in Gulshan and Baridhara to divert all waste.

DoE and BFDC officials were not available for comments.

Bangladesh Environment Movement General Secretary Abu Nesar Khan told The Daily Star, "We repeatedly requested the government to take steps to protect the lake and prevent the waste from streaming into its water. But no action has been taken. We demand punishment to those responsible for dumping toxic chemicals in the water-body."

## Hayden

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Gilchrist. The opener struck 38 fours and 11 sixes from 437 balls in 622 minutes at the crease.

Australia captain Steve Waugh and his side formed a guard of honour for Hayden who was mobbed by teammates and fans as he walked up to the change rooms.

Queenslander Hayden resumed on his overnight score of 183 not out after blazing 170 in the evening session on Thursday.

Hayden, 31, who has hit six hundreds in his last 12 tests, had a previous highest score of 203 and possesses an excellent strike-rate of 15 centuries in his 45 tests.

The powerfully-built left-hander reached his 300 with a single to mid-off from the bowling of Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak.

Hayden took a single to long-off to reach 335, passing the previous Australia record of 334 shared by former captain Mark Taylor and the great Don Bradman.

Dropped at long-on on 335, Hayden then smashed his 10th six as wicketkeeper Gilchrist slipped almost unnoticed into the netties.



A woman cooks in the open yesterday after her house collapsed in a tornado that lashed Baywaitona village in Sariakandi upazila, Bogra

PHOTO: STAR

## Nobel Peace Prize

**FROM PAGE 1**  
democracy in her country, in the Muslim world, and in all countries where the fight for human rights needs inspiration and support," the committee said.

"I'm shocked, because I didn't imagine that I would win," Ebadid told Norway's NRK public television by phone from Paris.

"It's very good for me, very good for human rights in Iran, good for democracy in Iran and especially children's rights in Iran," said the 56-year-old lawyer.

The Nobel prize is worth 10 million Swedish crowns (\$1.32 million) and will be handed out in Oslo on December 10. Ebadid, only the 11th woman to win since the prize was set up in 1901, said she would come to Oslo to receive the prize.

Reaction in Iran reflected the split between President Mohammad Khatami's reformist government and powerful hard-liners, and state media made no immediate mention of Ebadid's prize.

"This prize carries the message that Europe intends to put further pressure on human rights issues in Iran as a political move to achieve its particular objectives," Amir Mohebian, an editor of the headline Resalat newspaper, told Reuters.

But Vice-President Mohammad Ali Abtahi, a leading reformist figure, told Reuters the announcement was "very good news for every Iranian" and a sign of the active role played by Iranian women in politics.

**STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY**  
Nobel watchers say that the five-member committee, which includes three women, probably chose Ebadid as a way of promoting change in a nation once branded part of an "axis of evil" by President Bush with pre-war Iraq and North Korea.

By contrast, a prize to the ailing pope or to Havel could have been seen as too backward-looking when Alfred Nobel, the Swedish founder of the awards, once said he wanted to inspire the future work of "dreamers."

Analysts say the committee has sought to promote moderates in the Muslim world since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States to avoid stirring conflicts between Christians and Muslims after U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"She sees no conflict between Islam and fundamental human rights," the committee said. "Her principal arena is the struggle for basic human rights, and no society deserves to be labelled civilised unless the rights of women and children are respected," it said.

"In an era of violence, she has consistently supported non-

violence," it added. Many researchers say that the pope's opposition to birth control, pre-marital sex, homosexuality and female priests seemed intolerant to many people, especially women, in Norway despite a 25-year-reign devoted to peace and reconciliation.

**FLAK FROM WALESA**  
In a surprisingly frank attack, former Polish president and Nobel peace laureate Lech Walesa said it was a "big mistake" to award the 2003 prize to an Iranian human rights activist and snub his compatriot Pope John Paul II, AFP said.

"For me it is a big mistake, a bad mistake, an unfortunate mistake," a visibly annoyed Walesa told Polish television, after watching the announcement of the award to Ebadid from his home in Gdansk, northern Poland.

"I have nothing against this woman, but if there is someone alive in the world who deserves this distinction it is certainly the Holy Father," he said.

Similarly strong criticism of the choice came from Monsignor Tadeusz Pieronek, a senior figure in the Polish Roman Catholic Church in Krakow, the southern Polish town where the Pope spent most of his life.

"The Pope did not expect any prize and will not be surprised, but I am surprised and I think that public opinion is too that his immense effort for peace has not been recognised," he was quoted as saying by the PAP news agency.

The ailing 83-year-old pope, a Pole much beloved by his compatriots, had been considered one of the favourites for the prestigious prize, alongside former Czech president Vaclav Havel.

The surprise announcement that it had gone to Ebadid came amid deep concerns for the Pope's health and as

Walesa, who won the prestigious peace prize in 1983 and was elected as Poland's first post-communist president in 1990 has remained on the sidelines of political life, but nevertheless a highly vocal media personality, since losing the presidency to Aleksander Kwasniewski in 1995.

He said he would seek to investigate the reasons for the Nobel Committee's choice, but stressed he would not make a formal complaint to avoid offending the Pope.

In Rome a Vatican source said on Friday Pope John Paul II would himself send a message of congratulations to Ebadid.

"I do not want to throw into question the committee's choice, but I am going to try and find out through my own contacts with the committee what weighed in favour of such a

decision," Walesa said.

"The Pope has so many merits, he has tried to convince the big powers that peace is always a better solution than war. The one who has done the most in the world, for all religions, did not get the prize," he said.

But he said to protest against the choice "would be an offence to the Pope. The Holy Father is bigger than the Nobel Peace Prize, than all the prizes in the world," he added.

In Krakow, the southern town where Pope John Paul II spent most of his life, Father Adam Boniecki, the editor of the prestigious Catholic publication Tygodnik Powszechny, however, welcomed Friday's award.

"This gesture will contribute to appeasing tensions between cultures, civilisations, it is certainly in the spirit of the man who was our candidate John Paul II," he said.

"I think that the Pope will have been happier with this award than if he had received it himself."

## Arafat-Qorei

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Mahmud Abbas quit over a power struggle with Arafat, whom both Washington and Israel have accused of undermining the peace process.

Parliamentary sources said Qorei, who has spent the last seven years as speaker of parliament, had decided to stand up to Arafat after gauging the temperature of Palestinian Legislative Council members.

Deputies believe that while Arafat was justified in imposing emergency rule in a presidential decree issued on Sunday this does not give him the right to appoint an emergency cabinet without their approval.

Independent MP Azmi Chuaibi said he did not think Qorei would follow through with his resignation but was trying to exert pressure on Arafat to make him agree that the cabinet must have parliamentary approval.

"I don't think he will go through with his resignation, but he is up there now and wants to use it to press on Arafat to name the cabinet as a normal cabinet."

Sources said a meeting of senior members of the mainstream Fatah movement had broken up acrimoniously, with Arafat objecting to the presence of Nasser Yussef -- the man slated to be the new interior minister who refused to take the oath of office Tuesday.

Yussef had been reluctant to take office without parliamentary approval but sources said he was also unhappy about the powers that he had been handed.

## More women MPs

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Parliamentarians in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals', at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre as part of the 49th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference.

Later in the day, the CPA General Assembly also adopted a five-year strategy plan to encourage women to contest elections to representative bodies and sought removal of barriers to their participation.

Khurshid Zahan Haque, chairperson of the steering committee of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), presided over the workshop attended by deputies from 20 countries.

The legislators observed that without proper participation of women, achievement of the millennium goals would be impossible.

They urged the CPA to take measures to create a level-playing field to ensure women parliamentarian's participation in policymaking and development.

Khurshid Zahan Haque, also women and children affairs minister of the host nation, focussed on the importance of addressing the gender issue for achieving the goals.

loud almost through each goal, she said.

"Gender issue cannot and should not be treated as a segregated issue, rather it should be considered an integral part in all programmes and policies."

The lead speaker of the workshop, Jatiya Party lawmaker Raushan Ershad, women empowerment will be impossible if women continue to suffer from multi-faceted violence, she said, adding: "... addressing violence against women is of crucial importance for empowering women."

Emphasising participation of women in every sphere of activity, Raushan said women's full participation in the nation-building process was not possible unless there was a sharing of power and responsibilities between women and men in both public and private spheres.

"But women must come of their own accord to actively participate in politics and decision-making."

Lindiwe Maseko, deputy speaker of Gauteng, a South African province, who moderated the discussion, stressed the need for forging unity among women lawmakers in Commonwealth nations.

President of the CPA conference Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar, Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain also spoke at the workshop.

## Hostages to misrule

**FROM PAGE 1**  
past mistakes."

"We want to ensure honour of women, their rights and security in a future Bangladesh. We want to build a welfare country for the young generation to head off unemployment and frustration."

She labelled the alliance's stay in power as a rule of corruption, indecision and lack of coordination and said the last two years of the government has proved "those who come to power by robbing people of their right to vote cannot do good to them."

Hasina also highlighted repression on the AL leaders and workers, journalists, the religious minorities and young women during the coalition rule.

"Criminalisation of politics is now a regular feature while many identified criminals have now become powerful public representatives."

She accused the government of withdrawing cases against 70,000 criminals and releasing them since it took office.

The AL chief said the lives of small traders to big businessmen are at stake because of threats by the ruling party men.

Hasina blamed the government for its failure to rescue Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, a BNP leader and businessman of Chittagong, even 79 days after abduction.

"The government finally admitted to the existence of militant groups in Bangladesh although it initially ruled it out. The country's image has been tarnished and it has been put on the list of terror-risk countries," she said.

Referring to the latest report of Transparency International, Hasina said, "Only in the last six months, the government misappropriated about Tk 600 crore in 216 incidents of corruption."

The leader of the opposition lashed at the government for the price spiral of essentials and said the living cost rose 20 percent and transport cost 40 percent, while foreign investment climbed down 70 percent of what the AL left after its rule.

Hasina was critical of the closure of mills and factories, accusing the government of leaving thousands of workers jobless.

On parliament, she alleged the government did not believe in parliamentary democracy as it formed parliamentary standing committees on various ministries without the opposition.

She alleged that the opposition was deprived of speaking in parliament on the issues of national interests. "The Prime Minister herself directed the House to switch off the opposition lawmakers' microphones, while the speaker asked me to submit notices before saying anything in the House."

The speech over, Hasina told the audience, "Today is a black day for the nation."

## One killed, 2 hurt as drug peddlers clash at Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

One person was killed and two others were injured in a gunfight between two rival groups of drug peddlers at Duttapara in the town on Thursday night.

Police said the clash began at about 9:30pm and continued for an hour, injuring three people.

Of the injured, Rana, 20, son of Abdur Razzak, succumbed to his injuries at a local clinic at midnight.

The whereabouts of the two other injured could not be known, police said.

A case was filed with Sadar Police Station.

Police and local sources said both the groups clashed over establishing supremacy in drug trade in the area.

## Steps against NGOs

**FROM PAGE 12**  
on February 2 in our defence," he said.

In 2001, the government blocked all foreign funds of the five organisations and ordered probes into the allegations of funds misuse and links with some political parties.

Defending the government position, the DG of the NGO bureau said, "We have no reason to harass any organisation. Rather, we appreciate their efforts in development programmes. There is no politics in it."

The bar on funds forced the NGOs to cut down their programmes on literacy, poverty alleviation, women empowerment and others, sources in the sector said.

Majumder however said such investigations by the bureau are not unusual. "It can only ensure transparency in the sector. There are about 1,800 NGOs registered with the bureau, and a few of them were punished in the past."

The bureau could not take any decision on the IVS as it is an international NGO based in the US. "Through the Bangladesh mission in Washington, we tried to communicate with its mother organisation. But we found out that the IVS, Washington no longer existed."

The bureau excused the CDS after it acknowledged its 'fault' and assured not to repeat it in future. The funds of the CDS would be released shortly, sources said.

There is no let-up for Proshika,

which could not use the held-up funds of Tk 324 crore for the project, "Towards a Poverty-free Society". The five-year programme started in 1999 and was supposed to end in June next year.

The bureau has decided to widen its probe into the Proshika affairs after finding 'gross violations' of the NGO related rules in the project, Majumder said.

"The second phase of investigation is going on now and it would end by October 31," he said.

A top official of the leading NGO said the government did not notify them about the finds in the first phase of investigation that started in January and ran until May 2002.

The tenure of the second phase of investigation has already been extended thrice, he said.

## Sabita case

**FROM PAGE 12**  
in law of Yusuf Ali, then officer-in-charge of Morrelganj Police Station.

Of them, Nur Mohammad, Budho Mallick, Tuku Khan and Gaffar Khan are now in custody while others, including prime accused Sayedul Mallick, still at large.