

## World wants

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justice so that the crimes are not repeated.

Terrorism is never defeated; it needs continued efforts to combat terrorists and religious extremists, the diplomats told the media, after an extensive briefing by Morshed at the state guesthouse Padma about the progress in "war on terror" in Bangladesh following the captures of the JMB linchpins. They said the "war" is not yet over.

They also urged the government to make further efforts to arrive at a compromise with the opposition to institutionalise the country's democracy.

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar was present at the briefing of the heads of foreign missions and international organisations in Dhaka, while Italian Ambassador Pietro Ballero and Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi spoke on behalf of the assembled diplomats. US Charge d'Affaires Judith Chammas, UK High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury and Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri were also present.

The briefing came a day after the law enforcers had arrested JMB chief and JMB second-in-command Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai four days into the capture of his Shaekh, JMB supreme Abdur Rahman, ending a long manhunt since the August 17 countrywide terror strike last year.

Emerging from the nearly two-hour lunch briefing, Chammas said, "I think it's a significant achievement... We'll be watching along with all of Bangladesh and international community as the perpetrators are brought to justice."

She said the government of Bangladesh has demonstrated its strong commitment to fighting terrorism by capturing the top JMB kingpins.

"It's also important to see that the investigation is carried out to completion—no matter where it's and sparing no one—and justice be done," she told the press in reply to a question.

"If requested, I'm sure we'll be able to provide assistance," the US envoy said when asked about any US assistance in the investigation into militancy. She also mentioned that the US has already an ongoing assistance programme in Bangladesh in counter-terroring.

Anwar Choudhury called for resolving the remaining terror attacks on May 21 and August 21 in 2004 and other incidents "with equal vigour so we can get some conclusion."

Choudhury, who was a victim, and probably target, of the May 21, 2004 grenade attack in Sylhet, said, "It's also important to remember that terrorism is never defeated in one single stroke," adding he hoped that the current campaign will continue heart and soul so that people feel safe.

Responding to a question, he said, "It's important that investigation is carried out in a transparent way so that everyone is able to see openly the process of justice and human rights are respected."

"We want to see a sustained results," Choudhury said, adding, "It's an excellent day for countering terrorism in Bangladesh" but also reminding that the "war is not over."

Japanese Ambassador Horiguchi said the foreign minister assured them that the trials will be held in a transparent manner and the perpetrators put to justice to ensure that such crimes do not recur.

"We're looking ahead to the further steps being taken by the government," said Veena Sikri, adding terrorism and religious extremism is a common problem and "all of us have to be together in overcoming this".

### MORSHED KHAN'S BRIEFING

Briefing the diplomats, Morshed Khan said the arrests of Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai should leave no doubt in anyone's mind that extremism and hatred have no connection to Islam and no place in Bangladesh.

"The government has fulfilled its pledges to the people to combat terrorism in Bangladesh by putting the JMB and its supporters on the run and bringing the leaders to the book," he said.

Morshed said the actions against the terrorists have not ended here, adding there will be no letup until the last terrorist is held and their network is totally routed.

Turning to the August-17 near-simultaneous bomb blasts across the country by the outlawed JMB, he said the operation was meticulously planned and the intention was to create a countrywide panic, terror and instability to dislodge a democratically elected government.

But, he said, the perpetrators of terror have failed miserably in what-ever they had hoped to achieve as they underestimated the commitment of the people of Bangladesh to uphold the values of human rights, democracy and tolerance and their total abhorrence to terror.

Instead of creating panic or fear, the actions of the terrorists and extremists resulted in a wave of anger across the country, Morshed observed. He said the people rallied behind the government to bring the criminals to book and to destroy their terror network.

"The extremists again made the mistake of undermining the will of the government and that of the people as they resorted to a tactics unprecedented in our society—suicide bombing. Judges and magistrates, police and innocent people were targeted," he mentioned.

The foreign minister said the government marshalled all available resources and went after the extremists. Based on sound intelligence and coordination among the law enforcement agencies with all-out support from the people, he said, the leaders of the JMB were caught one by one.

Morshed also mentioned that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is very firm in eliminating all sorts of terrorism and extremism in the country and described the August 17 serial blasts as an attack on democracy.

Morshed also came down heavily on the opposition. It is unfortunate that some of their leaders chose to take

their dissent beyond the frontiers and join the vested interests abroad by participating in conferences and seminars that sought to tarnish the moderate image of Bangladesh by naming the government communal and an abettor of religious extremism, he said.

He alleged, "They [opposition] have relied on anti-Bangladesh elements abroad to project the present-day Bangladesh as a failed state, with the government projected as an active supporter of harassment and persecution of the people of other religions and everything bad."

In an oblique reference to Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, he said, "Sensationalism is always sought after by the media and I therefore would not blame them, particularly the western ones, for publishing sensational news, if a responsible leader or personality of our country holding an official position were to tell them all this."

### DIPLOMATS ON GOVT OPPOSITION ISSUE

Bangladesh's development partners urged the government to make "further effort to make a compromise" with the opposition by resolving the pre-election political tangles for further consolidation of the democracy.

"The foreign minister explained the relations with opposition parties. So, I requested the government to make further efforts to make a compromise with the opposition party so that democracy can be further developed," Ambassador Horiguchi, who spoke on behalf of the diplomats, told the media.

On this, Morshed explained, the diplomats expressed their happiness over the developments in the just-ended parliament session where the prime minister proposed a bipartisan committee to resolve the pre-election wrangling.

He said the prime minister perhaps has already finalised the members from the ruling alliance on the committee, adding it can start functioning as soon as the opposition nominates its representatives.

However, in his briefing to the envoys, Morshed said, "The coming elections will have to take place as per provisions of the constitution. To reject it will be a violation of the constitution."

In his written statement, he said, "Some of our friends seem to have been influenced by some apprehensions raised by the opposition that the government has taken certain actions that undermine the autonomy of the Election Commission, pre-empt the neutrality of the Chief Adviser of Caretaker Government, tampering the electoral rolls by leaving out the minority population and so on."

He dismissed these allegations as totally baseless and unfounded, and told the diplomats that the present government cannot hope to return to power by resorting to fraudulent means.

"The formula—if I win the elections are free and if I lose the elections are rigged—cannot be an acceptable option. One has to have faith in the system as it came about through an act of parliament," he added.

Morshed said the government is not intimidated by threats of boycotting the polls unless the reform proposals proposed by the opposition were accepted in entirety. "This is not a proposal but an ultimatum that smacks of arrogance of the minority in parliament."

"An elected government cannot be blackmailed into accepting the unreasonable and the impossible," he said. However, he said the government is prepared to sit and discuss with the opposition parties to find some common ground for bettering the existing system.

**WHAT BABAR SAID**  
At the briefing, State Minister Lutfozzaman Babar said anti-terror operation has not ended with the captures of Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai. "We're on our job... We never considered it over. It's a continuous process and we'll continue with it," he told reporters after the briefing.

Babar assured the diplomats that the government would go into the root of terrorism and crush the entire network. "We want to get all of it," he was quoted by the British high commissioner as saying.

The state minister said the militants would be tried under the existing laws and the offenders will be given the highest punishment as per the nature of their offences.

Some 220 cases in connection with the August 17 bomb blasts have been filed, he informed. Of them, 52 were filed against Abdur Rahman, 48 against Bangla Bhai and 28 against Ataur Rahman Sunny.

So far, 642 militants have been arrested and some 22 awarded death penalty by speedy tribunals, he told the diplomats.

BDNEWS adds: There are allegations against the owners of the sweater factory for the tragic accident. The injured workers alleged that the officials rang the emergency siren without any confirmation of fire. Moreover the factory officials informed the police late, they added.

The factory Production Manager Jilur Rahman said the bodies were handed over to the relatives of the deceased after autopsies.

The 22 injured admitted to different hospitals are: Neela, 23, Khairul, 25, Mariam, 22, Bedena, 18, Shripa, 22, Nazma, 22, Razia, 18, Rawshan Ara, 20, Rawshan, 22, Nazma, 18, Aleya, 19, Runa, 16, Shefali, 19, Rozina, 20, Imran, 22, Badsha, 28, Billal, 25, Fazlu, 23, Bulbul, 20, Habib, 20, Mofazzal, 22, and Ripon, 23.

## UN watchdog

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Iran, appearing to reject a Russian proposal to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme by allowing international agencies with all-out support from the people, he said, the leaders of the JMB were caught one by one.

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## BPC to import

**FROM PAGE 1**  
supply. To meet this emergency mission, the BPC requested the KPC and the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) several times to supply diesel but they regretted.

This compelled the BPC to float a spot tender last month, in which Mesfield turned out to be the lowest bidder. The BPC at a board meeting on February 15 approved Mesfield's offer and sent it to the cabinet purchase committee for approval at its March 2 meeting.

But due to personal reasons, the BPC chairman was on leave and the energy adviser was abroad when the cabinet committee met. This provided the scope for another BPC high official to withdraw the proposal and go for purchasing low quality diesel from the KPC.

In a letter to the energy secretary on February 28, the BPC high official said the diesel inventory situation has improved and the Mesfield deal may now remain suspended.

Sources pointed out that the purchase from the KPC will not require the cabinet committee's approval as this is a state-to-state deal. Besides, the purchase from Mesfield would have violated a provision of the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) that discourages spot tender that involves asking for bids verbally.

Since the BNP-led four-party alliance came to power, the government opted for unsolicited state-to-state purchase of oil, instead of buying it through open international tender. This has stopped deals with leading oil companies of the world.

"It is not clear if the present mechanism ensures cost effective and environment friendly procurement. But certain officials are strangely comfortable with unsolicited oil purchase on rigid terms," noted a BPC source.

## PM to attend

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Soemadi DM Brotdiningrat, special envoy of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, handed over an invitation letter to the president to her yesterday.

Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey are members of the D8 group, aims at expanding trade among the member countries.

In his letter, the Indonesian president personally requested the Bangladesh prime minister to attend the upcoming summit.

The prime minister thanked the special envoy and received the invitation letter, saying that she would attend the summit.

She requested the special envoy to convey her greetings to the Indonesian president and invited him to visit Bangladesh.

Increased bilateral trade, import of Bangladeshi products in a bigger way, deepening the existing relations between the two Asian countries and the joint commission meeting that will be held soon to discuss increased cooperation in various areas also came up for discussion at the meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Indonesian Ambassador in Dhaka Warmas Hasan Saputra was present.

## Bangla Bhai

**FROM PAGE 1**  
that SI Humayun Kabir of Bagerhat Detective Branch (DB), also the investigation officer (IO) of the robbery case, helped the militant leader get released by submitting a weak charge sheet.

Bangla Bhai visited Khulna several times in disguise last year along with Abdur Rahman to meet JMB cadres and monitor the militant trainings held in different mosques.

In September, 2005 JMB Khulna district Amir Masud bin Ishaque was arrested by Khulna DB police. In his confessional statement to Metropolitan Magistrate Shafina Begum, he admitted the involvement of Bangla Bhai and Abdur Rahman in organising training of JMB cadres on how to make bombs and grenades and use AK-47 rifles.

These trainings were mostly held during midnight at Ahle Hadith mosques at Daulatpur in Khulna city and at Icegati village in Rupsha upazila of Khulna district.

## 3 killed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The management staffs of the factory have been on the run since the incident. A general diary (GD No. 372) was filed with Joydevpur Police Station in this connection.

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## Dr Kamal asks govt

**FROM PAGE 1**  
his men killed 16 people and disabled hundreds others during April 2004 to January 2005.

He demanded immediate formation of an independent national inquiry commission comprising three retired chief justices and experts for a neutral investigation on militancy and all militant bomb attacks in the country.

"Unless the prime minister takes action against the ministers and orders the immediate investigation into the charges which are reportedly confirmed by Abdur Rahman, national security will continue to be in grave danger," he said.

Kamal said the government who blamed the media for creating factitious characters like Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai should immediately seek apology.

"It has been proved that the allegations against the media are baseless. The continued retention of those ministers in the government would mean the prime minister and the government condone their role

## KTS fire victims

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deterioration of her condition, hospital sources said.

Another victim of the fire incident, Marzina Aktar, 18, died at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 12:00pm yesterday.

She was sent to the DMCH earlier for better treatment along with five other critically injured. They are -- Noor Jahan, Abdus Salam, Farzana, Sima Barua and Lovely.

Among the 49 KTS fire victims admitted to the CMCH, six succumbed to their injuries so far. They are Moni, Mohammad Hannan, Monir, Kamrun Nahar, Nasima Akter and Jhunkli.

At present, 19 KTS workers are undergoing treatment at the CMCH. Fifty-four people died and hundreds were injured on the night of February 23 in the devastating fire at KTS garment factory of Kalurghat BSCIC Industrial Area in Chittagong.

## Babar

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"I will monitor the drive against those violating the laws and if necessary I will amend the Fire Service Act," Babar said.

He was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Fire Service and Civil Defence Week-2006 at Mirpur training complex yesterday.

According to the fire department, there were 7,135 fire incidents across the country last year. These incidents left 54 people dead and caused an estimated loss of Tk 273 crore.

Admitting the lack of modern emergency equipment, the state minister said the home ministry would formulate a proposal within a month to buy modern equipment for fighting fires and facilitating salvage operations in emergency situations like building collapse incidents.

He said the proposal would be sent to the planning commission for approval.

Babar said 36 new fire stations became operational since 2001 and with these the total number of fire stations rose to 170.

He also said construction work of 122 more fire stations is underway while Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Cnec) recently approved 78 more fire stations across the country will stand at 370 after implementation of the projects.

Babar said the government increased the salary of warehouse inspectors, station officers and foremen. It is now considering providing 40 percent risk allowance to the operational staffs, he added.

## Nizami

**FROM PAGE 1**  
coverage even in the inner pages despite being in politics for last 40-45 years."

"If the terrorists are given with banner headlines then hundreds of Bangla Bhai would be created," Nizami recalled his earlier comments.

The Jamaat ameer's statement in the wake of Bangla Bhai's capture contrasts sharply with the one on July 22, 2004, where he said, "Bangla Bhai was created by some newspapers."

Accusing newspapers of having links with Bangla Bhai, he had also said: "If they [newspapers] don't have any relations with him [Bangla Bhai] then how come they publish exclusive interviews with him."

"Police have nothing to do when there is no existence of so-called Bangla Bhai. Whom should they arrest?" said Nizami on June 22 the same year while speaking at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with reporters from different national dailies.

On March 13, 2005, he said: "They (AL) want to split the four-party alliance through peddling propaganda in the existence of so called militancy. They (AL) know it well that if the alliance exists it won't be possible for them to win the next election."

Talking to the ATN yesterday, he reiterated his resolve to establish Islamic laws in the country. He noted, "Jamaat has no ideologies of its own, rather it follows to the letter the Quranic dictates that came from Allah through the prophet."

In response to the opposition's criticism that the recent arrests of the militant kingpins were timed to coincide with the US President Bush's subcontinent visit, he referred to a book (having references to militancy) that he claimed the then Awami League government had handed to visiting ex-US president Bill Clinton.

as patrons and protectors," he said.

The country's leading jurist said the independent national commission could be headed by several former chief justices who can be nominated through consultations between the government and the opposition parties.

"The commission should include recognised and independent experts who could evaluate all the evidence collected over the last 24 months. The commission should also seek assistance of the United Nations within the existing framework of international cooperation to combat terrorism provided by the Security Council Resolution 1573 and related resolutions," he added.

Gonoforum presidium member Commander (rtd) Abdur Rouf read the written statement on behalf of Kamal at the press conference.

Gonoforum and Jatiya Oikya Mancha leaders Advocate Zahurul Huq, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Ajoy Roy, Mustafa Mohsin Montu and Advocate Sheikh Akhterul Islam were also present.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in a press briefing yesterday demanded immediate arrest of the "godfather ministers" who have links with militant kingpins Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai.

Dr Kamal Hossain and Advocate Mahbubey Alam appeared for the petitioner while Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezaque Khan stood for the state.

## Resume supply

**FROM PAGE 1**  
terms of JVA (joint venture agreement).

When the government was showing such a strong stance against the Canadian company, Niko has been allowed to start exploration at Tengratla field, twice hit by blowouts, leaving the compensation issue unsettled.

Sources said the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Monday approved a plan of Niko allowing the company to start exploration at the Tengratla gas field.

Energy experts and the industry insiders found the government role as a good example of paradox and said with approving Niko's plan to start gas exploration at Tegratla, the government has finally backed out from its earlier stance for realising compensation from the Canadian operator.

Earlier, Madmudur Rahman had repeatedly told reporters that Niko would not be allowed to carry out any more exploration work until the compensation was realised from the company.

The government claimed compensation for burning out of 8.0 billion cubic feet (bcf) of natural gas from the Tengratla field and harming the environment by the two blowouts last year.

About approval of the Niko's plan, Mahmudur Rahman said he found nothing wrong with it. "The country needs huge gas at the moment. That's why Niko's plan has been approved," he told reporters.

He claimed that Niko has already accepted the compensation-claim. "But they have sought some clarifications... We'll give it soon," he added.

Meanwhile, Niko and Bapex officials sat at a meeting of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) at 6:00pm yesterday to discuss gas exploration at the Tengratla field and resumption of production at Feni gas field.

The meeting was in progress till the filing of this report as of 7:20pm.

## No respite

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"So long we've been suffering from poor supply quota of power because of low-level of electricity generation in the country, now that our cables are burnt we're facing additional trouble in providing power to the city people."

He, however, claimed that against 80 MW demand for power in Ulan's command area, Desa is maintaining a supply of 50 MW through alternate lines from Ulan via Kakrail. "We're feeding Dhanmondi and adjoining neighbourhoods by supplying power through 33kv Kakrail and Kallyanpur lines."

Earlier, at the daybreak on Monday, many parts of the capital went powerless due to the burning out of the Ulan-Dhanmondi underground grid shutting down power supply to Dhanmondi, Karwanbazar and Ramna sub-stations.

The worsening power situation is also contributing to the water dearth in various city neighbourhoods, as Dhaka Wasa (Water and Sewerage Authority) is being unable to lift underground water for piped supply. Wasa is operating over 250 diesel-n generators as alternative to electricity for drawing water for supply to the capital's households.

The power and water supply nightmares are haunting businessmen, office-goers, students and housewives alike but the thousands of examinees, who are to appear in tomorrow's SSC examinations, the biggest public exam in the country, are the worst victims finding it unbearable to complete last moment preparations.

Desa control room sources told The Daily Star yesterday that against a conservative demand estimation of 1500 MW power in Dhaka, it got only 1100 MW yesterday, down by 150 MW from Monday's 1250 MW. They said, Desa got lesser supply as the country's total generation was hardly 3100 MW yesterday against a nationwide demand for 4,000 MW.

## Kibria killing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
After hearing both sides for an hour, a four-member Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain ordered the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Sylhet, to submit records of the murder case within a week.

The court adjourned the hearing for a week by extending the stay on operation of the HC verdict until the next hearing on March 14.

Within three hours of charge framing by the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Sylhet, against the 10 accused of Kibria killing, the Supreme Court on February 7 stayed for three weeks the proceedings of the case following a leave to appeal filed by Advocate Abdul Majid Khan, complainant of the case.

On November 21 last year, the High Court discharged a writ petition that sought further investigation into the murder of Awami League leader and former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria with observations that it has 'no jurisdiction' to order further inquiry into the case pending with the trial court.

Kibria and four others were killed in a grenade attack at Boiddayer Bazar in Habiganj on January 27 last year.

Within two months of the incident, Senior ASP of the CID Munshi Atiqur Rahman submitted the charge sheet to the court against 10 suspects. The complainant, Abdul Majid Khan, disapproved of it claiming that the charge sheet was submitted without in-depth inquiry, leaving out the masterminds and sources of the grenade.

Dr Kamal Hossain and Advocate Mahbubey Alam appeared for the petitioner while Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezaque Khan stood for the state.

## Independence Day

**FROM PAGE 16**  
and artists to perform on truck-tops during the parade.

With miniature replicas in hands representatives from all the 37 ministries met at the home ministry on Tuesday with the state minister for home affairs in the chair. Each ministry was asked to bear the expenses for the parade from their own funds, all combined which would be over Tk 2 crore, home ministry sources said.

After the parade is over, the decorated trucks would be moving from area to area throughout the city on March 26 Independence Day. Official sources said several departments in the meeting expressed their inability to meet the expenses due to fund constraints but when the top bosses asked them to contact the Prime Minister's Office, they went mum.

Officials at different departments said the move was a 'tactic clearly aimed at a campaign for the up coming general election' at the expense of public funds.

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## Women's Day

**FROM PAGE 16**  
enjoying more economic freedom.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in a message said empowerment of women and their participation in all spheres of society and decision-making process as well as access to power are the fundamentals for achieving equality, development and peace.

Different organisations have sketched out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

As many as 48 women's organisations under the banner of International Women's Day Observation Committee will hold rallies, form human chains and bring out processions in the city to mark the day.

Besides, Bangladesh United Nations Association, Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights, Bangladesh Sromojibi Nari, Mohila Gono Forum, Women Watch Bangladesh, Kamrojibi Nari, Biplobi Nari Songhito, Gonolantrik Mohila Samiti and many other social, political and cultural organisations will also arrange different programmes including seminar, procession, rally and debate to mark the day.

"If the government does not establish the Islamic laws in the country even after this third warning and if it arrests any Muslim for seeking Allah's laws or resorts to repression on Alemn-Ulema, the JMB would go on the offensive," the August 17 leaflet read.

Much before the countrywide blasts, Bangla Bhai in an interview with The Daily Star in May 2004 said: "We don't believe in the present political trends. We want to build a society based on the Islamic model laid out in Holy Quran-Hadith."

Asked to clarify his model, he said, "Just wait and see."

Abdur Rahman claimed during the interview that his organisation is against the use of force. Neither does it want to assume