

# PM calls for peace in her final speech

**FROM PAGE 17**  
marking the end of her five-year rule.

The outgoing prime minister regretted that the BNP-Awami League dialogue could not produce any expected result. She said the objective of the political dialogue was to ensure the holding of the general election peacefully as per the constitution.

"But there is nothing to be disappointed," she said, as the constitution is the protector of the peace-loving, courageous, struggling, conscious and responsible nation.

Khaleda said the forthcoming polls must be held in time "if we, and every citizen, quarter and party, could show respect for the constitution and move forward".

Terming the upcoming general election crucial for the nation, she said the election will determine whether the nation will move forward or backward. "That election will determine whether the peace should prevail in the terror-free Bangladesh or Bangladesh turn into a haven of terrorism."

The prime minister said it is the expectation of all that Bangladesh,

which earned the Nobel Peace Prize will again be acclaimed at home and abroad for holding the peaceful general election.

She noted that the people of Bangladesh are really peace loving. For that, one of the major tasks of her government was to maintain peace throughout the country. "Despite political unrest on different occasions, we have been able to maintain peace and constitutional process."

Congratulating the people on their extending cooperation in completing her five years in office, Khaleda said it requires more time to complete all development projects her government initiated to make Bangladesh happy, prosperous and self-reliant. To maintain the process of development, it needs the continuity of government, she added.

The prime minister urged the people to remain united so that she could work for their welfare in the future. "The key to development is in your hands. I believe you will keep the doors of opportunity open by using that key appropriately in the coming general election," she told

the nation.

In her 47-minute speech on the national hookup, Khaleda painted a rosy picture of successes in different socioeconomic sectors in the last five years. She claimed that her government had inherited a fragile economy five years ago but rebuilt the economy on a strong footing under her rule.

"Politics is for the people, people are not for the politics," she said in criticism of negative politics. "The politics that invites unhappiness instead of welfare, the politics that signals destruction instead of construction, the politics that protects the interests of individuals and parties instead of welfare for the nation cannot be accepted by the people."

Khaleda said unhealthy politics had been reflected in the activities of the main opposition party in the last five years. They did not hesitate to trample national interest for the sake of party's petty interest. And that is why, she said, people stayed away from their movement.

"Despite repeated bid to create chaos and anarchy, they failed. This is the reality and this is the truth.

Those who will conduct anti-people activities must be rejected by the people."

Khaleda reminded that the country is not a place for playing cards, so "trump card" in the country's politics is either ignored, unworkable or has flopped.

However, the prime minister thanked all members of parliament, including the leader of the opposition, for completing the five-year term of the 8th parliament.

The prime minister said the coalition government assumed power with a foreign exchange reserve of \$1 billion, but maintained a level of over \$3 billion in the last five years. "We could maintain a strong economic situation despite purchase of fuel oil at much higher price."

She said remittance inflow has increased to \$4.2 billion in 2005, rising from

\$1.88 billion in 2002. Despite removal of the quota regime, exports also increased significantly due to the measures taken by the government, she added.

During the last five years, Khaleda said about 50 lakh people

have been employed in the country while 12 lakh people got jobs abroad. In addition, some 50 lakh people have found self-employment with loans and training from the government.

"Progress in various sectors of the economy has been reflected in the growing GDP," she said, mentioning that the GDP grew by about 7 percent during the last fiscal (2005-06), the record highest in Bangladesh.

She said the per capita income rose to \$482 and per capita GDP increased to \$456 in 2005-06, reflecting that the income of the people of Bangladesh has increased during the last five years.

The prime minister said Bangladesh has attracted international attention by dint of its investment-oriented economic policies and strategies while international investors are now becoming more and more interested to invest in various sectors that include banking, mining and telecommunications.

"Investment proposals for a huge amount of money have been made in the country's industrial sector

considering a complete new picture of Bangladesh," she said.

She added that up to March 2006, investment proposals to set up some 9,000 industrial units with an investment of Tk 62,000 crore were registered with the Board of Investment (BoI), while FDI worth \$2.5 billion was registered.

Khaleda pointed out that her government has increased agriculture subsidy to Tk 1,200 crore from Tk 100 crore of the previous government as her government put emphasis on the agriculture sector.

She said disbursement of agriculture loan has also been increased to Tk 5,000 crore in the last fiscal year while the government has been providing various incentives for flourishing the agro-processing industry.

Food production has increased to 30.5 million metric tons, raising agriculture GDP by 5 percent, she added.

The prime minister said the government has privatised 31 state-run enterprises during the last five years while the Adamjee Jute Mills has been made an export processing zone to generate employment

opportunities for 100,000 people.

She listed infrastructure development works by her government during the last five years that included 55,000-km new roads, 14,209 metre bridges including 24 large bridges and 3,409 metre culverts as well as measures taken to develop the Chittagong Port.

About environmental development, she spoke about introduction of 4-stroke engines to replace 2-stroke three-wheelers for protecting environment against pollution, dismantling 20-year old buses from the city and banning polythene bags.

She also gave an overview of the development activities of her government in various sectors, including education, health, poverty alleviation and social safety-net programmes.

"If we get the opportunity in the future, we'll make arrangements to offer free education for women up to degree level," Khaleda said, narrating the measures her government had taken for the education sector during the last five years.

## One burnt to death in Mymensingh

**UNB, Mymensingh**

A man was burnt to death and five others were injured in a fire that broke out in a house at Tengragara village in Dhobaura upazila on Thursday night.

The dead was identified as Ali Ahsan, 30.

Local people said Ahsan died and five others were injured trying to put out the blaze that broke out at the house of Meher Ali.

Of the injured, four were admitted to Dhobaura Health Complex.

Another reports from Rajbari adds: Four shops, including a jewellery establishment, were gutted in a devastating fire that broke out at Borat Bazar in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Local people said an electrical short-circuit sparked off the fire at a shop at about 4:00am.

The affected shop owners claimed that valuables worth Tk 10 lakh were damaged in the fire.