

Khaleda demands
**Launch
combing
operation
under caretaker
govt, not now**
UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia has demanded a combing operation to curb terrorism once the caretaker government takes over, not under this partisan administration.

"This government during last five years has staged farce in the name of combing operation. It has arrested opposition leaders and workers instead of nabbing real culprits," she said in a statement yesterday.

As a result, the BNP chief observed, the actual offenders have been desperately carrying out killings, rape, plunder, extortion, grabbing and attack and oppression.

She alleged terrorists were not caught because they are leaders and workers of the ruling party or relatives of the party men.

"As a result, there is no rule of law in the country at all," Khaleda Zia said, adding that every citizen is afraid of their life and property and dignity.

The opposition leader men

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**Drive to arrest
criminals
in 4 cities
begins today**
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in four metropolitan cities of the country will begin a drive today to arrest criminals and recover arms, sources said.

The drive will continue up to June 28 in the cities of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi.

It would be a part of the regular combining operation. However, this drive would have a special focus on arresting most wanted criminals having arrest warrants.

Police would be reinforced by Ansars. "There would not be any additional police reinforcement in the drive," said a high official.

UNB adds, the newly appointed RMP Commissioner has ordered a combing operation in the city from today to arrest criminals wanted in

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**Dacoits kill
businessman,
loot
wholesale shop
in Chittagong**
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Dacoits killed a businessman and looted a wholesale shop at Dohazari Bazar under Chandonaisa thana in the district in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Ali, 30. A gang of dacoits entered shop through ventilators and strangled Mohammad Ali when he was asleep.

They also looted Tk 50 thousand in cash and 12 tolas of gold ornament from iron safe of the shop. Ali got married last year.

Protesting the incident, the local businessmen went on a strike. They also decided to continue the strike till 2 pm today demanding immediate arrest of the killers of Ali who hailed from nearby Patiya upazila.

Bangladesh tops list of UN peacekeepers

M ANWARUL HAQ, from New York

Bangladesh has emerged the number one troop contributor in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the world.

This was disclosed by Assistant Secretary General for UN Peacekeeping Operations Hedi Annabi during a briefing session with Asian journalists of 15 countries at the UN headquarters yesterday.

Bangladesh now has 5,964 of the total of 42,982 United Nations ground peacekeepers posted in 15 different parts of the globe. Bangladesh only recently pushed itself up to the number one, position beefing up its strength to brigade level in Sierra Leone.

Of the 5,964 peacekeepers from Bangladesh, most are from the armed forces. However, there are 170 civilians and police, and 54 military observers among the Bangladeshi peacekeepers. Nigeria holds the second position with 3,478 peacekeepers followed by Jordan (2,601), Kenya (2,085) and Ghana (2,052).

Three other South Asian countries, India, Pakistan and Nepal, occupy the seventh, ninth and eleventh position respectively. Bangladesh is currently participating in several peacekeeping operations including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Iraq-Kuwait, Ethiopia-Eritrea and east Timor.

So far, 49,249 members of the Bangladesh armed forces had taken part in peacekeeping missions in 25 countries. Fifty-seven Bangladeshi soldiers had so far

died and 56 were injured during peacekeeping operations.

Hedi Annabi told newsmen that the current cost of the UN peacekeeping operations was in the neighbourhood of 2.4 billion US dollars.

Responding to several questions, Hedi Annabi said the United Nations despite the increasing size of its peacekeeping operations, did not consider setting up a standing UN army as it would involve huge costs and members did not find it 'practically feasible.'

"We never think of having a standing UN army. What we have is a standby army."

"We have a list of countries who are willing to participate in peacekeeping operations and request participation in all missions from them," Hedi Annabi said.

He also pointed out that although developed countries contributed most of the costs of peacekeeping operations, they themselves were unwilling to participate physically. So far, 89 countries contributed troops in various peacekeeping operations.

Regarding Australia's participation in East Timor's operations, he said, it happened as Australia itself was agreeable to participate and Indonesia extended its consent.

"Peacekeepers are only sent after consent is received from all sides involved in a conflict resolution," Hedi Annabi said.

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Rajuk demolished illegal structures at Dayaganj in old part of the city yesterday.

**3 Rakhain youths
arrested: Bullets
recovered**
UNB, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh Rifles detained two Rakhain youths along with 473 live bullets from a bus on Teknaf Highway on Thursday.

Sources said BDR men searched a Cox's Bazar-bound bus at about 8 pm and seized the ammunition from Mongcahing, 25, and Ray Aung, 22, of Bouddha Mandir and Rice Bazar Road in the town. The bullets were found wrapped around their waist.

Police alter arrested another Rakhain youth, Mong Chen Ching, 20, following their confessional statement.

The three are linked with an

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**Dhaka's ban on rice import
Mixed reaction among
Indian exporters**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh's decision to ban import of rice from India has caused mixed reaction among exporters here with one section saying it might hit the proposed target of export of three million tonnes while others ruling out cause for worry on account of this.

Exports of ordinary variety of Indian rice are not meant for Bangladesh only because a major chunk of it goes to Russia, Mauritius and Madagascar, says S S Kumar, vice president of L T Overseas.

According to him, Bangladesh had exported more rice than what it required. Besides, Bangladesh expects a good paddy crop this year and therefore the ban on Indian rice import is nothing 'surprising', Kumar says.

He said Bangladesh imported 40,000 tons of rice from India in a year when that country was hit by

flood and cyclone. But in a normal year, imports from India came down to 20,000 tonnes.

Bangladesh largely imports raw short-grained rice from India along with some parboiled quality. Since October last year, ten to twelve million tonnes of rice were delivered from India to Bangladesh as against orders for nearly 25,000 tonnes, Kumar says.

However, Kumar admits traders in West Bengal state would feel the real effect of Bangladesh's ban on import of Indian rice.

However, an official of a multinational trading house says Dhaka's decision would affect the overall rice export target. He points out that although Indian non-basmati rice was not competitive from the point

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**Daewoo likely to
deliver frigate
to Bangladesh
next week**
AFP, Seoul

Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Co. is ready to deliver a frigate to Bangladesh and become the first South Korean shipyard to export a naval battle ship, a company spokesman said Friday.

The shipyard is also holding talks with Malaysia to export a submarine, the spokesman said.

"We plan to deliver the 2,300 tonne frigate to Bangladesh next week," he said.

The 100 million dollar ship is 103.7 meters long and 12.5 meters wide at her widest point.

Armed with one 76 millimeter main cannon and two 40-millimeter support guns and ship-to-ship missiles, the frigate can move up to 25.3 knots an hour.

Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering has become profitable again since becoming independent from the bankrupt Daewoo Group last year.

**Case under PSA
34 BNP men
chargesheeted
at Sirajganj**
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Thirty-four leaders and activists of Bangladesh National Party (BNP) have been chargesheeted in a case filed under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

Local Awami League leader Abdul Aziz filed the case against the opposition leaders and activists with sadar thana on April 2.

In the FIR, Abdul Aziz stated that the accused ransacked his house and looted valuables at about 11 am on the day when a procession brought out by opposition alliance parading the street in front of his home.

After investigation police submitted the chargesheet to the court on Thursday.

**BNP activist
murdered
at Netrakona**
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A BNP activist was murdered at Netrakona by some unidentified assailants yesterday.

Police said Taharuddin, 45, of village Bichipara under sadar upazila of the district was murdered while saying Esha prayers at a local mosque.

The miscreants entered the mosque and killed him with sharp weapons.

A case was filed with Netrakona sadar thana. None was arrested in this connection.

**Lightning kills
mother, daughter
in N'ganj**
UNB, N'ganj

A woman and her 5-year-old daughter were killed in lightning at a village in Rugganj upazila of Narayanganj district on Friday night.

Local people said Rahela Khatun, 35, and Tandira were struck by lightning when they were sleeping at their house at village Shimulia.

Two more murders in city



Bullet-hit Fazlu being taken to DMCH where doctors declared him dead.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more persons were killed in last 16 hours ending at 3:30 p.m. yesterday in the city.

Fazlu, 24, a member of Mia Bahini, was shot dead by his rivals at Bhuiyanpara under Khilgaon thana at about 3:30 p.m.

Witnesses said an armed gang of four led by local terrorist Mithu swooped on Fazlu, brother of Mia, a top terrorist and leader of 'Mia Bahini', near Minar Mosque.

They fired several shots at him from behind and took him to a nearby lane where they stabbed him indiscriminately.

The critically injured Fazlu was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

The duty officer of Khilgaon thana said last night that Fazlu was involved in criminal activities in the area and accused in three cases: murder, robbery and looting. He was

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**Both individuals, social
bodies have role in
curbing corruption**

Seminar in Mymensingh told

RAZIUR RAHMAN, Back From Mymensingh

Individual effort coupled with socio-cultural movement has become a must to curb corruption, which has become a chronic disease in the society.

Participants at a seminar titled The role of civil society in curbing corruption and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in Mymensingh yesterday also observed that the state was not doing enough to check corruption.

Chairman of TIB Board of Trustees Prof. Khan Sarwar Murshid attended the seminar as chief guest while Shamsul Islam, convenor of the CCC, presided over. Organised by the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Mymensingh Sadar, the seminar was held at the Mymensingh District Council Auditorium.

According to TIB officials, six such CCC units comprising conscious people in the locality have so far been formed in greater Mymensingh area with technical and logistics support of TIB to fight corruption at the local level. It has been decided that the CCC, Mymensingh Sadar will initially combat corruption in primary education and health sectors, according to Shamsul Islam.

Prof. Muzafer Ahmad of Dhaka University presented a paper on 'Corruption in Bangladesh and Good Governance' while Prof. Jatin Sarkar presented another on 'Corruption: Society: Socio-cultural Movement'.

Former comptroller and auditor general (CAG) M Hafizuddin Khan attended the programme as special guest. Representatives of different professional groups in the locality, a number of diplomatic missions in Dhaka

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**PDB staff threaten
agitation unless
reforms stopped
by June 17**
UNB, Dhaka

Engineers, officials and workers of Power Development Board (PDB) have urged the government to stop donor-prescribed "unilateral" reforms in power sector by June 17.

Otherwise, they threatened a tougher agitation including a 24-hour work abstention.

Eight unions of PDB in a joint meeting yesterday strongly opposed the process of corporatising Ashuganj Power Plant and handing over transmission to Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB).

They also urged the government to stop indiscriminate transfer of PDB lines and establishments to REB.

Chaired by Hydroelectric Engineers' Association leader Mizanur Rahman, the meeting demanded implementation of recommendations of a committee involving power-sector trade unions to save PDB from destruction.

Central leaders and representatives of eight trade unions of engineers, employees and workers were present in the meeting.

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



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Send donations to: Savings Account No. **25002111**
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News Analysis

All for giving peace a chance

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The initial wave arising out of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's invitation to Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf is slowly giving way to a more realistic assessment of the possible thaw in relations between India and Pakistan.

With Vajpayee's invitation having been delivered to Pakistan, the stage now appears set for a renewed summit-level engagement between the two countries since Vajpayee had met the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif, a democratically-elected head of government, in Lahore in February 1999.

Sources here say the Musharraf visit to New Delhi may take place either in the last week of June or early July.

In agreeing to engage Musharraf, India has, no doubt, moved quite a distance from its reluctance to interact with a person who overthrew a democracy. Delhi did this in the hope of giving peace a chance. But officials are still skeptical about Musharraf's intentions.

One main reason for this skepticism is the harsh statement issued by Pakistan Foreign Office on Friday while reacting to the news announcing Vajpayee's invitation to Musharraf for talks. The statement poured venom on India's Kashmir policy, diplomatic observers here point out.

In sharp contrast, observers say, is the dignified and reconciliatory tone of Vajpayee's letter to Musharraf which was released to the press here on Friday. In his letter, the Indian Prime Minister made no mention of the Pak intrusion in Kargil in 1999, soon after Vajpayee's historic bus ride to Lahore.

Instead, Vajpayee's letter said "our common enemy is poverty. For the welfare of our people, there is no other course" but pursuit of "the path of reconciliation, engaging in productive dialogue and building trust and confidence."

The Indian Prime Minister chose not to rake up the memories of Kargil and instead asked Musharraf to "pick up the threads" again and "walk the high road" to peace and prosperity in the Subcontinent.