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## 3 Bangladeshis face Kuwaiti gallows today

AFP, Kuwait City

The public hanging of three Bangladeshis convicted of murder will go ahead in Kuwait Wednesday after a one-day postponement, a newspaper reported.

Mohammad Zahar Abdul Sattar, Anwar al-Zamaan and Anwar Khan Mohammad were scheduled to face the Kuwaiti gallows Tuesday but the hangings were delayed at the behest of the public prosecutor, the English-language Arab Times said.

The postponement was designed to "give authorities time to inform" the three men's lawyer and enable forensic experts to prepare "to receive the bodies," the daily added.

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International

## Dump Arafat, Bush asks Palestinians

AFP, Washington

US President George W. Bush on Monday laid down tough conditions for US support for a future Palestinian state, demanding that Palestinians replace Yasser Arafat by a new leadership "not compromised by terror."

In a key speech billed for weeks as a plan to revive moribund Israeli-Palestinian peace talks after nearly 22 months of bloodshed, the US leader outlined a strategy sure to please Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

For months Sharon, who has been welcomed at the White House six times since he took office, had been trying to impress on Bush the

need to stop treating the Palestinian Authority leader as a legitimate partner for peace.

Without mentioning Arafat by name, the US leader pointedly remarked that "peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born."

And he urged the Palestinian people to elect new leaders "not compromised by terror."

"When the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbours, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state," Bush pledged.

"Today, Palestinian authorities

are encouraging, not opposing terrorism," the US leader said. "This is unacceptable."

This stance marks a major shift in Washington's Middle East policy as until now the United States took pains to recognise Arafat's legitimacy although Bush has, since he took office 18 months ago, shown deep mistrust of the Palestinian leader and refused to meet with him.

It will not be welcomed by Arab leaders who have always expressed public support for Arafat and may well conclude that Bush is now clearly tilting toward Israel.

While focusing most of his speech on the need for sweeping Palestinian reforms to facilitate the

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## Germany crack ROK open

AFP, Seoul

Germany ended South Korea's World Cup fairytale run when they beat the co-hosts 1-0 in an enthralling semi-final battle here yesterday.

Germany now have a chance to equal Brazil's record of four World Cup titles when they play in the final in Yokohama on Sunday against the winner of the Brazil-Turkey semi-final today.

Victory came in the 75th minute when Oliver Neuville burst down the right on a quick break.

His low cross caught the stretched Korean defence asleep and Michael Ballack fired in from close range. Lee Woon-Jae got down but the ball rebounded of his body and this time Ballack made no mistake as he hit home.

But the Bayern Leverkusen will not have the satisfaction of playing the final. Four minutes earlier he collected his second yellow of the knock-out stage when he tripped Lee Chun-Soo and is automatically banned for one match.

"This is fantastic. We played well, we deserved to win and we have every right to be in the final," Neuville said.

"Now we really don't care which

team we play in the final."

Defender defender Christoph Metzelder said solid defensive play had been the key to the victory and to their run to the final in which they only conceded a single goal.

"Our secret was the four-man backline which doesn't always work but it did tonight," he said.

"It was hard work against this opponent. We'll definitely be having a few drinks to celebrate."

For the battered and bruised Koreans, the match proved one too many. Their giantkilling performances to knock out Portugal, Italy and Spain had taken their physical toll as they tried to become the first ever Asian side to go into a World Cup final.

But the Koreans answered their critics who had claimed their wins over Spain and Italy was due to biased refereeing.

Switzerland referee Urs Meier did the home side no favours but still Germany found themselves on the rack for long portions of the game.

A brilliant jinking run by Seol Ki-Hyeon in the 90th minute turned the German defence inside out but

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PHOTO: AFP

ASIAN ESCAPE ENDS...German midfield maestro Michael Ballack celebrates after scoring the winner in the first semi-final at Seoul yesterday.

## Another body to look into loan defaults

INAM AHMED

The government has formed another Bank Reform Committee to get to the heart of loan defaults and ways of scaling over the situation.

The committee will analyse the level and nature of default loans of different categories. It will also seek to formulate a policy for banks so that they can write-off bad loans.

Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud of Dhaka University has been made

the chairman of the committee while Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Kazi Abdul Mazid, former managing director of the Prime Bank, and Moslehuddin Ahmed, partner of the audit firm Rahman Rahman and Huq, have been made members. Executive Director of the Bangladesh Bank Nazrul Huda is the member secretary.

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## Kibria suggests easing tax load

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former finance minister SAMS Kibria yesterday urged his successor M Saifur Rahman to immediately rework the proposed budget for the next fiscal. Otherwise, he feared the 'ambitious and unrealistic' revenue collection target would end up in a 'great fiscal failure'.

Kibria termed the 53.7 per cent growth in VAT (value added tax) collection projected in the proposed budget unprecedented in the country's history.

Taking part in the budget discussion in the parliament yesterday, the ex-finance minister also came up with some suggestions to modify the budget proposals so that the poor get some tax relief.

His suggestions include raising the lowest slab for income tax from the proposed Tk. 75,000 to Tk 1 lakh, reconsidering widespread expansion of the VAT net, lowering duty on import of essential products, raising duty on import of luxury goods including new cars, lifting the proposed ban on import of reconditioned cars, lowering tax on travel through land routes, reintroducing 10 per cent tax on investment of black money and tax relief on

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## Grameen Match Report

## DHL Spec Report