

## Asia faces

**FROM PAGE 1**  
economic and social development. He said Asia has the highest number of relatively affluent nations but it also had a multitude of poor, with an estimated one in every five Asians still suffering from the effects of poverty.

Asia, however, was making great progress if only because countries like India and China, which had the largest number of poor, were making impressive strides in developing their economies, he said.

"Nonetheless much work remains to be done in these and other countries and the challenges are enormous," he said, adding that the burden weighed greatest on countries that were least able to shoulder it.

Abdullah said many Asian countries had missed out on the industrial revolution and "were seen mainly as suppliers of raw materials and natural resources to furnaces and factories owned by our colonial masters."

He said the Asian countries must now ensure that they do not let the information age pass them by.

Information technology and telecommunications, he said, had enabled leaps in productivity never thought possible before and it could be a new source of prosperity for the countries.

He warned that the digital divide could also be a new source of poverty. "It is therefore vital for us to work together and build capacity, so that our poor, the ones who are most in need of a helping hand, will not be further left behind," he said.

Highlighting the second challenge facing Asian countries, Abdullah said any programme to eradicate poverty must involve human development as the most valuable resource of the countries was their people.

He said while it was vital to provide access to good education and high literacy, adequate health services and clean water, Asian countries must

foster a quality education system supplemented by skill training and life-long learning facilities.

"In every country, education and skills development will be the key to human and economic development. Once we have developed our infrastructure and built the hardware, it is equally important to concentrate on developing the software."

Abdullah also said based on a classification by the United Nations Development Programme which measured a country's achievement in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income, only eight Asian nations were deemed to have "high human development."

As for good governance, he said it involved governments dedicating to the welfare of the people and serving them. This meant efficient and responsive delivery systems, financial prudence, government, business and society free of corruption, transparency and accountability as well as businesses with a healthy social conscience and not solely profit-making.

He said Asia had much to do in this field as many of the nations were still young as independent entities and still in the early decades of nation-building.

"Asia's agenda should therefore concentrate on developing systems that can deliver the economic and social goods to the people," he said, adding that there was no "cookie cutter" or common model for every country to use to achieve this.

On the fourth challenge of regional peace and stability, Abdullah noted that parts of Asia and many countries were still vulnerable to ethnic and religious tensions, autonomy and separatist pressures, militancy and terrorism.

## AL finds

**FROM PAGE 12**  
ended up in the indefinite House boycott coinciding with AL's.

The JP, next to the AL in strength with 14 lawmakers, staged a stormy walkout from the session on Sunday, protesting government's restriction on the former president from flying abroad. The government did not even show any reason for the bar, prompting the JP lawmakers to take a hard line like boycott.

At a meeting with Chairperson Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury in the chair, the FNB in a resolution said the 1978 ordinance was intended to ensure proper utilisation of foreign donations received by the NGOs.

ADAB Chairperson Qazi Faruque Ahmed in a statement alleged the 2004 amendment would help the government establish absolute control over the NGOs and make them toe the line of the four-party alliance by taking over their management, funds, resources and the authority to work independently.

"We feel the proposed amendment is simply monstrous and, if enforced, it will severely restrict the space for NGOs' operation and make all their pro-people programmes collapse," the statement says.

The ADAB alleges the government's purpose is not to establish transparency through effective action against an NGO for irregularities but to take over that NGO to carry out its own political agenda.

**HARTAL**  
"The prime minister and her government will have to resign if it doesn't meet our demands by February 10," Hasina threatened earlier at a Paltan Maidan rally, calling the February 12 hartal.

To drum up support for the hartal and anti-government demonstration, the AL exchanged views with professionals on January 11-16, staged demonstrations on January 18, held rallies and processions in districts on January 21-23 and in upazilas on January 27-29 and organised hustings over the last three days.

"The government's non-response is also a response and we'll react accordingly," Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

AL sources say the government pushed the party to go ahead with the hartal despite business leaders' appeal against it. Bangladesh Cricket Board also made a plea in newspaper advertisements for not enforcing hartal.

The party will draw up its next programme, mindful of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup and SSC and HSC examinations in March and May.

However, the ministers held that the government should keep the state machinery ready to face any eventualities and take appropriate measures if the opposition tries to create lawlessness.

Sources said the PM has asked the party and alliance leaders to hold rallies and processions across the country to highlight government's activities and achievements to counter the opposition demands.

When asked about AL's 15-point charter of demands, Information Minister Tariqul Islam said the government is determined to curb crime and is not at all harbouring

## U-19 WC cricket

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Some 600 boys and girls from Bir Shreshtha Nur Mohammad Rifles Public School and College, and Bir Shreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles School and College, dancers from the Rangamati Cultural Institute and Shilpakala Academy took part in an impressive cultural show.

The night's events culminated in a brilliant fireworks display organised by the Bangladesh Army.

The tournament proper kicks off on February 15 in four zones -- Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna. Matches will be played in eight venues five of which have been newly built.

## 7 UPDF men

**FROM PAGE 1**  
gunpoint.

The sources however could not confirm whether they were abducted for ransom or taking revenge.

Shabekong area is a stronghold of the UPDF, a tribal organisation opposing the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord signed between the government and the PCJSS in 1997.

Several bloody clashes between the two rival organisations left four UPDF men killed and 10 others abducted in Naniachar upazila last month.

Additional Superintendent of Police Khairul Alam said they received information about Monday's abduction yesterday, and police backed by army immediately started a rescue operation in the area.

He however said success of operations to net criminals in the forest-clad hilly areas is very limited.

## Resolve problems

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Indian Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee during the Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) summit in Islamabad as "very fruitful and far-reaching," the Indian envoy said the meeting had taken the relationship to new heights.

She said India attaches great importance to its relations with Bangladesh and would like to work together. She stressed on continued contacts at different levels to deepen the ties.

The envoy called for dialogue and exchange of visits at different levels between the two countries.

Veena said that there was a lot of demands of Bangladeshi products in India and expressed the hope that trade and commerce would be increased between the two countries.

She said besides the Safta agreement, Bangladesh and India could also go for bilateral agreement to boost trade relations.

Veena invited Bangladesh to participate in the trade fair scheduled to be held in November in Delhi and said India would provide special facilities to Bangladesh at the fair.

The prime minister reiterated her invitation to Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and urged the envoy to convey her greetings to her Indian counterpart and the Indian president.

The envoy also reiterated Vajpayee's invitation to Khaleda Zia to visit India at a mutually convenient time.

## NGOs blast govt

**FROM PAGE 1**  
will turn the private voluntary organisations into another set of departments of the government that has adequate regulations for NGOs.

At a meeting with Chairperson Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury in the chair, the FNB in a resolution said the 1978 ordinance was intended to ensure proper utilisation of foreign donations received by the NGOs.

ADAB Chairperson Qazi Faruque Ahmed in a statement alleged the 2004 amendment would help the government establish absolute control over the NGOs and make them toe the line of the four-party alliance by taking over their management, funds, resources and the authority to work independently.

"We feel the proposed amendment is simply monstrous and, if enforced, it will severely restrict the space for NGOs' operation and make all their pro-people programmes collapse," the statement says.

The ADAB alleges the government's purpose is not to establish transparency through effective action against an NGO for irregularities but to take over that NGO to carry out its own political agenda.

## BNP to kick-start

**FROM PAGE 12**  
fully prepared to face any threat of the movement politically. We want to face the opposition democratically because we know it well that the opposition has no solid issue to win public support to dislodge the government," Khoka added.

PMO sources said ministers, including M Saifur Rahman, Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, MK Anwar and Matir Rahman Nizami, at yesterday's meeting with the prime minister said the government has enough time, in terms of its tenure, to ward off the opposition pressure.

They also suggested that the government should continue its appeal to the opposition to sit across the table to come back to parliament.

However, the ministers held that the government should keep the state machinery ready to face any eventualities and take appropriate measures if the opposition tries to create lawlessness.

Sources said the PM has asked the party and alliance leaders to hold rallies and processions across the country to highlight government's activities and achievements to counter the opposition demands.

When asked about AL's 15-point charter of demands, Information Minister Tariqul Islam said the government is determined to curb crime and is not at all harbouring

## Gold jewellery

**FROM PAGE 12**  
driver Milon Hossain.

Police said they were stationed at the roadblock at Mohishapur under Sharonkhola upazila in Bagerhat on the look out for outlawed political operatives.

Suspecting that the recovered items from the car might be of the recently looted jewellery from the Karnaphuli Garden City in Dhaka, the local police informed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Police in Dhaka about the seizure.

Luffar, however, claims himself to be a black marketer of gold, not a robber.

## 1.3cr disabled

**FROM PAGE 12**  
advisor to caretaker government. It is a duty of all of us to help integrate the disabled to the mainstream, she maintained.

Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau Shahjahan Majumdar gave the number of disabled people in the country. The speakers expressed their solidarity and committed their support for establishing the rights of the disabled.

ADD volunteer Shiuli said during a programme to identify disabled persons in some parts of the city, she found the upper- and middle-class people being less co-operative in naming their disabled family members than the poor ones.

The ADD reported that the disabled demanded representation in parliament to discuss their issues at policy level.

The ADD has been working in six areas of the city to empower the disabled, establish their rights and to be of help in their deprivations. It has been working in 23 districts for the last one decade.

## Bank robbery

**FROM PAGE 12**  
A case was filed on the next day against Ward Commissioner Ashique Ahmed and Union Parishad Chairman Usman Ali and his two stepbrothers.

Police held Usman soon after the incident, while Tk 5 lakh and two motorcycles, reportedly used in the robbery, were recovered from his house.

The prime minister reiterated her invitation to Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and urged the envoy to convey her greetings to her Indian counterpart and the Indian president.

The envoy also reiterated Vajpayee's invitation to Khaleda Zia to visit India at a mutually convenient time.

The statement described as illogical the provision for taking action against an NGO when an individual of the organisation is involved in irregularities.

The way the bill defines the terms -- irregularities, maladministration and political activity -- is vague and ill-intentioned, the organisation says.

Aroma Dutt, executive director of government-blacklisted NGO PRIP Trust, says: "This move will make people poorer. We have been working for the last three decades and the development model of Bangladesh is known world-wide."

"No NGO is involved in politics. If an NGO talks about class struggle or poverty alleviation and that is perceived as politics, it will be sad. The move is aimed against destroying a few selected NGOs," Aroma says, terming the proposed act as repressive.

She levelled charges against the Jamaat-e-Islami, a ruling coalition partner, and said: "Jamaat does not want women's empowerment. The government has targeted those NGOs that work for them."

terror-mongers as claimed by the AL.

"The Awami League planted the seed of violence and provided state patronisation, but we are working to root out violence and nobody can say that the alliance government is patronising crime in the country," he added.

About the price hike of essentials, he said most of the essentials are within the purchasing capacity of the consumers and sometimes imported items like soybean oil prices rise due to fluctuation in international market prices.

On corruption, Tariqul said the government is going to enact a law to set up an independent anti-corruption commission to deal with it. "The BNP is the first government in Bangladesh to have taken such a courageous step," he said.

About AL's threat to topple the government, Tariqul said such a threat is 'ridiculous' as the government has about three more years to complete its tenure.

"People might not accept the demand that a democratic government step down only after two years in office. Asking an elected government to resign much ahead of its tenure is undemocratic and it would weaken the democracy in Bangladesh that is only flourishing," he added.

## Gold jewellery

Based on the information obtained from the arrestees, a joint team of CID police from Dhaka and Bagerhat and Pirojpur police raided Luffar's rental house at College Road in Jhalakathi town Tuesday morning. The team recovered another 1.25kg gold ornaments from the house.

The team also searched Chapal's house at Amtala in the town but found nothing illegal. It then sealed the house for further investigations, police sources said.

## 3 killed

**FROM PAGE 12**  
on the highway at about noon.

The dead are bus passengers Abdur Rashid, 48, and Mohiruddin, 50, and trucker Abdul Kader, 60. They died on the spot.

The seriously injured people were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, while others to Gobindaganj Health Complex.

A case was filed with Gobindaganj Police Station.

## 4 'outlaws'

**FROM PAGE 12**  
A team of joint forces led by Captain Sultan Ahmed Russell also reached the spot in the early hours of yesterday to assist the police in defusing tension in the area.

None of the deceased could be identified till yesterday evening.

The lynching raised the death toll in Bagerhat to seven in last 10 days.

In another incident Monday night, a suspected member of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was beaten to death by an angry mob at Munshipara 3rd Lane under Khulna Police Station.

The dead was identified as Russell, 21.

Police said Russell was arrested from the house of one Mustafizur Rahman of the area but was forcibly taken away by an angry mob who beat him black and blue. Russell succumbed to his injuries at Khulna Medical College Hospital at around 9:30pm.

Police recovered 50 posters of PBCP's Marxist-Leninist faction from his possession. His body was handed over to his father Babul Gazi yesterday.

Sub-inspector Abul Khair lodged an FIR (first information report) with Khulna Police yesterday as complainant of a murder case naming no-one as accused.

He died of lung cancer at the age of 64 on February 11, 2001.

## Correction

In our report on seven women held at ZIA on Feb 9, it was inadvertently mentioned in the heading that they were barred from boarding a Kuwait-bound flight instead of Jordan-bound flight. We regret the mistake.

## Joint forces nab 413 in midnight raid

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Joint forces raided different parts of the capital after Monday midnight and held 413 people.

Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Armed Police Battalion (APBn) and police carried the raids in Tejgaon, Badda, Ramna, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Mirpur, Kafur, Shyampur, Demra and Pallabi areas.

The forces nabbed 48 wanted criminals and 43 accused in various cases, police said.

They held 64 people in Mirpur, 60 in Pallabi, 59 in Kafur, 56 in Mohammadpur, 32 each in Demra and Badda, 29 in Ramna, police added.

## 43 die in Iran

**FROM PAGE 12**  
including Indians, Pakistanis and Filipinos, who make up the bulk of the Emirates' work force -- to exit and return in order to remain within Emirati visa requirements. Foreigners whose visas are expiring need to exit and re-enter on a new visa, which takes two or three days to process.

Kish is a favorite destination for those renewing their travel documents because tickets are cheap and Iranian visas aren't needed. Cheap hotels cater to such travelers.

In Tehran, Kish Airline officials refused to comment.

## Ad firms

**FROM PAGE 1**  
mayor told newspersons at his official residence in the city.

The DCC and outdoor advertisement firms entered into a legal battle following the DCC's move to raise advertisement charges in July 2002.

Several firms obtained a stay order on the DCC move, resulting in a halt to DCC's renewing contracts of 4,407 advertisement spaces in the city. Moreover, the DCC held the entire hoarding as illegal, there being no renewal since June 2003.

The High Court ruled in favour of the DCC in September 2003, but the firms appealed against the decision in January this year. A consortium of six advertisement firms filed another case with the High Court and the bench issued the status quo.

Khoka alleged that the firms are now 'taking advantage' of the status quo and constructing huge pillars for billboards, raising levels of sight pollution.

"The DCC could earn five times of Tk 4 crore that it earns now from its rented spaces," the mayor said adding "What we are trying to do is streamline the sector and create a full cell for it."

"The DCC is considering all modern aspects of advertisements. We might involve our zonal offices or hand over the section to private operators," he said.

Meanwhile, Outdoor Advertising Owners Association in a press conference in the city yesterday blamed the DCC for violating the status quo by destroying hoardings. The DCC officials refuted the allegation, saying they are removing the billboards erected after the court order.

## Tawfiq Aziz Khan

**FROM PAGE 12**  
One of the leading journalists of the country, Tawfiq Aziz Khan joined the then Pakistan Observer as a staff reporter in 1958 while he was a student of Dhaka University.

He worked as public relations officer at the erstwhile EPIDC (East Pakistan Industries Development Corporation) and Titas Gas Corporation from 1968 to 1975, before joining Dainik Bangla and Bichitra as general manager.

Tawfiq Aziz Khan joined The Daily Star in 1990 as its founding managing editor. He became executive editor in 1997 and worked in that capacity till his death.

The first English sports commentator of the country, he worked in radio, and later in television, since 1958. He was also the resident editor of Cricketer Asia of Hong Kong and Sports Times of Lahore.

Tawfiq Aziz Khan was the founder editor of the fortnightly Sports World (Kiria Jagat). He was also involved with the weekly Holiday at the initial stage of its publication.

Six times he was elected president of Bangladesh Sports Writers' Association and a permanent member of Jatiya Press Club.

He was also a national committee member of Fema (Fair Election Monitoring Alliance).

He was a founder member and president of the country's first group theatre 'Drama Circle' and served the Rotary Club of Dhaka North-West as its president for two consecutive years from 1999.

He died of lung cancer at the age of 64 on February 11, 2001.

## Bangladesh-Myanmar

**FROM PAGE 1**  
ing the road.

The decision to construct the road was taken as Bangladesh wants to have the road between Dhaka and Yangon via Teknaf in Cox's Bazar and Buchidong in Myanmar declared as the Asian Highway.

But a certain portion of the roads and culverts on the Myanmar side up to Buchidong needs development, the official added.

Following the reluctance of Yangon to develop the road on the stretch, Dhaka agreed to construct it at its own cost to set up the road network, according to sources in the communication ministry.

If the highway stretch is constructed, there will be no major interruption in the Dhaka-Yangon road link. It would also cut the distance at least by 500 kilometres from Bangkok to New Delhi, the official said.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (ESCAP), the coordinating body, will recognise the road as Asian Highway if the countries could develop it as per the specified standard and requirement, he added.

State Minister for Communication Salahuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday that the road would be built on a bilateral understanding. Later, it may be selected as the Asian Highway, he said.

According to sources, the government had approached the donor agencies for funds for the highway project but the response was not positive. The donors are not interested in the affairs of Myanmar because of their lack of understanding with the ruling military junta there, they pointed out.

## Six to die

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Those awarded life imprisonment are Mamun alias Picchi Mamun alias Abu Naser Mridha, Ripon alias Nurunnabi, Jewel and Masud alias Masud Rana. They were fined Tk 25,000 each, in default, they are to suffer one more year in prison.

Of the total 10 convicts, four were tried in absentia. The are Nazrul Islam, Ripon, Jewel and Masud.

According to the prosecution, Sub-Inspector Kanokuzzaman alias Kanok, 40, was shot and bombed to death by a gang as he tried to resist them from snatching his briefcase, in which he carried a viscera report of a case, in Agargaon area on June 25, 2001.

Kanok arrived at Gabtoli bus terminal from Dinajpur with the viscera report and started for his destination in the capital at about 5:00am.

Inspector Wahiduzzaman of Tejaoga Police Station filed a case in connection with the killing. The case was transferred to the tribunal in August last year for trial.

## Tangail AL MP

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Dr Razzak alleged that despite his talks with Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj, State Minister for Jute Lutur Rahman Khan Azad, and Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to the PM, police took no steps to arrest the criminals who manhandled him at Nedurbazar in Mohupur on February 6.

Abdul Hamid Chowdhury, deputy leader of the opposition in parliament, who was also present at the briefing, said armed miscreants belonging to ruling BNP assaulted his fellow partyman when he was exchanging post-Eid pleasantries with the people of his constituency.

## BNP-AL blame

**FROM PAGE 1**  
of AL adherents at Shahpara, where a gang destroyed 16 houses in an arson attack on Saturday night after the killing of Sabir Ahmed Gama.

District BNP President and Deputy Minister of Land Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu and General Secretary Shahidul Islam Bachchu claimed villagers saw some AL workers among the killers.

A group of masked men launched the attack and fought with Gama's friends for half an hour after the killing, Bachchu told journalists at Natore Circuit House.

On the February 7 arson attack on Shahpara village, Dulu said: "We are not a fringe political party nor did we torch houses of Awami League leaders to wipe them out to win elections."

On the attack on the Janakanta journalist, GM Iqbal Hasan, during a hartal called by ruling BNP's youth front Jubo Dal in protest at the killing, he said, "Some immature people beat him up, being angry at his report."

Natore AL General Secretary Hanif Ali Sheikh at a press conference at Natore Bar Bhaban denied the allegation against the AL of killing Gama.

He alleged police under influence of the deputy minister refused to receive the case against the arsonists.

## Iraq cop station

**FROM PAGE 1**  
brought down part of the building and the court house."

The provincial governor said all of the dead were locals, including some policemen. "No Muslim could have done this. It appears the amount of explosives used was huge because it killed so many and devastated the buildings," said Imad Lifty.

US forces cordoned off roads leading to the blast site.

Earlier yesterday, a suicide bomber blew himself up outside the house of Amer Suleiman, chief of the al-Duleimi tribe in the area and head of the local US-appointed authority in the restive town of Ramadi, 68 miles west of the capital, wounding four bodyguards.

The government is also preparing a draft agreement to be signed between Dhaka and Yangon in this regard.

India also provided assistance to Myanmar in building roads and bridges for connecting road network between New Delhi and Bangkok. It is constructing roads bypassing Bangladesh through Assam and Manipur following Bangladesh's reluctance in giving road transit and transhipment facilities to the next-door neighbour.

An agreement was also signed among India, Myanmar and Thailand two years ago to develop the road network in the region.

The communication ministry officials, however, do not feel such agreement is needed among Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand as the road network between Yangon and Bangkok already exists.

"Definitely, if such an agreement is signed