



PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina addresses a huge public rally near Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Who to drop for Ganguly?

REUTERS, Lahore

India are uncertain who will open the innings in the deciding third Test against Pakistan next week with Aakash Chopra likely to be dropped due to the return from a back injury of captain Sourav Ganguly.

The 31-year-old Ganguly will be back at the helm in Rawalpindi and his replacement for the first two Tests, Yuvraj Singh, is also almost certain of making the team after a 59 in the first Test at Multan and a blistering 112 in Lahore.

"Everyone knows Yuvraj will play," Ganguly said this week and, though he did not specify who would be excluded, opener Chopra is the weakest link in a batting order boasting Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar and Vangipurappu Laxman.

Critics are divided on who should be promoted up the order but former captain Sunil Gavaskar feels wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel is the man for the job after his unbeaten 62 in the second Test, which Pakistan won by nine wickets to level the series 1-1.

"Parthiv's gumption will no doubt earn him a promotion to the opening slot for the third test so that Ganguly can come into the 11," Gavaskar, India's most successful opener, wrote in his weekly newspa

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Rice sets stage for CIA, FBI testimony

AP, Washington

Condoleezza Rice emphatically assigned blame for the pre-Sept. 11 failures on "frustratingly vague" US intelligence, setting the stage for the top men at the CIA and FBI to explain next week what went wrong and what's been done to fix it.

In a long-anticipated public appearance, President Bush's national security adviser on Thursday repeatedly cited flaws in US intelligence agencies for hampering the administration's ability to foresee or stop the deadly suicide hijackings.

And she cautioned that while the FBI and CIA have made marked improvements since Sept. 11, 2001, the job is not complete.

"I really don't believe that all of our work is done, despite the tremendous progress that we've made thus far," Rice testified to the independent commission investigating the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

Next week, the bipartisan panel will examine law enforcement and intelligence failures surrounding Sept. 11, with scheduled testimony from Attorney General John



Condoleezza Rice

Ashcroft, CIA Director George Tenet and FBI Director Robert Mueller, as well as former FBI Director Louis Freeh and former Acting FBI Director Thomas Pickard.

"This hearing will focus on four important questions," commission chairman Thomas Kean said. "How was our government structured before 9-11 to address the terrorist threat inside the United States? What was the threat in 2001 and our government's response to it? How did the intelligence community

address the threat? What reforms have been taken since 9-11 to respond to the terrorist threat inside the United States?"

"These questions are at the core of the commission's mandate," he said.

Kean also said the 10-member commission hoped the White House would publicly release by next week an Aug. 6, 2001, classified memo entitled "Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States."

At the panel's request, the White House said it soon would declassify the intelligence briefing, which was given to Bush just weeks before the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania.

Democratic commissioners sharply questioned Rice as to why the memo didn't spark immediate action against al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization headed by Osama bin Laden.

Rice said the document was "historical information based on old reporting" with no specific intelligence information regarding an impending attack.

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Abducted AL leader buys freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A cloth trader and Awami League (AL) leader secured his release from the abductors on Wednesday after paying a ransom of Tk 3 lakh.

A gang abducted Rabiul Islam, 40, of Sharsa upazila on March 15 from Rampur Bazar of Sharsa upazila in Jessore and demanded Tk 8 lakh for his release.

Sirajul Islam, Rabiul's elder brother, alleged that Officer-in-Charge of Sharsa Police Station Mosharaf Hossain refused to record the FIR (first information report) on March 17. The AL leaders also sought help from the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police of Jessore in vain.

Following a negotiation through Putkhali Union Parishad Chairman Habibur Rahman, the abductors handed Rabiul to Habibur when they were paid the sum, Sirajul said.

OC Mosharaf had threatened to implicate him in criminal cases if he failed to satisfy him, Sirajul told reporters at a press conference in Jessore district AL office Thursday. The AL leaders alleged that the abductors, close aides of a central BNP leader Sharsa, are at large.

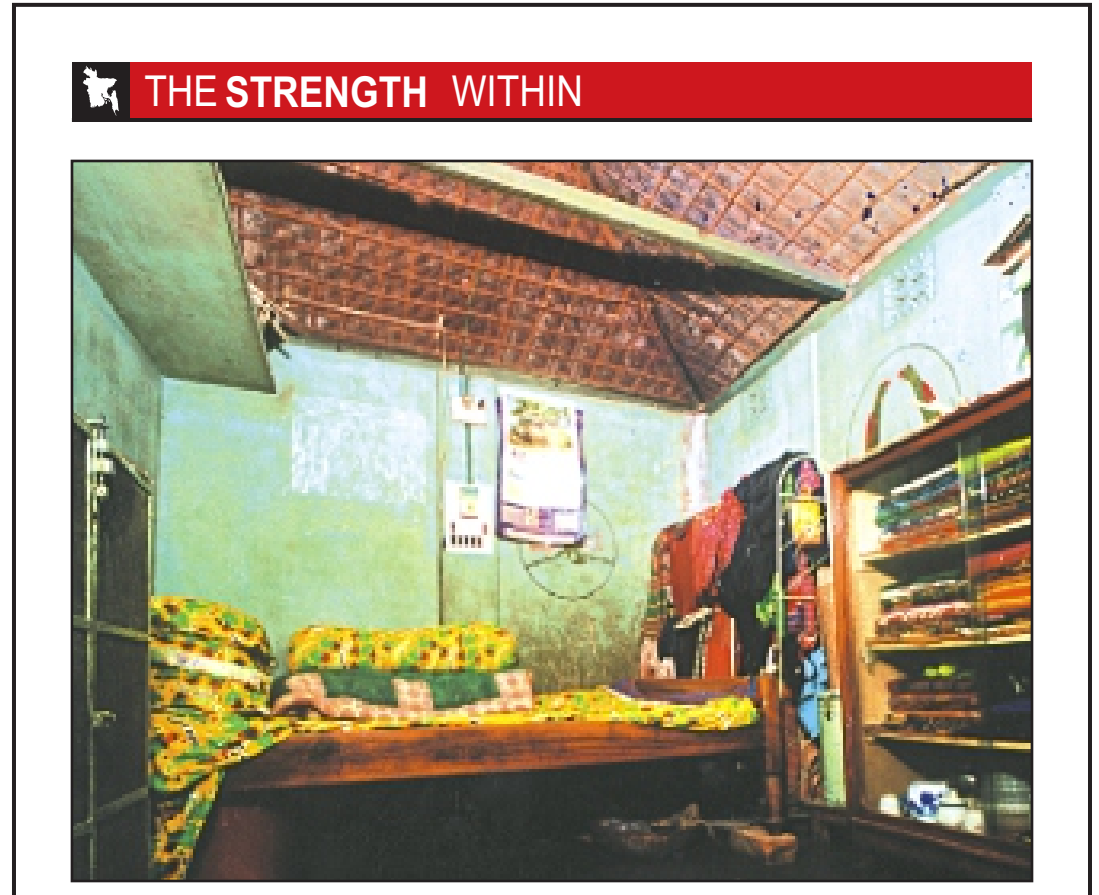


PHOTO: STAR

A musty room in Kandapara brothel in Tangail speaks of poverty and life in isolation.

Step beyond isolated life

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

"Aren't we human?" asked an angry Parvin, a commercial sex worker at Kandapara brothel in Tangail. Raising her fist, she continued, "At night they come to us, but during the day they are the very people who kick us in the gut. It has to change!"

Commercial sex workers (CSWs) like Parvin were and still are persecuted by mainstream society. Parvin like 1,500 other CSWs living and working in the cramped confines of the Kandapara brothel line up day after day, rain or shine with inviting smiles, trying their best to conceal in their person the ravages of abuse and diseases.

Prohibited from wearing sandals, restricted to wearing only saris to their shins to single them out, sex workers had to bear the symbols of their profession as signs of their social

degradation.

This was a reality that most administrators were reluctant to address, and left for an organization, Society for Social Services (SSS), to take up, go to Kandapara and give the women working there a new lease of life in 1996. Now, CSWs are getting their chance to make society face the reality that it had long chosen to suppress -- they are part of society as anyone else.

Some of the women have purchased lands in villages on the outskirts of Tangail to build houses and rebuild lives far away from the pains. Like Parvin, they are part of a pilot project initiated by the SSS to rehabilitate CSWs. Currently, the project covers 110 CSWs from Kandapara and 100 of their children who are kept in a hostel, including Parvin's 6-year-old son.

Most women at Kandapara

do not have a familial or social support system to fight social exploitation. Many of them were abandoned by their parents, husbands or in-laws and trafficked to Kandapara, a major destination of trafficked women and the second biggest brothel after Goalanda in Rajbari.

One social exploitation of the CSWs that the SSS has been able to negate is the financial side, with all of the 110 women saving their money with the SSS and borrowing micro-credits to purchase land.

"They (SSS) are not only giving my son hope for a better future, also giving me a future. I am dreaming of a life where I will be out of Kandapara and living with my educated son and with respect," said Sufia who is plan

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RUN-UP TO 2004 POLLS Indian ruling alliance vows to go tough on infiltration

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has announced in its election manifesto to repeal the Illegal Migration Detection by Tribunal (IMDT) Act to end what it said was infiltration of Bangladeshis into Assam.

Releasing the manifesto for the upcoming parliamentary elections at a press conference in New Delhi Thursday, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said his government was committed to repeal the IMDT Act of 1983.

The NDA has tabled the revocation of the law as one of the priorities in its development plan for the northeastern Indian states.

There is a feeling in the northeastern states that the act failed to deliver its purpose -- that is to put an end to "infiltration from Bangladesh", Finance Minister Jaswant Singh told the conference.

Addressing an election rally in Guwahati, the capital of Assam, on April 06, Vajpayee said the IMDT Act defeated its purpose, as only 1,500 illegal immigrants had been detected and deported from Assam since its legislation, while thousands of Bangladeshis entered Assam without valid documents.

The Indian prime minister also proposed a dialogue between New Delhi and Dhaka to solve what he called illegal immigration from Bangladesh to India.

Reacting to Vajpayee's remarks on the act, Tarun Gogoi, chief minister of Congress-ruled Assam, said

the purpose of the law was not to stop infiltration but to protect Indian citizens from being summarily deported merely on suspicion and without judicial scrutiny.

Under the act, the onus of proving a person's citizenship rests on the complainant, not on the person whose citizenship is questioned.

"The responsibility to check infiltration from Bangladesh lies with the federal government," Gogoi said. He said he suggested several measures, like fencing the entire border of Assam with Bangladesh, reducing the distance between BSF posts from eight to four kilometres and issuing photo-identity cards to those residing along the border to check infiltration. He wanted to know what the federal government did to implement them.

The Assamese chief minister also alleged the BJP raised the infiltration issue whenever elections were around but forgot it soon as it came to power.

Some political observers view the inclusion of the illegal immigration issue in the NDA election manifesto as a success of the BJP in taking a subject on board which has been high on the agenda of its allies, especially in Assam.

The issue was not raised in the NDA manifesto for the 1999 general elections.

Two other pet ideological concerns of the BJP -- a uniform civil code and abrogation of the special constitutional status to predominantly Muslim states of Jammu and

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PHOTO: STAR

A corridor bridging the SH Mansion of slain businessman Shamsul Haq and Bikrampur Mansion of his alleged killer Kajol in Old Dhaka lies in rubble yesterday. Haq's family razed the passage after Haq and his son's recent killings.

Haq's family razes corridors with Kajol's mansion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation yesterday gave permission to the family of slain businessman Shamsul Haq to demolish the corridors linking Haq's SH Mansion to its adjacent Bikrampur Mansion owned by Kajol, the prime accused in the gruesome murder of the businessman and his son.

Sources said the prime minister during her meeting with Haq's wife on Thursday discussed matters relating to the property Haq bought from Kajol. Kajol went into hiding after the murders.

"We discussed the matter with the prime minister and she asked the mayor to help us with the demolition," said one of Haq's family members.

As many as seven corridors link the two buildings near Kotwali Police Station in old Dhaka and at least three were demolished till yesterday afternoon under heavy police guard.

Police said the corridors providing passage to at least 42 other surrounding markets were built when Haq and Kajol were in good terms.

But a member of Haq's family said, "Kajol forcibly built the corridors despite Haq's opposition."

"The structures are illegal and built without our consent and we want them demolished," he said.

Prayer Timings		
April 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

