

## PM pleads

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that can ensure fair play, justice and compassion for the poor," she said while addressing the opening session of the World Bank-sponsored global conference on poverty reduction here.

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao delivered the keynote speech at the opening session. President of Tanzania Benjamin William Mapa, President of Brazil Lula da Silva, Finance Minister of China Jin Rong and President of World Bank James D Wolfensohn also addressed the opening session at the Shanghai International Convention Centre.

Referring to the Bangladesh experience, the prime minister said the resource gap could be overcome partly by implementing a suitable strategy.

"The experience of Bangladesh indicates that lack of adequate resources is an important handicap but not an insuperable obstacle," she observed.

Khaleda told the conference that Bangladesh had received significant dividends from the consistent policy on human development.

"I am happy to inform you that Bangladesh, according to the assessment of the UN human development report, has for the first time graduated from the low human

development category to the medium human development category in 2003," she told the audience.

The prime minister said starting with a fragile resource base and a war-devastated economy in 1971, Bangladesh has reduced poverty, from more than 70 percent in the early 1970s to less than 50 percent in 2002.

She, however, said, "What has been achieved so far is encouraging but not enough."

The prime minister said reforms are necessary, but they are not sufficient for poverty alleviation.

"The poor need opportunities to participate in equal terms. They cannot at all enter the highly competitive global market unless they are given access to education, health, electricity and information highway," she added.

Recognising the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in poverty reduction, Khaleda said poverty is a complex problem with many faces. It cannot be solved from the top by the government alone.

Referring to the importance of NGOs, the prime minister said NGOs can never be the substitutes for government programme. They can play a very useful role in developing innovative approaches and supplementing the public sector, she added.

## Evil forces

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are obstructing investigation and sheltering the criminals.

Asked if he feels involvement of Islamist fundamentalists in these incidents, he said, in some of the incidents, linkage and presence of those who abuse religion could be noticed.

He grieved over the seizure of a huge quantity of illegal arms and the murder of Commodore (Retd) Rabbani in Chittagong, killing of lawyer Manzurul Imam and journalist Manik Saha in Khulna, brutal slaughter of a businessman and his son in Dhaka and the murder of lawmaker Ahsanullah Master in Tongi.

The Gono Forum chief said the indifference to the popular demand for an effective investigation into the bomb blast at Hazrat Shahjalil Shrine that killed seven people in January last led to the heinous attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury.

Coming down heavily on the vigilante activities of 'Bangla Bhai', he accused the man and his followers of taking the law into their own hands to murder and terrorise citizens in the Rajshahi region.

"Not only has the law not been enforced against such crimes but the police seem to provide them with cover. In spite of extensive media coverage of the medieval forms of torture and killings, the cabinet demonstrates nothing but paralysis," he bitterly censured.

Referring to the nomenclature of Bangla Bhai, Dr Kamal said this name must have come from outside and it

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Dr Kamal demanded disbanding of armed groups which he said were patronised by political parties, neutral function of law-enforcing agencies and the administration, separation of the judiciary, impartial investigations into killings and bomb explosions and publication of investigation reports.

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He also sounded a strong note of caution against any manipulation in the upcoming by-election in Dhaka 10 in the style of Magura-2 by-election, saying people would not accept the results and those who would obstruct fair voting must be punished. "We have been issuing warnings for long; we cannot wait further... The time to act is now," he announced.

He said his party is in consultation with other parties, including the 11-party alliance, to unite on common issues. "We want a fundamental change—a change for healthy politics against sick politics," he told a questioner, saying, despite changes in the past through movement, there has not been any qualitative change in the tenor of power.

"What we want is a meaningful movement, a meaningful change... not merely a change in power, but a change in character of power with honest and competent people," the eminent lawyer explained.

## AI slates attack

**FROM PAGE 1**  
tribunals, increasing the risk of convictions based on flawed evidence, the report says.

Over 130 people were sentenced to death and two men executed, the human-rights organisation says, adding harassment of human rights defenders continued.

Immunity from prosecution was granted to officials and army personnel associated with human-rights violations during the anticrime "Operation Clean Heart" in which at least 40 people died after being detained by soldiers, the report says.

Dozens of people died in violence during and after local elections in the first quarter of 2003.

The report says several opposition politicians were assassinated and corruption and poor governance were key factors in blocking economic prosperity.

It says the government reportedly pressured judges to dismiss criminal charges against ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party supporters.

The main opposition party, Awami League, boycotted most sessions of parliament, the report notes.

The report mentions the case of senior journalist Enamul Haque Chowdhury who, upon his release

from jail on January 5, said he was beaten, tortured with electric shocks and threatened with death at gunpoint in police custody. He was accused of misquoting the home minister in a news agency report.

Police continued to use excessive force during opposition or trade union demonstrations, but no officer was known to have been brought to justice for the attacks, the report says.

Some prominent detainees, including Shahriar Kabir, Professor Muntasir Mamun, Saleem Samad and Awami League leaders Bahauddin Nasim, Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Tofail Ahmed, continued to suffer harassment and threats of detention after their release from jail.

In June, warrants of arrests were issued against Mahtab Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, Matiur Rahman, editor of the Daily Prothom Alo, and Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the Awami League.

A government official filed a criminal defamation case against them after publication of a letter in which Jalil criticised the nomination of the official to an executive post in an international organisation.

## US slated over rights

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The global security agenda promoted by the U.S. administration is bankrupt of vision and bereft of principle," Khan said in a statement.

"Violating rights at home, turning a blind eye to abuses abroad, and using pre-emptive military force where and when it chooses have damaged justice and freedom, and made the world a more dangerous place."

Amnesty said the US-led war on terror continued to be waged using indiscriminate and disproportionate means.

The report cites the hundreds of foreign nationals who remain in indefinite detention without charge or trial in US custody at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. It also details alleged unlawful killings of civilians by coalition troops in Iraq and allegations of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers.

The recent publication of photographs of U.S. troops torturing and humiliating Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad was met with international condemnation.

"By failing to protect the rights of those who may be guilty, governments endanger the rights of those who are innocent and put us all at risk," Khan said.

The report criticized several governments, including those of Spain, France and Uzbekistan, which it said have introduced "regressive" anti-terrorist legislation and restrictions on freedom since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Britain was singled out for holding 14 foreign nationals under anti-

terrorism laws that allow indefinite detention without charge of trial. The laws have been criticized by lawmakers, civil rights groups and Muslim associations.

British police disclosed last month that more than half the 572 people arrested in anti-terror raids in Britain since Sept. 11, 2001 have been released without charge, and fewer than one in five have been charged with terrorism-related offenses.

Amnesty also criticized several European nations -- including Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, Ireland and Malta -- for tough new policies on asylum seekers.

Khan said she was heartened by millions of people who took to the streets in capitals around the world to protest the war in Iraq, Spaniards who marched following the March 11 terrorist attacks in Madrid, and the World Social Forum in Brazil.

"Governments need to listen," she said. "In times of uncertainty, the world needs not only to fight against global threats but to fight for global justice."

The report also said that Iraq and the war on terror have obscured the greatest human rights challenge in recent history -- the tendency of many developing countries to spend billions of dollars a year on weapons instead of tackling poverty.

Khan said there is a risk that UN Millennium Development Goals such as reducing child mortality and halving the number of people without access to clean water, will not be achieved because resources have been diverted to the war on terror.

## Kapali dropped

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Tareq was preferred to left-arm spinner Enamul Haque for strengthening pace battery.

Coach Dav Whatmore and chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who is accompanying the team as tour operations manager, is going to have a one-to-one talk with the top-order batsmen after the training last night.

"We will talk with the top order batsmen individually. It is very important because if we are to do well in the five-day game the top order must show a disciplined approach against a four-pronged West Indies pace attack," said Faruque during the morning practice session.

The Tigers reached St Lucia on Tuesday but not before they were battered and bruised by the West Indies Cricket Board XI in a three-day practice match that ended in a draw in Grenada on Monday.

"I have seen the pitch and it looked hard and bouncy to me. There is nothing to fear for the batsman," said Faruque, who was delighted to see the sun shining on the ground after being chased by rain in Grenada.

Meanwhile, the West Indies team also reached St Lucia without their captain Brian Lara, who opted out of the one-day series that the home team won 3-0. The gifted left-hander is expected to join the afternoon training session.

The selected 12: Habibul Bashar (captain), Rajin Saleh, Javed Omar, Hannan Sarkar, Mohammad Ashraf, Faisal Hossain, Manjarul Islam, Mushfiqur Rahman, Khaled Masud (wicketkeeper), Mohammad Rafique, Tapash Baisya and Taerq Aziz Khan.

## 3 Bangladeshis

**FROM PAGE 12**  
agencies said.

Dumont belonged to al-Qaeda's logistics arm and police suspect he was engaged in raising funds, money laundering and forming a terrorist network while hiding here between July 2002 and September 2003, according to earlier reports.

The arrest of several foreign nationals during raids at more than 10 locations, was aimed at "getting to the bottom of Dumont's fundraising activities in Japan," Jiji Press said, quoting police.

Jiji said another 33-year-old Bangladeshi man had received several calls from Dumont.

Police and security agencies have refused to comment on Dumont's reported stay in Japan, although it has been tacitly acknowledged in comments by politicians including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

## UK detectives share

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Hazarat Shahjalil Shrine, sources said.

The Scotland Yard officials arrived in Dhaka on Sunday to investigate the deadly blast that wounded Bangladesh-born British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury and 69 others and killed three. The team went to Sylhet the next day.

The UK police officials earlier in the morning went to the police headquarters and met the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahudul Haque. They also went to the Special Branch (SB) of Police office and talked with Additional IGP Mohammad Abdul Qaiyum.

Alan Shaw, head of political section of the British High Commission, and a SB team accompanied the British officials, sources said.

A home ministry official, wishing anonymity, meanwhile, yesterday said the government wants the anti-terrorist group to help track down the criminals. He added that police lack the expertise to investigate the bomb explosion and people have little confidence in the police force.

**INVESTIGATORS AGAIN OFF TO SYLHET TODAY**  
The British team will again fly off to the northeastern city this morning to carry out further enquiry, our staff correspondent from Sylhet reports.

The UK detectives will meet the deputy inspector general of police, Sylhet Range, and may visit the shrine, an official said. The team is likely to head back to the capital in the afternoon, he added.

**NO LEADS AS YET**  
The local investigators have found no clue to the blast at the shrine. "...We were chasing all possible links and interrogating people suspected for suspected links to the blast," said an official yesterday, asking not to be named.

The transfer of the case to the Criminal Investigation Department from Kotwali police is still in process,

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"We have been issuing warnings for long; we cannot wait further... The time to act is now," he announced.

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Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, Advocate MK Khalilur Rahman, Barrister Tanjib Ul Alam appeared for the petitioner.

Dr Kamal also submitted that since prevention is better than cure, the election proceedings should be stopped to prevent a repeat of farcical election like the Magura-2 by-polls of 1994.

The government attorneys, as usual, opposed their submission.

The HC bench observed that a full hearing is needed to resolve the case.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed told newsmen after the HC order that the EC would not appeal against the judgement.

"The government can do it," the CEC said.

Mannan, a retired major and also BDB secretary general who resigned from parliament and the ruling BNP on March 10, rejected the allocated election symbol, 'bench', and challenged the RO's order to the High Court on May 23.

"As the secretary general of a political party, I cannot contest the by-polls as an independent candidate with the symbol allocated by the returning officer," Mannan said.

The High Court the same day directed the RO to reconsider allocation of 'Kula' to the BDB candidate, but the RO on May 25 once again refused the election symbol.

The RO said he allocated 'Kula' to 'independent candidate' Mannan by lottery, as several candidates vied for it.

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He also promised to talk to the USAID and the World Bank to fund a water purification project for the arsenic-affected areas, which he said he already has discussed with the country's business community.

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Gilman came to Dhaka on an invitation from the Bangladesh-US Friendship Association. During his stay, he met with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on the eve of her departure for China, and a number of ministers and opposition leaders. He also visited various development projects across the country.

A staunch Republican, Gilman is known as an influential lobbyist and the immediate past chairman of the Congressional Committee on International Relations.

## Gilman for tighter

**FROM PAGE 12**  
to know of its potential adverse impacts on Bangladesh from experts and hopes that the new Indian administration will review its implementation.

"There are riparian rights," he underscored, adding, "I will have an opportunity to talk to the US state department and the UN on the matter."

The founder of the Bangladeshi caucus in the US Congress finds the termination of US concessions to Bangladesh readymade garment producers as a "discrimination". He said he will ask the US trade representatives "to take a good hard look at why Bangladesh is being discriminated while Caribbean and African countries are receiving special treatments."

Upon his return to the US, he promised to encourage a greater US investment in Bangladesh, try to solve trade-related problems and urge US traders to explore jute products for US market.

Gilman also took it on himself to work with the current chairman of Bangladeshi caucus, Joseph Crowley, to revive the stalled congressional bill which sought to legalise over 100,000 Bangladeshis

who are over-staying in the US in the next session of the Congress.

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## HC stays Dhaka-10

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attorneys sought constitution of a special bench to hear the matter during vacation. The High Court goes on vacation from today until June 11 and will hear the matter when it resumes on June 12.

The returning officer (RO) of the Ramna-Tejgaon (Dhaka-10) constituency on May 20 refused to allocate 'kula' for the BDB on the grounds that the Election Commission (EC) recognising the BDB as a political party.

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## HC stays RPCL MD

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notice issued a letter on the termination of Sabur on May 17.

Sabur, who says a group of corrupt REB officials and a businessperson, who is also the local agent of the RPCL's consultant Lahmeyer, have victimised him, challenged the REB letter in the High Court.

A High Court bench comprising Justices MA Matin and Tariq-Ul-Haqim yesterday in its rule stayed the REB decision until the previous High Court order is disposed of.

The final hearing of the dispute will be held within two weeks.

Sources said the RPCL MD became a target of a vested interest group when he had objected to some corrupt deals hatched by an influential businessperson in the donor-funded first phase 280-megawatt Dhaka North Power Plant (DNPP).

With an estimated cost of 153 million Euro the tender for the project's consultant in a way has tampered the DNPP so that only a certain company gets the lucrative contract. Only one company -- Alsthom -- submitted bid documents in February's tender and was found qualified.

The project's consultant Lahmeyer itself was selected without any bidding allegedly because of the lobbying by the Lahmeyer's local agent. The agent virtually enjoys strong command over the REB and even attends the REB Board Meetings illegally.

As The Daily Star in a report revealed this corruption, the project's German donor KfW launched a probe and found severe inconsistencies in the power project. KfW recommended appointment of an international auditor to review various aspects of the RPCL and also put a question about how the local agent's participation in the RPCL's board meetings.

## Ageing F-28

**FROM PAGE 12**  
up maintenance cost. The Rolls-Royce-manufactured engine will cost Biman no less than \$5.25 lakh, 35 percent of the price of a similar aircraft.

The purchase goes against Biman's fleet planning committee's modernisation plan, which recommends procurement of new generation planes to expand operation and earn profit.

However, Managing Director of Biman Akhter Hossain Khan said the aircraft, maintained in European standard, are still in good condition. He said after registration by civil aviation authorities, the planes may start operation on domestic and regional routes in two-three days.

Four Indonesian pilots, who have flown the planes from Indonesia, will leave Dhaka after familiarisation of local pilots with the aircraft, he said.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin yesterday pay a visit to the F-28s at Biman's engineering hangar at the ZIA.

The minister told newsmen that the new planes will help Biman to maintain its schedule and increase flight frequency on some important routes.

Biman has bought the planes with the money it got from the sale of two ATP (Advanced Turbo Prop) planes earlier this year, he said.

## Ministry seeks

**FROM PAGE 12**  
asked it to ensure proper use of the fund.

Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker Golam Mohammad Kader demanded subsidy on all agricultural inputs including electricity, diesel, seeds and expressed despair at the slow process of fertilizer import.

"There is no crisis of fertilizer, but the process initiated by the government to import the agricultural input is very tardy. I am doubtful whether the government will be able to import fertilizer on time. I think farmers will be hit hard by a fertilizer crisis in the next season."

The state minister, however, assured the committee that there would be no fertilizer crisis in the next season.

Committee chairman Abdul Mannan held after the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

## Sikri pushes

**FROM PAGE 12**  
and State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrif Hossain also attended it.

Huda said sub-standard Indian goods are being dumped into Bangladesh and urged the envoy to look into the issue. "I know many poor quality vehicles entered into Bangladesh after two-stroke three-wheelers were banned," he said.

Mosharrif said Bangladesh has overcome a crisis of CNG refuelling station which was there even a few months ago. "Now it is possible to make CNG-run vehicles popular in the country and mobile filling stations can solve the problem in areas where there is no gas transmission line."

Tariqul said as CNG-run vehicles are saving around two-thirds fuel cost and the commuters should benefit from it. He also urged Green Arrow Express, to charge less and increase passenger facilities.

Anwarul Islam Tarek, chief executive officer of Green Arrow Express, said they have hit the road with 50 Tata buses which run only on CNG and plan to push the number to 500 in a year.

## Proshika

**FROM PAGE 12**  
detained Proshika staff could form the human chain for few minutes before police barred them for holding a gathering without prior permission from Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz.

Police asked the family members to leave the area saying they would be arrested if they stayed there any longer. Fearing arrest, the agitating group left the place and tried to assemble in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital gate, but police chased them again and thwarted their attempt.

Before leaving the area, Faruque's wife Shahana Ahmed said, "The alliance government has violated human rights by foiling our peaceful programme. I demand immediate release of my husband and dismissal of all cases filed against him and Proshika staff."

She also urged the government to stop harassing Proshika employees and officials and ensure family members' visit to the detainees at Dhaka Central Jail.

Faruque's daughter Rifat Zebini Bohni demanded release of her father. She also urged the prime minister to ensure proper treatment of her father in jail. Demanding Faruque's immediate release, 8-year-old Qazi Rubayet Ahmed said, "I want to see my father."

## Double trouble

**FROM PAGE 1**  
spent seven days in jail in inhuman condition. Police misbehaved with me as they did with thousands of other detainees like me."

Police filed a case against her on charge of organising people for anti-government movement. Fatema is now out on bail, but she had to spend Tk 9,500 to bribe police to get out of jail. "I am the only bread earner of my family and have nine mouths to feed. How can I bear the legal expenses? I am a victim of the political wrangling between the government and the opposition. Who will compensate me for the damage caused to my family?"

Many others like Fatema who were caught up in the government-opposition standoff and ended up being accused of anti-government conspiracy.

More than 15,000 were picked up in an eight-day dragnet after the government launched an unprecedented drive, indiscriminately arresting opposition leaders and activists and workers of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Proshika, to counter AL's much-hyped ultimatum.

Most people arrested under Dhaka Metropolitan Police Act and section 54 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) were sentenced without their appearance in court, let alone scope for self-defence.

Jahanara Begum, 40, another resident of Kuril slum, was also arrested under Section 54 on the same day along with Fatema and spent seven days in jail without any specific charge.

"Now I have to appear before the court as Gulshan police have accused me of organising an anti-government movement," she said.

Abdul Jabbar, 40, a resident of the city's Bhasantek area, worked for an insurance company when he was rounded up on April 19 and subsequently charged for theft. During his 17 days behind bars, Jabbar got fired from his job for being absent for five consecutive days.

"I was never involved in politics in any way or the other but had to pay for the political turmoil centring AL's April 30 deadline. Who will feed my seven family members now that I have lost my job?"

Jabbar said the government is duty-bound to protect the common but it has rather penalised the poor for its brawl with the opposition.

Abdul Mannan, a slum-dweller at Bhasantek, is now absconding after Kafil police filed a case against him sometime before April 30.

"Now some people claiming close

association with police are demanding money from me to get the case withdrawn," Mannan said.

Some NGOs have extended support to the innocents who were arrested over the deadline issue.

"An O Salish Kendra (Ask) and Blast (Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust) are providing legal support to some victims," said Mostafa Qayyum Khan, executive director, Coalition for the Urban Poor (Cup), a networking organisation of NGOs.

"But it is not possible to provide legal support to every victim, so it would be best if the government withdrew the cases filed in connection with the April 30 deadline," Khan told The Daily Star.

"The legal procedure will have a negative effect on the society as a whole as most of those rounded up are poor and insolvent to run cases. The financial burden will make them inclined to adopt unfair means to pay for litigation. This will encourage criminal activities," he observed.

"We extended financial support to nearly 100 people fined