

## Allow int'l probe

**FROM PAGE 1** full participation in the democratic process in parliament.

It called, in particular, upon the opposition parties to end the boycott of parliamentary activity, since agitation and violence caused suffering to the people of Bangladesh, the resolution said.

The European Parliament highlighted, among other issues, the need for putting an end to anti-crime operations by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), trial of the war criminals of 1971 and ensuring the rights of religious minorities.

The resolution came on the same day when Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, back from an international roundtable in Sweden, told newsmen that overall impression about Bangladesh was now excellent across the world. Referring to his meetings with European parliamentarians, Saifur said they had showed a very positive attitude towards Bangladesh's development.

In an instant reaction to the resolution, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed last night told BBC radio that its contents were not 'against us, rather these are about us'.

The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) called upon the government to respect the instructions given by the High Court to avoid abuse of legal instruments in detaining opposition demonstrators and to refrain from repressing peaceful political protests through detention and torture.

Blaming the Rab for 'extra-judicial' killings, the MEPs urged the government to put an end to the anti-crime operations by the 'paramilitary force'. They referred to the figures provided by a Bangladeshi human rights organisation -- Odhikar-- to say there that were 90 publicly reported custodial deaths due to torture in 2004.

The MEPs reiterated their support for the demand that those known to have participated in the massacre of Bangladeshi citizens and other war crimes during the Liberation War in 1971 be brought to trial.

The resolution expressed support for the principled steps which the European Union (EU) representatives had taken last year in

defence of the rights of religious minorities in Bangladesh, such as physical presence of the Ahmadiyya Muslims at a complex in October 2004, when fundamentalists had prepared to stage a mass assault on it.

It called for a review of the application of the human rights and democracy clause of the EU-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement and to ascertain whether the Government of Bangladesh is making sufficiently strong efforts to fundamentally improve the human rights situation.

The European Parliament noted that recent modest steps taken by the government to improve the political situation would help establish a situation respectful of law and order, and would support any substantial progress on issues like good governance, freedom of press, the fight against corruption and respect for human rights.

The MEPs encouraged the government to enable the population to participate in traditional cultural events and to provide security measures so that these events, which reflect a tradition of tolerance and secularism, could be implemented safely, the resolution said.

It also called upon the government to take preventive steps against what said is the Muslim paramilitary groups that have spread violence and intimidation in rural areas of Bangladesh.

In his reaction, Moudud told BBC radio that many such resolutions were adopted on various non-developed nations in the past.

He said he did not mind if they (European Parliament) express concern as a well wishes of Bangladesh. But they would commit a mistake in thinking that Bangladesh would act as per their desires.

On reforms and caretaker issue, the law minister said it was not the Europeans' business. "Caretaker government is our achievement and we'll look into it."

Turning to human rights, Moudud wondered why they focus so much on the poor nations' human rights situation said while there are human rights problems also in the developed countries.

### Saifur calls India's river-linking plan disastrous

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday described the Indian river-linking project as a disastrous scheme, which will have adverse impact on Bangladesh.

"Our neighbour has undertaken a disastrous plan [to withdraw waters from the upstream of the common rivers]," he told a statistical conference in the city.

"We'll fight against the move," Saifur said.

He stressed the need for proper water management planning in the country's own fashion but expressed disappointment that Bangladesh lacks correct and updated statistics to formulate such a one.

The finance minister said the planners could have evolved a plan to preserve the surface water to expand agricultural irrigation but they don't have information about the surface water. "We can have proper planning if we have latest and trustworthy statistics," he added.

The Indian government has a plan to link up its rivers and transfer waters from the upstream for its irrigation that has caused widespread protest in Bangladesh. New Delhi, however, has assured Dhaka that the river-linking project is at the conceptual stage and it would not implement any scheme that might adversely affect Bangladesh's agriculture and ecology.

## Foreign film maker held on Bhomra border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) caught a foreign documentary film maker while he was entering Bangladesh through Bhomra border point in Sadar upazila early Thursday.

The BDR also arrested an Indian national who acted as his guide.

BDR jawans caught Manda Garan, 55, and his guide Mafizul Islam, 18, of Haroa under 24 Parganas in West Bengal, as they entered into the Bangladesh territory near Bhomra, BDR and police said.

The BDR handed Garan to the district administration and the Indian national to Satkhira police, Captain Mahabub of 41 Rifles Battalion told The Daily Star.

Garan, who came to Bangladesh on a six-month visa on February 26, went to India crossing the border illegally on February 28 after the Indian government denied him entry visa, Manda told this correspondent.

He wanted to make a documentary film on Babri Mosque demolition by Hindu zealots in Ayodhya in 1992, stayed at different hotels in India showing the visa that the Indian government issued him last year and managed to complete his documentary film, he added.

## BSF kills one in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

A Bangladeshi national man was gunned down and another injured by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Tekerghat on Chunarughat border on Thursday.

The dead was identified as Shamsu Miah, 32, while the injured as Kalai Miah, 30, of Dudhpati village.

Locals said the BSF men opened fire on them while they were working on a field along the border.

### Relatives

**FROM PAGE 1** amulet and his wallet and keys found in his pocket," said Rakib.

The body of Jahangir Alam, a knitting supervisor and resident of Palashbari, was recovered from the top of the building with Tk 3,596 held in his left hand, which seemed to be his last month's salary drawn on the night of the catastrophe.

"At first I could not identify his body and it was taken to Savar thana as an unidentified one. But, later a colleague of Jahangir, after seeing the serial number of his identity card found on the body, identified him as Jahangir and informed me," said a waiting Rupa, Jahangir's sister-in-law, while receiving the body from police.

The body of Mozammel Hossain, another employee of the factory, recovered from the western part of the building, was flattened. It was biting its tongue in an expression of unbearable pain.

"I identified him seeing the gold ring on the middle finger of his left hand. A photograph of his wife was also found in his wallet," said ALAmin, brother-in-law of Mazammel, after taking the body from in front of the army rescue control room on the site.

"How would I feel if I fail to identify my husband's body on seeing his face?" Aleya, wife of Amin, who was among the over hundred victims still trapped in the debris and feared to be buried alive, asked The Daily Star.

"I can't move as a big chunk has fallen on me. Take me out and save my life," a sobbing Aleya quoted her husband as telling her over telephone at 2:30 on Monday night after the building crumbled.

"He sought my help but I couldn't do anything yet to rescue him. I even don't know whether I can identify him or not," wailed the woman in despair.

Most of the relatives are waiting now only to have the bodies of their beloved, except those few who believe in miracles.

## Rescuers give up hope

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the still trapped victims were gripped with the anxiety whether they would be able to identify their beloved ones.

Three badly decomposed bodies were sent to Savar Police Station yesterday as no-one could identify them.

"We'll keep these corpses for eight to 10 hours and, if by this time no-one claims them, they would be handed over to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam for burial," said a sub-inspector of Savar Police Station.

Since Thursday night, relatives were seen identifying their beloved ones by the clothes on their bodies with which they had left for work on the ill-fated day or by identification cards they kept with them when at work. Relatives identified a few of the bodies by the rings they wore on fingers and the photographs they incidentally kept in their pockets or wallets.

"I could identify the body of my brother Abdul Gani Mian by the brown colour T-shirt in which he had left for work," said Gani's brother Abu Baker.

All the corpses retrieved yesterday and day before were pulled out from the third floor, where most of the victims were working the night shift during the deadliest building collapse in the country's history.

Rescuers, covering their noses with cloths, retrieved the corpses after cranes removed concrete slabs on the fourth floor at the eastern part of the collapsed structure.

The stench of the rotting corpses filled the air of Palashbari, the site of the collapsed building, forcing rescuers, volunteers, relatives and locals to cover their noses with cloths and palms.

The rescuers had to splash Phenyl on the bodies surrounded by swarms of flies.

Though factory workers are saying that some 300 people are still trapped in the debris, an information board in the control room of army on the site puts the number at 110.

Brigadier Nizam said they will

continue their effort to pull alive if any survivor is there. "We'll also work in a way that will not damage any corpse."

According to the rescuers from army and Fire Service and Civil Defence, it will take at best a week to completely remove the rubble.

According to the army control room, the rescuers have removed 20 percent debris in the middle, 35 percent in the northern side and 55 percent in the southern part.

Eighty-five workers were either rescued alive or successfully dodged death. The last one to emerge alive out of the rubble was 36 hours after the Spectrum Sweater Industries Ltd plant had crumbled early Monday.

#### REPORT YET TO COME ON ENCROACHMENT

A committee assigned to inquire if the owner of the collapsed sweater factory building had encroached into the nearby canal failed to submit its report yesterday.

The committee formed on April 12 headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Land Acquisition) M Towhidur Rahman was scheduled to submit the report to the deputy commissioner (DC) of Dhaka yesterday, but it played for three more days for the submission.

"We've done all the primary works including collecting the land documents of this area, but as the debris of the collapsed building occupy a big portion of it, it's not possible now to measure the canal," Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the map, the width of the canal near the collapsed building is 50 to 60 feet, but now it seems much less, DC of Dhaka Abdul Bari observed.

"We think the collapsed building had encroached into a portion of the canal. But we shall become confirm about it after the committee submits the report," the DC said.

### Paris hotel fire kills 20

AP, Paris

People screamed to be rescued from flames some even jumped from windows as a fire roared through a Paris hotel early yesterday used by the government to house needy African families. At least 20 people were killed, half of them children, officials said.

More than 50 people were injured, 11 seriously. The fire was thought to have started in a first-floor breakfast room of the one-star Paris Opera hotel in the capital's 9th district, a popular tourist area, fire officials said.

Eight hours later, rescue workers were still pulling bodies from inside of the scorched building.

Many guests were African. Paris City Hall had rented rooms in the six-story hotel to temporarily house nine people from Africa, and state services housed 65 others without means, including some seeking asylum.

The fire broke out after 2 a.m., when guests would have been sleeping. It spread quickly and caused panic, he said.

"One can imagine young children, parents without their clothes, in the middle of the night, fast asleep, smoke, cries, tears," he said.

French President Jacques Chirac labeled the fire one of Paris' "most painful catastrophes."

The injured came from France, the United States, Portugal, Senegal, Tunisia, Ukraine and Ivory Coast, Paris police said. Vibert said a Canadian also was lightly injured. The nationalities of the dead were not given.

### Musharraf

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confidence. More meetings and more bus services," he said. The prime minister, according to him, has been talking in terms of a little more opportunity for tourism across the two parts of Kashmir. Last week, India and Pakistan launched the first bus service connecting the two parts of Kashmir in nearly six decades despite threats from four militant groups in what was the boldest confidence building measure in the 15-

month-old peace process so far between the nuclear powered countries.

Although the Musharraf visit is not a state visit but an informal one, it has all the trappings of an official trip. Besides holding talks with Manmohan Singh, he will call on Indian President A P J Abdul Kalam and have meetings with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and Leader of the Opposition L K Advani.

Musharraf begins his visit by offering prayers at the dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer Sharif today where he will fly straight from Islamabad.

PTI adds: Indian security agencies yesterday took control of vital installations, including the place of stay and venues the highly threatened VVIP will visit during his three-day stay in India.

Hordes of police personnel, including those in plain clothes, have swarmed Ferozeshah Kotla, venue of the Indo-Pak one-dayer to be watched by Musharraf and Manmohan Singh.

Security has also been tightened at Taj Hotel where Musharraf will stay along with his delegation and it has been made out of bounds for media persons.

### 'Blue for Peace'

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record the statement of Qaiyum under Section 164.

She said the US authorities announced on April 6 not to investigate the killing of their brother because the government did not cooperate with the FBI members.

### Saifur

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Bangladesh there.

During the visit, Saifur Rahman attended a two-day international roundtable titled "Reduction of Poverty and achievement of millennium development goals (MDGs) by investing in reproductive health and rights," began on April 11.

Finance ministers of different countries attended the meeting.

The finance minister also held meetings with his counterparts from different countries and the Swedish political leaders and high officials on the sidelines of the roundtable in Stockholm.

Referring to his discussion with Swedish political leaders, including 12 parliament members and the officials at various functions, Saifur Rahman said they showed a very positive attitude towards the recent development of the country.

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### Afridi

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to reach his fourth one-day hundred before playing the next ball from the off spinner on to his stumps.

He had laid the platform for victory by then, with Pakistan needing 119 more runs from 35.4 overs.

Man-of-the-match Afridi drove Harbhajan Singh for a straight four to reach his fourth one-day hundred before playing the next ball from the off spinner on to his stumps.

Earlier, stand-in captain Rahul Dravid made a patient 86 and shared in a 135-run fifth-wicket partnership with Mohammad Kaif (78) after paceman Naved Rana had reduced India to 59 for four.

The final game will be played in New Delhi on Sunday.

# Bombings kill 23 in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

Guerrilla bombings targeting US and Iraqi forces killed at least four people yesterday as insurgents appeared to rebound after a lull in violence.

A roadside bomb near the northern city of Samarra killed two Iraqi soldiers, an army source said.

A car bomb intended for a US convoy passing through Baghdad's upscale Mansour neighborhood killed at least one person and wounded five, police and witnesses said.

Across town a few minutes later, a bomb targeting Iraqi National Guard troops killed one civilian and wounded three others, police said.

They were small-scale attacks by Iraqi standards, but appeared to mark a new surge in the violence that has been so common over the past two years and which seemed to have subsided since January elections.

Bombings Thursday killed about 19 people in the capital and a southern city.

The bloodshed increased pressure on Iraqi leaders, who have been squabbling over the formation of a new government during a lull in attacks since the Jan. 30 polls.

## Satkhira Ahmadiyya

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On the other hand, he said, if the ruling parties declare Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim, they will get political support from the Muslim Ulema in returning to power.

In the opposition camp, civil society members on April 13 night held a meeting at Satkhira Unnayan Kendra, an NGO. Speakers at the meeting expressed serious apprehension at the IKNM programme and said the government will be responsible for any untoward incidents during or over the siege.

They condemned the repeated attack on Ahmadiyya Jamaat and their persecution by Islami bigots and called the IKNM move to lay siege to the Ahmadiyya complex a violation of their constitutional rights.

On Thursday, leaders of the left-leaning 11-party alliance visited the Ahmadiyya complex at Sundarban Bazar, the target of IKNM April-17

siege, and promised the Ahmadiyyas of their full support against the IKNM attack.

Later in the evening, at a press briefing at Satkhira Unnayan Kendra, 11-party leaders termed the IKNM activities militant. Workers Party leader Mustafa Lutfullah said the situation is deteriorating fast due to government's inaction and sheltering Islami bigots directly or indirectly.

The same night, at a press briefing at a local hotel, Ahmadiyya Missionary Abdul Awal Khan Chowdhury urged the government to take proper safety measures at their Shyam Nagar complex.

When contacted, the district police super said the district administration has taken strict measures to protect the Ahmadiyyas and will deploy paramilitary BDR and Armed Police to thwart any untoward incidents on Sunday.

## Crossfire kills 2

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wanted in seven criminal cases including three for murder.

On his confessional statement, a police team led by the officer-in-charge (OC) of Kushtia Sadar Police Station, took Naba to Housing Estate Girls' High School ground at about 3:30am to recover firearms.

As police reached the spot, Naba's accomplices opened fire, prompting police to retaliate. Police said Naba was caught in 'crossfire' as he tried to jump from the police van and died on the spot.

His accomplices managed to flee, they added. Police recovered 32 bullets from the spot.

According to our Chittagong correspondent, a top criminal of the district was killed in a shootout between police and his accomplices at Raozan in the early hours yesterday.

He was identified as Sarwar Hossain alias Seru, 26, son of Elahi Box of Badu Munshirpara under Raozan upazila.

Police said Seru was a listed criminal and warned in eight criminal cases including three for murder.

Being tipped-off, Raozan police raided Jagatpur Ashram gate in Pahartoli area on Wednesday night where Seru and his two accomplices—Shahadat Hossain and Naser—were preparing for committing a robbery. They nabbed Shahadat and Naser with one SBBL gun while Seru managed to flee.

On the confessions of the two, police arrested Seru with one shutter gun and some ammunition from

## 7 cops injured in Ctg as roof-plaster falls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Seven policemen were injured, two of them critically, when roof-plaster of their barracks building in Dampara Police Line fell on them here yesterday afternoon.

As the injured police personnel along with their other colleagues were watching television, roof-plasters of the TV room in the barracks building suddenly fell on them, sources said.

Of the injured, Constable Hosseenuzzaman, 28, and Constable Abul Hossain, 45, were admitted into Chittagong Medical College Hospital and Dampara Police Hospital while five others were released after first aid.

Some policemen preferring anonymity alleged that the barrack building constructed some fifty years back was going without any repair work for long.

Aburkhill under the same upazila on Thursday night.

Police launched a search for the firearms under the possession of Seru taking him with them at about 1:45am.

When they reached Satbaria Barua Para, Seru's accomplices opened fire on the law enforcers in a bid to snatch their leader. Police returned fire.

Police said Seru was shot during the shootout as he tried to flee. He was rushed to nearby upazila health complex where the doctors declared him dead, they added.

Police said he was an accused in Raozan Noapara Police Camp attack case. In September 1996, Seru and his accomplices attacked the police camp, killed ansar constable Abdur Rashid and looted seven rifles.

### Ahsanullah

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the prosecution and the defence for seven days ended on Tuesday and the court fixed today for judgement.

Earlier, the tribunal recorded statements of 34 prosecution witnesses including the victim's younger brother Matiur Rahman, who is also the complainant, and son Zabid Ahsan Sohel.

Ahsanullah was killed when about 20 gunmen fired on a rally of the Shechchhasebak League, volunteer front of the AL, at Noagaon in Tongi on May 7 last year.

A schoolboy, Omar Faruq Ratan, was also killed and at least five others were injured in the incident.

Matiur filed a murder case with Tongi Police Station the same day against Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Nurul Islam Sarkar and 16 others.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probed the case, and on July 10 last year, pressed charges against 30 people, including Nurul for masterminding the killing with political motive. A four-member CID team led by Assistant Superintendent of Police Khalequzzaman carried out the 60-day probe.

During the investigation, one of the accused, Mahbub, gave a confessional statement to a first class magistrate disclosing the names of others involved in the killings.

On October 13, the home ministry shifted the case to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 for quick disposal.

The tribunal framed charges against Nurul and 29 others on October 28, and the trial began on November 2.

Nurul and 12 other accused are now in jail custody while 17 others, including Jatiya Chhatra Samaj leader Nurul Islam Dipu, are on the run.