

New Pope sets out his priorities

AFP, Vatican City

Pope Benedict XVI pledged to work towards Christian unity and dialogue with other faiths as he set out the priorities of his pontificate in his first homily Wednesday, saying he had been surprised by his elevation to the papacy.

During his first mass as pontiff in the splendour of the Sistine Chapel where cardinals had elected him pope the day before, Benedict said he would "work unceasingly for the reconstruction of the full and visible unity of all Christians."

"A demonstration of good intentions is not enough," he said, delivering his first homily in Latin, as tradition dictates, in the same Sistine Chapel where his 114 cardinal colleagues had elected him less than a day earlier.

"We need concrete gestures that enter the soul... calling each one to that interior conversion that is the basis of any progress on the ecumenical path."

In a positive sign, the new pope's appeal was matched by Russian Orthodox Church leader Alexy II, who said in a message to Benedict that he hoped his papacy "will be marked by the development of good relations between our churches, fruitful Orthodox-Catholic dialogue." Benedict called on his cardinals, the men who will help to stamp his papacy on the worldwide Church, to "support me with prayer and with constant, active and knowledgeable cooperation."

According to his compatriot, Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne, the former Joseph Ratzinger was applauded on his election immediately after a conclusive fourth round vote during the cardinals' conclave Tuesday.

Meisner told journalists that the new pope's first words were: "In obedience to the Holy Spirit, to the vote of the cardinals, I respond: Yes."

In his homily, Benedict also signalled his humility, belying his reputation as the feared guardian of Catholic orthodoxy, saying he was surprised at his elevation to pontiff.

"Confounding all my expectations, divine providence through the votes of the venerable father cardinals has called me to succeed this great pope," he said, paying tribute to his predecessor John Paul II whom he helped elect in the previous conclave 27 years ago.

John Paul II, he said, had left behind a "more courageous, freer and younger Church." Like him, the new pontiff said he was committed to "open and sincere dialogue" with followers of other faiths.

The pope's first meeting with young people as he follows in the footsteps of his hugely-popular predecessor will come when he attends the World Youth Day festivities in his native Germany in August, a visit he confirmed here.

The August 16-21 gathering in Cologne is the first planned foreign visit of the new papacy, according to a Vatican schedule which dates from the last pontificate.

While the Sistine Chapel ceremony was attended only by prelates and a few Vatican staff, more than 100,000 pilgrims from around the world are expected to converge on St Peter's Square for his inauguration mass as pope on Sunday.

Public acclamation for the new pope has come from all quarters, from Berlin to Bombay, London to Lagos.

Italy's press saw the German cardinal's election as a sign of the Church's determination to hold fast to its traditional values and carry on the work of John Paul II.

The cardinals' choice surprised few.

"The Church has been entrusted to a man of 78 with a baby face, a shy man with great energy and a culture as highbrow as (Saint) Augustine. He will be a pope both loved and feared, an intellectual with the bearing of a shepherd," said the *Cardine della Sera*.

The communist daily *Il Manifesto* has already dubbed him "The German Shepherd," a quip on his previous nickname as the rather grim protector of Catholic doctrine, "God's Rottweiler."

Benedict faces the burden of trying to revive a 2,000-year-old Church riven by turmoil and disaffection and losing numbers in an increasingly secular age.

While congratulations poured in from around the world there was much dissent too, with many activists dismayed by his conservative views on issues ranging from sexual morality to the ordination of women.

The Philippines, Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation, hailed the election, President Gloria Arroyo

Sound mixer Mobin

FROM PAGE 16
band "Black" and some music crew were returning to Dhaka Tuesday night after performing at a concert organised by the GrameenPhone Ltd at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong with "Indian Idols" Amit Sana and Rahul Saxena.

Having set off for Dhaka at 12:30am, the team stopped at the Highway Inn at Choudhagram for a meal. Resuming their journey, the left front tyre of the microbus suddenly blew out on the dilapidated road near Choudhagram thana at around 4:15am. The speeding vehicle rolled several times along the Dhaka-Chittagong highway before it tumbled into a roadside ditch, said crew members John and Tanim.

Mobin was thrown from the backseat of the vehicle and died on the spot, while Tony Vincent Gomes and Meraz, the drummer and bassist of Black respectively, as well as the driver Iqbal were injured, the crew members said. Meraz suffered from broken bones in both legs, while Iqbal suffered from a broken waist bone. The rest of the crew

calling his appointment a "continuing beacon" for the faithful.

The choice of a conservative was broadly welcomed by Filipino Catholics, many of whom share the Vatican's hardline stance on abortion, contraception and homosexuality.

Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany called it "a great honour" for the country and said Benedict XVI was "a worthy successor" to John Paul II.

US President George W. Bush, who clashed with John Paul II over the US-led war on Iraq but shared many of his conservative values on other issues, said Ratzinger was a man of "great wisdom and knowledge."

UN chief Kofi Annan added his support, Israel said it hoped he would forge closer ties between Jews and Catholics and British Prime Minister Tony Blair said he looked forward to working with the new pope on issues including Africa and international development.

Reminders of diplomatic troubles ahead came from secular giants China and Russia, two countries with which the Vatican's relations have been particularly frosty.

Beijing, which does not recognize the pope's primacy over an official Church, immediately called on the new pope to sever ties with Taiwan and stay out of its internal affairs.

Despite Alexy II's congratulatory message, Moscow's press predicted the chill which has characterised Vatican-Orthodox relations would continue.

Among the critics were activists who decry the Church's opposition to abortion, contraception – notably in the fight against AIDS – divorce, gays, the ordination of women and the celibacy of the priesthood.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), however, pressed charges against Saber, Murad, Kamal and 41 others on March 12 last year.

Army personnel arrested Saber at Zia International Airport before his flight to London on October 20, 2001. He was first shown arrested under the section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code and then in the motorcade attack case on October 24.

"This fabricated case is typical of thousands of others filed against AL leaders and workers across the country since the October 2001 elections," Saber told *The Daily Star*.

He expressed the hope that the higher courts will dispense justice to the 43 AL leaders "maliciously implicated in the chase."

ADB urges govt

FROM PAGE 1
The ADB DG praised Bangladesh for its capability to face natural calamity and noted that the country could maintain a moderate economic growth this year despite devastating floods.

Kunio assured their continued support to Bangladesh for development of areas like health, education and infrastructure as well as poverty alleviation.

"I congratulated the minister for interventions in keeping macroeconomic stability in a sustainable level of high growth. This country has much larger potential to grow further," the funding-agency chief told reporters.

He, however, pointed out the need for infrastructure development and said the ADB would continue its assistance in this regard. He said the bank has already undertaken assistance programme for the improvement of infrastructure in Bangladesh.

Replying to a question, he said they do not have any new programme in addition to existing ones.

He said the bank is going to finalise its 5-year country assistance strategy, which will be consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

"We're very happy with the content of PRSP," he said, requesting the government to accommodate their recommendations, now being prepared, in the final document.

ERD Secretary Ismail Jablullah and officials from ADB's Bangladesh resident mission were present at the meeting.

Graft-riden

FROM PAGE 16
open to the proposal, RPCL tried to resist and finally obtained a court injunction stopping the audit.

Side by side, RPCL fired its managing director and changed several of its PBS chiefs to ensure a board obedient to the businessman, sources allege.

The court injunction expires in June and if the government still has stakes in RPCL, it will have to open its books to the auditors.

But Ismat Alam ruled out any relationship between the German auditing and the 'total privatisation' of RPCL. "Back in 1994, when RPCL was formed, it was decided that PBSs will gradually take over by 2005. The issue of auditing is recent. It has no relationship with that," he quipped.

Neither the REB chairman nor any other official agreed to say anything officially in this regard.

Tata to invest

FROM PAGE 16
uninterrupted gas supply for 20 years of its proposed plants, competitive pricing for the gas, quick facilitation of its investment proposal and selection of suitable sites.

Ratan N Tata, chairman of the Indian conglomerate, visited Bangladesh in mid-October last year when the group signed an expression of interest (Eoi) agreement to set up gas-based industries in Bangladesh.

The 1 million-tonne fertiliser unit and the 1,000MW power plant will use natural gas as raw material. The steel mill will also be gas-powered.

Bangladesh, which received foreign direct investment of nearly \$600 million in 2004 and \$441 million in 2003, had the highest growth rate in the South Asian region during the two years.

GrameenPhone in a press release conveyed its sympathy for the bereaved family of the deceased. It also expressed compassion for the injured Black members, the brand spokespersons of its D-Juice venture.

Mobin was buried at the Bangladesh Air Force graveyard.

KHALEDA MOTORCADE
ATTACK

Saber relieved of charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday relieved Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary of Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina, of charges of attacking then leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia's motorcade on June 17, 2001.

The court however framed charges against former AL lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder, AL leader from Savar Murad Jong and 41 others.

Kamal and the others pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court after the charges were read out to them.

Magistrate Delwara Begum of the First Class Magistrate's Court accepted Saber's discharge petition but framed charges against others, saying the allegations brought against them were primarily proved.

In her order, the magistrate said Saber was discharged as he along with his family was in Mecca to perform Umrah on that day.

BNP activist Mohammad Kafiluddin filed a case with the Savar Police Station against unnamed local hoodlums belonging to AL on August 20, 2002, 14 months after the attack.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), however, pressed charges against Saber, Murad, Kamal and 41 others on March 12 last year.

Army personnel arrested Saber at Zia International Airport before his flight to London on October 20, 2001. He was first shown arrested under the section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code and then in the motorcade attack case on October 24.

"This fabricated case is typical of thousands of others filed against AL leaders and workers across the country since the October 2001 elections," Saber told *The Daily Star*.

He expressed the hope that the higher courts will dispense justice to the 43 AL leaders "maliciously implicated in the chase."

ADB urges govt

FROM PAGE 1
The ADB DG praised Bangladesh for its capability to face natural calamity and noted that the country could maintain a moderate economic growth this year despite devastating floods.

Kunio assured their continued support to Bangladesh for development of areas like health, education and infrastructure as well as poverty alleviation.

"I congratulated the minister for interventions in keeping macroeconomic stability in a sustainable level of high growth. This country has much larger potential to grow further," the funding-agency chief told reporters.

He, however, pointed out the need for infrastructure development and said the ADB would continue its assistance in this regard. He said the bank has already undertaken assistance programme for the improvement of infrastructure in Bangladesh.

Replying to a question, he said they do not have any new programme in addition to existing ones.

He said the bank is going to finalise its 5-year country assistance strategy, which will be consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

"We're very happy with the content of PRSP," he said, requesting the government to accommodate their recommendations, now being prepared, in the final document.

ERD Secretary Ismail Jablullah and officials from ADB's Bangladesh resident mission were present at the meeting.

Graft-riden

FROM PAGE 16
open to the proposal, RPCL tried to resist and finally obtained a court injunction stopping the audit.

Side by side, RPCL fired its managing director and changed several of its PBS chiefs to ensure a board obedient to the businessman, sources allege.

The court injunction expires in June and if the government still has stakes in RPCL, it will have to open its books to the auditors.

But Ismat Alam ruled out any relationship between the German auditing and the 'total privatisation' of RPCL. "Back in 1994, when RPCL was formed, it was decided that PBSs will gradually take over by 2005. The issue of auditing is recent. It has no relationship with that," he quipped.

Neither the REB chairman nor any other official agreed to say anything officially in this regard.

Tata to invest

FROM PAGE 16
uninterrupted gas supply for 20 years of its proposed plants, competitive pricing for the gas, quick facilitation of its investment proposal and selection of suitable sites.

Ratan N Tata, chairman of the Indian conglomerate, visited Bangladesh in mid-October last year when the group signed an expression of interest (Eoi) agreement to set up gas-based industries in Bangladesh.

The 1 million-tonne fertiliser unit and the 1,000MW power plant will use natural gas as raw material. The steel mill will also be gas-powered.

Bangladesh, which received foreign direct investment of nearly \$600 million in 2004 and \$441 million in 2003, had the highest growth rate in the South Asian region during the two years.

GrameenPhone in a press release conveyed its sympathy for the bereaved family of the deceased. It also expressed compassion for the injured Black members, the brand spokespersons of its D-Juice venture.

Mobin was buried at the Bangladesh Air Force graveyard.

Satkhira Ahmadiyyas

FROM PAGE 1
"Otherwise, Toudhi Janata (believers in one God) will teach you a goodness."

The zealots Tuesday morning also kidnapped Faruk Hossain Bulbul, a member of the Ahmadiyya community who works with the Ahmadiyya headquarters in Dhaka, from Bhetkhali in Jyotindranagar under Shyamnagar upazila. Police rescued Bulbul from the house of a leader of the zealots yesterday afternoon.

The IKNMB activists on Sunday attacked and wounded at least 50 Ahmadiyyas, including women and children, robbed 10 Ahmadiyya houses and hung a signboard at the local Ahmadiyya complex that advised Muslims not to mistake the place for a mosque and read: 'This is a place of worship for the Ahmadiyya community, Sundarban Bazar'.

The Ahmadiyyas pulled down the signboard the same night.

People of all walks of life including the Ahmadiyya sect, meanwhile, vowed to keep peace in the area at a meeting held yesterday at Sundarban High School ground. Shyamnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Solaiman Mondol chaired the meeting.

COMMITTEE FORMED

Seventy-one percent of those who drew their pension said they bribed the offices concerned Tk 8,000 on average. In a year, Tk 82 crore goes to the pockets of corrupt officials and employees of the pensioners. Some 70.4 percent of households said they paid bribes to get power connections.

The TIB found that officials and employees of the power sector take Tk 104.16 crore in bribes for giving power connections and Tk 65 crore a year for reducing power bills. Some 10.4 percent of households used illegal power connections for three years.

In government hospitals, 20 percent of households paid bribes in the indoor, 29.4 percent in the outdoor, 37 percent for surgery, 57 percent for x-rays and 60 percent for diagnoses like blood tests and other tests. These five health services earned the corrupt officials and employees Tk 113.75 crore in a year.

The TIB survey found that 49 percent of households paid bribes to income tax offices, while nine percent of households had to bribe the offices concerned for holding tax payments.

The tax department officials and employees took Tk 167.73 crore a year from the income taxpayers and Tk 39.18 crore from the holding taxpayers.

TIB trustees and former advisor to the caretaker government Hafizuddin Ahmed and Dr Iftekhariuzzaman were also present at the press conference.

US congressman

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

TO KEEPPEACE

A 13-member committee was also formed with Munshiganj Union Parishad and BNP President Jaber Morol as its head to maintain law and order in the area.

Shyamnagar UNO Solaiman Mondol told *The Daily Star* yesterday, "A peaceful situation has been prevailing here since the meeting and no untoward incident has been reported until 6:00pm today."

PROTESTS RAGE
Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Bangladesh Human Rights Commission yesterday, meanwhile, condemned and protested Sunday's attack on Ahmadiyyas at Sundarban Bazar in Satkhira.

In separate press releases, the organisations demanded arrest and punishment of the religious bigots, who on Sunday also assaulted women and children of the Ahmadiyya community.

The women and rights organisations also asked the government to provide the injured Ahmadiyyas with proper treatment. They demanded necessary steps to prevent the zealots from carrying out such attacks in the future.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.

Shamsher also asserted that any apprehension regarding the investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice was totally unfounded.

He mentioned how a Bangladesh court had punished the killers of another Awami League MP, Ahsanullah Master. He pointed out that like Kibria's family, the family of Ahsanullah Master had also voiced their concerns over the investigation and trial. But after the pronouncement of verdict, Master's son, who is now an Awami League MP in his father's seat, "expressed his full satisfaction".

The envoy invited Barney Frank to visit Bangladesh. The US lawmaker agreed and said that he might pay a visit to Dhaka in December this year.

FROM PAGE 1
FBI team in Dhaka" and requested him to contact the State Department to cross-check his assertion, to which the Congressman agreed.