



# Four Years of Living Dangerously

***When the Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led Four Party Alliance came to power on October 1, 2001, it promised a clean government that would "usher a new dawn in the lives of the people". Four years since then things have changed very little for the voters, most of whom have found themselves living under an inefficient and insincere government. The gulf between an ever-increasing number of poor and a few self-indulgent rich has touched a pitiable level.***

***The Alliance promised to curb corruption, but in its four-year rule, nepotism and corruption have reached a dangerous level— some ruling party leaders and workers have interpreted people's overwhelming mandate as a license to get rich quick. Terrorism, which as an issue dominated the elections: the Alliance's rule has witnessed numerous ghastly bomb blasts, and the government, at the height of apathy, has so far failed to nab the masterminds behind these terrorist attacks. As the government celebrates its fourth year in power, the Star Weekend Magazine tries to find out if there is anything to applaud.***

**SHAMIM AHSAN and AHMEDE HUSSAIN**

**S**EPTEMBER 22, 2005, Rupnagar Residential Area, Pallabi. A three-member unit of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-4) enters the area's road no 20 riding Rab's trademark all-white motorcycles. The team, which comprises of Manjur, Zakir and Rafique, has been sent by the Rab Headquarters to arrest an alleged mugger whom an angry mob of around 20 people has just caught. Shujat, the alleged criminal, cries innocence and asks for mercy, as Rab members drag him down the street near house no 19. The mob gives a raucous roar of approval, when the Rab men, armed with the planks of wood that the crowd has supplied, start flogging the alleged criminal. Sheets of blood ooze out of the youth's shoulder. Asked why they are beating Shujat up, who can very well be vindicated, a Rab member replies, "People have caught him mugging; we have been trying to find out what has happened".