

# Pope sees 'nothing positive' from Iraq

AP, Vatican City

In an Easter litany of the world's suffering, Pope Benedict XVI lamented that "nothing positive" is happening in Iraq and decried the unrest in Afghanistan and bloodshed in Africa and Asia.

"How many wounds, how much suffering there is in the world," the pontiff told tens of thousands gathered Sunday at St. Peter's Square on what is Christianity's most joyful feast day.

Benedict, delivering his traditional "Urbi et Orbi" Easter address from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, read out a long list of troubling current events, saying he was thinking of the "terrorism and kidnapping of people, of the thousand faces of violence which some people attempt to justify in the name of religion, of contempt for life, of the violation of human rights and the exploitation of persons."

"Afghanistan is marked by growing unrest and instability," Benedict said. "In the Middle East, besides some signs of hope in the dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, nothing positive comes from Iraq, torn apart by continual slaughter as the civil population flees."

He singled out what he called the "catastrophic, and sad to say, underestimated humanitarian situation" in Darfur as well as other African places of suffering, including violence and looting in Congo, fighting in Somalia which, he said, drove away the prospect of peace and the "grievous crisis" in Zimbabwe, marked by crackdowns on dissidents, a disastrous economy and severe corruption.

Benedict called for a negotiated solution to end the draw-out, bloody conflict in Sri Lanka, and said East Timor needs reconciliation ahead of elections.

Earlier he celebrated Easter Mass on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica under hazy sunshine.

# National ID, voter list

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stalled ninth parliamentary election.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain said it is not possible to implement the voter list project in less than 18 months.

About the pilot project, the election commissioner said the EC has planned to launch the pilot project at the end of this month or early in May.

"A tentative timeframe for implementing the voter list project and possible difficulties will be identified in this process," he said.

Meanwhile a delegation of Bangladesh Army on Saturday morning made a multimedia presentation at the EC Secretariat conference room on the process of implementing the voter list project.

"Experts of Bangladesh Army will provide all sorts of technological assistance and build public opinion for the task. The Election Commission officials will prepare the voter list," Election Commissioner Sakhawat said.

The CEC on last Thursday however said the army would be given responsibilities to implement the massive voter list scheme.

# Govt extends time

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from previous rate of Tk 15.25.

In the district towns, 10 dealers, instead of four, will sell rice from now on.

The government has decided to sell 2.51 lakh metric tons of rice across the country under the OMS programme to cool down the wayward market.

# Ex-health minister

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In his complaint, Abul Hossain, a distributor of multi-level marketing company Destiny 2000 Pvt Ltd, said Mosharraf had long been bearing a grudge against him, as he (complainant) is an AL activist and had worked for the party in the last general election.

The ex-minister's accomplices took him to the BN office at Paltan as he got out of his Kakrall office at around 5:00pm on June 15 last year. They gave him a severe beating and demanded Tk 50,000.

Abul's brothers Hasan and Jahangir gave the gang Tk 15,000. But Mosharraf's men told them they would have to pay Tk 10,000 a month if they were to run businesses in the area.

The complainant was even denied treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on orders from the then health minister.

He did not file any case against them for fear of retribution, Abul Hossain said.

Advocate Shamsul Haq Rintu appeared for the complainant.

**EXTORTION CHARGES AGAINST SALAHUDDIN**

Another Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against detained former BNP lawmaker from Demra Salahuddin Ahmed and seven others in two extortion cases.

The cases were filed under the Speedy Trial (Law and Order Disruption) Act with Jatrabari and Demra Police Stations on February 14 and 18.

The other accused are Abul Hashem, Salu, Bareq, Nurul Haq, Joyal Abedin, Jamaluddin Tutul and Mithu. Of them, Salahuddin and Mithu are now in jail while the rest are still at

large.

Salahuddin and Mithu pleaded not guilty after Metropolitan Magistrate MA Salam of the Speedy Trial Court-6 had read out the charges against them.

In the Jatrabari case, Salahuddin and three others were accused of extorting Tk 3 lakh from a cattle trader on different dates in 2004 and 2006.

In the other case, Salahuddin and four of his men were charged with taking Tk 5 lakh from a person in Demra between October 2001 and November 2004.

**CASE AGAINST MAMUN**

The investigation officer (IO) of the Tk 2.40 crore extortion case against Giasuddin Al Mamun yesterday sought a court's permission to seize different bank cheques given by the complainant of the case.

IO Sub-Inspector (SI) Kazi Mainul Islam said he thinks those cheques could be vital to prove the charges against Mamun and others.

**CASE AGAINST ABDUL QAYYUM**

Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam yesterday placed Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ward Commissioner Abdul Qayyum on a two-day remand in an attempted murder case.

The case was filed with the Badda Police Station in February.

The order came when Qayyum was produced before the court for hearing on a 10-day remand prayer.

Earlier on March 11, he was taken on a two-day remand in the same case.

## Pietersen

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Tait's pace while dragging a ball into his stumps while trying to cut a ball square.

Glenn McGrath replaced Tait after an impressive four-over burst and was immediately greeted by an expansive Bell who advanced to the first ball then launched the third over mid off.

Bell continued to flourish, putting McGrath out of the attack with three fours in four balls, then Pietersen launched Michael Clarke, surprisingly brought rather early, for a straight four and an even better six over-long-on.

The fifty-stand came off 55 balls and the onslaught made Ponting move to spin in the form of Brad Hogg and medium pace from Andrew Symonds.

The England pair milked them with sweeps, drives and nudges. Pietersen's fifty came off 49 balls and Bell's followed two balls off 69 deliveries. A huge moment followed when Ponting who did great to get near the ball but spilled a horizontal attempt to catch Pietersen.

The third-wicket pair survived and brought up a hundred runs in 18 overs.

## Biotechnology

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sector to the government.

Prof Ahmed AAzad, Prof AS Islam, Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Prof Naiyum Choudhury, Prof Haseena Khan, Dr Firdausi Qadri, Dr Shah M Faruque and Prof Zeba Seraj spoke at the press conference among others.

The speakers stressed coordination in biotechnological sector and its research.

Prof AAzad, who read out the recommendations, urged the government to form an international scientific advisory committee with expatriate and local experts to review the scientific, technological and innovative activities of NIB to ensure that the institute's scientific activities conform with the international trends and practices in the field of biotechnology.

He also said NIB should cooperate and facilitate research activities in modern biotechnology, which are being carried out in different organisations and should act as a centre for human resource development and technology transfer in this field.

The existing National Institute of Biotechnology should be an autonomous 'research flagship' of a national commission for biotechnology and play complementary role in the development of biotechnology research in Bangladesh as the national resource and training centre," he said.

The experts viewed that a national commission for biotechnology should be the focal point for coordination and promotion of biotechnology through liaison with relevant government departments, academic and research institutions, the private sector and the funding agencies.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury hoped that the present government would take initiative so that biotechnological research can flourish. He said biotechnology has the potentiality to develop various sectors and, therefore, meet the challenges that we are facing now.

Expressing disappointment over the output in biotechnology sector, Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury hoped that within the next few years biotechnology would be able to give some output that can be used for the welfare of this nation.

He also said bio-informatics (combination of biotechnology and information technology) could significantly contribute to the development of Bangladesh, if the young professionals in this sector could be properly trained.

Zeba Seraj said, "Biotechnology is a multidisciplinary subject," adding, "Coordination is necessary to bring success in this field."

"Several significant works have been done in biotechnological sector including tissue culture," she added.

Prof AS Islam said biotechnological research on health, medicine and nutrition should be given preference.

### CONCLUDING DAY ACTIVITIES

During the final day of the conference, 37 experts presented their research papers on various sub-sectors of biotechnology.

The papers were on agricultural biotechnology, pharmaceutical biotechnology, waste and salinity management, etc.

Pioneer of biotechnology education in Bangladesh Prof AS Islam presented his "Draft Position Paper" yesterday focusing on the status of biotechnology research in Bangladesh.

Saying that a nation without science is lost, the chair of the final session of the conference The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam lamented that a thrust on science in general is missing in Bangladesh.

The CA's meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, the adviser said Islamabad would give wheat worth \$10 million to Bangladesh as a "token of friendship".

Direct air link between Dhaka and Colombo came up during the CA's meeting with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa, he said.

At the meeting, the adviser stressed the need for strict monitoring of the CNG three-wheeler operation to oblige the drivers to go to any distance on passengers' demand and to check metre tempering.

If any auto rickshaw driver tries to charge extra fare or refuses to go to any destination, his license would be cancelled and the auto rickshaw owner would be fined, Matin warned.

# Bangladesh party

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"Bangladesh reach for the sky," was how the Daily Jugantor described the Tigers' win. Samakal read: "Tigers win like Tigers."

ing a Bangladesh side which has already accounted for India in the first round of the tournament in the Caribbean.

"We probably turned up and thought it was a walk in the park, something we could take for granted," he said on the Supersport cable network.

"We left the spinner out but where are we? Sometimes we have to think on our feet," said former chairman of selectors Omar Henry Henry, himself a left-arm spinner.

"We have gone in with a very one-dimensional approach," agreed Wessels.

"We do not have the bowling options. We were exposed, badly exposed."

### LEADERS GREET CRICKET TEAM

President Prof Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Speaker M Jamiruddin Sircar, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia have congratulated Bangladesh cricket team on their stunning victory over South Africa in the World Cup Cricket at Guyana Saturday night, reports UBN.

In a message, the president hoped that the national cricket team would be able to build on their success in the days ahead by showing their skill and efficiency.

The chief adviser in a message lauded the Bangladeshi players, coach and the other officials of the cricket team and said the countrymen are exalted at the victory. "This victory has elevated Bangladesh to a higher position in the world cricket arena."

The Awami League president in her message said: "victory of our young cricketers against the top class teams of the cricket world one after another proved that at present, Bangladesh is name of a new power in the cricket world."

The BNP chairperson in her message said this historic victory is the fruit of long endeavour and this of success would continue in future too.

The defeat was hard to swallow for South African captain Graeme Smith.

"It's difficult to come up with answers after the Bangladesh defeat. We didn't do the basics well and gave them an opportunity. They grabbed it with both hands," said Smith after the match.

He also praised man-of-the-match Ashraful.

"His innings changed things, he set it well, worked the field well and kept us under pressure through the 50 overs from when he came into bat."

There was however little praise back in South Africa.

"Proteas humiliated" read the headline in the Sunday Times which said the hopes of glory for the team ranked number one in the world in one-day cricket had "suffered a severe setback" as a result of their "dismal performance".

The defeat plunged South Africa from being among the favourites to reach the semi-finals to possibly needing to win all three of their remaining matches against the West Indies, England and New Zealand, "the paper added.

Former South African captain Kepler Wessels said Graeme Smith's team had been guilty of underestimating

## Indian FM

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The truck driver apparently lost control when a tire burst as Mukherjee's convoy was driving past in the opposite lane, Kanjia said.

Mukherjee was first taken to a village clinic near the site of the accident, about 130km north of Kolkata, where he was "given stitches in his head and oxygen and saline to stabilise his condition," PTI reported, quoting a doctor.

He was then transferred to a hospital in a nearby town where a team of army doctors and neurosurgeons rushed to meet him.

Mukherjee is close to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi. He was first named defence minister after Congress returned to power in 2004, and became foreign minister in an October Cabinet reshuffle.

Two West Bengal state politicians were also hurt in the accident, along with Mukherjee's driver and security guard, both whom were reportedly in serious condition.

This is the first complaint filed against mayor Minu implicating him with JMB.

In his complaint, advocate Moazzem Hossain from Mollahpara of Rajshahi city lodged the complaint with Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi at 4:00pm.

Police officially received the complaint at 7:00pm and sent it for home ministry's recommendation as to whether the complaint can be filed as a regular case.

The complainant has many components for it to be filed as a sedition case, said a senior police official.

Militant leaders also declared that they were pledged to "change the map of the country" and both Minu and Aminul would help JMB strengthen by providing the necessary financial and administrative assistance.

Moreover, the JMB leaders announced that they would kill leaders of different political parties as well as journalists who stood in their way.

The militants delivered similar speeches from another rally organised later at zero point of Saheb Bazar, the complainant added.

# Rajshahi mayor

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complaint are former deputy commissioner (DC) of Rajshahi Aziz Hasan and then Rajshahi superintendent of police (SP) Masud Miah (dismissed in 2006).

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In his complaint, advocate Moazzem Hossain said on May 23, 2004, assisted by the accused four -- mayor Minu, barrister Aminul, DC Hasan and SP Masud -- JMB leaders Prof Lutfar Rahman, Mahtab Khamaru, Abdus Sattar, Jalil Amin, Natib Lutfar and others gathered around 2,000 militant activists from Rajshahi and its adjacent areas and marched toward Rajshahi city.

The militants paraded different city streets and chanted various anti-state slogans that