

## Violent backlash kills 33 across Pakistan

Benazir laid to rest, al-Qaeda claims responsibility

AP, AFP, Ghari Khuda Baksh, Karachi

As her husband wept bitterly by the graveside and vast crowds of mourners beat their chests in grief, Benazir Bhutto was finally laid to rest yesterday.

Rioting and political violence following the assassination of Benazir killed 33 people.

Hundreds of thousands of people let out a huge roar as the former premier's body arrived at

the family mausoleum in the village of Ghari Khuda Baksh in the southern province of Sindh.

Inside the imposing three-domed mausoleum a cleric led funeral prayers, while the crowds raised their hands in front of their faces and chanted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great) three times.

Tears rolled down the cheeks of Benazir's husband Asif Zardari as her coffin was lowered into the grave, while her son Bilawal

appeared in a state of shock.

Outside the building the crowds chanted slogans blaming President Pervez Musharraf for Benazir's death in a suicide attack at a campaign rally in the northern city of Rawalpindi on Thursday.

"Destroy Musharraf, He Killed Our Leader" and "We Are Orphans, Thank God Benazir was Innocent", they chanted.

In a violent backlash Benazir

Bhutto's supporters rampaged through cities yesterday to protest her assassination less than two weeks before a crucial election, ransacking banks and setting train stations ablaze, officials said.

The killing of Musharraf's most powerful political opponent plunged Pakistan into turmoil and

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**Benazir killed after smashing her head on car's sunroof!**

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's interior ministry said yesterday that Benazir Bhutto was killed after smashing her head on her car's sunroof while trying to duck, and that no bullet or shrapnel was found inside her.

The ministry also said it had intercepted a phone call from a top al-Qaeda figure congratulating a militant for the attack on her Thursday, and said there was "irrefutable evidence" the group was trying to destabilise the country.

Benazir's death after a suicide bomber blew himself up at her campaign rally has plunged this nuclear-armed Islamic nation into turmoil, but the ministry said she would have lived if only she had stayed inside her car.

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Officials of the National Museum look at the recovered pieces of broken Vishnu statues at Amin Bazar on the outskirts of the capital yesterday. Two Vishnu statues were stolen from the Zia International Airport on December 22. The officials, right, put broken pieces together in a bid to reassemble them.

## Broken pieces of stolen artefacts recovered

Experts primarily confirm their genuineness

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and EMRAN HOSSAIN

Investigators yesterday retrieved some broken pieces of the two stolen Vishnu statues from a dump on the city outskirts and the National Museum authorities confirmed that those belong to the 1,500-year-old relics.

So far, the law enforcers have managed to gather 27 pieces of the Gupta era idols--'Vishnu' and 'Bust of Vishnu'--at Baliarpur of Aminbazar.

Of the fragments salvaged, 20 make up about 25% of the black terracotta statuette of Vishnu where the Hindu god stands with goddesses Saraswati and Laxmi on either side. The remainder pieces comprise a little over 10% of the bust, Swapan Kumar Biswas, acting keeper of the National Museum, told The Daily Star last evening.

Sub-inspector Monu Sohel Imtiaz, investigation officer of the case filed for the theft, said the retrieved pieces form 80% of the goddess portion and only a fraction

of the hand (one hand was already missing) and legs of Lord Vishnu.

They make up upper part of the biscuit colour bust including most of its crown, he added.

The investigators, meanwhile, have yet to know the motive for the theft and destruction of the age-old objects that were stolen from the Zia International Airport (ZIA) last weekend. The two along with 143 others had been awaiting shipment to Paris for an exhibition at

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## Redwan freed on bail, rearrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shahbagh police arrested former state minister for Liberation War affairs Redwan Ahmed on the premises of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) soon after his release on bail yesterday evening.

Redwan Ahmed was arrested at his Baridhara residence in the city on June 26 under Section 16/2 of the Emergency Power Rules (EPR). He was later shifted from Dhaka Central Jail to the Prison Cell of the BSMMU at Shahbagh due to heart ailments.

Golam Hayder, senior superintendent of Dhaka Central Jail, told

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## Nepal parliament formally abolishes monarchy

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal lawmakers yesterday formally approved a decision to abolish the monarchy and declare the country a republic as part of a deal with former Maoist rebels.

However, King Gyanendra will remain on the throne for the time being as the agreement between the Maoists and the government last weekend to make Nepal a republic can only be put into effect at the first meeting of a new constituent assembly.

Polls for that assembly are due to be held by mid-April.

In Friday's vote, out of 321 parliamentarians, 270 voted for abolition of monarchy and three voted against. The remainder were absent or abstained.

The constitutional amendment was tabled in parliament after the government and Maoists reached a 23-point deal agreeing to abolish the monarchy that ended Nepal's long-running peace deadlock.

The constitution has been amended by two-thirds majority.

Speaker Subash Nemwang said.

The move paves the way for Nepal to be declared a federal democratic republic.

Nepal's 61-year-old monarch has already been stripped of most of his powers, including his roles as head of state and army chief, since mass protests forced an end to a 14-month period of his authoritarian rule in April 2006.

The amendment also gives lawmakers the power to make Nepal a republic ahead of the polls

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## An NRB who did the impossible

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

There has been a lot of talk about reversing the "brain drain" out of Bangladesh at the ongoing conference of non-resident Bangladeshis. There has also been a lot of talk about why this is not only unlikely to happen but also almost impossible to make it happen due to a lack of infrastructure and security. But, no one has shattered this myth

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## 'Shun path of West, be proud Bangladeshis'

NRBs for ending existing political culture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriate Bangladeshis yesterday called for an end to the existing political culture and attitude, and revival of the traditional values of serving the community.

Shunning the materialistic path of the West, the people of Bangladesh need to nurture and uphold their own values, they said

on the second day of the three-day conference of Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) in the capital.

A competent leadership is the need of the day to harness the potentials of the citizens. And they should be empowered properly and should have a role in decision-making, the expatriate Bangladeshis noted.

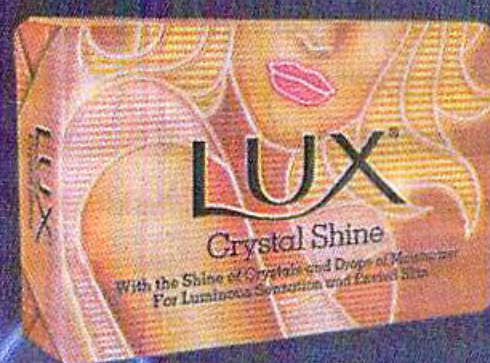
They were speaking at an after-

noon session of the NRB Conference 2007 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury moderated the session.

Bangladesh people must have faith in themselves to serve the country, said Hansen Clarke, state senator of Michigan, US. "Be

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