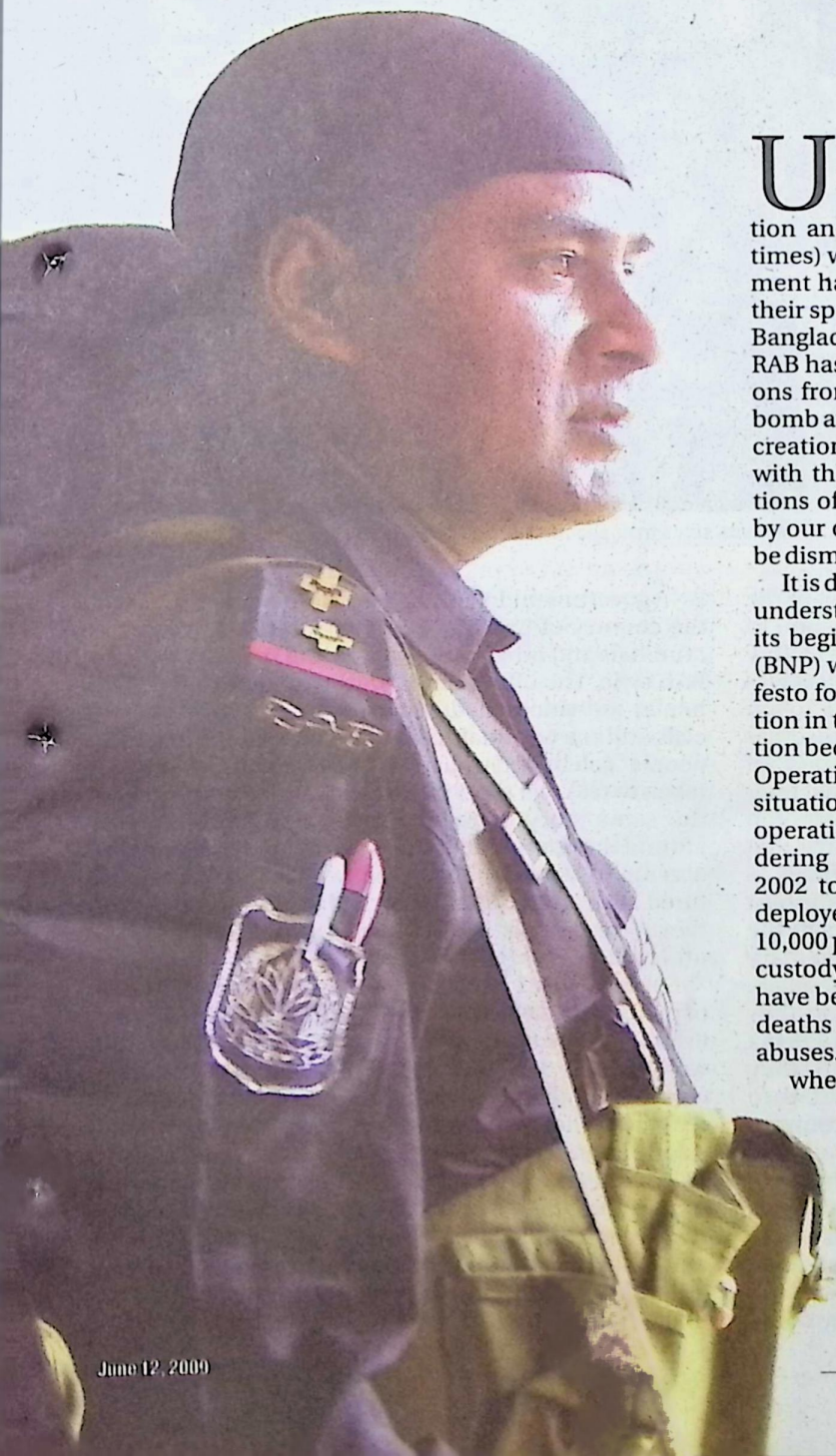
for All...



Unlike Bangladesh's Police forces, RAB has remained largely untouched by corruption, they performed their tasks with dignity and distinction and for the most part they were (and are still at times) well received by the public. RABs special achievement has been in fighting terrorists and militants since their spectacular takedown of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leader Bangla Bhai and his associates. RAB has continued to capture terrorists and their weapons from their hideouts, thus also preventing possible bomb attacks. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the creation of RAB and it provides the current government with the perfect opportunity to investigate the allegations of torture, intimidation and extra-judicial killings by our own men in black. The culture of impunity must be dismantled.

It is difficult to understand the creation of RAB without understanding the culture of impunity that surrounded its beginnings. When the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was voted into power in 2001 much of their manifesto focussed on the deteriorating law and order situation in the country and a year into their tenure the situation became so shocking that they initiated their famous Operation Clean Heart. Even though the law and order situation had unravelled to dangerously high levels, the operation was seen by many as unnecessary even bordering on unconstitutional. For 85 days from October 2002 to January 2003, 40,000 military personnel were deployed to fight crime, and purge the underworld. 10,000 people were arrested with over 50 of them dying in custody due to 'heart attacks'. Some people claimed to have been tortured in custody while the high number of deaths in custody also raised questions of human rights abuses. All those grievances were swept under the rug when on January 9, 2003 the BNP proposed The Joint Indemnity Act 2003, which granted immunity from prosecution to government officials and the armed forces for their involvement in "any casualty, damage to life and property, violation of rights, physical or mental damage" between October 16, 2002, and January 9, 2003.

Numerous 'heart attacks' in custody which led to death were papered over as well as count-