## The Baily Star

# Experts at Kyoto forum suggest Better irrigation and rainwater harvesting

#### AFP, Kyoto

Better irrigation and more efficient rainwater harvesting could double crop yields while also reducing the amount of fresh water used in agriculture, experts at the Third World Water Forum said.

As global farming uses some 70 per cent of the world's developed fresh water supplies, improved productivity could reduce the amount of supplementary water required to serve an ever-expanding population.

The need for efficiency is becoming more pressing as expanding urbanisation and industrialisation mean the amount of land under cultivation is expected to shrink, reducing the size of annual global harvests after 2025 by about 350 million metric tonnes.

**Barisal**, Sylhet polls

for 30 hours from midnight tonight

for smooth holding of Barisal and Sylhet city corporation polls on

Election Commission and those

engaged in emergency work (ambu-lance, fire service, electricity, gas and

post and telecommunications) will

cheque encashed with the help of

be out of the purview of the ban.

tonight

BSS, Dhaka

Thursday.

yesterday.

"A farmer drinks five liters of water a day but he needs 5,000 liters a day to produce crops," said Olivier George Covers, a program manager of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation.

"The idea is to try to stabilise our use of water and use it in a more efficient way in order to produce more food, not to use less water.'

Topping the list of agricultural techniques promoted at the forum, which has gathered some 10,000 participants from 165 countries to address the needs of 1.4 billion people without access to fresh water and 2.4 billion without access to sanitation, was drip irrigation.

Some 60 per cent of water used in irrigation is wasted, due to runoff or overwatering of crops. Using drip irrigation to water staples such as root vegetables can

Young man

Iraq crisis **Dhaka for** peaceful solution, says FM BSS, Dhaka

reduce the amount of water used Bangladesh yesterday reiterated by more than one half and still yield its stand for a peaceful resolution highly productive crops, said to the Iraq issue. David Molden of the International

"We have always been promoting the cause of peace anywhere in the world and would continue to Mediterranean agriculture has seen the greatest benefits of drin pursue it," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told a group of irrigation as the low-cost localised astic tubing system that provides water, drop by drop, to the base of the plant is particularly suited to newsmen at his office.

Asked how Bangladesh see the A8-hour ultimatum given by US President George W Bush to Iraqi President Saddam Hossain and their sons to quit Iraq to avoid exported, low-cost and small-scale military action, Morshed evaded a direct reply saying, "Everybody should play his role for a peaceful solution of the situation.

Responding to a question on the contents of his discussion with US ambassador Mary Ann Peters at a meeting earlier on the day, the minister said the meeting was to keep each others informed of the situation.

"We have expressed our sentiment to the ambassador," he added.

# **Ruthless** Australia

(three) and Avishka Gunawardene (one) to have them reeling at 43-4.

for just 11, it was all over even though Kumar Sangakkara, 39, and Chaminda Vaas, 21, tried to mount a rearguard action and were unbeaten when the rains came.

Earlier, Andrew Symonds hit an unbeaten 91 after his team won the "The Academy Awards are schedtoss and elected to bat on another slow pitch.

Sri Lankan left-arm swing bowler Chaminda Vaas took three for 34 to set a new World Cup tournament

"I bowled very well in my first spell," said Vaas, who gave his team a flying start by dismissing Matthew Hayden and Australian skipper Ricky Gilchrist c Sangakkara b de Silva22

and then the spinners took over. Between us, we kept it very tight in the first fifteen overs.

Australia's problems began when Adam Gilchrist 'walked' in the sixth over when Jayasuriya turned to the off-spin of Aravinda de Silva after the Australians made a fast start.

sweep de Silva's second ball.

# Shazneen case

Shazneen.

1998.

the hearing.

Jayasuriya

SRILANKA

Atapattu b Lee

Arnold

10 0 42 2

8

0

14

3

1

11

39

3

21

9

R W

1

3

0

2

0

0

planes.

NAVY

2 0

Jayasuriya c Symonds b McGrath17

Javawardene c Gilchrist b Hogg 5

Total: (For 7 wkts in 38.1 overs) 123

Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-37, 3-37, 4-43,

Did not bat: M Muralitharan, P

**O** M

10

Result: Australia won by 48 runs

under the Duckworth-Lewis method.

Man-of-the-match: Andrew

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA)

7 1 20

8 0 35

10 4 18

2.1 0 11

1 0 4

1 30

Tillakaratne c Gilchrist b Lee

**Extras:** (b-4, lb-1, w-2, nb-2)

De Silva run out (Bichel)

Sangakkaranotout

Arnold c Lee b Hogg

Vaasnotout

5-51, 6-60, 7-76

Gunaratne

Bowler

McGrath

Lee

Bichel

Hogg

Harvey

Lehmann

Symonds.

Toss: Australia.

Gunawardenec Ponting b Lee

All the six accused now in Jail

were present in the court during

#### FROM PAGE 12

NEWS

place at the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka. Judge Kazi Rahamal Ullah then adjourned the hearing till March

During the cross-examination, Masum told the court that Hasan used to come to Latifur Rahman's (Shazneen's father) Gulshan residence everyday as he was doing renovation work at the house. But he stopped coming to custody Hasan, Shahid, Badal, Shaniram, Minu and Parvin-that house after the tragic incident involving shazneen on April 23, 1998. So, he was called to that house on April 30.

Special public prosecutors (PPs) Arfan Uddin Khan, Saima The witness further said he had told the Investigation officer (IO) Khanam and Assistant PP Anisur that three guests-- Ahmad Shafi Chowdhury, Enam Ahmed Rahman appeared for the state. Advocates Mosharraf Hossain Chowdhury and Anisuzzaman Kazal and Mizanur Rahman Khan -- were interrogating the house maids -- Minu and Parvin represented the accused shortly after the incident.

A different war Parvin first said she saw Shahid fleeing Shazneen's room with a knife in his hand. Then she said FROM PAGE 1 special significance as remittance she saw a man sitting on supports about 30 per cent of imports. Shazneen's body and again said And if petroleum price shoots, this will have a bearing on product costs. she did not see anything, Masum told the court. Many may still see a silver lining, though elusive may it be. Once the war is over, peacekeeping will be a major concern and there Bangladesh

At about 2:30 am on April 24, a police team including some women police came to the house and made an inquest report. Masum further said that on

turn them down, only for Gilchrist to

Ponting and opener Hayden soon

De Silva finished with two for 36,

Scoreboard of the first semifinal

20

2

36

91

8

7

19

7

W

3

0

head back to the dressing room.

**SCOREBOARD** 

AUSTRALIA

Port Elizabeth on Tuesday:

will matter. It has already earned a good name for peacekeeping and fresh demand will only make it hap-September 27, police took Shahid now principal accused) to pier.

Lee mopped up Hashan Tillekeratne

followed before Symonds and Darren Lehmann (36) put on 93 for the fourth wicket before Lehmann was bowled when he shaped to cut Jayasuriya. Jayasuriya claimed two for 42 and Muttiah Muralitharan conceded only 29 runs in his 10-over spell.

of the World Cup between Australia and Sri Lanka at St George's Park in

Hayden c Tillakaratne b Vaas Ponting c Jayasuriya b Vaas Lehmann b Jayasuriya Symonds not out

Harvey c Sangakkara b Vaas Bichelnotout Extras: (lb-3, w-3, nb-1) Total: (For7 wkts in 50 overs) 212

Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-37, 3-51, 4-144,5-144,6-158,7-175 Did not bat: BLee, GMcGrath Bowler

glove and was caught by wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara. The Sri Lankans appealed but

**Ready to cross** 

capital.

case of a war.

About 8,000 military person-nel, mostly at Al Udeid Air Base southwest of Doha and at the As

Sayliyah army base outside the

installed a deployable headquar-

ters at As Sayliyah, giving Army General Tommy Franks the option

of using it to direct all US forces in

About 5,000 US troops. US and

US Central Command has

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 19, 200

#### FROM PAGE 1

Latifur Rahman's residence. Shahid narrated how Hasan and his employee Badal hired Humayun, Parvin, Minu, Shaniram and him to rape and kill region, ready to inflict a massive, high-tech bombardment on Iraq's largely ill-equipped forces and to drive deep into the country in a rapid helicopter and tank assault.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, The desert camps buzzed with the youngest daughter of Latifur an air of anticipation as news Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, spread of Bush's announcement was raped and murdered at their that he was giving Saddam 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war. Gulshan residence on April 23,

> The mood among the troops BAHRAIN was confident and eager after weeks of uncomfortable waiting About 5,000 US forces, mostly US Navy. US Fifth Fleet headquarunder canvas amid the rising ters are located here, making it the temperatures and sandstorms of nerve centre for all US warships in the inhospitable Kuwaiti desert. the Red Sea, the Gulf, and the

"As a marine, this is what we Arabian Sea. train for. This is what we look forward to," 19-year-old Joseph **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES** McCarthy from St. Johns, Arizona, About 1,200 US military persaid at Camp Viking in northern sonnel are in the Emirates, a stop-Kuwait. ping point for US naval vessels.

"I myself -- and I'm pretty sure TURKEY all the other marines around me -are ready to go, ready to get this thing kicked off and taken care of British air forces operate from Incirlik air base, flying patrols over and finally get Saddam out of

northern Iraq to enforce a no-fly zone. In the past about 50 US where he's at Many soldiers said they were aircraft, mostly fighters, have been stationed there. worried they may be attacked with chemical or biological weapons.

Turkish and US officials con-"Anything could happen -tinue to haggle over an agreement uicide attacks, them setting up to allow up to 62,000 troops to bombs within housing for when you clear it," said Sergeant Anthony Boswell, 24, a marine move through its territory in the event of a war, officials say. But the Pentagon is now said to be focusfrom Salem, Oregon. ing on alternatives.

**KUWAIT** 

also are based in Kuwait.

bat team here.

Jaber and Ali Salem

**SAUDIARABIA** 

More than 10,000 US troops,

mostly air force are based at

aircraft, E-3 AWACS radar planes,

other surveillance and reconnais-

sance aircraft, and air refuelling

Some 48,000 sailors and

marines are aboard a growing

armada of US warships in the Gulf

region, including the aircraft carriers USS Kitty Hawk, USS

Abraham Lincoln and USS

Following is a rough break-down of the forces in the region, Several thousand US troops had been engaged in upgrading based on US defence sources: bases and preparing for the arrival of US forces.

#### JORDAN

About 149,000 troops, mostly US army and marines, many of Jordan says its territory will not whom have been training in the be used to invade Iraq. But US desert near the Iraqi border. troops are manning three Patriot About 25,000 British troops are anti-missile batteries to protect Amman against missile attack. The army's 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Marine

DJIBOUTI

About 1,000 US military per-Expeditionary Force is the anchor sonnel are based in this tiny state on the Horn of Africa, part of a for the US ground forces massing for a possible southern invasion of counter-terrorism task force. A Iraq. The Army's 82nd Airborne Division also has a brigade com-400-member task force headquarters is aboard the command ship USS Mount Whitney. Two air bases are used by US

#### OMAN and British forces in the region, Al-

About 3,000 US military personnel. Omani ports and airfields serve as important transit points for forces heading up the Gulf or to Afghanistan.

#### **DIEGO GARCIA**

Prince Sultan Air Base in the desert south of Riyadh. Small Fewer than 1,000 US military personnel. This British base in the numbers of US forces are at a Saudi airfield at Arar near the Îndian Ocean has been used as a border with Iraq, evidence of growing US-Saudi cooperation. staging post for B-52 and B-2 stealth bombers. Special climate The Afghan air campaign was directed from a combined air operations centre that opened at controlled shelters for the B-2s have been built here in recent months.

#### Prince Sultan Air Base in 2001. The AFGHANISTAN base is also a hub for US fighter

About 10,000 US troops. These include forces from the crack 82nd Airborne Division, which recently took over headquarters responsibilities from the 10th Mountain Division. Another 4,000 troops are in the surrounding central Asian states and Pakistan

## Australia expels

# FROM PAGE 1

When Aravinda de Silva was run-out by a direct hit from Andy Bichel

uled to proceed Sunday the 23rd at 5:30 pm (0130 GMT)," said Gil Cates, the producer of the show, dismissing reports that the show would be

record of 23 wickets.

Ponting. "I managed to find the right spot

Bevan c Sangakkara b Jayasuriya 0 HoggstSangakkarabdeSilva

Gilchrist hit 22 as Australia raced to 34 for no wicket before the Australian wicketkeeper tried to

The ball looped off his pad and

Vaas Gunaratne DeSilva

AFP, Hollywood Hollywood on Monday launched an unprecedented security clampdown ahead of next week's Oscars ceremony as the United States appeared poised for war with Iraq.

Water Management Institute.

Drip irrigation has also taken

root in Africa, where an Israeli-

program has helped to create

African Market Gardens in Niger,

Nigeria and Burkina Faso, said

Suhas Wani of the International

Crops Research Institute for the

**Tight security** 

at Hollywood

arid regions

Semi-Arid tropics.

A battery of streets around the venue of the 75th annual Academy Awards was to be shut down for six days starting Monday, as Oscar officials vowed that Sunday's show would go on even if conflict erupted this week.

delayed in the event of war.

Ctg city

BSS, Chittagong

**Tremor shakes** 

The intensity of the tremor measuring 3.45 on the Richter scale lasted 14 seconds.

people said Ismail was a supporter

miscreants intercepted the autorickshaw by which Ismail was returning to the city at about 12.30 pm and pulled him down at gun-

Ismail died instantly as the gunmen shot him at point blank. Police said members of a notorienforcement agencies, observers of

not be known immediately, police

The body was sent to CMCH for autopsy.

## **Guard dies**

The Anti-corruption Bureau filed a case against Joynal Hazari and the three bank officials in the Hazari had left the country on

#### **Movement of** shot dead in vehicles to be Fatikchhari banned from STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

## A young man was gunned down near his home at Uttar Pinedong

under Fatikchari upazila yesterday afternoon Movement of motor cycle, microbus, pick-up and babytaxi will be banned The victim was identified as Ismail, 27, son of late Ehsanul

Haque Haroon. Fatikchari police quoting local

of Jamaat-e-Islami. He was a gar-The deputy commissioners of ment factory worker. Barisal and Sylhet have been Police said a gang of armed empowered to impose the ban, a press release of the Election Commission Secretariat here said

However, vehicles of election point. observers from home and abroad (identity card holders), journalists, officials and employees engaged in elections duty, members of law

ous gang known as 'Shamim Bahini'killedhim.

The reason for the killing could A mild earthquake shook Chittagong city and its adjoining areas yesterday afternoon, sources in the Geophysical Observatory Centre here said yesterday.

The epicentre of the tremor was some 124 kilometres off the port FROM PAGE 12 the ground floor of the five-story city. garments factory. The fire engulfed There was no report of casualty the first floor and gutted everyor damage.

st 14, 2001 following expiry of the AL government's tenure.

## Blair

UCBL

FROM PAGE 12

the three officials.

first week of this month.

## FROM PAGE 1

prime minister said that regime change had never been his goal, but that the need to remove Saddam was a reason why Britain could go to war with "a clear conscience and a good heart.

Despite the failure to gain international support and UN backing for action. Blair said that the UN should pass a resolution, after the conflict was over, to provide for Iraq's proper governance.

He added that money from Iraqi oil should be put in a "trust fund for the Iraqi people, administered by the UN'

Critics of the decision to back the US in taking military action against President Saddam unless he leaves Iraq are hoping to muster an even bigger rebellion than last month, when 122 Labour MPs defied the whips

Blair's plea for support came after the resignations of Home Office minister John Denham and junior health minister Lord Hunt of Kings Heath over the government's hardline stance on Iraq.

The Leader of the Commons, Robin Cook, quit the cabinet on Monday, insisting that he would join the rebels in voting against military action in last night's vote.

However, Blair was offered some comfort by the decision of the international development secretary, Clare Short, not to join the list of ministerial resignations.

### **Basra first**

#### FROM PAGE 12

American officials say they are not certain whether Hussein appointed Majid, a close relative, to ensure that the restive Shiites of southern Iraq remained loyal to Baghdad, or whether Majid has been entrusted with executing a military strategy devised to blunt or undermine the American-British invasion.

"We fully recognise his image and his track record," a military official was quoted as saying.

One fear is that Hussein, by appearing to expose Basra to easy occupation, is preparing to surprise American and British forces by attacking them with chemical or biological weapons, American officials said.

The fate of Basra is viewed as critical. "The first image of this war will define the conflict," said Maj. Chris Hughes, a Marine Corps spokesman

Local people informed the Gulshan police. Four units of fire brigade rushed to the spot eventually extinguishing the fire.

Later Noor Amin's body was recovered from the gutted clothes. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Mizanur Rahman, manager of the garments factory, filed a case with the Gulshan Police Station. He said fire could have originated from a burning cigarette.

The fire brigade, however, could neither confirm the cause of the fire nor figure out exact amount of ss due to it.

Police picked up four persons from the factory area in the morn-

#### **BNP to revamp** FROM PAGE 12

a dampening effect on organisational matters as most of the party eaders and activists went on hiding fearing arrest. The ruling alliance nominated BNP leader MAHaq for the post of mayor. Highly placed sources said most

ministers visit their respective parliamentary constituencies only, while the ministers in-charge of different districts rarely go there(districts).

"It seems the majority of ministers represent their own constituencies only, not the country," said a BNP policymaker.

Sources said the BNP secretary general in his circular instructed all cabinet ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers, chief whip and whips of Jatiya Sangsad to attend the party office regularly.

> A six-day week roaster for this purpose will be prepared in a day or two and it will be sent to all concerned

The ministers have been asked to be in touch with the party secretary general to resolve problems of the party and of the leaders and activists. They have also been instructed to attend at least one party programme when they go outside the capital.

Ministers have been further advised to visit party offices, hold party and public meetings and exchange views with party's grassuring their roots level leaders tours outside Dhaka.

Sources said the ministers have also been asked to inform the party secretary general in writing if they fail to attend the party office for some reason or the other. The programme is expected to start next week.

Troops

FROM PAGE 12

dates -- Ebaidul Haq Chand and Ahsan Habib Kamal -- face expulsion from the party. Ministers, state ministers, MPs and senior ruling party leaders have

been campaigning in favour of Sarwar.

The main opposition Awami League (AL), which threw its weight behind the Citizens' Committee candidate Enavet Pir, has warned that any attempt to create irregularities would result in downfall of the government.

Pir also obtained support from the other opposition parties and members of civil society.

the mayor's office.

notable candidates.

and 79 in Svlhet.

FROM PAGE 12

tioned in Barisal.

tions

day.

trates at the polling centres.

have expressed their fear that the

presence of the ministers will

Nine candidates are running the mayoral race in Barisal while 260 are vying for 60 posts of ward commissioner. Fifty candidates of the 260 are vying for reserved seats for women.

Kamal Ahmed of Jatiya Party, AFM

Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to The Sylhet City Corporation ours," he said. witnessed almost similar election-"Saddam Hussein and his sons eering over the last couple of weeks. must leave Iraq within 48 hours.

people.

**Bush defies** 

**UN critics** 

Their failure to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a Fourteen candidates are fighting for time of our choosing," Bush said, warning Americans of a threat of The AL has supported incumbent Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran. terrorist reprisals and putting the nation on its second-highest level Senior AL leaders took part election of alert. campaign in favour of him. Prof.

perity and democracy to the Iraqi

"The United Nations Security

The deadline is 4:15 a.m. Iraqi time (0115 GMT) on Thursday.

Kamal of Sammilito Nagorik Parisad and Independent candidate Nations around the world were Shamsuzzaman Zaman are the divided over Bush's strategy and governments struggled to cope Over 3.49 lakh voters, 1.64 lakh in with internal splits in the wake of Barisal and 1.85 lakh, are to vote at widespread popular protests 169 polling centres -- 90 in Barisal against waging war.

British Prime Minister Tony The authorities will also deploy Blair, Bush's closest ally, battled in police, BDR, Ansar along with magis parliament to subdue a rebellion among his own Labour supporters that has seen three government ministers resign. **Home minister** 

"It will determine the pattern of international politics for the next generation," Blair said of the Iraq issue.

hamper smooth holding of elec-French President Jacques Chirac led those world leaders Meanwhile, a 150-strong army who accused the United States of contingent has arrived from being reckless with the unrivalled lessore to strengthen the team of power it has enjoyed since the 150 army personnel already sta-Cold War and of flouting the will of the United Nations in a way that According to the letter of the may fuel global instability.

home ministry, which was sent to the DC and SP of Barisal, BDR men Washington was putting "force before justice," Chirac said. will be placed under the command

"There is no justification for a of the SP. But this might complicate matters as the SP will be working unilateral decision to resort to under the returning officer. The SP force," he insisted, saying Iraq did said that he would sit in a meeting not represent an immediate threat with the BDR and army personnel and that UN disarmament had to chalk out the plan for maintainbeen working. ing law and order on the election

Inspectors

10 36 0 umpire Rudi Koertzen appeared to Muralitharan 10 0 29

**Target locked on Baghdad** 

O M R

34

10 1

8 0 60

With war looking inevitable, the United Nations drew down the curtain on 12 years of frustrated efforts since the 1991 Gulf War to ensure Iraq has no chemical. biological or nuclear arms. UN ins pectors flew to Cyprus from Baghdad.

We know that we could have stayed longer to finish our job," one of them said.

but resigned to their third war in just over two decades. Impoverished by UN sanctions since 1990, people stocked up on food and other essentials.

Pregnant women crowded maternity wards asking for Caesarian surgery rather than face giving birth in crowded bomb shelters. To the south, in the Kuwaiti

desert, US and British troops packed up tents and prepared kit for an invasion they expect within days, probably preceded by a massive bombardment.

"Finally we're going somewhere. We're going to war," said Sergeant Robert Vennebush, 25, with an army engineering unit.

Global financial markets took heart from the view that a quick US victory would end months of uncertainty hanging over the world's biggest oil-producing region. Brent oil prices dropped 10 percent and stock markets jumped after Bush's speech.

"Markets are truly backing the view that it's going to be a short, sharp, successful affair," said Michael Wilson of fund manager Ausbil Dexia in Sydney.

Bush said Iraq might provide weapons of mass destruction to groups like Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda Islamist radicals, whom he blames for the September 11 attacks and who were the object of the US campaign against the

Afghan Taliban 18 months ago. Not to pre-empt that would be "suicide," Bush said, scolding France -- though not by name --

#### for lacking America's "resolve. World opinion divided

Many Western leaders share

Bush's skepticism of Iraqi denials of having banned weapons and his distaste for Saddam's record over three decades. But some disagree about the extent of his possible sponsorship of terrorists and argue that war may simply fuel more violence in the Middle East and beyond.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said war meant "certain death to thousands of innocent men, women and children.'

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called for peace and in Moscow parliament delayed a vote on a US-Russian arms control treaty in irritation at Washington ignoring Russia's views on Iraq.

Bush supporters like Britain, Spain, Italy accuse doubters like France, Germany and Canada of repeating the mistakes of those who appeased Adolf Hitler in the 1930s.

Some Muslim states said war would inflame just the sort of violence that Bush said he was seeking to prevent.

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, a moderate Islamic leader called Bush and Blair "war criminals."

Japan expressed support. Australia offered troops, in spite of popular opposition that saw "No War" daubed in blood red letters on the landmark roof of the Sydney Opera House.

Turkey, a NATO ally, appeared to be softening its resistance to helping US forces, though possibly only by offering airspace to planes and missiles rather than grant requests for US troops to invade northern Iraq from Turkish bases

Few soldiers expect the Iraqis to put up much of a fight. But they are ready for bitter guerrilla warfare from Saddam loyalists with little to lose -- and for chemical attacks.

Israelis, targeted by Iraqi Scud missiles in the 1991 Gulf War, began sealing rooms against chemical or biological warfare.

Terrified of reprisals, thousands of Iraqi Kurds fled the city of Arbil in their northern region beyond Saddam's control.

Constellation. The USS Nimitz is **Iraqi** diplomats on the way from the US west coast.

There are 26 surface combatant ships, 20 amphibious assault AFP, Canberra ships, and 12 support ships in the Gulf. A three ship amphibious Iraqi diplomats were given five assault group led by the USS Iwo days notice to leave Australia

Jima is on the way from the US east yesterday shortly after Prime coast. Minister John Howard announced The carriers USS Harry S Truman and the USS Theodore a decision to commit troops to a Roosevelt are in the eastern US-led invasion of Iraq. Mediterranean with their battle Foreign Minister Alexander groups. The sailors and marines Downer said he had told the diploaboard those ships account for mats to depart no later than midmost of the 20,000 US forces night on Sunday, adding that the deployed in the European expulsion would contribute to the Command's area of operations for

security of Australia and its forces possible action against Iraq. fighting in Iraq. Eight warships that shoot "This course of action is clearly a Tomahawk cruise missiles are in the Red Sea and as many as seven others were due to follow from the

logical and prudent step in a situation where Australia is engaged in military action against Iraq," Downer said.

# PM: Myanmar

#### FROM PAGE 1

Mediterranean.

QATAR

Council of Myanmar Senior General Than Shew

Apart from strengthening economic cooperation, repatriation of Rohingva refugees will also come up during the talks.

"We expect Myanmar to take its nationals (Rohiyangas) as soon as possible and this is also necessary to keep peace on the border. Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said yesterday.

He is hopeful that the issue would be resolved as the two nations vowed to strengthen bilateral relations. Earlier, Myanmar said the refugees would be taken back only after a verification of their identity.

During the prime minister's visit, Bangladesh and Myanmar will set up a joint trade commission headed by commerce ministers of the two countries.

A foreign ministerial joint commission will also be set up to oversee bilateral relations.

The two neighbours are expected to pen agreements to introduce "accounts trade" that would initiate two-way transactions of goods without the need for cash payment.

They will also change the existing border trade agreement signed in 1994 to prohibit trading of third country products, sources at the commerce ministry said. Manufactured goods will require at least 30 per cent value addition for trading

"Implementation of the agreements will substantially increase bilateral trade, while the current informal trade will be gradually turned into formal trade, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said.

The bilateral trade is tilted in favour of Myanmar and the unofficial trade volume is much bigger than the formal one, according to business sources.

In 2001-02 fiscal, Bangladesh's imports from Myanmar cost US\$16.94 million while exports fetched only about \$2.39 million.

Unofficial import figures stand at about \$170 million as most of Myanmar goods are shipped to Singapore port and unloaded here as Singaporean products. Bangladesh's export is expected to be over \$50 million, business sources said.

During the prime minister's visit, the Export Promotion Bureau has arranged a Bangladesh Trade Fair with 90 stalls to showcase 36category potential export products. Some 200 Bangladeshi businessmen are expected to attend the

The prime minister is leading a 50-member delegation that includes Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda and Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury.

A 16-member business delegation and a cultural team will be accompanying the prime minister.

#### 0 Match Referee: C Lloyd (WI)

and D Shepherd (Eng)

TV IImpire B Bowden (N

#### FROM PAGE 1 pullout failed diplomacy. French and Greek envoys also pulled out leaving few diplomats in Baghdad.

Defying many UN allies and dividing public opinion, Bush defended his right to wage what he 'We're sad that we're leaving. portrayed as a pre-emptive war against September 11-style terrorism. He promised to bring pros-

In Baghdad, Iraqis were fearful