



PHOTOS: AFP, STAR

(From left) A convoy from the Marines 3rd Light Armoured Reconnaissance Battalion passes a burning oil storage at al-Ratka in southern Iraq; a hole appears in one of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's palaces in Baghdad after it was hit by a US missile overnight; US marines capture Iraqi civilians in southwestern Iraq; and leaders and activists of the left-leaning 11-party alliance carry an anti-war banner during an eight-hour hartal in Dhaka yesterday to protest the US-led invasion attack on Iraq.

# Baghdad lies ravaged



PHOTO: AFP

An injured Iraqi boy lies on a bed at the al-Yarmouk Hospital in Baghdad yesterday. The Iraqi information minister said the massive British and US bombing blitz on Baghdad wounded 270 civilians, most of them women and children.

## Nassiriayh falls to US forces; seven UK troops die in chopper crash; three Iraqis die, 270 hurt

STAR DESK

On the third day of aerial and ground assaults by the US-led forces aimed to remove an "illegal regime", much of Baghdad today lies devastated with over 1,000 cruise missiles and a similar number of bombs dropped on it since dawn yesterday.

US claimed to have captured the strategic Basra, Iraq's second most important city, after fierce battle. However, a BBC reporter moving with the US forces said the city is considered as "strategically unimportant" and so, it is being avoided by the troops for fear of close combat.

US said four of its troops were killed in central Iraq, raising the combat casualty number to six. US Marine tanks fought a "major battle" with Iraqis on the western outskirts of the ancient city, Reuters said.

Collision of two British Sea King choppers over northern Gulf yesterday left seven crewmen dead.

US troops are also in control of Nassiriayh on the bank of Euphrates river, Pentagon said. It has claimed that the 51st division of Iraq's army surrendered with 8,000 to 10,000 soldiers.

But Iraqi Defence Minister Sultan Hashim Ahmed flatly denied the claim and said the

division has been putting up fierce resistance to the invading forces.

Television pictures showed Baghdad hospitals swelling with civilians injured in air raids. Children cried in pain as doctors worked frantically. Ambulances screamed through the bomb-ravaged city bringing in more wounded.

The Associated Press said Radio Baghdad was knocked off the air, and the streets were deserted after the missile attacks.

Iraq said three civilians were killed and 270 injured in Baghdad alone. Al Jazeera TV said 45 including a Russian engineer died in Basra.

The Iraqi military has claimed to have inflicted "heavy losses" on US and British troops while repelling attacks in southern Iraq. Reports said there has been stiff resistance from Iraqi forces in Umm Qasr.

Turkey has opened its airspace to the invading forces late Friday and a "great many" US warplanes have been flying through its territory.

The Guardian has reported that Turkey has begun sending troops across the border into Iraqi Kurdistan last night in defiance of the US, a move which threatens to open a "war within the war" and

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## War threatens humanity, says Pope

REUTERS, Vatican City

Pope John Paul, in his first public comment on the outbreak of hostilities in Iraq, said yesterday the war threatened the whole of humanity, and that weapons could never solve mankind's problems.

"When war, like the one now in Iraq, threatens the fate of humanity, it is even more urgent for us to proclaim, with a firm and decisive voice, that only peace is the way of building a more just and caring society," he said.

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## India, Australia face off

AFP, Johannesburg

After 53 matches in six weeks of competition, the two best teams at the 2003 World Cup will contest Sunday's final here at the Wanderers when defending champions Australia face India.

There have been few classic matches at the tournament so far but, with both sides laden with match-winners, Sunday's showdown should be something special.

The contest could boil down to which of the teams' much-vaunted top-orders is better able to resist the opposition's pace bowlers.

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### TODAY'S MATCH

Final  
 Australia vs India  
 Venue: Johannesburg

## Dhaka wants an end to US military attack on Iraq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka wants an immediate end to the "military action" on Iraq and said indiscriminate bombing in Baghdad is not acceptable to anybody.

It also urged all concerned not to violate human rights in Iraq. The US-led attack entered its third day yesterday.

"We want an end to the military action soon... Indiscriminate bombing in Baghdad city with five to six million people can not be acceptable to anybody," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told newsmen yesterday.

"Our position is clear. We think war is not the solution for peace," he said.

Morshed Khan evaded a direct reply when asked whether the government thinks the US attack on Iraq is aggression. "Whenever there is anything good we call it good."

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