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Iraq to respect

rights of POWs,

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein

has issued a statement pledging to

respect the rights of prisoners of

war, Iraqi television said yesterday.

and its humanity ... will respect the prisoners of war of the enemy

whom we capture," said the state-

"We will respect their rights according to the Geneva Convention."

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Kalu Shaikh, 25, an armed cadre of

outlawed Purbo Banglar

Communist Party (PBCP) was

murdered by unidentified people near Naihaty High School under

According to police, a group of

five swooped on the outlaw and stabbed him. He died on the spot.

Kalu Shaikh might have been killed by his rivals in the party,

His body was sent to hospital for

Rupsha police station yesterday.

ment read on Iraqi television.

PBCP cadre

murdered

in Rupsha

"Iraq, out of respect for itself

says Saddam

REUTERS, Baghdad



Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Professor SMA Faiz leads a procession of teachers and students on the campus to demonstrate against the US-led

DU teachers, students protest attack on Iraq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of students of Dhaka University and their teachers led by Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz came on campus streets yesterday protesting the US invasion of Iraq and chanted slogans for peace.

With slogans like "No War for Oil" and "Stop Killing in Iraq" written on bare chests of many of them, the protesters carrying anti-US placards converged on the Central Shaheed Minar premises and burned at least seven effigies of President Bush. The Vice-chancellor (VC) addressed the

Sponsored by the DU authorities and different student bodies, the protest march began at 11 am from the Aparajeo Bangla at the Arts Faculty. Chanting various slogans against the Bush administration, they crossed the TSC area, Doel crossing and Cirzon Hall and assembled at the Shaheed Minar.

Police said the crowd was between 8,000 and 10,000 while the organisers estimated it at about

Classes and examinations were postponed yesterday due to the half-day hartal called by left parties protesting the invasion.

Addressing the rally, the Vice Chancellor said students, teachers and officials of Dhaka University came on streets to protest the invasion and to express their soli-

4 killed, 30 hurt 3,000 VCD in Magura road mishap

UNB, Magura

Four people were killed and 30 others injured when a Khulna bound bus from Dhaka rammed a roadside house early yesterday

The injured passengers and hospital sources said the night coach of Ruma Paribahan met with the accident at Bagat on Dhaka-Magura road.

The driver lost control over the steering while giving passage to a truck coming from the opposite direction.Identity of the victims could not be known. Twelve of the injured were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital. The condition of

The truck driver managed to flee the scene soon after the accident. A case was filed with police.

players seized at container depot

players worth about Tk 1 crore from a container at the Inland Container Depot at Kamalapur in

tion in Bangladesh, she emphasised On information, they broke the importance of better underopen a container and found the standing between the two major VCDs packed in 851 cartons, political parties so that they can imported from China by Ashraf work together to solve the problems International, 1/Chak Circular facing the nation. Road, Dhaka in the name of tennis Rocca termed Bangladesh's role

Police last night said that they

were looking for officials of the company, but none could be

four was stated to be critical.

World snubs US

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov meanwhile said on Friday that Moscow would refuse any US demands to expel Iraqi diplomats, but that it had yet to receive an official request.

Malaysia also rejected the US demands on Friday while Thailand's foreign ministry, yet to receive a request, questioned whether such actions would be

"How can assets of the embassy of Iraq be seized? It's not legal, we have relations," said a foreign

ministry spokesman. US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Friday dismissed the

resistance to Washington's request.

"That is their choice," Powell told reporters when asked about the refusal of at least seven nations to accede to the US call.

"We believe that, as we watch this regime come to an end, it would be appropriate to let all of our friends know that it was time to cease the activity of the Iraqi missions in their countries," he

Several countries that have broadly supported the US-led campaign to wage war against Iraq held firm in the face of Washington's requests

Portugal, a strong backer of US policy on Iraq, said on Friday that it would not expel Iraqi diplomats as requested by Washington.

"We do not intend to close

Irag's embassy nor are there any motives to expel the Iraqi diplo-Manuel Durao Barroso said at a

The Netherlands, which also backs the United States over Iraq, rejected the request as groundless, while Poland rejected it on Thursday as "unjustified".

"Embassies represent not only the leaders of these countries but also the nations, and Iraqi nationals also live in Poland," said Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski.

Algeria, Kenya and Sweden also turned down the US demands receive a formal request.

while Jordan said it had yet to In Australia, however, all Iraqi

diplomats were told to pack their bags and leave the country before the end of the week.

Iraq has a diplomatic presence in 63 countries, via 56 embassies, six special interests sections and one consulate, and is also repre-

sented at the United Nations. A number of countries, includ-

ing France, that took part in the 1990-1991 Gulf War have since had no official diplomatic ties But despite prolonged UN

economic sanctions against Iraq, many governments have resumed normal relations with Baghdad over the past decade, typically handled via special interests

Woman raped, murdered in **Bagerhat**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A woman was raped and killed allegedly by BNP activists at Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat district following her abduction on Wednesday, sources said.

The victim was identified as Majeda Begum, a divorcee and the daughter of Hekmat Ali of Ghoshgati village. Police recovered her body from a ditch at Rajpat village under Mollahat thana on Friday.

This is the second such incident in Mollahat upazila in about a week's time after the rape and murder of a schoolgirl there on

Police and local people said five men abducted Majeda from her father's house on Wednesday night and raped and killed her before

A number of organisations yester-

day announced that they would lay

siege to the US embassy to protest

the US invasion of Iraq defying the

strong security measures that are

in place in and around the capital's

said it will lay siege to the US

Embassy on March 25 while

Islamic Shashantantra Andolon

announced a similar programme

Left-leaning 11-party alliance

Sources said left-leaning parties

and pro-Islamic groups are ada-

mant to make the programme a success saying it is the moral

responsibility of people from all

walks of life to protest the US-led

Rocca emphasised that it is in

the interest of the United States to

keep Bangladesh firmly in the

moderate, democratic camp and to

that Bangladesh is a valued partner

in the war on terrorism, and under-

scored US commitment to

strengthen Bangladesh's demo-

cratic institutions, help its eco-

nomic development and improve

the economic progress so far

achieved by Bangladesh and under-

scored the need for diversification

of exports and strengthening of its

in war against terrorism as "excel-

Rejecting recent media reports

Referring to the political situa-

Rocca expressed satisfaction at

living standard of its population.

She informed the Subcommittee

help its economy prosper.

and some other organisations have

extended their support to the siege programme and urged people to

The Civil Society Against War

UNB, Dhaka

diplomatic enclave.

on March 29.

FROM PAGE 12

dumping her body in the ditch. Sources in the police said

Majeda's killers are activists of Mollahat thana unit of BNP who had also raped and killed Sufia Khatoon, a schoolgirl of Ghonargati village of the same upazila earlier on March 12. Sufia's body was recovered from a fish body was recovered from a fish enclosure at the same village on March 14.

Autopsy of Majeda's body was carried out yesterday. An unnatural death case was filed with the Mollahat police station. None was arrested till filing of this report last

Meanwhile, Afzal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mollahat thana, was closed to Bagerhat police lines on Friday for his failure to arrest the killers of Sufia and

Programmes to lay siege to **US** embassy March 25, 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Young man

murdered

A young man was beaten to death at Madhabpur of Digholia upazila in Khulna district on Friday.

The victim was identified as Hemayet Mollah, 35.

According to police and wit-nesses, Hemayet came under attack by some unidentified men while he was returning home at around 9:30 pm. He was taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 11 pm.

4 JCD activists expelled

BSS, Dhaka

Four activists of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were expelled for their alleged involvement in anti-organisational activities.

A press release, signed by assistant office secretary of JCD central committee Wahid Bin Imtiaz Bakul, said the expelled members are Muniruzzaman Khan Imran, Azadur Rahman Azad, Osman Goni Tuhin and Mohammad Hasanuzzaman

Rocca: Voice of moderation

Performers synchronise dance movements at a programme of the Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Conference at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

"If there is any provision in the environmental laws to save open spaces, the government will go Singapore. hrough it," Siraj added.

During his visit the environmentalists and local people protested and demanded the immediate cancellation of the project to keep the area liveable.

New Colony

FROM PAGE 12

The residents informed the ministers that the contractors and the officials of the Department of Housing (DoH) were threatening the protesters to file cases against them for their 'anti-state activities'.

Activists of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA), Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnayan Jote, SEBA and local residents vowed to save the playground and open spaces in the city. Referring to the open space

protection act, 2000 they urged the government 'to act following legal orovisions' Professor Abdullah Abu Saeed

of the BAPA thanked the minister

"We have no space to walk, no air to breathe in the city. As such we cannot allow the criminals to

Fuel crisis

FROM PAGE 12

one and a half lakh tonnes of refined petrolium products from

The country's lone oil refinery -Eastern Refinery Ltd. at Patenga -requires 4,500 tonnes of crude per
day. The annual import of crude for it
stood at 13 lakh tonnes, mostly from
Middle East countries including Abu
Dhabi and Saudi Arabia, BPC
sources said sources said.

The BPC signs contract after every six months for import of 12 lakh tonnes of refined fuel from Singapore. Contracts for different consignments of fuel -- both refined and crude -- were signed in February this year and it is getting the supply accordingly.

PM: Hartal

FROM PAGE 12

that the organisation, besides carrying out research on the works and philosophy of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman, will act as a think-tank for the government.

She asked members of the Zia Parishad to build awareness among the people through their works to help the government's development programmes successful.

In this context, she mentioned the

government's efforts to expand education in general and women's education in particular, empower women, restore congenial atmosphere in educational institutions develop the health sector and improve the environment. Presided over by chairman of Zia

Parishad Kabir Mural, the meeting was also addressed by its secretary Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, Dhaka City Unit president Mahbubul Alam, DU unit president Qamrul Ahsan Chowdhury, Mahmudul Amin and Foyez Mohammad Siraj.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was special guest at the meeting which was also attended by Political Secretary to the Prime Minister Haris Chowdhury and

Adnan Sami

FROM PAGE 12 Daily Star to inquire about the con-

Makfubar Rahman Sweet, Second Officer at Gulshan thana, said the home ministry issued an order yesterday morning to stop the concert until further order. Other sources said the order followed initiatives by the cultural affairs ministry to stop it.

for Friday but the organiser -- Antar Showbiz Limited-- postponed it for 24 hours in view of planned public protests on that day against the US invasion of Iraq.

The organiser could be contacted yesterday despite repeated attempts. Earlier, Islami Oikya Jote, Khelafat Majlish, Islami Shashan Tantra Andolon, Lekhak Shibir and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) urged the government to stop the concert as it was planned at a time when "the Muslim Ummah is facing an attack".

Protests

slogans at the procession.

Several activists partially damaged two passenger buses near the Muktangan at about noon.

leaders of the alliance and the right wing andolan expressed solidarity with the Iraqi people and sympathy especially for women and children. They called for immediate UN intervention to 'save' the mankind in such a situation.

Normal life was partially disrupted. Movement of inter-district

buses and trucks was less than Leaders and activists of 11-party

Our correspondents in different districts reported that the eighthour hartal passed off peacefully.

anti-war processions and chanted slogans in favour of peace.

polls death this time, says **Odhikar** STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Worse ever UP

The number of deaths in violence over this year's Union Parishad (UP) election is much higher than the number in the 1997 polls.

The number of the injured is around 20 times the 1997 figure, said Masud Alam Ragib Ahsan, director of Odhikar at a press conference yesterday.

Odhikar and the Liberal Forum, numan-rights organisations, based the finds on their monitoring of over 500 polling centres in ten districts and newspaper reports.

This year, 80 people were killed and around 10,000 injured during the 51-day UP polls. On the other hand, violence over the 1997 election left 31 people killed and over 500 injured in 31 days, he said.

Hindu voters were attacked and intimidated in some unions including Shuvo Rara and Baghutia in Jessore and Chandra Mohan in Barisal, said the Odhikar director.

"Our observers didn't find agents of most candidates at 54 centres including 28 in Munshiganj," he said.

Presiding officers, magistrates and police did not allow observers to enter 27 booths in different areas including Beldah in Tangail; South Hijaltala, Charaptania, Khandakhali, Roypura and Durgapur in Barisal; Nityanandapur and Singnagar in Jhenidah; and Jugindha, Shanghat, Гера and Dhankhola in Meherpur.

Activists of the ruling alliance and supporters of influential candidates captured many polling centres, including all but one in the unions of Munshiganj. They also snatched ballot papers and boxes, he said.

"Fake votes were cast at 30 centres and voters alleged doctoring of voters' lists at 80 centres," he said

90 more back

Migrants (IOM), a UN body, is ready to help repatriate Bangladeshi workers if necessary. He however said many returnees came to spend time with their

He said the returnees may come in great numbers if the war escalates beyond Iraq. The state minister said in that event the government is ready to face any situation.

Two medical teams are working round the clock at Zia Internationa Airport to provide emergency treatment to the expatriates.

The secretary in charge of the expatriate welfare ministry and director general of Bureau of Manpower Export and Training were also present.

Baghdad lies ravaged

hugely complicate the American military strategy in Iraq. In Baghdad, thick plumes of

smoke cast shadow over the city. In between air raid sirens, people came out in search of food and relatives. People were seen picking through rubbles and they waved pictures of Saddam at television People were trying to get out of

Baghdad as air attacks became more intense with B-52 bombers joining the sorties. Saddam's palace ripped through by Tomahawks Friday night stood forlorn with gaping holes.

As dusk falls, Baghdad braces for another ferocious night with jets rumbling overhead at 9:45pm Bangladesh time. The UN in its latest humanitar-

ian situation report said an estimated 300,000 to 450,000 people have fled their homes in northern

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the Iraqi president's regime was "starting to lose control of their country". But Iraq's Defence Minister said "it is impos-

urging them to give up.

sible to take Iraq by force". Iraqi forces lit trenches filled with oil around the capital Baghdad yesterday in an apparent hid to obscure visibility over the city, a target of air strikes by US and British forces.

US forces have been showering

Iraqi troops with hundreds of thousands of propaganda leaflets

US and British troops have reportedly taken over a number of

Iran said two coalition rockets have hit its Meniouhi region on the shores of the Shatt al-Arab and US and British warplanes have been violating its airspace.

Dhaka wants end

FROM PAGE 1are against war and will remain so," Khan said.

"We urge the UN to bring all the parties to a table, put all the heads together and find a peaceful solution to the (Iraq) crisis,' He said double standard in

implementing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions is not acceptable. "This is not acceptable to us that

UNSC resolution is applicable for some parties, while it is not enforced on others," Morshed Khan said. Territorial integrity of Iraq should be ensured and no party should bring any other issue, Khan

said when his attention was drawn to Turkey's position in the current situation. Asked whether the Iraqi embassy here would be closed and its diplomats asked to leave the country, Khan said, "Why should we, and why this question is com-

He was reminded that the US government gave instruction to its embassies to request host govern-ments to shutdown Iraqi embas-

sies and expelits diplomats. The foreign minister said, "We have not received any such request. Even if there is any request, Bangladesh will act on its own as a

sovereign and independent coun-On the comment made by the Iraqi foreign minister that Bangladesh was an "agent of US president George Bush", he said,

"This is unfortunate and we reject this comment.

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said so far he did not see any disruption to the economy or to Bangladesh's exports due to the war.

and war has many effects," Khosru

FROM PAGE 1

The Pope, in a speech to employees of Catholic television station Telepace, added: Violence and weapons can never resolve the

diplomatic campaign to avert war, putting the Holy See on a collision course with Washington and its backers in the Iraq campaign. Before war broke out, the 82

year-old Roman Catholic leader dispatched senior cardinals to both Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and US President George W Bush. The Vatican also pleaded with

Saddam to comply with UN resolutions demanding disarmament and made it clear from the start that any action against Baghdad had to come under the auspices of the United Nations.

Thursday morning, the Vatican lashed out at the United States, saying if "Deplored" the interruption of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully.

India, Australia face off

infrastructure.

Australia speedster Brett Lee took three for 36 against India in a ninewicket thrashing of India during a group match at Centurion last But India have since won eight

games on the trot and their seam attack of Javagal Srinath and youthful left-armers Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra has taken 49 wickets between them at the tournament. "The thing that has stood out for me is their fast bowling and that has

done some damage," said Australian captain Ricky Ponting. But Lee, who has been up round the 100mph mark, has the kind of pure speed that can defeat the reac-

tions of even the world's best bats-

"There is bound to be some short stuff," Ponting admitted. "But as much as the pace, the length that you

Ganguly and Sehwag with full length balls at Centurion.' But opener Sachin Tendulkar is in prime form. He has already broken his own record for most runs at a World Cup with 669.

With India in only their second World Cup final they won for the first But he knows now that others in

Hard-hitting Andrew Symonds

team to beat.

commitment to donate \$ 1 million USAID Assistant Administrator

tion building.

during the hearing.

Secretary Rocca for more assistance to sustain the project. Crowley voiced strong resentment over Bangladesh's inclusion in the NSEERS list and expressed suggesting al-Qaeda presence in Bangladesh, she made it clear that

unhappiness at the way Bangladesh as a friendly country of the US has

although the bottom order have

it exposes the middle-order. But in every game one of them has stood up," Ganguly said. Australia, who lost champion leg-

win three World Cups. Their record of 16 consecutive one-day victories makes them the

All-rounder Andy Bichel sums up the strength of Australian cricket. Destined for a bit part role, the gutsy Queenslander seized his chance following Jason Gillespie's calfinjury, starring with both bat and ball in Australia's wins over England

Bichel now has a tournament batting average of 117 and the paceman leads the Australian bowling figures with 15 wickets at just 9.3

91-run win over minnows Kenya on Thursday, Ganguly scoring an

But wicketkeeper Rahul Dravid let through 16 byes and injured a finger, although he is expected to be

However, Australia batsman

Damien Martyn's finger injury is unlikely to heal in time. Ponting's team will start favour-

sides," said Ganguly. "The World Cup final has to be a pressure game."

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Michael Bevan, Andy Bichel, Ian Harvey, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Darren Lehmann, Jimmy Maher, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Andy Symonds, Nathan Bracken, Nathan Hauritz.

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Rahul Dravid, Virender

TV umpire: Rudi Koertzen (South (Sri Lanka)

and Steve Bucknor (West Indies)

Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle

The concert was first scheduled

Bangladesh Ambassador to the US Syed Hasan Ahmad was present

FROM PAGE 12 The whole world is in favour of peace and against war. Only a few persons are responsible for the attack on Iraq, were some of the

Addressing rallies at Paltan crossing and on the northern side of Baitul Mukarram mosque,

Our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong adds: Hartal was observed in the port city peace-

brought out a procession from Darul Fazal Market area. The participants chanted anti-war and anti-Bush slogans.

Demonstrators brought out

"Obviously, concern is there

Pope on war

problems of man." The Pope led the Vatican in a

After the war erupted on



"The attack on Iraq is against humanity, peace and independence", he said. "This demonstration will send a owerful message that peace

darity with the innocent people of

oving people of the world are with the innocent people of Iraq. "The students, teachers and officials Dhaka University are with the peace loving people who are

demonstrating against aggression.

"All we can do is to pray for the

eople of Iraq and urge nations to

raise their voice against the war",

"We condemn the war unleashed by some 'arrogant' people", he said. From the Shaheed Minar the students again gathered at the

Aparajeo Bangla, where they called

for a boycott of American products,

"My heart is with the people of

said Naima Sultana, a DU student. "The large scale devastation in Iraq pushed me to take part in the march, the first in my life",

from soft drinks to films.

Nishat Mahmud, 22, of Political Science Department said the war is only for Iraq's oil. In the afternoon, Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) brought out another procession on the DU campus protesting the invasion.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Customs officials vesterday seized over 3,000 illegally imported VCD

Prime Minister Jose meeting of EU leaders in Brussels.

bowl is important "We saw that when Brett got

> and only time in 1983 Tendulkar will be desperate for one more big score. the top order can take the strain.

Australia's batsmen have failed to fire in their last three matches

State Department does not have any been treated. information that may give credence to such allegations. She emphasised on the need for the US to reach out

From among the members of the Crowley, Robert Wexler, Steve Chabot and Gary Ackerman spoke highlighting Bangladesh's positive role as a moderate, democratic Muslim nation that has been contributing to the regional and international peace and security and

thereby helping the United States.

Crowley noted that Bangladesh is making progress in the path of democracy both through governmental actions as well as activities of a strong and vibrant civil society. He said the proposed Asian University for women to be located in Bangladesh would make tremendous impact in the whole Muslim world. He recognised USAID's

for this project and urged Assistant

ensured they posted totals which gave the bowlers more than enough "Every team has a bit of a weakness. If the top order gets out quickly

spinner Shane Warne to a drugs ban on the morning of their first match against Pakistan, have remained unbeaten at the tournament so far in their bid to become the first nation to

and New Zealand two rare occasions when his team were tested.

has also come to the party with 326 India eased into the final with a

He expressed concern that inclusion of Bangladesh in NSEERS list creates misgivings about the

whole purpose of the NSEERS program. his protest against the administration's decision to include Bangladesh in the NSEERS list. He regretted that such a decision clearly "undermines" the excellent relations that the two countries enjoy and did not seem to be clear

under which Bangladesh was included in the program. Congressman Chabot praised Bangladesh for its peacekeeping role while Congressman Ackerman appreciated Bangladesh government's efforts to establish an autonomous anti-corruption commission as part of democratic institu-

about the objectivity of the criteria

Wendy J Chamberlin informed the Subcommittee that Bangladesh this year is receiving US\$102 million in American development assistance.

ites but for India whose cricket crazy public is the most demanding in the world that will make no difference. "There will be pressure on both

That much is assured. **TEAMS**

Seĥwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Dinesh Mongia, Parthiv Patel, Sanjay Bangar, Ajit Agarkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif. Umpires: David Shepherd (England)