



PHOTO: PID  
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia places gold medals awarded to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and late president Ziaur Rahman yesterday at the National Museum to preserve those.

## Independence award conferred on Bangabandhu, Ziaur Rahman

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday conferred this year's independence award on late President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and late President Ziaur Rahman simultaneously, underlining the imperative for forging national consensus to attain self-reliance.

"I believe party is above any individual and the country is above party. Let us pledge on the eve of Independence and National Day to work together shunning differences to build a happy, prosperous and self-reliant Bangladesh to show respect to two great leaders", said Khaleda Zia at the 'Swadhinata Puraskar-2003' ceremony, held at the National Museum auditorium.

Describing the ceremony an exceptional one, the prime minister said "today's ceremony has added a new dimension to the history of this country".

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PHOTO: AFP

A member of Iraq's ruling Baath Party waves her Kalashnikov in Baghdad yesterday.

## Iraq war could lead to new world order, warns Russia

AFP, Moscow

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warned that the Iraq crisis could lead to the establishment of a new world order, in an article published yesterday in the official daily Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

"It is obvious that not only the fate of Iraq depends of how events unfold, but also the future of international relations for a long time," Ivanov wrote. "The foundation of the future world order is the main issue at stake in this crisis."

He said the unity of the US-led anti-terrorist coalition is also threatened by the military intervention in Iraq as most nations condemn the move.

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## Bush puts \$ 74.7b price tag on Iraq war

AP, Washington

After delaying for months, President Bush is revealing his official estimate of what war with Iraq will cost American taxpayers. His price tag: \$74.7 billion to cover six months of combat, humanitarian aid, rebuilding and bolstered security at home.

The bulk of it, \$53.4 billion, is for what the White House calls "pure operational activities" - moving troops and weapons, the costs of combat, and bringing the soldiers home, according to a Bush administration document obtained by The Associated Press.

Bush refused to provide a cost estimate before the attack on Iraq

started, asserting there were too many variables to give a reliable price tag. Monday, five days into the military campaign, the administration tipped its hand, outlining for congressional budget chiefs his spending plans in the form of a "supplemental" request.

Bush was formally unveiling the new spending package Tuesday at the Pentagon, and asking Congress to pass it by April 11.

Lawmakers grumbled after a Monday meeting with Bush that they were frozen out of their oversight role on spending, and predicted Bush would soon return asking for more warmoney.

"This is just the beginning. This is

the first down payment, and the American people have the right to know that," said Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va.

"I told the president that I was glad to be invited down today to discuss the supplemental bill, but I said that Congress ought to be in at the start of the process and not just brought in at the end to sign the check," Byrd said.

A senior administration official said the White House kept its estimates close to the vest because it could only have provided projections that varied widely depending on different scenarios, such as Saddam Hussein's surrender versus full-scale war.

## US, Britain want UN to play a 'pivotal' role in post-war Iraq

REUTERS, London

Britain's Tony Blair insisted yesterday that London and Washington agreed that the United Nations had to play a pivotal role in post-war Iraq.

Asked if he was flying for talks with President George W Bush in order to head off plans for an American civil administration taking control of Iraq once President Saddam Hussein is toppled, Blair said "no."

"It is common ground between us that the UN has got to be involved in post-conflict Iraq," Blair told a news conference in his Downing Street home.

He admitted that details of post-war structures had to be thrashed out but added: "I've got no doubt at all that we will."

Turkey was aware that Iraq's territorial integrity must be observed, he said.

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## Contractors continue digging work at New Colony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Contractors are still continuing digging work in open spaces between the buildings in the city's New Colony at Asad Gate, ignoring protests by local people and environmentalists.

Local people said the contractors had stopped digging the western part of the playground upon a stay order issued by the High Court, but continued digging other parts of the open spaces at the colony. The High Court order had directed the government not to continue construction works in the playground.

The Department of Housing (DoH) recently took up the project for constructing flats in the open spaces and playground of the colony. The flats were to be sold to the government officials.

The local residents expressed their resentment over the housing minister's stand that construction works in the open spaces and playground of the colony would continue. At an inter-ministerial meeting on Monday, Housing Minister Mirza Abbas expressed his determination to continue the construction works.

Meanwhile, the protesters have planned to submit a memorandum with signatures of local people to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia seeking her intervention for cancellation of the housing project.

"We will collect the signatures within a day or two and then seek an appointment with the PM," said Abu Naser Khan, general secretary of the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) which is spearheading the protest.

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SHAZNEEN CASE

## 8th PW gives deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Anisuzzaman Khan, eighth prosecution witness in the Shazneen rape case and a friend of the victim's father, gave his deposition before court yesterday.

Kazi Rahamat Ullah, judge of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, recorded the deposition for an hour.

He was then cross-examined by lawyer of Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, principal accused in the case.

Anisuzzaman identified two of the accused-Minu and Parvin -- in the dock.

The court then adjourned the hearing till March 27.

Anisuzzaman told the court that at about 8.30 pm on April 23, 1998, he and his wife joined a party at Latifur Rahman's (Shazneen's father) Gulshan residence in the city.

"After entering the residence, I saw a strange matter that all the security lights on the compound were off. Then we went upstairs where the party was going on. After a while, we met Mrs Latifur Rahman and asked how she was. She replied that she was not so good. She had high blood pressure."

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## 4 awarded death penalty, 3 life term for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Four persons have been sentenced to death and three others given life term for killing one person in a village in Golapganj upazila more than three years ago.

The judgement was delivered by Additional District and Sessions Judge SM Mujibur Rahman in a crowded court room yesterday.

The four to die are Nizamuddin, Jainal Miah, Ful Miah and Mohammad Abdullah. Those given life term are Rafiqueuddin, Ziauddin, and Malikuddin.

Saiful Alam of village Sheikhpur was called out of his house by the seven in the night of November 23 in 1999. They stabbed him to death and dumped his body in a pond nearby. The body was later recovered and a case was filed with the Golapganj Police Station by the victim's father.

The murder took place as a sequel to previous enmity.

|        | Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|--------|-----------|----------|
| Mar 26 |           | 6-12 pm  |
| Mar 27 | 5-56 am   |          |

| Prayer Timings             |       |        |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|
| Mar 26                     |       |        |
|                            | Azan  | Jamaat |
| Fair                       | 5-00  | 5-30   |
| Zohr                       | 12-45 | 1-15   |
| Asr                        | 4-45  | 5-15   |
| Maghrib                    | 6-18  | 6-23   |
| Esha                       | 7-35  | 8-00   |
| Source: Islamic Foundation |       |        |