

DHAKA TODAY

Film show

As part of its 18th anniversary celebration, Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen three very best films of the year 2002. These are 'Spirited Away' by Hayao MIYAZAKI (Japan), 'And Your Mother Too' by Alfonso CUARON (Mexico) and 'Talk to Her' by Pedro ALMODÓVAR (Spain). Venue: Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm, 5.15pm and 7.15pm.

Anti-war rally

Banglabazar Theatre organises a rally to protest the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. Venue: Mukhtangan, Ramna. Time: 4.00pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Film show

As part of its 18th anniversary celebration, Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen three very best films of the year 2002. These are 'Mr and Mrs Iyer' by Apama SEN (India), 'Women' by Francois OZON (France) and 'The Pianist' by Roman POLANSKI (Poland). Venue: Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm, 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

Swiss film show

Alliance Francaise will screen three Swiss films titled 'Fourbi', 'Espace to Paradise' and 'La vierge noire'. Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am and 5.00pm.

Movie show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'My Big Fat Greek'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.00pm.

Roundtable

Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organises a roundtable titled 'New Regionalism and South Asia'. Venue: BILIA auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.15pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research organises a seminar on the development of the city and its environment. Venue: CIRDAAP auditorium. Time: 4.30pm.

Human chain

Projonmer Chetona will form a human chain comprising children and juveniles including students and youths to protest the US-led invasion of Iraq. Venue: In front of National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 10.00am.

PM warns against hoarding of kerosene, petrol

UNB, Dhaka

There are adequate stocks of kerosene in the country and the supply is stable.

This was informed at a high level meeting of the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry at the Prime Minister's office yesterday afternoon.

Chaired by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who is in-charge of the Ministry, the meeting was assured that there is enough crude oil in the supply pipeline.

Officials also informed that Bangladesh does not import any petroleum products from Iraq. Therefore, the war would not affect the petroleum market in Bangladesh.

In case of emergency, Bangladesh can import crude oil from Singapore, they added.

Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister warned against hoarding of kerosene or any other petroleum products and directed the authorities concerned to take stern action against anyone trying to go for illegal stock.

Directives were also given to all deputy commissioners in this regard.

Yemen

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current situation in the region, the security threat to all American citizens in Yemen remains high," the State Department said.

"US citizens in Yemen should consider departing," it said in a statement, adding that Americans should defer any plans to travel to the country.

"The Department of State has authorized the departure of adult family members and non-emergency personnel at the US embassy in Sanaa on a voluntary basis," it said.

Border talks

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Liaquat Ali Khan, Sector Commander, Mymensingh; Col. Jointul Abedin, Col. Nuris Sama, Sector Commander, Sylhet; Col. AFM Ahmed Ullah Imam Khan, BDR Headquarter; Col. Mohammad Hamidul Haque, Sector Commander, Rangamati and Major Firoz-ur-Rahman, BDR headquarters.

The 10-member Indian team was headed by MC Parmar, Inspector-General of BSF, Tripura-Cachhar & Mizoram frontier. Other members were SC Srivastava, DIG of BSF, Assam-Meghalaya-Mizoram frontier & Nagaland; S Basumatary, DIG, BSF, Shilong sector; SG Vaid, DIG, BSF, Tripura South sector; MI Khan, DIG, BSF, Cachhar & Mizoram sector; ADIGs Mohindar Lal, JP Mohla, Ramesh Singh, SA Alu, and Deputy Commandant Sushil Kumar.

Murder

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League, was gunned down Friday midnight near his house at Mahishdia village in Digholia upazila. Eight masked armed miscreants called him out of his house at about 12-30 am, stabbed him and fired four shots on his head and chest.

The killers raised slogans in the name of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and fled away, locals said.

Shrimp farm owner Wazir Shaikh (32) of Rayermahal under Dumuria thana was shot dead at about midnight on Friday allegedly by outlaws of Biplobi Communist Party. The body was recovered from near the farm.

In the city, JCD supporter Shumon (18) was severely stabbed by some miscreants at about 11 pm on Friday in Murhipatty area. He has been admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital where his condition is critical, police said. The miscreants attacked him when he was returning home along with his father.

Corruption case filed against BSC MD, 4 others

BSS, Ctg

Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC), Chittagong, yesterday filed a case against five persons including Managing Director of the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) with Bandar Police Station for misappropriation of over Tk3 crore.

Five others who have been implicated in the case are BSC Captain Azizul Haque, Executive Director (Commercial) Captain Serajul Huda, Deputy General Manager Tapan Kumar Dutta, Managing Director of the Alesman Shipping Corporation Mostak Ali and President of the Norstar Shipping Lines Mizanur Rahman Pervez.

After investigation an Assistant Inspector of the BAC, Chittagong, filed the case in which he alleged that the persons made a dubious deal in chartering BSC vessel

'Banglar Kakoli' in 2001 to grab huge amount of money.

The BSC officials who were involved in the process of making an agreement were also charged for giving false statement to the authorities, preparing fake document and also abuse of power.

In the case, the BAC Inspector alleged that the BSC incurred a loss of Tk 3,14,26,545 due to a faulty charter agreement which was signed between the BSC and Norstar Shipping Lines through the mediation of Alesman Shipping Corporation to lease 'Banglar Kakoli' for a period of six months in August 2001.

The BSC authorities signed the agreement with Norstar Shipping Line without verifying the business reputation and records of the firm and without taking prior approval of the committee formed to charter the vessel.

After 35 days of signing the agreement the authority called a meeting of the committee which the BAC official termed 'unusual'.

In the case it was also alleged that only the MD of BSC captain Azizul Hoque and GM (Charter) attended the meeting.

The Executive Director (Finance) was not even informed about the meeting although he was a member of the committee.

The BSC MD himself signed the agreement on behalf of the MD, ED (Technical) and ED (Finance).

The vessel was operated by the shipping lines for three months and submitted fake bank deposit slip to the BSC as monthly rent.

The BSC officials also charged for not nullifying the agreement when a bank cheque was given in favour of BSC by the firm was detected as fake.

Bombing of phone system

FROM PAGE 12

by a cruise missile which penetrated the basement of the building. The exchange in Karada, where Baghdadis pay their phone bills, was ripped open. No more. Because "we" have decided to destroy the phones and all those "command and control" systems that may be included, dual use, into the network.

So Friday, most Baghdadis had to drive across town to see each other; there was more traffic on the roads than at any time since the start of the war. Down, too, went Baghdad's internet system. Iraqi television, a pale shadow of itself since the Americans bombed the studios on Wednesday night, can be watched only between an increasing number of power cuts.

So what's next? Each day, of course, brings news of events which, on their own, have no great import but which, together, add a sinister, new dimension to the coming siege of Baghdad. Yesterday, hundreds of tribesmen from across Iraq gathered at the Baghdad Hotel before

meeting President Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqi tribes, ignored by the military planners and Washington pundits who think Iraq is held together only by the Baath party and the army, are a powerful force, their unity cemented by marriage and a network of families loyal to President Saddam who provide a force as cohesive as the Baath party itself.

Tribesmen guard the grain silos and electricity generating stations around Baghdad. Two of them were credited with disabling an Apache helicopter captured last week.

And yesterday, tribal leaders came from all over Iraq, from Ninevah and Babylon and Basra and Nassiriyah and all the cities of Mesopotamia.

President Saddam has already issued one set of orders which tells the tribesmen "to fight [the Americans and British] in groups and attack their advance and rear lines to block the way of their progress ... If the enemy settles into a

position, start to harass them at night..."

Another sign of things to come. At least 20 international "human shields" hitherto "guarding" power stations, oil refineries and food production plants decided to leave Iraq yesterday. So did all Chinese journalists, on instructions from their government. Not all the optimistic claims from the Iraqi government, a victory against US Marines outside Nassiriyah was among them, could change their minds.

The nightly attacks long ago spread into the daylight hours, so the sound of aircraft and rockets I have several times actually heard the missiles passing over the central streets have acquired a kind of normality. A few stores have reopened. There are fresh vegetables again. And like every blitzed people, Baghdadis are growing used to what has become a dull, familiar danger.

Is this "shock and awe", I sometimes ask myself?

America in the vice

FROM PAGE 1

"combat lite" strategy and a man whose reputation and career are very much on the line, appears to be hesitating. The champion of the "forward-leaning" posture is now in danger of falling flat on his face.

His boss, George Bush, who at Camp David this week seemed to be asleep while standing up, insists a relentless America will prevail "no matter how long it takes". Down in Tampa, that sounds like leadership. But it is actually an amazing admission that the US military behemoth no longer entirely controls the timetable or pace of a war begun at a moment and in a place of its own particular choosing.

That the Pentagon has been obliged to double its ground combat forces after only a week, and must now wait for them to deploy, is a matter for considerable political shock and awe. This military deceleration now runs directly counter to that other powerful dynamic: a quickening human tragedy. Put simply, the longer the war rages, the more acute the suffering of the Iraqi people will

become. And while the regime remains undefeated, the more deeply problematic will be efforts to distribute aid and the more furious the international outcry.

The prospect of Iraqis dying in large numbers from dehydration, or malnutrition or disease is still hopefully some way off; the UN estimates a five-week food supply. But problems with refugees and tainted water supply are beginning to emerge around Basra and Nassiriyah. Aid agencies, unable to enter most of the country while fighting continues, say they cannot assess the status of the population. However much money is raised, and the UN has set a \$2.2bn overall target, it is useless as long as organised, safe distribution remains impractical. Last night's decision to give the UN secretary-general temporary control of a resumed oil-for-food programme and \$10bn worth of uncompleted contracts will also have a merely symbolic, political importance if secure distribution routes to 45,000 outlets are not swiftly reopened.

The Iraqi regime is not helping,

cynically using the plight of civilians as a propaganda tool. The US military and the US government's aid agency are not helping either by trying to direct the relief effort and thereby potentially compromising independent NGOs with far superior expertise. Yesterday's arrival of the British aid ship, Sir Galahad, at Umm Qasr, while welcome in itself, highlights another difficulty. This is Iraq's only deep-water port, the size of Dover. It will have to cope with the competing demands of military and humanitarian supplies for the duration and beyond.

Britain has earmarked £210m for humanitarian work in a total war budget of £3bn; the US \$2.4bn, out of \$74.7bn. Yet even with the best will in the world, aid efforts will have limited impact while the conflict continues inconclusively. This is why, with the war lengthening and slowing, Iraq's human crisis seems certain to intensify. This is the inexorably closing vice that has the power to destroy thousands of innocent lives and some very prominent political careers.

War poses threat

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week to finance the war.

It may have to impose new tax and introduce other fiscal measures which in turn may reduce imports like buying readymade garments from Bangladesh.

The European economies like other developed economies may also suffer.

This may also affect flow of their development assistance to Bangladesh.

It is more likely that the World Bank and other agencies may be under pressure in the post war situation to divert resources to reconstruction of Iraq, he added.

Similarly, cost of import may also rise from things like new surcharge, additional insurance and freight cost.

The fallout of the war may be too big, the finance minister said

adding he can give a more definite view on it after 10 days.

He asked the business community to keep prices of essentials steady. People also should not go for panic buying, he said.

He said the government is trying to reduce its size and cut unnecessary expenditure.

He appreciated the works of the Public Expenditure Review Commission, headed by former finance adviser to caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan, and said the government is taking benefits of some of their recommendations.

Responding to a question he said, "The impact of war on remittances is yet to be visible as of today."

Mongla Port

FROM PAGE 1

lished another report captioned "Corruption, strike keep ships away from Mongla port. Without confirming from the MPA, the DS wrote an editorial on 27th February 2003, thereby damaging the image of Mongla port both nationally and internationally. The DS published our rejoinder in the 'letter to the editor column'. The last report on MPA was published on 17th March 2003. The MPA finds itself in a very difficult position with the reports of the DS. Neither '600 ships, a decade ago' nor '525 ships in the first 10 months in 1990' arrived at the port. The correct figure was 423 and 300. The MPA operates on a tariff fixed by the government and there is no scope for behaving like a hungry wolf and why should shipping agents or others pay more without lodging a complaint with any one. Under no circumstances, Mongla port is costlier than Chittagong port and never ships had waited here for berth as stated by your reporter. The MPA is getting more clinker and fertiliser because of waiving of landing charges. Your reporter has given the news of tips, kickbacks and the opinion of frozen food exporters in a way that does not give a fair picture of MPA. The DS report quoted a report that "MPA was a criminal infested port" but did not provide any proof as to why and who made this claim.

It is the considered opinion of the MPA, Shipping Agents, Stevedores and port users that continuous reports of this nature in your English daily with such wide circulation has had a negative impact on the foreign ship owners. The DS should not publish news item depicting MPA as a place of crime and corruption, which has already damaged Mongla port nationally and internationally.

In Dhaka board, three were expelled under the Dhaka board, 149 under Jessore board, 221 under Chittagong board, 143 under Barisal and 124 under Comilla board.

In Dhaka board, three were expelled in Dhaka, 36 in Netrakona, 60 in Jamlapur, 19 in Gazipur, five in Madaripur, 13 each in Faridpur and Sherpur, 16 in Manikganj, 11 in Tangail, three in Gopalganj, 67 in Mymensingh, seven in Munshiganj, eight each in Narsingdi and Shariatpur, 12 in Kishoreganj, two in Narayanganj and 19 in Gopalganj.

Two teachers were also expelled from a center at Netrakona. Under Jessore board, 75 were expelled in Kushtia, nine in Jessore, 11 in Jhenedah, three in Magura, eight each in Khulna and Chuadanga, one each in Satkhira and Narail, 10 in Meherpur and 23 in Bagerhat districts.

Of the expelled examinees under Chittagong board, 122 were in Chittagong, 13 each in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban, 20 in Rangamati, 53 in Khagrachari districts. Three teachers were also expelled under the board.

In Barisal board, 12 were expelled in Pataukhali, eight in Barguna, 47 in Barisal, 51 in Bhola and 25 in Jhalokhati districts.

Of the expelled examinees in Comilla board 59 were in Noakhali, 42 in Comilla, three in Chandpur, nine in Brahmanbaria, four in Feni and seven in Laxmipur districts.

News from the front

FROM PAGE 12

other top brass had called in Group Captain Stagg, the Army meteorologist, to find out what the weather was going to be like in 36 hours' time. Not good, sir, replied Stagg. There was an anticyclone heading up the Channel towards Omaha beach from the Atlantic, and in his opinion, sir, the landing should be postponed. Taking the tides into consideration, this would mean delaying D-Day for two weeks and most of the Allied forces, battle-ships, fighter planes and assault troops were either in or heading inexorably towards Normandy. Now there's a classic example of an invasion going awry if ever I heard one. But did the great British public twiddling the knobs of their bakelite wireless sets hear a whisper about it?

Certainly not, and just as well, because round about lunchtime that day, the industrious Group Captain Stagg, scanning his charts, noticed a minute change in the weather patterns which, he calculated, might just afford a window of opportunity for a landing the

following morning. Voilà you know the rest, though maybe not the finer details. I hasten to say I only know them from listening to a splendid programme on Radio 4 to celebrate 80 years of BBC weather forecasting.

The best thing about this story is that Group Captain Stagg pretty much worked this out on the back of an envelope, not having a computer. The giant new computer recently installed at the Met Office in Bracknell is capable of 150 billion calculations per second. Sixty years ago, weathermen really had to know their onions.

Instead of these endless dispatches from the front, my not, if we must talk about the war, have rolling vintage John Mills and Jack Hawkins films, which would at least raise our spirits. China Radio International last night had a spokesman from Friends of the Earth talking about the hard time the wildlife, particularly the foxes, were having in the Iraqi desert because of all those tanks rolling over the sand. Poor foxes.

Food, medicine

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ferings of the Iraqi people.

Reiterating her call for an immediate halt to the war on Iraq, the Prime Minister said: "Bangladesh is a peace-loving country and wants peaceful solution to all problems."

During the meeting at the PM's Office, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan submitted a report on the latest Middle-East war and world situation.

The Prime Minister stressed the need for security of life and property of the civilians in Iraq and preservation of the Gulf country's sovereignty and regional integrity.

Peace-loving people of the world, including the United States and Britain, have been vocal for an end to the "illogical and unacceptable war" and continued demonstrations in different towns and cities.

Apart from stopping the war, the Prime Minister called for the launch of relief and rehabilitation and reform activities in Iraq under UN leadership as per international laws and resolutions.

She emphasized more effective role of the United Nations in ensuring world peace and security.

The meeting also discussed high-level exchange of visits between Bangladesh, China and Thailand and progress in implementation of the agreements signed during the visits.

It directed the Foreign and

Pause on road

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not the first choice of U.S. strategists. But a bloody street-by-street take-over of the capital seen as even less desirable -- and possibly not much quicker.

"They will gain a victory by destroying Iraq but they will be destroyed in the whole world, politically, and in their credibility," said Professor Mohammed al-Mufsir, a political scientist at Qatar University.

"They laughed when the Iraqi people voted 100 percent for Saddam in election and now look; all of the Iraqis are fighting and taking up guns. He has become a hero. They have made him a hero. He has stood for 10 days," he added.

The hope in Washington and London remains that Saddam's leadership structure can be so shaken by bomb strikes and other attacks that it will collapse on itself while U.S. forces ring the city at a distance.

"Saddam's only hope for survival is to drag it out," said retired U.S. Army general William Nash, a 1991 Gulf War commander. Saddam would try to hold on until the international community demanded a cease-fire, he told the BBC.

But some Arab intellectuals despair of a cease-fire, saying the "regime change" demand by Washington and London left no other way out than total U.S.-British victory, precluding talks.

"There is nothing left to negotiate. They demand that Saddam goes and he will not. His people would turn against him if he surrendered now," Al-Mufsir said.

other ministries concerned to take effective measures to implement those agreements.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman, Political Secretaries to the Prime Minister Harris Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali, Chairman of the Board of Investment Mahmudur Rahman, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Siddiqui and Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury were present in the meeting.

Life is boredom

FROM PAGE 1

ised by what is going on.

Niveen, my oldest girl, is 11-years-old. On Friday, after a night of heavy bombing, she was suddenly very scared. Before that she'd been relatively unaffected. She's suddenly become very teary and anxious.

I've been giving Mariam children's sleeping pills or tiny bits of valium to help her relax and sleep.

It may seem funny to you, but we don't think ahead much - it's a condition of life in Baghdad.

If you think ahead too much, you'll be overcome by fear.

We're hoping the bombing will end soon, but God only knows what will follow that.

We're in our homes and that's very important, we've no plans to leave. We live day by day. We make our prayers and trust in God.

In my situation, I can't leave Baghdad. I have family commitments and responsibilities to my sisters and their children.

I can't really think of leaving and the family being split up. My view is, either we live together or we die together.

War dent

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There is also demand for more manpower in Kuwait but 'we have temporarily suspended export' due to the war, he added.

Last year, Bangladesh exported 15,794 people to different countries. Qumrul mentioned that 5,000 Bangladeshi workers' stay in Kuwait was legalised under an amnesty declared by the Kuwaiti government in July last year. The returnees in the last 10 days might include workers whose job contracts have expired.

The state minister said special arrangements have been made at the Zia International Airport for the returnees and many of the goods brought by them are now duty-free.

The government is also providing Tk 300 to each returnee to meet their immediate needs and special coupon for free their home-bound journey by train and launch.

He pointed out that the returnees seemed to have enough money with them. Only 54 of them accepted the monetary help and 24 others took the coupons.

Official sources said Bangladesh earns around 2.85 billion US dollars a year from 2.7 million expatriates across the world. Sixty-five per cent of the amount comes from workers in the Middle East countries.

Mourning turns into suicide revenge

FROM PAGE 1

as the raid began.

US warplanes used laser-guided bombs to destroy a building in Basra where some 200 paramilitary members were meeting, US Central Command said. No figures of casualty were available.

Iraq said the attack was on food warehouse. Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sabhaf said yesterday President Bush should be charged with war crimes in connection with the civilian deaths.

One British soldier was killed and five were injured in 'friendly fire' in southern Iraq, say British sources.

BODY BAGS POUR IN

Huge planes carrying bodies of 10 British servicemen out of 23 who died in the Iraq war arrived in Oxfordshire for a solemn ceremony. More wounded US soldiers were flown to Germany yesterday.

KUWAIT HIT

An Iraqi missile evaded Patriot anti-missile defences and slammed into a breakwater in Kuwait City, damaging a seafont shopping mall and wounding two people yesterday.

The missile, probably a Chinese-made anti-ship Silkworm, had been fired from the vicinity of the Faw peninsula, which British

forces said they had captured early in the war.

Iraq has fired a dozen missiles at Kuwait since the war began, but this was the first to hit the capital.

GRIEF, RAGE AND DEFIANCE Grief and rage over civilian casualties appear to be rallying the people of Baghdad. No major provincial cities are under US or British control and there has been no firm sign of Iraqis celebrating "liberation," as hoped for.

Western military experts also say they simply do not know how hard a fight will be waged by the Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard defending Baghdad. What they do know is that they currently outnumber US forces to the south.

The ultimate goal of Bush administration proponents of the invasion is to spark a democratic transformation of the Middle East, starting with Iraq. But the bloodier the overthrow of Saddam, the more difficult that may become.

BASRA FIGHTS ON

Basra remained far from "secured" yesterday contrary to earlier US claims. Severe fighting was reported.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

Ground combat continued in southern and central Iraq, while US forces pressed ahead with air and