

DHAKA TODAY

Photography exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of the first solo exhibition of digital photography by Monzurul Huq will be held. Venue: Drk Gallery. Time: 5.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till April 3 from 3.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

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 Aparna 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, 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

Movie show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Moulin Rouge'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.00pm.

Musical evening

Nandan, a cultural organisation, organises a musical evening. Venue: Bishwa Sahitya Kendra auditorium, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Time: 5.30pm.

Thai food festival

The inaugural ceremony of a five-day long Thai Food Festival, organised by the Pan Pacific Sonargaon, will be held with State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin as chief guest. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 12 noon.

Seminar

NGO Forum organises a seminar titled 'Safe Water for the Future Generations' with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest.

Venue: BETS Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 9.00am.

Workshop

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organises a workshop on 'Widow's Plight in Bangladesh: Rethinking Policies'. Venue: BRAC Centre Inn, Mohakhali. Time: 10.00am.

ASB meeting

Ageneral meeting of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (ASB) will be held. Prof Hamiduzzaman, head of the Department of Sculpture, Institute of Fine Arts, will deliver a lecture on the development of sculpture in post-independent Bangladesh. Venue: Seminar room of the society. Time: 5.00pm.

Human chain

Bangladesh Adhykha Parishad and Bangladesh College Shikkhak Samity will jointly form a human chain to protest the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. Venue: Manik Miah Avenue, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 11.00am.

Anti-war rally

Anti-War Movement organises a rally in protest against the US-led attack on Iraq. Venue: Aparajeo Bangla, Dhaka University. Time: 11.00am.

DHAKA TOMORROW

French film show

Alliance Francaise will screen three French films titled 'France la visite', 'Taxi 2' and 'Asterix et Obelix- Mission Cleopatre'. Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am, 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

Movie show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Star War Part 4'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.00pm.

13,000 down with arsenicosis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 13,000 people are down with arsenicosis and 3.6 crore more (36 million) are at risk of contracting the disease for drinking contaminated tubewell water, activists said.

The arsenic affected people are not even aware of the disease, said Dr Abul Hasanat Milton, arsenic cell chief of NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation.

He was addressing a Meet the Press on 'Arsenic Mitigation in Bangladesh' organised by the NGOs for Arsenic Information and Supply Unit (NAISU) in the Press Club yesterday.

Dr Milton said people in the rural areas did not consider the disease as an important health hazard as it took two to ten years to spread in human body.

Executive Director of NGO

Forum S M A Rashid said everyday 20,000 tonnes of human waste polluted surface water, the alternative source of safe drinking water, due to lack of proper sanitation.

He called for closer government and NGO coordination in facing the menace, saying the problem could not be resolved by anyone alone.

Timothy J Claydon, country representative of Water Aid Bangladesh, stressed the need for ensuring safe drinking water in the rural areas, adding about 20,000 people died of diarrhoea every year.

The conference was also addressed by Abdul Motaleb, director of WATSAN partnership project, Shafiqul Islam of UNICEF, Dr Fajlul of the Community Hospital and Sanjoy Mukharjee of NAISU.

Robbers gun down 2 in Banshkhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two persons were shot dead and three injured in two incidents of robbery in Banshkhali coastal upazila in the early hours yesterday.

According to police and witnesses, some 30 armed robbers attacked the house of jeweller Aporba Dharr, 45, in Jalodi village at around 3 am. They looted gold ornaments and other valuables holding the inmates on gunpoint.

Ocean freight

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In the run up to the war, an increased BAF of US\$ 190 came into effect on March 1.

Excluding the WRS, the increased GRI and BAF alone would raise the fare of each container from US\$ 1150 to US\$ 1305 on North European and Mediterranean routes and US\$ 800 to US\$ 1055 on Middle East routes.

The cost of export or import items might go up several times as soon as the increased fares go into effect, as about 50 percent of the goods are transported through North European and Middle-East routes.

At present about 15,000 containers of goods are carried through North European and Mediterranean ports and about 4,000 containers through Middle Eastern ports.

They further added that the member shipping lines of Trans-Pacific Stabilization Agreement (TSA), another conference lines, have already started realising increased fare.

Major shipping lines such as P & O, Maersk, Hapagolyed, APL, OOCL, Nor Asia, NYK and YML are the members of these conference lines (IPBCL and TSA), sources said.

While fleeing, they fired indiscriminately, injuring Aporba and killing his younger brother Ranajit Dharr, 35, a construction contractor, on the spot. Aporba was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in a critical condition.

In the other incident in Madhya Katharia village about one hour later, a gang of about 25 robbers looted valuables and goods worth over Tk 3 lakh from four houses and seven shops.

Chased by villagers, the robbers sprayed bullets killing night guard Anu Miah, 55, on the spot and injuring two others. The injured persons -- Badruzzaman, 28 and Abdul Karim, 45 -- were admitted to CMCH.

Two cases were filed with Banshkhali thana.

SC Bar polls begin

BSS, Dhaka

The two-day election of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association began yesterday at the Bar building.

Out of 2,570 voters, 1,036 cast their votes yesterday.

Two panels, one of them pro-government and the other pro-opposition -- are contesting the election.

Advocate TH Khan and Mohammed Mifta Uddin Chowdhury Rumi are contesting from the pro-government 'Jatiyabadi Oikya Panel' for the posts of president and secretary respectively.

Barrister Rakan Uddin Mahmood and Mohammed Mahboob Ali are fighting from the pro-opposition 'Ainibibi Samanya Parisad' for the posts.



(From left) Members of a theatre group shout anti-US slogans; students of English medium schools burn an effigy of US President George W Bush; and members of Projanmer Chetona form a human chain calling for an end to the US-led attack on Iraq in Dhaka yesterday.

Diarrhoea in Khagrachhari kills four

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cog

Diarrhoea has taken an epidemic turn in remote Kukichhara area in Ramgarh upazila in Khagrachhari district.

Four persons died and over 50 were hospitalised in the last twenty-four hours ending at 6pm yesterday evening, sources said. The dead were identified as Pru Lai Tripura, 43, Anika Tripura, 2, Banika Tripura, 2, and Akrai Murma.

The affected people were admitted to Matiranga and Manikchhari health complexes.

The Khagrachhari civil surgeon visited the area yesterday, the sources said.

Stalemate at SUST continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The stalemate at the Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST) continues with the liaison committee of teachers, officers and employees agitating for the vice chancellor's resignation.

The members of the liaison committee staged a 4-hour sit-in demonstration on the campus yesterday.

They have also appealed to the prime minister and chancellor of SUST to withdraw the VC for 'saving the varsity'.

"There is no alternative to withdrawing the VC, as he has lost his moral right to run the institution," they said. They also announced that the movement would continue until their demand was met. The committee will bring out a procession on the campus today.

The students of the university observed a token hunger strike for two hours in front of Sylhet Press Club yesterday demanding immediate resumption of classes. Another group of students brought out a procession on the campus. They will organise a human chain and sit-in demonstration in front of the Shahid Minar today.

The activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League brought out a procession and held a protest rally on the campus. After the rally, three activists of the BCL were taken to the students union office by the JCD supporters and were reportedly manhandled. However, the JCD refuted the allegation.

Living on the edge

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everywhere else in the world," he said.

At least two communications centres were struck with about seven missiles on the dawn of the 11th day of massive US-British strikes on the capital since the launch of war against President Saddam Hussein's regime.

"The al-Aadhamiya telephone centre was hit two days ago, so we got scared and decided to sleep in the shelter at the end of the road," said Shakar, a 56-year-old former employee of the industry ministry.

"But now that our home is totally destroyed, we are not just sleeping at the shelter, we have actually moved there. It will be our home until we rebuild ours," he said.

Baghdad residents, acquainted with US-led raids against infrastructure and civilian services sites from the 1991 Gulf war and the 1998 bombing campaign, have been expecting massive bombardment of such targets and nearby "collateral damage": their homes. Their telephone lines have also been cut off.

"The American bombings are usually very accurate," said Anis Abdallah, a barber who still lives on the other side of the road where he braves daytime bombings to open his shop every day.

"But you never know. Look at all these homes around the centre that are destroyed," said Abdallah, before explaining to his nine-year-old daughter Tiba that "America is the one that destroyed our telephones and our country."

A hundred metres down the road from the communications centre, a gigantic crater filled with water from gutted pipes replaced what used to be three small houses and a shoe shop.

There were no casualties since the communications centre and

nearby homes and shops were all deserted.

But around midday on Sunday, an additional coalition missile struck the Al-Aadhamiya communications centre again as workers were clearing rubble and journalists were filming after the overnight strikes.

A 50-year-old man was wounded and taken by ambulance to hospital. Another person was treated for shock.

Minutes before the mid-day strike, four busloads of journalists were on a tour organised by the information ministry of sites bombed during the night.

In front of a destroyed home next door to the communications centre, a veiled woman was sitting silently on a swing, carrying a sleeping baby.

"Our children did not sleep tonight because of the bombing, and we were in a small room in the house when the centre was bombed. We escaped miraculously," said Zeinab Fouad al-Malki, 40.

Across the street from the Al-Salhiya communications centre, stands a rectangular building behind a large fence. A sign reads: "Saddam Centre for Cardiac Surgery."

The medical centre suffered a few hefty knocks overnight but there were no injuries as it had recently been only open for outpatients for safety reasons.

Two workers in blue overalls were standing by the rubble at the destroyed communications centre, looking at the scene with arms crossed and eyes fixed on the mangled switchboards.

"We came to help, we work at a similar communications centre in the north of the capital," said one of them. "Ours has not been bombed," interrupted the other, before adding "yet."

State minister injured in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharef Hossain Shajahan was injured when his car collided with a taxicab at Hare Road in the city yesterday.

He was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) with head injuries.

More organisations protest war Boycott US-British goods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations in Dhaka joined torrents of protest and condemnation of US-led invasion of Iraq and demanded boycott of Anglo-American products and immediate end to the propaganda campaign by Western media.

Bangladesh Teachers Association (BTA) in a statement urged the teachers' community to boycott the Anglo-American goods.

Demanding an immediate end to the aggression, BTA President Kazi Abdur Razzaque and Secretary General Mohammad Salim Bhuiyan said the whole world condemned the Anglo-US coalition forces for killing innocent civilians, including children and women.

Dhaka Metropolitan Committee of Bangladesh Workers Party (BWP) also urged the people to boycott the US and UK goods.

In a statement, the leaders of BWP said the US and UK sold their goods in the Third World and the revenue earned from the countries

were now being used against Iraq.

Two hundred and ten distinguished personalities of Civil Society Against Imperialist War demanded an immediate end to the smear campaign by the Western media.

In a joint statement, they said the Western media including BBC, CNN, VOA are dishing out inappropriate news in favour of the imperialist Anglo-American alliance.

Signatories to the statement included poet Shamsur Rahman, journalist Faiz Ahmed, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, social worker Hena Das, vocalist Kalim Sharafi and Prof Mostafa Nurul Islam.

Projanmer Chetona formed a human chain in front of the National Museum and voiced their protest against US-UK invasion of Iraq and demanded immediate end to the unjustified war to save innocent children.

Condemning the invasion, Bangladesh Chhatra Union demanded immediate halt to the war.

Speakers at a conference organised by Bangladesh National

Council of Textile Garments Leather Workers-BNC expressed the concern that poverty and child labour would increase following the war.

They also said the war posed threats to export of goods, including ready-made garments and textiles.

The speakers also demanded immediate end to the war, saying it was against peace and humanity.

National University Officers' Association led by Vice-Chancellor Prof Abdul Momen Chowdhury formed a human chain in protest against the war. Teachers, officers and employees of the university took part in it.

Bangladesh Principal Parishad and Bangladesh College Teachers' Association in a joint statement condemned the US invasion of Iraq and protested against it.

They will form a human chain today at 11 am on Manik Miah Avenue and urged the students and teachers to take part in the protest.

The World Federation of Trade Unions called for intensive actions to stop the war on Iraq.

2 brothers

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including Babul's friend Sohail said.

They fired two shots in Nura's chest and leg. Babul was shot in the stomach and hacked as he came to save his brother. Babul died on the spot and Nura was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died later.

The killers fled the scene allegedly with the help of Jall member of Madanpur, sources claimed.

The two groups had old family rivalry. The road construction work was also one of the reasons for the killings as Surat Ali had threatened the two brothers after he got the work, sources claimed.

Free trade

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if the political will is there.

Dubey said that India is trying to find alternatives as it believes that without any change in Pakistan's policy there is no possibility of a trade block emerging in this region.

Then he raised the question, "If Pakistan is the biggest obstacle in regional free trade arrangement, then why the other countries cannot make one?"

US aggression

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term election, claiming that the present government has failed to run the country smoothly and to express solidarity with the war-ravaged Iraqi people when the whole world burst into protest against the war.

Al general secretary, Abdul Jalil, called upon his deputies to strengthen the anti-government movement and force it to announce a mid-term election.

"The BNP-Jamaat alliance government has failed at every step -- the law and order is creaking, prices of essentials are spiralling and the country's image abroad has been blurred," he said adding that this government has lost legitimacy to run the country.

He was critical of the government's stance on the Iraq issue saying that it failed to clarify its position to the people when hun-

dreds of civilians including women and children are being killed in the war that began 11 days ago.

AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said the government's silence on Iraq proves that the BNP-Jamaat alliance is neither with the Islamic world nor with the common people. "They have been taking advantage in politics in the name of Islam, but they are not with the Muslim countries," he said.

Termining this war unjust and illegal, Suranjit Sengupta said the AL condemns the US-led aggression. "We stand by the Iraqi people."

Among others, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, Ivy Rahman, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Habibur Rahman Mollah, Abdus Salam Khan and other city unit leaders addressed the gathering.

Endless tide

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across the asphalt.

Earlier, allied forces had dropped two bombs on a building where a meeting of 200 members of the Baath party was supposedly taking place. A pair of F-15E Strike Eagles fired laser-guided munitions fitted with delayed fuses meaning they penetrated the two-storey building before detonating, to minimise the effect of the blast on the building's surroundings. Official statements did not say how Anglo-American forces knew about the meeting, and it was not clear whether there were casualties.

About 800 yards beyond the bridge was the front line for the British forces, or at least the line of containment. The British and Americans say they have no plans to take the city of Basra, despite reports that there has been a popular uprising that was put down by forces loyal to Saddam Hussein. Instead they are desperate to gain some control over a situation that is still very unstable an objective they were only partially achieving yesterday.

Certainly they were preventing most of the young men entering Basra: they were also stopping and checking all the young men leaving the city. Several soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the Irish Guards said they had stopped many young men in civilian clothes and discovered they were carrying their Iraqi army fatigues in plastic bags.

Those believed to be senior officers were being led away to a wrecked compound taken over by British soldiers. The Independent on Sunday watched as a group of about five or six men were marched into the compound in a line with green canvas bags pulled over their heads, one arm on the shoulder of the man in front. Inquiries as to what was going on in the compound, and

why soldiers needed to put bags over the heads of their prisoners, were not warmly greeted by the Scottish soldier on guard at the gate.

Captain James Moulton, whose armoured vehicle marked the closest the British troops were going to the city, was a lot friendlier as he explained how his men had come under fire yesterday morning from buildings 400 yards away. He could not tell whether the fire was from regular soldiers or some other unit perhaps the Fedayeen militia, said to be fanatically loyal to President Saddam.

"Look at those two men on the back of that truck," he said, nodding towards the road. "They're probably deserters." But while the troops were effective at establishing the checkpoint, they were less effective at communicating their wishes to local people leaving them angry and confused, their truckloads of tomatoes and goods sitting beneath the hot sun as they tried to force their way through.

"Why are the British soldiers treating me like this?" asked a young man called Adnan. He said he was a petrochemical engineer, and could not understand why he could not return to Basra. He had not been home for seven days and had not been able to contact his family. "We need liberty, not invasion," he said. "I don't know what is going on."

The problem of communication is one of the most basic that British and US forces are encountering. Few units have translators, and phrase cards have been given out about one for every four troops. Lt Moulton was happy to show his Easy Guide to Arabic for Soldiers at Roadblocks or whatever it was called. It reveals the kind of things a soldier might need to communicate to people whose country he is invading. Qan-nass is, apparently, Arabic for sniper.