



PHOTO: AFP

A girl cries in fear, as Iraqis flee Basra across one of the city's bridges manned by British soldiers. A battle has begun in earnest with hundreds of British marines in Basra launching a major assault to secure a suburb.

Crackdown on fuel thieves goes well

REAZ AHMAD

A countrywide drive to check fuel pilferage and cheating of customers in gasoline stations is gaining momentum, much to the relief of motor vehicle owners.

To check pilferage, 'flow adjusting device' (FAD) has been installed in 2000 out of 3,368 dispensing units in 971 petrol pumps across the country so far. The drive began on January 21 and is likely to be completed by April 30.

Transport owners can now be sure of getting the accurate quantity of petrol, diesel and octane they pay for at FAD-installed dispensing units, officials concerned told The Daily Star yesterday.

As per a decision of a January 4 meeting at the energy ministry, nine teams comprising representatives from fuel marketing companies and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) are inspecting petrol pumps across the country and installing the FAD.

BSTI Deputy Director Habibur Rob Majumdar told this correspondent yesterday that FAD has been installed in 630 units in 127 petrol pumps in Dhaka division where there are 1259 dispensing units in 287 pumps.

The device has been installed in all the 731 dispensing units in 219

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Corruption costs govt Tk 4,300cr last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) - in its news scan analysis report released here yesterday - said at least 440 cases of corruption by government officials caused a loss of more than Tk 4,391 crore to the government in 2002.

The amount is 1.85 per cent of the GDP of 1999-2000 fiscal and 10.38 per cent of the national budget of 2001-2002.

The report was prepared after analysing 2778 news items of corruption published in 23 newspapers (17 national and six regional newspapers) from January to December 2002.

TIB identified the law enforcing agencies as the most corrupt, accounting for 18.4 per cent of the corruption

reports in newspapers.

The local government was the second most corrupt sector (15.4 per cent of the corruption reports), while education was third with 15 per cent reports. The health sector and the land administration accounted for 8.4 and 4.4 per cent corruption reports respectively.

Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, a member of the TIB board of trustees, released the report at a press conference at the Tennis Complex auditorium yesterday morning.

The first class officers working in the local government, education and health sectors were found responsible for 25.5 per cent of the corrupt practices, while the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

3 cops, ansar jailed for extortion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Three police personnel and an ansar have been convicted of extortion and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment.

The convicts are sergeant Abhijeet Dev Roy, constables Mostafizur Rahman, Sirajul Islam and Ansar Anwar Hossain.

Of them, Anwar was sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment while sergeant Abhijeet and constables Mostafiz and Sirajul to two and a half years rigorous imprisonment.

Al-Mamun, Magistrate of the Speedy Trial Court (West), Dhaka, found them guilty of extorting Tk 100 from a rickshaw van puller in the city's Mirpur area on February 19 and gave the verdict yesterday.

In the case filed with Mirpur police station, it was alleged that the Rapid Action Team (RAT) caught Anwar from the spot with the extorted money while the rest three managed to escape.

On information received from Anwar the RAT arrested the rest three the same day.

Victim Motiur Rahman filed an extortion case with Mirpur police station accusing the policemen and Ansar.

The Investigation Officer of the case submitted a charge sheet against them on February 27.

Nine of the 20 prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

Court Sub-Inspector Siraj Uddin conducted the case on behalf of the state while advocate Iqbal Hossain appeared for the accused.

Term of CHT councils extended

A CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The term of Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari district councils has been extended by three months, the Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs Ministry said yesterday.

This is the 12th extension of their tenure, which ended on June 30, 1992.

A 31-member district council of each of the three districts was formed in 1989 for three years. Since then their term is being extended without holding election.

The Supreme Court on December last year issued an order for holding election of the three district councils in March 31.

War architects under fire

INDEPENDENT, Undated

British Prime Minister Tony Blair suffered a backlash from senior Labour MPs over the war in Iraq yesterday when a former minister warned that the conflict could turn into another Vietnam.

The growing political tensions affected the architects of war on both sides of the Atlantic and the Bush administration was forced to deny that its strategy is in disarray. Reports surfaced of a rift between senior US military commanders and Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, over the size and nature of the force sent to oust Saddam Hussein.

In Washington, Rumsfeld and General Richard Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, flatly denied suggestions of disagreement. "That's not true," the US Defence Secretary declared.

And he dismissed suggestions that the 12-day campaign was taking a breather -- of anything up to a month, some reports have suggested -- to allow reinforcements to arrive at

the front line, 50 miles south of Baghdad. "We have no plans for pauses or ceasefires or anything else," Rumsfeld said.

But while air attacks continued on Republican Guard units and on "regime targets" in the capital, the impression is that the US forces are digging in, building up reserves and securing supply lines.

Although the Allies attacked Baghdad, where a huge fire was burning after the Iraqis lit an oil trench close to the city centre, the main action seemed to be around the southern port of Basra. British forces claimed to have captured five senior Iraqi officers and hit the city's television tower. A British soldier was killed when his launch on the Zubayr river came under grenade attack.

In London the unofficial political truce since the war began was shattered when Robin Cook, who resigned as Leader of the Commons two weeks ago, called for British forces to be brought home.

After being accused of disloyalty to the troops by his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

US troops, Republican Guard fight major battle



AFP 31/03/03

DU teacher sues VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shafiqur Rahman, a law faculty lecturer of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday filed a case against 23 DU teachers including Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof. SMA Faiz.

Shafique said he had filed a case at the Dhaka District Judge's Court against them for violating university ordinance. The hearing of the case is scheduled to take place today, Shafique said.

Among others Pro-VC Yusuf Haider, registrar, treasurer, proctor, provost of Shahidullah Hall and teachers of the law department were named in relation to the case, he said.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Fake PS to minister held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested an imposter passing himself off as the personal secretary (PS) of the state minister for home on Sunday night.

Tawhid Kashem Khan Prince, managing director of Prince Trade Syndicate Ltd. was caught from a hotel in the city's Rampura area. Prince is actually a friend of State Minister Lutfulzaman Babor's brother-in-law.

According to police, Prince had been masquerading as the state

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

HC rules waiver for foreign ships illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A general waiver given to foreign ships by the Department of Shipping to load and unload cargo at Bangladesh ports without permission has been declared unlawful.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court gave the judgement recently upholding a High Court Division verdict.

The court, however, allowed the issuance of waiver certificates to foreign flag vessels in accordance with Bangladesh Flag Vessel (Protection) Ordinance 1982 on case to case basis.

The certificate will be issued when

Bangladesh flag vessels will not be available and capable to carry cargo relating to foreign trade to and from Bangladesh.

The Appellate Division comprising Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, Justice Syed J R Mudassar Husain and Justice Abu Sayeed Ahammed gave the judgement on February 8 this year. But its written version was made available to the press yesterday.

The judgement resolved a long dispute between local and foreign ship owners over the share of sea cargo to and from Bangladesh.

The High Court followed a peti

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Trade slump feared on war surcharge

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

Business circles apprehend a slump in the export-import trade following imposition of war risk surcharge (WRS) and fuel surcharge on shipping freight in Gulf and Karachi routes, effective from today.

For Gulf routes, WRS has been fixed at US\$ 150 and fuel surcharge at US\$ 95 for a 20-foot container, shipping sources said.

The decision was taken by the India-Pakistan-Bangladesh-Conference Lines (IPBCL) at its recent meeting held in Hong Kong.

The increase follows a general rate increase (GRI) of US\$ 150 in March 1, they added.

Talking to this correspondent, Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association

(BSAA) Chairman Farid Ahmed Chowdhury said Bangladesh's trade will be "badly affected" due to the freight increase.

"Cost of import and export goods will automatically go up triggering a negative impact on our overall economy" he said.

However, some of the shipping lines said they will not make the WRS and fuel surcharge effective from today.

On the other hand, a section of people involved in freight business are reportedly trying to make money on the plea of WRS, sources said.

Bangladesh exports frozen fish, vegetables, tea and some other items to the Gulf region, and tea and jute goods to Pakistan.

It imports various essential items through the Gulf and Karachi routes.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
April 1		6-15 pm
April 2	5-50 am	

Prayer Timings		
April 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-15
Maghrib	6-21	6-27
Esha	7-35	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation