

Gruesome deaths on highway

10 children, women killed at checkpoint as US troops fire; British soldier dead; house-to-house fight in Hindiyah



PHOTO: STAR

An Iraqi wails over the body of his mother in Hilla in the southern province of Babylon yesterday. The man lost 15 members (including six children) of his family as his car was bombed by coalition helicopters while fleeing al-Haidariyah towards Babylon.

US looks to night operations to avoid Iraq heat

REUTERS, Washington

US and British forces may be compelled to fight at night because of the searing heat if the war in Iraq drags on into late spring or early summer, analysts said on Monday.

The troops could also risk heat stroke on the battlefield if they don full-body chemical warfare suits in soaring temperatures.

Every day that passes raises the chances that the invading armies will have to fight in the heat expected to come to Iraq, particularly southern Iraq, starting in late April and May.

"It's only logical that the senior leadership wants to avoid large-scale operations in extreme weather conditions. You just don't want to do it. It's incredibly hard on the troops," said retired US Marine Corps Col. Phil Anderson, an analyst with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Once it heats up to 100-plus degrees (37-plus degrees Celsius), it's going to make things very, very difficult."

The average daily high temperature in Iraq in May is 96 degrees (35 Celsius), rising to 105 degrees in June (40 Celsius).

Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said US forces are capable of fighting in any weather, but said nighttime operations could be used in order to avoid the heat of

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STAR DESK

The invasion of Iraq took another nasty turn yesterday when US troops fired on a car packed with civilians near Najaf and killed 10 unarmed women and children.

A few hours later, another civilian car driver was killed by the troops south of Baghdad, fuelling Arab anger. The driver in a white truck was apparently oblivious to barbed wire strewn across the road.

The US troops violated their own instructions of firing early warning shots to stop any car and sprayed bullets on the speeding car with 15 women and children.

Five children, all under five years, and five women died instantly. Others were also critically wounded.

A Washington Post reporter travelling with the US troops at Najaf said the warning shots were not fired and rather bullets were indiscriminately sprayed on the car.

"You just killed a family because you didn't fire a warning shot soon enough," Captain Ronny Johnson, who was in charge of the checkpoint, yelled at his troops after the incident.

Civilian deaths kept on piling on the 13th day of the war. Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf said 56 civilians had been killed in US-

led air raids yesterday, including 24 in overnight bombings in Baghdad and five in the morning.

A BBC correspondent in Baghdad said he saw distressing pictures of mutilated bodies of a family who were killed in a missile hit in Babylon yesterday.

"This morning the villains have bombarded the Nader district in the southern part of the city. Nine Iraqi children were martyred, among them one small baby," the Iraqi information minister said.

The battle yesterday took to the streets as Iraqi forces and Anglo-

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Export orders dip on Iraq war

Govt urged to immediately take bailout measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing war in Iraq is taking a heavy toll on the overall export performance with orders declining sharply, leaders of export-oriented industries said yesterday.

The government should immediately take some bailout measures including release of funds for cash incentive, waiving of interest on bank loans for a certain period and continuation of subsidy for carrying perishable items.

At a meeting with the apex trade

body, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), business leaders also urged for analysing the impact of the ongoing war on Bangladesh's export-oriented industries and identifying possible solutions.

The FBCCI organised the meeting with its President Yussuf Abdullah Harun in the chair.

Joint Secretary General of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association Humayun Kabir pointed out that 45 per cent of

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Libyan aid for Iraq

AFP, Tripoli

A Libyan transport plane bound for Syria and carrying emergency aid for Iraq took off from Tripoli on Monday night, official sources said.

It was the first flight in a planned programme of aid for the beleaguered population of Iraq and included food supplies and medicine due to be carried into Iraq across the land border with Syria.

In Damascus, a Libyan diplomat said: "Fifteen Libyan flights each carrying 40 tonnes of food and medicine are due to land in Syria as part of an airlift programme."

A Libyan medical team was also heading for Iraq via Syria, the sources said.

US jets pound human shield buses: Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

US warplanes attacked two buses bringing American and European peace activists to Baghdad from neighbouring Jordan, Iraq said yesterday.

Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf told a news conference the injured were being treated in a hospital near the Jordanian border. He gave no more details of casualties.

"Yesterday an American warplane attacked two buses on the highway between Amman and Baghdad with foreign passengers, among them Americans," Sahaf said, adding later that Europeans had also been on board.

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Nine drown in Padma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least 9 people drowned in a boat capsized in the river Padma at Narayanpur union in Chapainawabganj district yesterday morning.

Local people recovered the bodies from the river.

Six of the victims are: Sontosh Kumar, 29, Narayan Chandra Das, 31, Menuka Rani, 40, Mithun, 20, Sanjay Das, 10, and Krishna Chandra Sarkar. They all hailed from Laharpur in Barogharia union.

Police, however, confirmed only three deaths.

The incident occurred at around 8:30am when the boat sank in the

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star introduces yet another exciting innovation, "Star City", to better serve our valued readers. This 4-page additional section will come out every Wednesday and Sunday, starting today.

It will include Star Holiday, Star Tech, Star Health, Star Photo Feature and Star Chittagong.

We welcome readers' comments and contributions to this new section. Price remains unchanged at Tk 7. -- Editor