



Students of Dhaka Medical College demonstrate in the city yesterday against US-led attack on Iraq; Jatiya Shishu-Kishore Parishad protests killing of Iraqi children in bombardment by coalition forces; employees of Public Works Department shout against the attack and DESA workers burn an effigy of US President George W Bush.

Truly remarkable

FROM PAGE 12 months and wheel our young soldiers west to surround Damascus? Where, for heaven's sake, is all this going? We were going to "liberate" Iraq.

But the war could be "long and difficult," George W Bush now tells us - he didn't tell us that before, did he? - and, according to Tony Blair, this is "only the beginning."

"Oh, really? Strange, isn't it, how all that fuss about chemical and biological warfare has been forgotten."

The "secret" weapons, the gas masks, the anti-anthrax injections, the pills and chemical suits have now been erased from the story - because bullets and rocket-propelled grenades are now the real danger to British and American forces in Iraq.

Even the "siege of Baghdad" - a city which is 30 miles wide and might need a quarter of a million men to surround it - is fading from the diary.

Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld according to the "New Yorker" interfered with the General's "plan".

This was going to be - I quote Mr Rumsfeld - "war of a kind we have never seen before."

He can say that again. Sitting in Baghdad, listening to the God-awful propaganda rhetoric of the Iraqis but watching the often promiscuous American and British air attacks - targeting an alleged missile battery near a market place in a capital city at midday during a sandstorm (Start italic) is (End italic) going to kill civilians, is it not? - I have a suspicion that what's gone wrong has nothing to do with plans.

Indeed, I suspect there is no real overall plan. Because I rather think that this war's foundations were based not on military planning but on ideology. Long ago, as we know, the right wing pro-Israeli lobbyists around Mr Bush planned the overthrow of Saddam.

This would destroy the most powerful Arab state in the Middle East - Israel's chief of staff, Shoal Mofaz, demanded that the war should start even earlier than it did - and allow the map of the region to be changed

3 of a family electrocuted in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Three members of a family were electrocuted at village Madra in Tala upazila of the district on Monday night.

The victims were identified as Bimal Kumar Mondal, 32, his wife Shefali Rani Mondal, 27, and mother Annada Mondal, 60.

Police said Bimal Kumar was electrocuted when he came in touch with a live electric wire in front of his house at around 10pm.

Bimal's wife Shefali Rani and mother Annada Mondal were also electrocuted as they came to save him.

On information, police went to the village yesterday, recovered the bodies and sent them to Satkhira hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Tala police station.

Arab states

FROM PAGE 12 Ambassador Goncalo de Santa Clara Gomes, Arab envoys said.

Santa Clara Gomes is the assembly's acting president in the absence of Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic, who is out of town until April 9, UN officials said.

Arab diplomats said they were seeking the assembly meeting on orders from Arab foreign ministers, who adopted a declaration in Cairo last week "affirming (their) solidarity with Baghdad" and condemning "the American-British aggression against Iraq."

The declaration instructed Arab nations at the United Nations to initially try to "halt the aggression" through an emergency session of the Security Council.

Failing that, it told the bloc to take the matter to the General Assembly.

Dacoits loot shops, houses in Banshkhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Dacoits looted shops and houses in Banshkhali upazila at midnight on Monday.

At least three persons were injured by the gang. Police said a gang of 25 entered Chunati Bazar in Katharia union at around 11.30pm and looted goods worth Tk.10 lakh from 16 shops.

The gang stabbed two shop owners named Jafar Ali, 25, and Jamal Sowdagar, 30. They were admitted to the local health complex.

The gang later went to Baghmara village near Chunati Bazar and looted valuables and gold ornaments worth Tk.4 lakh from the houses of Yousuf Mohammad, Ofiur Rahman, Abu Ahmed and Hazi Kabir Ahmed. One Fatema Begum, 65, was injured by the dacoits.

Shibir, JCD clash at Barisal Medical College

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two persons were injured in a clash between the activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College yesterday.

Campus sources said Shibir brought out a procession on the campus protesting US invasion of Iraq. They (Shibir men) also raised slogan against JCD.

JCD brought out a counter procession and swooped on the Shibir men, leaving two injured.

Rehana's house

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Meanwhile, Awami League strongly condemned the government for 'illegally occupying' the house using lawenforcers.

"As per a cabinet decision, the house was allocated to Rehana as daughter of the father of the nation," AL general secretary Abdul Jalil said in a statement.

He said the housing ministry also handed over all the documents of the house to Rehana on July 12, 2001. "But the BNP-Jamaat government occupied the house unlawfully sending police personnel."

Jalil said the autocratic character of the government was exposed through the incident.

He also dismissed as "false, baseless and unlawful" the government's claim that the allocation of the house stood cancelled automatically with the repeal of 'Father of the Nation's Family Members Security Act 2001'.

He demanded immediate withdrawal of police from Rehana's house and release of the arrested persons.

Morshed khan

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relations, Morshed said Bangladesh attaches great importance to its relations with Japan as "we have been getting support and assistance for development of economic infrastructure, poverty alleviation and human development from Japan."

He said Bangladesh and Japan, both signatories to the NPT and CTET, work together in peacekeeping missions in various parts of the world.

Morshed said that in his meeting with the Japanese Foreign Minister, he would convey the deep appreciation of the government of Bangladesh for Japan's support and assistance.

Later, Japanese Senior Vice Foreign Minister T Yono paid a courtesy call on the foreign minister.

Morshed told Yono that Bangladesh and Japan enjoy excellent bilateral relations and that Bangladesh has benefited tremendously from Japanese assistance.

He praised Japan for its international role and added that Japan has brought about a fundamental change in Bangladesh by contributing to its economic and social infrastructure building.

Morshed also briefed him about establishment of democracy in Bangladesh and its success in economic development and in achieving self-sufficiency in food.

Yono praised Bangladesh's peace-keeping role in East Timor.

Shazneen case

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ing day, he returned home at 1.00pm and at the airport he came to know from his wife over telephone that Shazneen was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Soon after hearing the news, he went straight to Latifur Rahman's (Shazneen's father) Gulshan residence and talked to him (Latifur Rahman) about the tragic death of his daughter, the witness told the court.

"At about 9.00pm on May 27, 1998, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) police took Guard Humayun Kabir (now dead) to the residence of Latifur Rahman where Mrs. Latifur Rahman, her elder daughter Simeen Hossain, Mrs. Yeasmin Morshed, Akku Chowdhury and I were present. Later, Humayun was taken to the northern side of the house and a chisel was recovered from the rooftop of the servants' bathroom adjacent to the wall. The CID then made a seizure-list and Akku Chowdhury and I put our signatures on it. At one stage, Humayun informed us that Shaniram, another accused in the case, gave him the chisel," Mahabur Rahman said.

"After a while, Humayun was taken to the victim's bedroom and he narrated in our presence how Shahid, Parvin and he raped and killed Shazneen."

"Humayun then said that he hit Shazneen with the chisel and Shahid stabbed her with the kitchen knife. Parvin grabbed her by the hair. Then the three pulled down Shazneen from the bed. She was becoming unconscious. Shahid raped her in this condition. He (Humayun) then came out of the room with the chisel and kept it on the rooftop of the servants' bathroom and entered the bathroom to wash his blood-stained hands and legs. Humayun also said that Hasan and his employee Badal hired

him, Shahid, Parvin, Minu and Shaniram with money to rape and kill Shazneen," the witness said.

Special Public Prosecutors (PPs) Arfan uddin Khan, Mahub Ahmed and Saima Khanam and Assistant PP Anisur Rahman appeared for the state. Advocates MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam and Abdus Salam Bhuiyan defended the accused.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Robber held

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in the area, joined the villagers. The shootout ensued when the fleeing robbers fired at the security personnel.

Police recovered a gold chain, a pair of earring and clothes from injured Ratan. The other gang members managed to flee.

9 drowned

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Some 40 people from Narayanpur, Barogharia, and Ramchandrapur were going to 'Patha Boli' fair at Nurpur in Murshidabad, India.

A local journalist, quoting survivors Dayal and Madhu, said that every year the Hindus of the area visit India on the occasion of the fair. The border security during the time usually remains rather lax.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Nurul Huq, deputy commissioner of Chapainawabganj, said the rescue operation was still going on.

Anti-war protests continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Through different programmes, various socio-political organisations continued protest against the US-led attack on Iraq.

While the people of Bangladesh is protesting the imperialism of Britain and America in Iraq, the Government has completely failed to show respect to public opinion, said leaders of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh in their meeting yesterday.

A protest meeting was held by the Bangladesh Women's Awami League at

their central office at Bangabandhu Avenue. They expressed their concern over the killing of innocent children and civilians in Iraq.

Gonotantik Biplobi Jote (Democratic Revolutionary Alliance) held two street meetings and a protest procession yesterday.

Dhaka University Ekushey Pathchacro arranged at seminar on 'Iraq: Aggression, Not War' yesterday.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (BaShad) is to arrange a grand rally at 12:30pm in the Muktagong today, demanding the end of war and the

boycotting of Anglo-American products.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Teachers' Association will stage a sit-in programme demanding the end of war on the April 3 at the university premises.

Bangladesh Hawkers' Federation will hang and burn the effigies of Bush and Blair and hold a meeting followed by a protest procession tomorrow.

Oikya Prochesta (United effort) will arrange a gathering at the Paltan Maidan on April 7 at 3:00pm.

Human shield

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"These were human shields who were coming to Baghdad to be deployed... many of them were injured and taken to hospital at Rutba," he said. "The brave Americans start shooting Americans."

Asked about the claim during a news briefing at Central Command headquarters in Qatar, US Brigadier General Vincent Brooks said he knew nothing of any such attacks.

Hundreds of Western activists poured into Baghdad before the war to show their support for the Iraqi people in the weeks leading up to the US-led invasion of the country.

Some of them set up camp in power stations and water plants around the Iraqi capital in a bid to dissuade US military commanders from targeting the facilities.

Others have headed out of the country taking buses that shuttle between Baghdad and the Jordanian capital Amman.

Cleansing drive

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demands of the officials and employees of the organisations to raise their salaries by two to three folds, the official said requesting anonymity.

There are four strong unions of employees in Biman and CAA who are continually pressing for salary hikes for the last few months, he added.

Ministry officials said a good number of officials and employees in the organisations are directly involved in corruption, including smuggling and pilferage of passenger goods.

But the government faces tremendous pressure from the unions to take any action against them, they said.

Biman has a manpower of about 6,000 and CAA 3,241. The officials further added that the government took action against

Night operations

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of chemical weapons such as nerve gas or biological weapons such as anthrax, Anderson said.

"It's unbearable" He noted that the protective suit is not porous -- "it doesn't breathe" -- and comes equipped with a hood and mask.

"Having worn that gear for extended periods of time, often times in very warm climates, you reach a point where it's unbearable. Then you have heat casualties," Anderson said.

Military analyst Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute said one advantage of the heat in the event of an Iraqi attack with chemicals is that such weapons generally evaporate more quickly in the heat. "Chemical agents are less persistent in heat than they are in cooler weather," Thompson said.

One way to evade the heat is with operations in the relative cool of the night. Analysts said the US military uses the best thermal and infrared night-vision equipment in the world, which can make extensive night operations possible.

Export orders dip

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Bangladesh's shrimp exports go to European Union (EU) markets and 40 per cent to US markets. Besides dipping prices in the global market, buyers are canceling orders because of the war.

"This is the season to procure shrimp fry. If the situation persists, it would be very difficult to prepare for the next season as there is no market at home for these products," he added.

A leader of Bangladesh Fruits and Vegetable Exporters Association said export of perishable items almost stopped because 70 per cent of these items go to the Middle East. Moreover, Bangladesh Biman has also withdrawn the subsidised rate for carrying perishable items to these destinations.

Member of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association Harunor Rashid said export orders have gone down so sharply that many will be unable to pay bank loan installments and may become defaulters in coming months. He also stressed the need for releasing funds for cash incentive immediately.

An official of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association said orders are being held

ZIA: Fatal flu threat

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the Thai capital next day. Symptoms of SARS

The main symptoms of SARS are high fever (> 38° Celsius), dry cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties. Changes in chest X-rays indicative of pneumonia also occur. SARS may be associated with other symptoms, including headache, muscular stiffness, loss of appetite, malaise, confusion, rash and diarrhoea.

An international multi-centre research project to expedite identification of the causative agent was established on March 17. Eleven top laboratories in ten countries are consulting daily and are working together to identify the causative agent. Various specimens have been collected from cases and post-mortem examinations.

How fast does SARS spread? SARS appears to be less infectious than influenza. The incubation period is short, estimated at 2-7 days, 3-5 days being more common. However, travel can rapidly spread the disease around the world.

The first known case was detected in Hanio. On February 26, a man was admitted to hospital there with high fever, dry cough, myalgia (muscle soreness) and mild sore throat. In four days, he developed increasing breathing difficulties, severe

thrombocytopenia (low platelet count) and signs of adult respiratory distress syndrome requiring ventilator support.

From February 1 to March 24, 456 cases have been reported from 13 countries. Of the patients, 17 died. In early stage, the symptoms are similar to those of many diseases including influenza.

Of the 13 countries, four have "imported cases" with no local transmission, indicating that the disease is not spreading in these countries.

Extensive investigation is under way to ascertain whether there is any link between SARS and the outbreak of a atypical (unusual) pneumonia in Guangdong province in China in November last year.

There is no indication that SARS is linked to bioterrorism.

The disease spread to several countries in a relatively short period but is not highly contagious when protective measures are used. The percentage of fatal cases is low. Since the WHO global alert issued on March 15, only isolated cases have been identified and no secondary outbreak occurred.

Gruesome deaths on highway

FROM PAGE 1

American troops were locked in house by house fighting in Hindiyah, just 50 miles from Baghdad.

Fears of suicide bombers have made the trek north increasingly dangerous for the Anglo-Americans. Moreover, fears of attack from surrendered Iraqi troops also heightened after a prisoner of war was shot dead when he reached for the weapon of a Marine.

US also suffered some casualties at Abul Khasib near Basra. A BBC correspondent said the invaders are not "at all in control of Basra" and that they are just outside the city.

A British soldier has died while on duty in southern Iraq, British defence ministry confirmed.

Baghdad rattles

A dozen cruise missiles hammered the capital while the Republican Guard faced their first significant battle with coalition forces on the ground.

Intense bombardments kept pounding the outskirts of Baghdad too, where four divisions of the Republican Guard were hunkered down to defend the capital.

Missile on Kuwait

An Iraqi missile fired at Kuwait was shot down by a Kuwaiti Patriot battery yesterday.

Iraqi forces launched a missile yesterday in an area of central Iraq where US troops are fighting, but it was blown up by a US Patriot missile. No one was injured.

"It just looked like a big bag of flour exploded," said Specialist Jeffrey Backowski, 25, a driver from Tulare, California, who saw the explosion as he was checking the communications system on his Humvee.

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