



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Teachers of Dhaka University take to streets; ward-level leaders and activists of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party march; police intercept a procession of Satrakul residents towards the US embassy; lawmaker Kader Siddiqui leads a procession of Krishak Samik Janata League in Dhaka yesterday to protest the US-led war on Iraq.

Detention under SPA

FROM PAGE 1
is physically tortured.

The court in a series of guidelines, mandatory for the authorities, said an accused has to be medically examined before and after police remand for interrogation under section 167 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). If any accused complains of torture during police remand and medical examination proves it, the court will take action against the investigation officer on the basis of his complaint.

The court directed the government to amend the relevant law (Section 54 and 167 of CrPC) within six months. The guidelines set by the court are to be adhered to until the laws are amended.

The court recommended raising penalty to seven years of imprisonment from two years for wrongful confinement and seven years from three years for malicious prosecution amending the relevant laws.

The judgement came in the wake of severe criticism both home and abroad of persistent abuse of power by police and death in custody.

It all came upon a public-interest-litigation (PIL) filed by human rights groups and individuals following the tragic death in police custody of Shamim Reza Rubel, a student of the Independent University on July 23, 1998.

The government constituted a judicial commission headed by Justice Habibur Rahman Khan who made recommendations about application of section 54. Those recommendations were included in the public litigation case in the form of writ.

The writ of November 29, 1998 was filed jointly by BLAST, Ain-o-Shalish Kendra, Sammilita Samajik Andolan, Sabita Rani Chakroborty, Syed Anwarul Haq, Sultanuzzaman Khan, Ummun Naser and prof

US may go for permanent military presence in Iraq

XINHUA, Washington

A senior US defence official indicated Sunday that the United States may keep a permanent military presence in a postwar Iraq as it has done in Germany since the end of world War II.

"It's a possibility," US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz told Fox News Sunday when asked about the likelihood of a US military presence in Iraq as there was and still is in Germany.

But he quickly said that it is "too soon" to say what those arrangements would be.

"Many of these issues have to be decided in partnership with an Iraqi government that represents the Iraqi people," he said. "And we need to get there, so that we can make those decisions in partnership with them."

Boat capsizes in Surma: 8 more bodies found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The death toll from Friday night's boat capsizing in Surma river in Chhatak rose to 80 yesterday with recovery of eight more bodies.

The recovered bodies include those of six children, a man and a woman. Bodies of only two of the children have been identified and handed over to their families, said an official.

The unidentified bodies were being sent to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital morgue, police said.

The bodies were found floating on the river in areas near Chhatak and Doarabazar police stations, they said.

Bridges

FROM PAGE 12
The project on 12 June, 1998.

A Chinese construction firm, China Harbour Eng. Ltd, started the construction work of the bridges in December 1999. The total cost of the two bridges is Tk 112.76 crore.

Construction of an 11-kilometre long approach road is also included in this project.

The bridges will shorten the travelling time to Dhaka from Barisal by road to less than five hours.

Brothers killed

FROM PAGE 12
Quoting doctors following autopsy of Choyen's body, police said his body bore marks of beating with hammer.

The victim was missing since a neighbour called him out of his house on Saturday night. Police yesterday recovered his body from a sugarcane field nearby.

Two persons -- Hafizul Islam and Adari Begum -- of the village were arrested following a case filed by the victim's son with the Charchat Police Station.

Six new moons of Jupiter discovered

INTERNET, Honolulu

Six more moons have been found orbiting Jupiter, pushing to 58 the total number of known natural satellites of the solar system's largest planet.

University of Hawaii's David Jewitt and Scott Sheppard, along with Jan Kleyna of Cambridge University, announced the discoveries Friday.

The moons are tiny, perhaps just a mile or so across, and orbit Jupiter at a distance of tens of millions of miles. They were found as part of an ongoing search using the world's two largest digital cameras at the Subaru and Canada-France-Hawaii telescopes atop Mauna Kea.

The moons follow retrograde orbits,

travelling in the opposite direction of Jupiter's rotation. That suggests the moons were captured by Jupiter's gravitational tug, perhaps not long after the planet itself formed, Jewitt said.

Jupiter has more moons than any other planet. Galileo discovered the largest four in 1610. Of those, Ganymede is the largest known moon in the solar system, with a diameter of 3,260 miles.

Jewitt's team has found 18 Jupiter moons this year and expects to find more.

"We think if we keep on pushing it with the cameras and telescopes we have available, we'll get to about 100," Jewitt said.

Young woman strangled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young woman was strangled in her flat at West Jurain, Shyampur yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Champa, 25. No other details could be known immediately, police said.

Quoting the landlord, police said the lady and a young man, claiming to be a couple, rented the place about a month back. They were known to be at the flat on Sunday.

However, when the landlord got no response from inside, the police was called.

Police broke open the front door of the second floor flat and found Champa dead. Police suspected that she might have strangled to death.

The body was sent to Mitford Hospital for autopsy.

A case was filed in this regard.

Hot weather

FROM PAGE 12
soon. Too much heat is felt because there has been no rain for some time."

Forecasting officer Kamrul Hasan said, "There is a link between temperature and humidity. If the humidity rises, the heat is felt more. And with the decrease in humidity, the temperature falls. Now the humidity is very high. Last night it was 81% in the city."

With the rise in temperature, some diseases like viral fever, cough and chicken pox are spreading fast, and children are the worst victims. Doctors have advised people to drink a lot of water.

Fruit and fruit juice sellers are doing brisk business as people working outdoors, and bearing the brunt of the heat, are crowding roadside juice and drinks shops.

Anwar Hossain, a vendor, has been selling 'khira' a cucumber-type watery fruit -- in front of the National Press Club for the last couple of weeks. He said, "People are taking khira in much greater quantity with the onset of summer."

Non-Muslims

FROM PAGE 1
Muslims only" for sundry jobs at the US base in northern Kuwait.

The ad "urgently requires" lift operators, storekeepers, clerks, typists, security guards and drivers for the base and insists that the applicants, besides being non-Muslims, should speak English and be below 35.

The advertisement is being issued by Rehman Enterprises and Continental Mercantile. Executives of these firms said they are representing a Kuwaiti company Marafi, which has a "maintenance contract" with the US Army.

"The Americans want us to process the applications of non-Muslims only," Rehman Enterprises' head Abdul Rehman told Hindustan Times on Wednesday. Asked whether it didn't amount to an unfair recruitment, a helpless Rehman shrugged: "What to do?"

There is an unmistakable sense of urgency in the advertisement. "The response has been very bad," said Jairaj. "We are getting very few calls. The headhunters are in a fix since executives of Marafi are flying to India for interview on March 31."

CNG station

FROM PAGE 12
sign of gas."

"I have not yet taken my meal and got any passenger," he said in utter frustration.

Sometimes, the drivers do not get gas after waiting for hours.

"We wait for hours and when our turns come, they refuse to fill up our fuel tankers as their supply runs low. It is ridiculous and the government should make proper arrangements immediately to resolve the chronic problem," said Shahidul Islam.

"I have to pay the owner a daily rent of Tk 450. How can I pay if I wait half of my day in a queue without earning," said Khalequzzaman, also a driver.

The drivers also said technical defects in pump machines and low gas flow are common with the CNG filling stations.

Some scooter drivers said the situation was forcing them to use octane or petrol and realise higher fares from commuters.

"We are helpless, but nobody is here to look into the matter," said Munir, a three-wheeler driver.

Some gas stations in the city remained closed due to land and other disputes.

Baghdadis fight back second push

FROM PAGE 1
airport in seven hours of fighting that ended early yesterday.

Reuters reporter Khaled Oweis said Iraqi forces were blocking many Tigris bridges. Republican Guards were defending key ministries with rocket-propelled grenades.

Heavy fighting erupted in the afternoon and Iraqi forces were pouring artillery shells into a presidential complex on the west bank of the Tigris river that the US forces had seized. Fighting was also going on in the area of Baghdad's landmark al-Rashid Hotel, which has been cordoned off by Iraqi fighters.

"Baghdad is safe," Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf told reporters at the central Palestine hotel as a dense yellow sandstorm swept in over the city.

"US columns had been 'slaughtered,'" he said. "The battle is still going on. Their infidels are committing suicide by the hundreds on the gates of Baghdad."

"We have seized the main presidential palace in downtown Baghdad... There are two palaces down there and we are in both of them," Lieutenant Colonel Peter Bayer told Reuters reporter Luke Baker, with the US 3rd Infantry Division near the airport.

But a Reuters witness says the Information Ministry and the Foreign Ministry are firmly in Iraqi hands with heavily armed Republican Guards spread over the area taking fighting positions.

The foreign ministry is a few hundred metres from one of the main gates of the presidential palace which US forces said they now occupied.

Iraqi information minister called on the international community not to believe US claims of having seized key buildings in the Iraqi capital.

US commanders will decide whether or not to remain in captured areas of the city, said a military spokesman.

Presidential palace

In the heart of Baghdad, American soldiers who reached the gold-and-blue-domed New Presidential Palace used the toilets, rifled through documents in the bombed-out compound, and helped themselves to ashtrays, pillows, gold-painted Arab glassware and other souvenirs. The Americans also blew up a statue of Saddam on horseback in the centre of

the city.

The presidential palace compound was rocked by five huge blasts. An arms depot had caught fire but as a cloud of thick white smoke covered the sprawling complex it was not clear if that ignited the blasts.

US troops set up a prisoner of war collection point in the palace compound. As Iraqis were captured in street fighting outside, they were brought to the palace for processing before being sent behind US lines.

During their armoured thrust into the city, allied forces also surrounded the state-owned Al-Rashid Hotel for a time. It was used by foreign reporters during the 1991 Gulf War. At that time, the US government alleged that the building housed a military communications centre. This time, many foreign journalists are staying at the Palestine Hotel.

The invading troops briefly surrounded the Information Ministry in Baghdad before they pulled back up to the city outskirts.

Baghdad battle

Mortar, artillery and machine gunfire were heard in the city. Visibility dropped as a sandstorm and heavy smoke from oil trenches, set alight in an apparent effort to confuse the invading soldiers, clouded the sky.

Iraqi and US troops were firing at each other in the heart of the city, Reuters correspondent Samia Nakhoul said.

"Baghdad is a battle zone now. It's shaking with the thud of explosions crashing everywhere, between homes in residential areas," she said.

"People are indoors because shells are crashing over our heads. Artillery is crashing everywhere."

British hold 'most' of Basra

The discovery of Chemical Ali's body came as British light-armoured infantry -- 50 to 75 vehicles and 700 troops -- pushed into Basra, believing resistance might fall apart with the city's leadership gone. The army was in control of most of Iraq's second city, but continued to face some resistance.

After a two-week siege, soldiers from the 7th Armoured Brigade, the Desert Rats, pushed through Basra's outskirts from the south-west in a bid to stamp out resistance from paramilitary forces loyal

to President Saddam.

The breakthrough came when a second attack was launched hours later by Royal Marines from 3 Commando Brigade, with support from 59 Independent Commando Squadron, Royal Engineers.

The decision to finally seize control of the city was prompted by intelligence from local people who indicated that many Ba'ath party loyalists had fled.

Troops are now testing their hold of the city after encountering "patchy resistance" from isolated pockets of militia, light fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

Confusion over 'Chemical Ali'

An early British claim that Ali Hassan al-Majid, who earned the sobriquet "Chemical Ali" for ordering a poison gas attack that killed thousands of Kurds, has been found dead was later proved wrong.

Major Andrew Jackson, of the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment, claimed that his bodyguard and the head of Iraqi intelligence services in Basra.

Al-Majid was a first cousin of President Saddam, who had entrusted him with the defence of southern Iraq against the invading forces.

'Tenant' robbers loot city house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted cash and gold ornaments from a residence at Dhanmondi Sunday evening.

A gang of five armed robbers went to the residence of Hosne Ara Akther at road no. 10/A West Dhanmondi in the guise of prospective tenants at around 7:00pm. They then tied up the inmates and confined them in a room.

The gang members looted Tk 1.14 lakh in cash and 30 tolas of gold ornaments totalling about Tk 23 lakh and left the spot.

Hosne Ara field a case with Dhanmondi Police Station in this regard.

Police arrested three young men Mohammad Mintu, Monir Hossain and Mohammad Hossain for their alleged involvement in the robbery.



PHOTO: PID

A delegation led by Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury (2nd-L) presented the final report on the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury (3rd-L) and members of the committee including ICC-B President Mahbubur Rahman (L) and former president of the MCCI Latifur Rahman (2nd-R) were also present.

Fatal flu catches ZIA napping

FROM PAGE 1
emergency.

The health directorate has alerted the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH) at Mahakhali to accommodate SARS patients from ZIA. But doctors at the hospital said it was not fit for the new task.

He, however, said that he and his team of six doctors, 12 nurses and sanitary inspectors were prepared to handle any emergency.

ZIA Director Wing Commander Md Nasir Uddin Khan on the contrary claimed that ZIA was fully prepared in case of arrival of any patient with SARS.

"We have a full-fledged clinic with two beds and doctors on duty round the clock. We also have six ambulances on stand-by to shift patients to IDH," he said.

The main symptoms of SARS are high fever with temperatures rising over 38 degrees Celsius, dry cough and acute breathing difficulties. Patients also suffer from pneumonia.

SARS is often associated with other

symptoms including headache, muscular stiffness, loss of appetite, malaise, confusion, rash and diarrhoea.

Close contact with an infected person spreads the disease. The majority of cases have occurred among hospital workers who cared for SARS patients and the close family members of the patients.

Travelers have spread severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in the past few weeks to Hong Kong, Canada, Singapore and Vietnam after the virus first showed up in southern China.

Cases have since surfaced in the United States, Britain, France, Australia, Japan and Taiwan.

There are two weekly direct flights from Hong Kong to Dhaka. The arriving passengers would be asked to disclose any illness during and before flight from Hong Kong, airport sources said.

The city heart

FROM PAGE 1
spokesman called "an armoured raid through the city."

During the battle for the palace, an arms depot on the riverside caught fire and thick white smoke engulfed the compound, worsening air already polluted by a sandstorm and black smoke belching out of burning fuel trenches.

US troops were met with fierce resistance at the compound where dozens of Iraqi elite troops wearing black were seen running along a bank and entering one of the main buildings.

Access to the gigantic gates of the presidential compound, already battered by weeks of coalition air strikes, had been blocked by armed militiamen manning checkpoints on nearby streets.

The administrative district around the compound, including the ministries of information and foreign affairs, was still in Iraqi hands in the early afternoon.

The road leading from the information ministry toward the foreign ministry was manned by armed soldiers in full gear and paramilitary troops, clad in military fatigues and red keffiyeh headaddresses.

Armed militiamen stood guard behind sandbags at the entrances of the ministries and other nearby official buildings, including the presidential construction agency and the Baghdad Security Directorate, which has been destroyed by US missiles.

Access to the nearby Al-Rashid hotel, one of the capital's main landmarks and which was rumored to have been seized by US troops, was also prohibited.

Ambulance sirens wailed across the city, and the central Al-Kindi hospital said it had admitted three dead and 50 wounded.

Also on the Al-Karkh bank, hundreds

of civilians pressed in vain at the gates of Al-Alawibustation.

"All these people came here because they wanted to leave town, but there are no buses," said a doctor from Al-Rashid military hospital trying to travel to his home in Al-Faluja, 30 kilometres west of Baghdad.

The civilians tried to flag down the odd passing private car in the hope of hitching a ride home or out of the besieged city.

"I did not know there was an attack. I was caught up in the battle," said the doctor, explaining he had just come off a night shift.

"Eighty per cent of the hospital beds are taken by people suffering from war injuries," he said.

On the eastern Al-Rusafa bank of the Tigris, traffic was also slow but small neighbourhood cafes were still full of people, grocery shops were open, fruit stalls erected and street vendors hawking cigarettes stood on main roundabouts.

But civilians trying to cross the river by the Al-Jumhuriya bridge, close to the palace compound, were stopped by armed militiamen who did, however, allow military vehicles to cross.

Shutters were firmly down over shop windows along the Al-Mansur commercial avenue in Al-Karkh. Outside one shop, a group of children sat looking at a giant statue of Saddam Hussein pointing in the direction of Jerusalem.

C&F agents go on strike at Hili land port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The C&F Agents Association of Hili land port in Dinajpur called an indefinite strike from April 9 at the port in protest of 'illegal' seizing of a truck loaded with imported sugar.

Alhaj Abul Kashem Azad, president of the association, in press statement sent to Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club, yesterday said the strike has been called as the authority concerned defied their ultimatum.

Earlier on Friday last, the association threatened with the strike if the truck was not released by April 7.

On April 1, Shibganj thana police seized the truck which was loaded with 300 sacks equalling 15 metric tons of imported sugar.

A case was filed under the special power act of 1974 against the owner when he allegedly declined to pay police a toll of Tk two lakh to the police.

The statement also alleged that Shibganj police have been frequently harassing traders of Hili extorting toll from goods trucks.

The C&F association submitted a memorandum to the home minister and the ministry ordered the Rajshahi range police to look into the matter.

Titas, Bakhrabad

FROM PAGE 1
corruption zone" -- Narsingdi have been put under the newly formed Sitalakhya Gas Distribution Company with Petrobangla's Secretary Kamrul Islam as its MD.

The Titas gas field pumped 1.9 trillion cubic feet of gas into the economy since it went into production in 1968. It was initially estimated to have 2.6 TCF gas. But several studies based on gas flow and existing data till 1991 indicated that it was the biggest field having over 4.5 TCF gas.

However pilferage of gas by a handful of industries in Narayangang and Dhaka with the help of meter readers, ledger writers and some Titas officials have been robbing the nation of over Tk 200 crore in gas sales revenue every year.

The pilferers have been patronised from top level in the Energy Ministry and by a section of high officials of Petrobangla in exchange of regular bribe, sources claimed.

The Bakhrabad system that came into operation in early nineties has been divided into two units. The system in Chittagong area will now be known as Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company and the Comilla region

will be under the Bakhrabad system.

The Bakhrabad system was built on the Bakhrabad gas field that was initially assessed to have 1.75 TCF gas reserve. However faulty development of the field destroyed the gas structure to a level that it is now said the country will not be able to extract half of the reserve.

A five-member Petrobangla Committee on Restructuring Titas headed by GTCL Managing Director Khandker Abdus Salek filed its report in July last year.

The committee found that theft of gas was highest in Titas Zone-4 covering Narayangang, Munshiganj districts and Keraniganj upazila. Theft accounts for 16 per cent of the gas supply in the areas.

Theft accounts for 15 per cent of gas supply in Zone-3 covering Dhaka city, Tongi, Savar, Gazipur and Manikganj.

In contrast, theft in Zone-2 covering greater Mymensingh (minus Bhairab) including Tangail is as low as 1 per cent. In Zone-1 covering Brahmanbaria, Titas belt, Bhairab and Narsingdi where Titas gas fields are situated, it is as low as 0.30 per cent.