



PHOTO: STAR

From left: Nurses and employees of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital shout slogans; teachers and students of Green View Institute of Health Technology take to the street; symbolic boycott of US products at the Central Shaheed Minar and a human chain by the Mahila Parishad of the IEB in front of the institution in Dhaka yesterday protesting Anglo-American invasion of Iraq.

Hasina's call to save natural resources, sovereignty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina has said that the countries having vast natural resources are feeling insecure. "People of those countries are in doubt whether their natural resources will be in their possession in future", Sheikh Hasina said while addressing the newly elected executive members of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association in the city yesterday. She urged the people to be united to save the natural resources as well as the sovereignty of the country. "We want peace, no more war", the opposition leader said appealing for an immediate end to hostilities in Iraq. Hasina alleged that the family members of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia were plundering a huge amount of public money. "They plundered at least Tk 11 thousand crore in the last 18 months and smuggled at least five thousand crore out of the country", she said. "They have established industries like textile mills in foreign countries."

She said the government is dilly-dallying in implementing the High Court order regarding separation of the judiciary. "When the last caretaker government tried to implement the High Court order, the present prime minister phoned an advisor to that government and told him to hold the matter for the next BNP government", she said. "The government has let loose a reign of terror with its armed cadres," she said adding that the government released 45,000 listed criminals after taking office.

"Over the last eighteen months, about 24,000 people have been killed, 10,000 women raped, and at least 430 journalists were assaulted (four of them killed)," said the former prime minister. She said donor countries and agencies have suspended development funds for corruption of the present government. The newly elected president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Barrister Rokon Uddin Mahmud, said, "It seems a vested interest is conspiring against independence of the judiciary." AL leaders Zillur Rahman and Suranjit Sen Gupta, Barrister Amirul Islam, Advocate Abdul Basat and the newly elected general secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Advocate Mahub Ali, spoke on the occasion.

Three killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed in separate incidents in the city yesterday. Unidentified gunmen shot and killed Mostafa, 40, a shopkeeper near his shop at Ring Road, Shyamoli yesterday evening. Locals quoting the witness said a gang of four went to Mostafa's shop and shot him in the head and chest. Mostafa was rushed to the Dhaka Medial College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead. Locals said local extortionists might have killed Mostafa following his refusal to offer. In another incident, Badda police recovered a beheaded body of a young man from Aftab Project at Ananda Nagar. The identity of the man aged 30 could not be known immediately. Badda police said both hands of the victim were tied up behind with rope. The body was sent to the DMCH for autopsy. A 10-year old girl was found dead in a wetland at Dakkhin Shahjahanpur in Badda. Police suspect the girl, still unidentified, was strangled. Separate cases were filed with Mohammadpur and Badda police stations.

Khaleda

UNB adds: The newly constructed bridges have been named after two valiant freedom fighters Major Jalil and Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Bireswaha. Khaleda Zia made the announcement at a public meeting at the Shishu Niketon High School playground at Babuganj. The Shikarpur bridge over the Sandha on the Barisal-Faridpur Highway in Ujipur upazila has been named 'MA Jalil Bridge' as a mark of respect for the late sector commander of the liberation War, who was born in the upazila. The other bridge, Doarika, over river Sugandha on the same route in Babuganj upazila, was named 'Mohiuddin Jahangir Bridge' as a tribute to the martyred freedom fighter, who hailed from the upazila.

S Africa, India

FROM PAGE 12 Australia, will also lead a relatively inexperienced Indian side that lands in Dhaka at noon. India will play hosts Bangladesh in the opening match. The day-night affair will commence at 2pm. But the tournament will definitely be missing some outstanding performers. Indian little master Sachin Tendulkar, who was man-of-the-tournament in South Africa, has decided to stay back along with Rahul Dravid to nurse minor injuries. Besides, South African star all-rounder Jacques Kallis has also been ruled out of the tournament.

Illegal immigrants BJP repeats call for tough laws

AFP, Guwahati

India's ruling Hindu BJP Monday renewed a call for tough laws to deal with Bangladeshis entering the country illegally and said the migrants posed a serious threat to national security. "The problem of infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals has assumed serious proportions having the potential to threaten India's internal security," BJP president Venkaiah Naidu told reporters here. He said India needed to amend its existing legislation to detect and deport illegal Bangladeshis from this north-eastern state of Assam which is believed to have the highest number of Bangladeshi infiltration.

Saddam

FROM PAGE 1 front of the al-Sa'ah restaurant where Saddam Hussein made a defiant public appearance Friday after US troops launched an attack on Saddam International Airport southwest of the capital. Monday's strike marked the second time US forces struck a target where the Iraqi leader was believed to be staying based on intelligence information. On the war's opening night on March 20, US F-117 stealth fighters struck a Baghdad compound where Saddam and several senior members of his inner circle were believed to be gathered. US President George W. Bush ordered that strike on short notice after being advised by CIA Director Tenet of intelligence on Saddam's whereabouts.

Booby traps

FROM PAGE 1 he said. Snipers US soldiers have reported coming under sniper fire in the city. General Buford Blount, commander of the US 3rd Infantry Division, said a US tank had been targeted by small arms and grenade fire from a hotel in central Baghdad on Tuesday. At Baghdad's main airport, seized by US forces on Friday, soldiers said there were still some concerns about security on the perimeter of the airfield. An Iraqi Soviet-built T-52 tank approached the airport in the early hours of Tuesday and was destroyed by US missiles.

Mayhem

FROM PAGE 1 any shots coming from within or around the Palestine Hotel. He said he noticed a US tank pointing its gun muzzle directly at the hotel from a balcony and turned away just before the blast. Al-Jazeera Baghdad correspondent Maher Abdullah said the missile strike destroyed an electricity generator and set fire to the office. Zuheir al-Iraqi, a cameraman of the network, was hit in the neck by shrapnel in the blast, which the network charged was a deliberate strike. "We were caught by surprise," Abdullah said. One missile hit the pavement in front of us, ripping out windows and doors and then one hit the generator. The office is now on fire," he said. Another satellite station, Abu Dhabi TV, announced its Baghdad bureau had also been hit and broadcast a live report showing its camera position under attack.

Footage from the network showed a fire blazing in the Jazeera office, which is in a multi-storey building. Jazeera correspondent Tayseer Alouni, who made his name covering the US-led war on Afghanistan, was seen carrying a wounded colleague into an Abu Dhabi TV car. Earlier on Saturday, Christian Liebig, a correspondent of the German weekly Focus and Julio Anguita Parrado, correspondent of Spanish newspaper El Mundo, were killed when an Iraqi missile impacted near an operations centre set up by the American military. Both of them were 'embedded' with the United States 3rd Infantry Division.

A day of crazed normality

FROM PAGE 1 sniping at soldiers and civilians. Hundreds of Iraqi men, women and children were brought to Baghdad's hospitals in the hours that followed victims of bullets, shrapnel and cluster bombs. We could actually see the twin-engine American A-10s firing their depleted uranium rounds into the far shore of the river.

From the eastern bank, I watched the marines run towards a ditch with their rifles to their shoulders and search for Iraqi troops. But their enemies went on firing from the mudflats to the south until, one after another, I saw them running for their lives. The Iraqis clambered out of foxholes amid the American shellfire and began an Olympic sprint of terror along the waterside; most kept their weapons, some fell back to an exhausted walk, others splashed right into the waters of the Tigris, up to their knees, even their necks. Three climbed from a trench with hands in the air, in front of a group of marines. But others fought on. The "stomp, stomp, stomp" went on for more than an hour. Then the A-10s came back, and an F/A-18 sent a ripple of fire along the trenches after which the shooting died away. It seemed as if Baghdad would fall within hours.

But the day was to be characterised with that most curious of war's attributes, a crazed mixture of normality, death and high farce. For even as the Americans were fighting their way up the river and the F/A-18s were returning to bombard the bank, the Iraqi Minister of Information gave a press conference on the roof of the Palestine Hotel, scarcely half a mile from the battle.

As shells exploded to his left and the air was shredded by the power-diving American jets, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf announced to perhaps 100 journalists that the whole thing was a

propaganda exercise, the Americans were no longer in possession of Baghdad airport, that reporters must "check their facts and re-check their facts that's all I ask you to do." Mercifully, the oil fires, bomb explosions and cordite smoke now obscured the western bank of the river, so fact-checking could no longer be accomplished by looking behind Mr Sahaf's back.

What the world wanted to know, of course, was the Question of All Questions where was President Saddam? But Mr Sahaf used his time to condemn the Arabic television channel al-Jazeera for its bias towards the US and to excoriate the Americans for using "the lounges and halls" of Saddam Hussein to make "cheap propaganda". The Americans "will be buried here," he shouted above the battle. "Don't believe these invaders. They will be defeated."

And the more he spoke, the more one wanted to interrupt Mr Sahaf, to say: "But hang on, Mr Minister, take a look over your right shoulder." But, of course, that's not the way things happen. Why didn't we all take a drive around town, he suggested defiantly.

So I did. The corporation's double-decker buses were running and, if the shops were shut, stallholders were open, men had gathered in tea houses to discuss the war. I went off to buy fruit when a low-flying American jet crossed the street and dropped its payload 1,000 metres away in an explosion that changed the air pressure in our ears. But every street corner had its clutch of militiamen and, when I reached the side of the Foreign Ministry, upstream from the US Marines, an Iraqi artillery crew was firing a 120mm gun at the Americans from the middle of a dual carriageway, its tongue of fire bright against the grey-black fog drifting over Baghdad.

Within an hour and a half, the Americans had moved up the southern waterfront and were in danger of over-running the old ministry of information. Outside the Rashid Hotel, the marines opened fire on civilians and militiamen, blasting a passing motorcyclist onto the road and shooting at a Reuters photographer who managed to escape with bullet holes in his car.

All across Baghdad, hospitals were inundated with wounded, many of them women and children hit by fragments of cluster bombs. By dusk, the Americans were flying F/A-18s in close air support to the US Marines, so confident of their destruction of Iraq's anti-aircraft gunners that they could clearly be seen cruising the brown and greyskies in pairs.

Was this what they call "rich in history"? General Stanley Maude invaded Iraq in 1917 and occupied Baghdad. We repeated the performance in 1941 when the former prime minister Rashid Ali decided to back Nazi Germany. The British, Australians and Arabs "liberated" Damascus from the Turks in 1918. The Israelis occupied Beirut in 1982 and lived not all of them to regret it. Now the armies of America and, far behind them, the British a pale ghost of Maude's army are moving steadily into this most north-eastern of Arab capitals to dominate a land that borders Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

As night fell, I came across three Iraqi defenders at the eastern end of the great Rashid Bridge. These three two Baathist militiamen and a policeman were ready to defend the eastern shore from the greatest army known to man.

That in itself, I thought, said something about both the courage and the hopelessness of the Arabs.

India condemns Iraq war, demands troops pullout

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian parliament yesterday condemned the US-led war on Iraq and demanded an immediate withdrawal of American and British forces from the war-wracked country. "Expressing national sentiment, this house condemns the war in Iraq by the US-led coalition. This is not acceptable," said a statement read out in parliament by speaker Manohar Joshi. "The innocent people of Iraq, especially the pain of women and children, is a serious humanitarian issue and this house expresses serious anguish and deep sympathy (for them)."

"This house also demands the war in Iraq end immediately and the coalition forces should withdraw," the statement said, adding the war was being waged beyond the charters of the UN.

It also insisted on the reconstruction of Iraq under the close supervision of the United Nations, and said India would send one billion rupees (20.4 million dollars) in cash and food to the Iraqi people through the UN. The unanimous condemnation of the Iraq war came after two days of squabbling between the government and opposition parties on its wording, jamming work in parliament since it reopened Monday after a month's vacation.

The government had offered a statement "Deploing" the war, but the opposition insisted the wording was strong enough. Media reports had previously speculated that New Delhi's low-key

response to the war in Iraq -- calling it "unjustified and unavoidable" -- was aimed at preserving friendly ties with the US. "This resolution will send a message ... for peace and humanity," Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha told parliament. He said India would not distance itself from either the US or the Arab world. "India always has the friendliest relations with the Arab world and Iraq and we want that to continue."

Khoka

FROM PAGE 12 the aerial spray decision, other speakers asked the authorities concerned not to go for it. Mahmudul Amin, a prominent zoologist, said spray of insecticides from the sky on Dhaka would be a great mistake. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Director of BELA, said DCC was responsible by law to protect the health of people. But the government agencies are not working comprehensively to take care of people's health, she alleged. Quazi Mohammed Shish, chief engineer of the WASA, said some voluntary initiatives of city-dwellers were necessary to control mosquito. "Aerial spray is not a permanent solution," he said. Dr Abu Naser Khan, Quazi Abdul Fattah, Dr Ashraf Uddin, Abu Bakkar Siddique, Nasima Mannan also addressed at the seminar.

Rajuk guidelines

FROM PAGE 12 violation of the Wetland Protection Act, 2000, officials said.

Initially, the government issued a temporary embargo on filling-up of such lands when a developer started land development work at Ashulia. But it could not deter the devious developers from earth-filling work in other areas, the officials said. They said some developers, ignoring the Dhaka Master Plan, filled up hundreds of acres of land in the city's eastern fringe earmarked as 'earthquake fault line' due to absence of any guideline. Moreover, the developers started expanding their projects without approval from Rajuk and ignoring the Bangladesh Environment protection Act and other building construction regulations, the officials claimed.

Environmentalists, town planners, urbanisation experts and geologists warned the government time and again that unplanned expansion of city and haphazard development with concrete structure 'must be checked' to save Dhaka city from any 'possible catastrophe'. "We have already destroyed the city's environment largely. If we fail to take timely measures to check further filling-up of low-lying areas before the next rainy season, it will definitely invite environmental disaster in near future," said a top town planner/Rajuk. From the very beginning, leaders of the developers are opposing the guideline saying 'it will stifle their business and control their effort to provide housing facility to the city dwellers'.

Toufiq M. Seraj, president of REHAB (Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh) told The Daily Star that they want an immediate settlement of the issue and urged the government 'to identify the wetlands soon by engaging an expert committee. He argued that putting embargo before identifying wetlands is 'totally unjust and illogical'.

Rajuk Chairman Iqbaluddin Chowdhury said the government has taken the issue 'seriously' but declined to say anything in detail.

Fresh tender for dev of Tanguar Haor soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Fresh tender will be floated soon for private investment for development of Tanguar Haor, a Ramsar Site in Sunamganj district, officials sources said yesterday. The decision followed poor response to the earlier tender floated in February, which was the third for the purpose. Only three proposals were received. The local ruling party lawmaker submitted those, one in his name and two by using other identities. After examining the proposals, the ministry of environment and forests decided to go for fresh tender. The indecision left the haor uncarved for three years, creating a scope for plunder of its fish and other resources. Under a development programme, investors will be selected for two years and local management bodies will be formed with participation of the stakeholders. The 3868-acre Tanguar Haor, home to about 60,000 birds of different species and

sweet water fish of 140 species, was declared a Ramsar Site in 2000 as its flora and fauna became endangered. Besides, over one lakh guest birds come to the country's largest freshwater wetland during winter. But the Ramsar project remained unimplemented due to indecision of policy makers and their failure in selecting investors.

Couple

FROM PAGE 12 the house of Babul Sardar at about 1:30 am and sprayed bullets on the two (Babul and Jesmin) as they were asleep in a room along with their one-year-old boy. The gang fled the scene in a microbus immediately after the incident. Police recovered the bodies in the morning and sent them to Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Bhandaria police station. None was arrested in connection with the double murder till yesterday evening.

US envoy

FROM PAGE 12 lion worth of non-food humanitarian assistance including \$110 million for reconstruction of infrastructure and essential social services, she said. She said the US plans to work with the UN Security Council to affirm Iraq's territorial integrity, endorse a popular and broad-based government and assist Iraq in achieving economic self-sufficiency.

Before long the UN may decide to lift economic sanctions on Iraq and a free Iraq will reassert control of its own abundant natural resources, she said.

Doctors fight

FROM PAGE 12 account instead of personal accounts. But the doctors disagree with the decision," said Director Prof. Farida. On the other hand, Associate Prof. Abdul Hannan of pediatrics, talking to the Daily Star, denied the allegation and said, "The director herself is corrupted and not competent enough to run the hospital." He also said no doctor had ever misappropriated research money. However, one of the leaders of the Karmachari Kalayan Samity of said, taking advantage of the disagreement, a section of unscrupulous senior doctors working on deputation are trying to destabilise the hospital's atmosphere. Prof. Farida said according to government rule, doctors on deputation are supposed to shift, but a number of doctors has been around for seven or eight years. Neither the children nor would-be mothers are provided proper health care services at the institute because of the doctors' negligence, patients alleged. "At the very beginning the treatment was good. But gradually the service has been deteriorating as the doctors pay little care to patients", said a patient. One of the staffers said, "They are all unfair and should quit. We need fair people to run the hospital and save it".

Situated at the outskirts of the city at Matuail, Demra, the institute has about 70 seats. On average the hospital has around 800 to 1000 outdoor patients everyday.

Bush-Blair talks

FROM PAGE 12 the rise of the international community. We are committed to working with international institutions, including the United Nations, which will have a vital role to play in this task."

Pressed on what precisely the UN role would be, however, Bush mentioned only humanitarian work, "suggesting" people to staff the interim authority and helping Iraq "progress." He did not spell out how much power the United Nations would have, an omission likely to alarm some in Europe and the Arab world. Nor did Bush elaborate on Washington's plans to place US officials alongside Iraqis in the interim administration. Saddam's grip loosening Blair pleaded for the world to avoid diplomatic wrangling over Iraq's future like the bickering that preceded the war. The British leader, who has stood by Bush throughout the crisis, said the world could be reassured that the "new Iraq" after the war would eventually be run only by the Iraqi people.

French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, whose government was most vocal in opposing the war, insisted that reconstruction could not be left to just one or a few countries. "We want the United Nations to play a central role in the search for a settlement to this crisis, in the post-war phase," he said in Paris. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, against war but keen to maintain good relations with his US and British allies, said in Berlin the United Nations should take a decisive role because of its humanitarian mission experience and "for reasons of legitimacy."

In a joint written statement, Bush and Blair pledged to seek UN Security Council resolutions to affirm Iraq's territorial integrity, ensure aid delivery and endorse an appropriate post-conflict administration for Iraq. Neither leader had news of Saddam's fate following US attempts to kill him earlier on Tuesday. "I don't know whether he survived," Bush said. "The only thing I can tell you is... that grip I used to describe that

Saddam had around the throats of the Iraqi people is loosening.

I can't tell you if all 10 fingers are off the throat but finger by finger it's coming off and the people are beginning to realize that." Bush and Blair's ambitious agenda for the summit also included the Middle East and Northern Irish peace processes. Bush pledged to put as much effort into obtaining Middle East peace as Blair had put into a Northern Ireland settlement. The tiny, British-ruled province's 1998 peace agreement -- which stemmed the worst of three decades of violence even though it has hit fresh political problems -- could have lessons for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Blair said. Bush briefly met Northern Ireland's various Catholic and Protestant political parties before flying out mid-afternoon. He urged them to accept an Anglo-Irish blueprint, due to be published later this week, for resuscitating the suspended power-sharing agreement set up under the 1998 accord.

Unlikely political allies with their contrasting right and left-wing backgrounds, Bush and Blair continued to lavish personal praise on each other. They seemed to get on well, going for a half-hour walk together in the castle grounds. Bush's trip is widely seen as a pay-back for Blair's loyalty.

Baghdad almost over

FROM PAGE 1 the air. I think our people chose not to fight," he said. Basra battle almost over More British troops poured into Basra in the face of sporadic resistance from the Iraqis. The British claimed the battle for Basra was "more or less over". Some Iraqis welcomed the US marines as they drove through Basra. But one Basra resident told AFP: "The people in Basra feel defeated. Sure, we certainly hated Saddam but we also hate the British and Americans."