

# Baghdad slips from Saddam's grip

## Troops roll into the heart of capital without resistance; civilians plunder buildings

### Dhaka won't back interim Iraq admin without UN approval

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh would not support any interim administration in the post-war Iraq without the United Nation's approval, the foreign minister said yesterday.

M Morshed Khan told reporters that the UN Credential Committee would decide who would run the interim administration there. "And Dhaka would act as per the UN decision," Khan said yesterday when Baghdad was on the verge of collapse.

He observed the UN is entering into a critical phase as far as reconstruction of Iraq is concerned. If there is any discontent in the credential committee on mandating any authority for interim administration, the issue might be dragged to the UN General Assembly.

The foreign minister said the territorial integrity of Iraq should not be compromised. "At any cost law and order should be restored and maintained in Iraq." He also urged for ensuring basic amenities

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



A statue of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein stands in front of the burning oil ministry in Baghdad yesterday. US tanks and troops poured into the heart of Baghdad as the Iraqi leader's regime collapsed after a blistering three-week onslaught.

STAR DESK

President Saddam Hussein's 24-year regime lost its iron grip over large swaths of Baghdad yesterday, as US tanks barrelled into city centre amid jubilant cheers of Iraqis after 21 days of invasion attack.

People gutted official buildings, dragging off anything they could carry from airconditioners to flowers.

The fate of Saddam Hussein is unknown. Information Ministry officials were nowhere to be seen.

Even Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, who has turned up daily during the war, failed to make an appearance.

Although there were no signs of Iraqi police or uniformed men on the main streets, the US military said American troops were still having occasional firefights with disorganised Iraqi forces.

"We are still seeing sporadic resistance but when we see it it's fierce," Captain Frank Thorp said.

"I think it's premature to talk about the end of this operation yet," he told Reuters at Central Command in Qatar.

The overriding image, however, was of men, women and children running and dancing, apparently unrestricted, cheering the invaders.

One elderly man tore down a picture of Saddam in his trademark military beret and sunglasses. In the street, he took off his sandal and used it to beat the image, while others ran at the picture and kicked it.

The United Nations headquarters and shops near the Olympic Committee's building in Baghdad

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Mystery shrouds Saddam's fate

STAR DESK

As Baghdad came under Anglo-American control, no one knows where Saddam Hussein is, or even if he is dead or alive.

US intelligence had solid information from multiple sources that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein went inside a building and didn't leave before it was struck by an American bomber Monday, US officials told AP.

One intelligence source was believed to be an eyewitness who watched him go inside. No one would discuss the identity or characterise the credibility of the witness.

But the CIA does not know whether Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and his sons were killed or whether they survived a US bombing earlier this week, a CIA official said yesterday.

More intriguing is that neither the wire agencies nor the TV channels reported what the US troops are doing to track him down.

"It is not known whether Saddam and sons were present and whether they survived the attack," the CIA official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

A B-1 bomber dropped four 2,000-pound (900-kg) bombs on a building in the Baghdad district of Mansur on

Monday after the CIA received a tip that Saddam and his sons. Uday and Qusay, were inside meeting with Iraqi intelligence officials.

Since the strike, which demolished the building and left behind a huge crater, there has been intense speculation about whether Saddam was killed or whether he survived.

British newspapers yesterday quoted unnamed British intelligence sources as saying Saddam probably survived the airstrike.

"He was probably not in the building when it was bombed (Monday)," The Guardian quoted a source as saying.

The Times said Britain's foreign intelligence service, MI6, told CIA that it believed Saddam left the targeted building in Baghdad just before it was bombed.

"We think he left the same way he arrived in the area, either by a tunnel system or by car, we're not sure," the paper quoted a British intelligence source as saying.

US officials have repeatedly said they do not know the results of the strike and that it would probably take some time to determine the fate of the Iraqi leader.

If Saddam survived he will survive. SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Transfer 1,200 child prisoners to correction centres

### High Court asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the government to send over 1,200 detained children -- languishing in 65 jails on different charges -- to correction centres.

A division bench passed the order after a three-month long hearing on the issue, following a petition filed by Advocates Idrisur Rahman and Shahdeen Malik, said a press release of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST).

Earlier, the court asked the Inspector General of Prison to submit a report after investigating the matter, the press release said.

Two human rights organisations -- Odhikar and Save the Children, UK -- published a report early this year which revealed the plight of the detained children.

The HC order directed the government to withdraw all criminal charges

filed against below 12 children, and if it is not possible to withdraw the charges, the government has to free them on bail.

Overcrowded prisons, lack of proper ventilation, poor food and inadequate medical facilities make the situation worse for the detained children.

As the children are accommodated with adult convicts, they eventually become victims of sexual and mental harassment. The court directed the government to separate them from adults.

The court also asked the principal secretary to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who is also the chief of the "Juvenile Justice Monitoring Cell," to go through the provisions of the rule in order to establish the rights of children.

BLAST and Ain-o-Shalish Kendro also filed a separate petition in this regard, which is awaiting hearing.

## Infuse dynamism in admin: PM

### Some laws need to be changed, secretaries suggest

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday advised the top bureaucrats to accelerate activities of their respective ministries.

She said infusing dynamism in the administration is an urgent need of the time to catch up with the fast-changing world and for timely implementation of government's development programmes.

"In some cases we have to change the process of work and improve the performance," the country's top executive told the secretaries of ministries at a meeting held at the conference room of the Cabinet Division.

In cases of laxity, remedial measures have to be taken, Khaleda said spelling out the urgency of bringing dynamism in the administration. "We have to build a performance-based system."

Referring to the war in Iraq, the prime minister said all possible impacts on Bangladesh should be evaluated and the situation regularly monitored.

"We have to keep in consideration various options," she said asking the top financial managers to be more restrained in spending the resources.

At the outset of the meeting, the fourth such since the present government came to power, Cabinet Secretary Dr Saa'dat Hossain made an introductory speech, outlining the objectives of the meeting.

Some of the secretaries who spoke on the occasion also said the mode of work and some of the laws need to be changed to infuse dynamism in the administration.

They also stressed the need for introduction of e-governance to cope with the changing world.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1