

# Saddam is gone, but is America safe?

AFP, Washington

Now that Saddam Hussein has disappeared from Baghdad, many Americans are wondering whether the collapse of his regime has really made the United States safe from attack.

President George W Bush and his main administration officials have insisted that bringing down the Iraqi regime will bring a safer world with fewer terrorist attacks.

"Our military forces are fighting side by side in Iraq to defend our security and to free that nation from oppression," Bush said at a Belfast summit this week with British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

In a speech in Philadelphia on March 31, Bush declared: "All Americans understand that we face a continuing threat of terrorism. We know that our enemies are desperate. We know that they're dangerous."

Secretary of State Colin Powell highlighted Iraq's terrorist links in speeches to the United Nations but other countries have said the link has not been proved.

And Americans might now be wondering whether they are really safer from a repeat of September 11 or even something more devastating from the arsenal of mass destruction that Bush accused Iraq of developing.

"That's an unknown factor at the moment," said Roy Godson, an anti-terrorism specialist at Georgetown University in Washington.

For the moment, US authorities have decided against lowering the nationwide terrorist attack alert, which is currently at its second highest level. "Not yet," Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge told Congress on Wednesday.

There is a high risk of a new attack

like those in Washington and New York on September 11, 2001 which left 3,000 dead and have been blamed on Osama bin Laden's terrorist network, experts said.

"It would make sense for bin Laden or others to encourage people to take action," said Mark Burgess at the center of Defense Information, a Washington research institute.

He warned that some people in Iraq would now be tempted to join al-Qaeda or other radical groups.

Godson said there was a "short term" risk from groups that "may be ready to act now, even in Washington where we have to be pretty much in alert." He said New York and London also had to be on alert.

"In the medium and long term, we could conceivably have some revenge activity, but I don't think this would be sustained over a period," he added. The risk in America, Godson said, depends on post-war and political developments in Iraq. Iraq needs a pluralistic and representative government to "provide an option for humiliated people to go in a non-terror path."

Other experts said they have seen signs of a new radical attitude in the Middle East, including the Palestinian authority.

The Middle East Media Research Institute in Washington said Palestinian Authority television recently broadcast a sermon by Sheikh Muhammad Abu Al-Hunud at the Khalil al-Wazir mosque in Gaza.

He called for reprisals against the United States, accusing Americans of "changing verses and to mess with Allah's book", and wanting "to Americanize the region, Americanize the religion, Americanize the Koran, Americanize Muhammad's message."



From left: Newly formed anti-war committee men march through streets; members of a suicide squad under the banner of Zaiish-e-Mustafa shout slogans; and angry demonstrators burn an effigy of US President George W Bush to protest the US-led invasion of Iraq in Dhaka yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

## Businessman shot by robbers at Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman was shot by robbers at his residence in the city's Pallabi area yesterday morning.

The victim, Dullal Mallik, was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A gang of five stormed into the residence at Block-E, Section-11 at Pallabi at around 6 am and asked Dullal to hand over the keys of his almirah.

As Dullal refused to give in to their demand, the robbers shot him in the abdomen.

They left the scene, leaving Dullal in a pool of blood.

## Another criminal of Adamjee arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police arrested another criminal of Adamjee area on Thursday night.

Acting on a tip-off, Shiddhirganj police raided Shimrail area at around 8:30pm and nabbed 'minister' Shah Alam.

Police said Shah Alam was wanted in eight criminal cases including murder and extortion.

## Farmer shot dead

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died with bullets from the beef yesterday morning and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Dumuria thana said the slain farmer was an activist of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

He might have been killed by his rivals in the party as a sequel to intra-party rivalry, OC said.

Bijoy Roy, son of the victim, filed a case with Dumuria thana yesterday.

Police arrested three people in connection with the murder. The arrestees are Mofizur, Zakir-1 and Zakir-2.

## Hasina

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chief ANM Shafique presided.

Earlier in the morning, Hasina addressed a gathering of professionals and newly elected city corporation ward commissioners at the local Circuit House.

The former prime minister said that her government had started implementing a massive project for development of Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

But the present government has initiated a process of reducing the width of the highway by four feet, she added.

The gathering was also addressed by Badar Uddin Kamran.

## BTTB

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corporatise or privatise but it needs financial autonomy," he added.

Quayum said the Telecommunication Act of 1998 has allowed BTTB full financial and administrative autonomy.

"Bureaucratic tangle and had long been hindering the development and service of the BTTB," he said.

The leaders demanded for 'Post approval' system for fund collection and spending on different project.

The leaders also demanded to allow launching of cellular mobile phone by the BTTB. "We will deposit Tk 500 per annum to the government exchequer if BTTB were given 10 lakh mobile phones," he said.

Earlier, the government has banned holding of procession and rally at Ramna Telegojago Bhaban identifying it as a Key Point Installation (KPI) after the BTTB employees started to agitate against the restructuring programme.

The government is under pressure from the donors International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to restructure the BTTB to ensure a level playing ground for the both public and private operators. The World Bank has offered US\$5.8 million for the restructuring process of BTTB.

The restructuring committee has expressed their willingness to sit across the table with the BTTB's employees and officers. The committee would sit tomorrow.

# Mosul falls, chaos takes hold

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On the run or underground, they are being hunted as are Saddam and his sons by US soldiers now consolidating their hold over the Iraqi capital and other key cities further north.

Iraqi forces appear to have dissolved into streams of unarmed, bootless ex-soldiers trekking home. There are reports of thousands of ex-soldiers walking the 155 miles south from Kirkuk to Baghdad in the strong sun.

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has claimed that senior Iraqi leaders are fleeing to neighbouring Syria, in some cases to stay, in others to move elsewhere.

US planes bomb home of Saddam's half-brother

US forces pressed on with efforts to hunt down deposed Iraqi leaders. A US aircraft hit the residence of Barzan Ibrahim Hasan al-Tikriti, Saddam's half-brother and former head of Iraq's Mukhabarat intelligence service, with six "smart bombs".

The results of the attack on the building, which was also an operations centre for the intelligence service, were not yet known.

Invaders off to Kirkuk

US soldiers fanned out across the northern Iraqi Kirkuk oilfield yesterday to secure Iraq's largest and oldest field, said a Reuters eyewitness on the scene.

The capture of Kirkuk, capable of pumping 900,000 barrels a day, leaves US-led forces in near total control of Iraq's vast oil wealth, the world's second largest reserves of crude.

Kirkuk's 408 oil wells appear to have escaped damage. Their status will be known for sure once US army engineers, already at work in Iraq's southern oil region, are on the ground. Many of Iraq's southern wells were left booby-trapped by Saddam Hussein loyalists.

Meanwhile, Kurdish guerrillas said they would hand over the important oil hub of Kirkuk to US troops. The rich city, traditional capital of the Kurds, fell on

Thursday to mixed units of Kurdish guerrillas and US special forces.

Tikrit targeted

Saddam's hometown of Tikrit is now the regime's last major stronghold. Coalition warplanes and special forces were targeting Tikrit, north-west of Baghdad.

Air strikes against Republican Guard targets were launched to "soften up" defences before ground troops moved in. The US 4th Infantry Division was expected to advance on the city from Kuwait.

But military officials refused to confirm suggestions that the US may seek to end hostilities quickly by using the 21,000lb so-called Moab, the "mother of all bombs", at Tikrit.

Leading regime figures have vanished from Baghdad, and coalition officials believe they may have tried to get to the Syrian border or Tikrit, although the road to Tikrit from Baghdad is dotted with special forces checkpoints.

# Protesters reiterate call to boycott Western products

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Islamic organisations and some other political parties have reiterated their call to boycott all western products in protest against the US-led war on Iraq.

Several thousand people took to the city streets yesterday after the Friday prayers and chanted slogans in favour of Saddam Hossain and against "anti-Islam" Bush and Blair, the two coalition leaders.

They came out from the Baitul Mukarram mosque with banners, posters and festoons, chanting anti-war and anti-west slogans.

As an expression of their consternation, they brought out and mauled the effigies of the two western leaders and finally set them on fire. Some others were churning anti-American songs on a stage set on the North-South road.

Islami Shashantantra Andolon organised the main rally of the day. Its leader Moulana Fazul Karim called upon his followers to work in favour of the eight-point demand earlier announced by the party. The demands include a ban on passing any law contradictory to the Koran and Sunnah, and boycotting of "commodities produced by Jews".

"The movement to boycott Anglo-American products would be spread all over the country within a short time," said one of the Andolon leaders to several thousands of activists attending the rally.

The Andolon leaders called upon people to take up arms to launch a Jihad against the US.

They also demanded trial of US President George W Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair as war criminals.

They called upon the United Nations to intervene and save the innocent Iraqi women and children.

Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir, a front organisation of the ruling Jamaat-

## US warns

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contributed to the US-led effort to oust the Taliban militia from Afghanistan.

"France has actually made some significant contributions in Afghanistan. And I think that's probably - we should note that," he said.

"The French, on a bilateral basis, frequently do things with us that they then don't support in NATO."

"If we just looked at our military relationship, you'd get a reasonably healthy view of things. It's the politicians, I guess, that we have an issue," Wolfowitz said.

e-Islami Bangladesh, Bangladesh Ummah Parisad, Tanshine Allama, Jamia Islamia Fazul Alam, Allahr Dal, Chhatra Majlish, Islami Biploti Parishad, Islami Oikya Andolon and many other organisations brought out anti-war processions.

They also circulated lists of Anglo-American products among the participants and pedestrians.

## Neon sign

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"You should be happy to see the signage in Arabic, shouldn't you?" the top CAAB official quipped.

Another senior CAAB official told The Daily Star that the neon sign was installed there at the instruction of some top policymakers. "We don't know what is the need to have this Arabic neon sign."

Air passengers and visitors were surprised and even confused to see it out there.

"I came from abroad last week and when I looked out from the window of the aircraft, I was puzzled," said Shahadat Hossain of Kalabagan. "At first I thought I landed in some Middle Eastern city by mistake! Later I realised it's Dhaka and they are just trying to change its look."

"I have never seen any public installations with Arabic signage unless they have anything to do with religion. What is the point of having it at ZIA?" wondered Shaded Khan of Uttara.

## Iraqi leaders

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collapsed, Secretary of State Colin Powell said.

"We don't know if he is dead or if he is alive but clearly he is no longer in control," Powell told Indonesia's Metro TV in an interview broadcast late Thursday.

"He hasn't been seen in weeks and none of his other ministers are around today. So we believe that the regime's control has been broken," Powell said in the Washington interview.

"Where he is as an individual I don't know, but it really doesn't make any difference any more. The regime has been brought down and the Iraqi people are now facing a brighter future."

Iraqi television aired footage of Saddam several times following the start of the war on March 20, including an apparent "walkabout" in a Baghdad district before the city fell Wednesday to US forces.

There was speculation that some footage might have been pre-recorded.

# Govt 'extending' PSC

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another six million dollars of bank guarantee because of their contractual failure, they were seeking further extension of the PSC because they want to sell out half of the block's rights to a new investor.

The American companies were discussing the sell-out with Indian Oil Company GAIL.

As per the contract, the government could not prevent such a sell-out once the PSC is extended, the sources pointed out.

Their PSC for oil and gas exploration in the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts region was terminated in January 2000 after three years of unsuccessful activities. It was given a one-year extension in the following month although there was no such contractual provision. And that also was terminated in February 2001.

Successful lobbying gave the oil companies a second chance in March 2001 for yet another year. But once again the company failed to fulfil the minimum work commitment.

During this process, as per the PSC Petrobranga liquidated UMC-Ocean Energy's bank guarantee of three million US dollars in early 2001 and

again early last year.

They were lobbying hard at the political level to get a third chance from mid-2002. "They even lobbied with the Prime Minister's Office," one source said.

The UMC-Ocean Energy's venture in Bangladesh was suffering due to cash crisis all along. It had attempted to drill an exploratory well in Kasalong. But it failed repeatedly due to lack of funds.

Previously, British company Cairn sold out half its concerns to Shell Oil and US Company Occidental sold out its concerns to Unocal. The government had no say in these deals. But in both the cases, Cairn and Occidental's PSCs were in effect.

The government also extended the "terminated" PSCs of Occidental and Oakland-Tullow. Both the companies failed to fulfil their work commitments.

Following unsolicited negotiations for over a year during the tenure of the previous BNP government, UMC signed its PSC with Petrobranga during the Awami League rule in the second week of January, 1997. UMC began its seismic survey in Block 22 covering an area of 1100 kilometres in late '97.

# US troops kill

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dead and unarmed in the morning.

In the Al-Mansour district in western Baghdad, pro-Saddam bands of Arab volunteers manned sandbagged positions, armed with rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikov rifles. Residents said they were mostly Syrians.

Children as young as 10 and entire families -- mother, father and the kids -- took part in the looting. With the breakdown of Saddam's authority in the capital, there was not even a traffic cop in sight.

"Tell the Americans to stop the killing and the looting. We can't live like this much longer, with Muslims looting other Muslims," said 41-year-old Jabryah Aziz. "I need to feel safe so I can go and collect my food ration."

The nursing college at Baghdad University was sacked along with the Engineering College Al-Mustansiriyyah. Looters left with light fixtures, desks, water coolers and air

conditioners.

At the Information Ministry, dozens of looters hauled out sofas, tables, chairs, electronic equipment and a refrigerator.

The Trade Ministry was still smouldering, apparently as a result of arson, as was one of the main markets in the city centre.

Looters used stolen trucks to carry off their booty. Others used cars or pushcarts. Some of the cars had licence plates indicating they were from outside the city.

Bands of looters also roaming the residential areas, casing homes to see if the residents were home. Journalists trying to talk to the looters were robbed of money and cameras.

In some neighbourhoods, residents erected street barricades of tiles, huge rocks and sandbags to fend off looters.

Long lines formed outside bakeries, garbage piled up on the streets along with debris from two days of looting.

# Hosts humbled

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Schwag sent the Bangladesh bowlers on a leather hunt after Ganguly went the toss and decided to bat.

After a cautious start, the Indian opener powered his way to a 51-ball 63. Schwag struck eleven savage hits across the rope. He completed his fifty in style, hitting paceman Tapas Baishya for a six over mid-wicket in an expensive 12th over that produced 18 runs.

The Schwag thunder came to a premature end when left-arm spinner Mohammed Rafique trapped the explosive right-hander lbw.

India did not look like they were going to cross the 250-mark especially after they were reduced to 172-6 in the 38th over. But Yuvraj's first hundred in his 71st one-day match provided the impetus for a late Indian show.

The talented left-hander from Punjab scored a blazing 102 not out off 84 balls, with his second fifty coming off just 28 deliveries. He reached the magical three-figure mark with a four down to wide long-off in the last over.

He hammered four sixes and nine boundaries in a flawless innings that was well supported by Ajit Agarkar.

Together with Agarkar, the south-paw shared 96 runs for the seventh wicket. Agarkar contributed 20 off 23 balls.

With Yuvraj going great guns India plundered 87 runs in the last ten overs.

Bangladesh's reply never took off after they lost three wickets for 12 runs. The team as a whole flopped with only three batsmen managing to reach double figures. Rafique scored highest 18 not out.

Left-arm paceman Zaheer Khan was the pick of the Indian bowlers with four for 19. Agarkar followed up his batting exploits with a fin run with the ball by claiming 3-18.

Debutant fast bowler Aavishkar Salvi made an impressive start, picking up

two wickets for 16 runs.

Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud said that it was a disappointing batting display and everybody was to blame.

"We batted badly despite being told to stay at the crease. Only Ashrafur was asked to play the attacking role. But he too played a bad shot to get out," said Mahmud after the match.

Coach Sarwar Imran was extremely annoyed at the lack of application by the batsmen.

"We will have to do better in the next match. But I do not know how it will be done if the application remains like this," he said.

India will enjoy a day's rest before taking on South Africa in their next game on Sunday.

Bangladesh on the other hand play the Proteas on Monday.

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## British troops

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already returned and some will return shortly," Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram said at a Ministry of Defence briefing.

"This is by no means the beginning of a full scale reduction. Our commitment to Iraq's future is undiminished and we are in the very early stages of beginning to look at the post-conflict phase," he added.

The Ministry of Defence said four Tornado attack planes and their crews had returned in recent days and would be followed soon by about 500 staff from a field hospital unit.

Officials would not be drawn on how fast or large the drawback would be. "We do not want to prolong people there longer than necessary. But the pace of events on the ground will dictate the speed and scale," a ministry official said.

There is a high risk of a new attack