Iraq uranium from Niger

'US embassy in Rome was given forged documents'

AFP, Washington

The US embassy in Rome was given forged documents detailing alleged Iraqi attempts to acquire uranium from Niger from a private source last October, a senior State Department official said Thursday.

"In October 2002, we acquired these documents in Rome from a private source, a nongovernmental source, and they were immediately shared with all the appropriate agencies," the official said.

"The embassy shared them with all the relevant agencies at post and they were then shared again when they got back to Washington," the official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

The official would not confirm reports in the Italian press that the documents had been given to the

Man to die for killing wife in Cox's Bazar

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A court here on Thursday sentenced a man to death for killing his wife in 1994.

The convict is Shahabuddin, son of Abul Hossain of Konakhali village

According to the prosecution, Shahabuddin killed his wife Jotsna Begum on September 17, 1994.

Later, a case was filed with Chakoria Police Station in this

After examining the records and witnesses, the judge of the

Tribunal no-2 handed down the

Scientists stumble over giant hole in the ground

AFP, Beijing

Chinese, American and British scientists have discovered a giant hole in the ground, which has immediately been praised as a "geological wonder" and potential tourist attraction,

The 300-meter-deep (1,000feet-deep) barrel-shaped hole was found hidden in dense bamboo forest in Wulong county near southwestern Chongqing municipality, the

Xinhua news agency reported. At the bottom of the hole, the researchers found two water-eroded caves, extending for a total of 18 kilometers (11.3 miles), the report said.

Shao Iianhua, a local official, said the county planned to develop the hole into a major tourist attraction once the scientists had left.

The hole is classified as a doline, or sinkhole, which is a geological feature developing when limestone or a similar rock type is dissolved by groundwater and collapses.

'Gene makes people more susceptible to depression'

AFP, Washington

Researchers have found a gene that makes people more sus-ceptible to depression under appear Friday in the journal

Researchers studied a group of 847 New Zealanders born in the 1970s from youth to adulthood and found a connection between stressful events in their lives and the gene controlling the levels of seratonin, a neuro-transmitter that links brain cells.

The researchers found that the gene controlling seratonin levels also controled a person's vulnerability to depression after traumatic life events. Those with the short form of the gene, known as 5-HTT, were more likely to slip into depression, the researchers

The discovery seems to corroborate the theory that psychological illnesses are caused by a combination of genetic and environmental

A study published last year in the United States revealed, for example, that children who

to develop antisocial behavior.



The FBI said Thursday it had opened an investigation into the origin of the false documents. "We do have an investigation. It's a pending matter," Federal Bureau f Investigation (FBI) spokesman Ed Cogswell said.

The documents, which the Italian newspaper La Repubblica has now published, were used by the State Department two months after they were obtained in a fact sheet pointing out omissions in Iraq's prewar declaration to the United Nations on its weapons

The Niger allegations then became part of the US campaign to convince the world community that Iraq was still pursuing a nuclear weapons programme, but were dropped after the CIA and other intelligence agencies in Washington cast doubt on their

Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency revealed publicly in March that the documents had been forged.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher admitted earlier this week that the inclusion of the iger allegation in the December 19 fact sheet had been a mistake given the questions about the authenticity of the documents received by the Rome embassy.

On Thursday, Boucher declined to comment on the source of the documents or say where they had been turned over to the United States but confirmed that they had been obtained in October 2002.

Flood

The flooding brought lakhs of people to their knees in the northern districts. Some of them returned to their washed away houses with the recession of floodwaters and were passing their days without bare necessities.

"They don't have food, shelter and safe drinking water and medicine," an official in Pabna said.

Our Sirajganj correspondent adds: Some fresh areas in Taras and Royganj in Ullapara upazilas in the

district went under water yesterday. The district administration said 75 unions, out of 83, and four municipal areas were submerged, affecting

some 6,10,770 people and causing

crop damage on 34,000 hectares. Some 1,850 people shifted to 13 flood shelters opened by the district

A spectre of starvation is also looming over the people in Aagbohali, Dharaborsha, Manika shoals of Sariakandi in Bogra and Shanbadhan Char, Char Giris, Char Nischintapur, Char Chongcha and Mircha shoals of Kazipur in Sirajganj and Kalagachi, Joyramaja, Isli, Iswarkul and Motukpur shoals of Rangpur.

Some 200 families in Motukpur in Gangachara upazila have been passing their days in utter misery.

They don't have food, drinking water and medicine, sources said.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: Rise in water level in the Meghna flooded vast areas in the district and in Bhola, marooning thousands of people, especially in the shoal areas.

The Joyonti, Sandhya, Sugandha and Tetulia rivers that criss-cross the Barisal region were flowing above danger marks.

The Bhola town protection dam was under threat of collapse.

Diarrhoea and gastrointestinal diseases were reported in flooded

Hectic lobby

appoint Jabbar as the establishment secretary. Several ministers are also supporting him.

However, sources at the PMO said the prime minister has not yet made up her mind on the issue and might take a few more days to take the final decision.

Amini FROM PAGE 1

vacant with the death of BNP lawmaker Nurul Amin Talukder.

The press conference elicited immediate reaction from the BNP policymakers, as the Prime Minister's Office asked the IOJ not to hold it.

A BNP policymaker said: "It's a clear breach of commitment and we cannot allow Amini to create troubles from within the alliance."

Although the prime minister did not announce the nomination of a common candidate from the alliance, Khadiza Amin, wife of late Nurul Amin, is likely to be fielded for the by-polls slated for August

Amini on July 2 caused a stir by offering to resign from the Jatiya Sangsad in protest at the noninclusion of his party representative in the cabinet, but backtracked on his decision after a meeting with



US soldiers block a highway in Baghdad as army explosives disposal team dismantles a bomb found along the side of the highway vesterday.

Manpower

FROM PAGE 12

Technology, physicians and

Both sides emphasised the need to halt illegal trafficking of people, especially women and children.

Other bilateral issues also came up for discussion in the meeting, which was held in a friendly atmosphere, said an official release.

Earlier in the morning, Ruddock, who arrived here Thursday night on a three-day official visit, placed wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar.

Bus strike

FROM PAGE 1

they would not allow any bus to ply the road until the 'killer' bus driver was punished.

Montu Khan, Secretary of the District Bus Workers Association, said they have decided to resort to strike in the face of threats and attacks by the tempo drivers and

AL to complain

"The ruling coalition constituted the committees keeping the slots of the AL vacant. The constitution and the Rules of Procedure do not permit partial formation of the bodies," Shahid said.

"As the custodian of the House, the speaker should take initiatives to resolve the problem.'

The gazette notification of the committees is likely to be published this week by the parliament secretariat, sources said.

Forty-five standing committees were formed in the last two ses $sions\,keeping\,the\,AL\,slots\,vacant.$

Administration

FROM PAGE 12

board, file tracking, VoIP, digital library and Annual Development Programme (ADP) database, which could be accessed through the PMO and secretariat via radio link.

Several consultants will be appointed for implementation of the project, sources added.

Under the project, an alternate communication network will be set up. It will provide maximum reliability and security of communication and enhance speed and efficiency in decision-making and follow-up of compliance status.

The e-policing system will be established at five police stations in the capital for communication between citizens and police in all possible ways including online filing of general diary and first information report.

Digital divisional towns will provide electronic processing for major services, empower local representatives, introduce electronic forms of institution and kiosks to increase access of citizens to the digital content.

A 14-member project steering committee has been formed with the principal secretary to the prime minister as the convenor and the project director will act as the member secretary. Other members of the commit-

tee are secretaries of education, commerce, science and information communication technology, post and telecommunications, law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministries, executive director of Bangladesh Computer Council. presidents of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce, Bangladesh Computer Samity, Bangladesh ISP Association, Bangladesh Association for Software and Information Services and head of the department of computer engineering of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

The project will be implemented by 2005 with internal

Hasina: Poverty, injustice

FROM PAGE 12

"When a population is subjected to repression and suffers, and the government of the day is unable or unwilling to extend protection, the principle of non-intervention should give way to the international community's responsibility to act and protect within multilateral settings," she said.

Bangladesh's experience over the past two years amply demonstrated lack of good governance that a dysfunctional parliament, and for that matter democracy, Hasina alleged that despite the

Sheikh Hasina said

constitutional guarantee of basic rights and freedom, crimes are committed with impunity and even the media is not spared. "In the absence of transparency and accountability, the nexus

between crime and politics is

assuming a dangerous institu-

dominated body of planting the

Baghdad's fall a national holiday

said one banner raised by the dem-

onstrators who converged on the

Um al-Qora mosque on the western fringes of Baghdad from several

Sunni mosques in the capital after

by the Governing Council during its

inaugural meeting on Sunday to declare April 9, the day US-led

forces ousted Saddam Hussein, a

national holiday in its first act as a

"We (Sunnis) are the silent majority, not a minority," read

another banner, while a third said

"no to division into Sunnis and

The 25-member council, sup-

posed to reflect Iraq's ethnic and

confessional makeup, has 13 Shiite

slogans against the US occupation,

vowing to "exterminate the infidel

Bremer follow Nuri," they shouted,

alluding to US civil administrator

Paul Bremer and Nuri as-Said,

The protesters also chanted

"Revolt, revolt O Baghdad, let

The reference was to a decision

"Shame on those who consider

FROM PAGE 12

Friday prayers.

seeds of civil strife.

alleged that corruption, extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths are now common in Bangladesh while the common man's access to justice is mostly

The former prime minister also

Referring to the election process, the AL chief said it must be free, transparent and provide full opportunity for mass participation. "It must be above controversy so that the government can govern with confidence, courage and full legitimacy," she said.

'Equally, democracy must not be limited to its electoral aspect only," she added.

Hasina said although there are a large number of entities and bodies to protect, ensure and promote human rights, freedom, rule of law and democracy, the question is how effectively these organisations practise these values

cratic institutions at home, and regionally and globally," she said. The objective, she said, must be to bring every country and every

and sharing of experiences, we can

consolidate and promote demo-

citizen of the planet within the folds of democracy as societies with a democratic culture perform better than those lacking in it. "We advocate globalisation of democracy and rule of law, such

transformed into a community of democracies," Hasina said. Citing her experience, she said the struggle to achieve democracy and establish rule of law is a long

that the world, in due course, is

and difficult one. Hasina said, "...but for the sake of future generations, we have the opportunity to take concerted action and commit ourselves towards a future of peace and well being for the child of today and the

"Through dialogue, interaction

Grenades hit US military

cil came against the backdrop of

mounting attacks against US

troops, chiefly in Sunni-populated

areas of central Iraq believed to host

monarchy who was killed by a mob when it was overthrown in 1958. Friday's rally was called by Iraq's

Council of Ulema, a body grouping Sunni religious scholars. In a statement read to the proesters, a cleric said the ulema believed the Governing Council had divided the Iraqi people along sectarian lines, declaring "a certain community to be the majority ... without an accurate population

census" "The group that was given a majority (on the council) does not make up a majority ... (even) among Muslims," the statement claimed, in defiance of independent population estimates which put the Shiites in a large majority.

Shortly before, the imam of Um al-Qora mosque, Hareth al-Dari, had also lambasted the Governing Council, telling the faithful it was "rejected and unacceptable because it divides Iraq into groups and races"

"It is planting the seeds of hostility between the sons of this society," said Dari. "That is why we don't support it ... This council does not serve the interests of the people or the nation."

The harsh criticism of the coun-

dominated regime.

Ctg GPO official's

CU CORRESPONDENT

Robbers in broad daylight yesterday shot and wounded the assistant postmaster of Chittagong GPO (General Post Office) and looted Tk 50.000 worth of cash and gold ornaments from his house at Bahaddarhat in

Sources said a gang of four armed men stormed into the house of Assistant Postmaster Joynal Abedin Chowdhury right behind the Bahaddarhat post office at 3:30 pm.

The masked robbers shot Chowdhury in the wrist and beat up his wife before fleeing the spot with the cash and ornaments.

No case was recorded till filling of

house robbed in broad daylight

Chittagongyesterday.

discuss US plans to try British

terror suspects being held at the US

naval base at Guantanamo Bay in

Cuba in military courts and release

in Britain with commentators

calling on Blair to prove that he has

influence over Bush. In a remark

certain to fan the flames, Bush told

reporters, "the only thing I know

for certain is that these are bad

None of those imprisoned in

Guantanamo has had a trial and

they face a much-criticised mili-

people.

The issue has caused an uproar

a statement about it yesterday.

Iraq urban warfare

US mulls use of reserves

REUTERS, Washington

The Defence Department is considering calling up thousands of additional National Guard and Reserve troops in the coming months for service in Iraq, US defense officials said on Thursday.

The Pentagon said a total of about 201,000 National Guard and Reserve troops already are on active duty.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the use of additional National Guard and Reserve troops is in the mix of options now being weighed as the Pentagon devises a plan to bring long-serving troops home from Iraq and replace them with fresh ones while maintaining adequate troops levels.

Officials said elements of Army divisions in Texas and Hawaii, Marine Corps troops, and reservists are being considered for service in Iraq in the coming months. No final decision has been made, they said.

One official said the Pentagon was planning "for a variety of contingencies," but said the Army had "no definitive plans to call up any (National Guard) brigades and did not have any identified for possible call-up."

Among the part-time troops currently on active duty are about 137,000 in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, 32,000 in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, and 20,000 in the Marine Corps Reserve.

The United States has about 146,000 troops in Iraq, but has announced plans to bring home the entire 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) this fall, perhaps by September. About 15,000 soldiers in that division currently are in Iraq

SSC grading

FROM PAGE 1

subject -- objective, essay-type, theoretical and practical -- to pass

Any candidate with F grade in four subjects in SSC/Dakhil exams will be allowed to sit for those particular exams next year. And students with F in three subjects in HSC/Alim will be con-

sidered to improve their grade next If students want to sit for all examinations, they have to attend classes and examinations in

 $school/college\,as\,regular\,students.$ The ministry abolished a previous provision to allow examinees grade in one subject and GPA 1.5 and above to enrol in

higher class on a temporary basis. Talking to The Daily Star, State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hoque said, "From this year students failing in four subjects will be able to sit for improvement exams in those particular subjects.'

The education ministry said schools, colleges and madrassahs have to introduce the same grading into internal examinations.

The education boards will issue certificates to successful candidates with GPA ratings. Examinees will be given tran-

scripts, instead of mark sheets, with the GP secured in every subject and the GPA, the ministry said. The GPA will calculate inclusion

of fourth subject marks of SSC,

HSC. Dakhil and Alim examina-

tions from 2004. At present, the

result does not reflect fourth sub-

The ministry decided to amend the system following a set of recommendations from educationists and experts.

The Pentagon is devising the rotation plan at a time when U.S. allies such as India have declined to provide thousands of peacekeeping troops as hoped by American officials.

Military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States have greatly increased the burden on America's

part-time troops. Central Command chief Gen. John Abizaid, who commands American forces in Iraq, said on Wednesday that troops being sent to Iraq could face yearlong deployments, a staple of the Vietnam War but used only rarely

India frees 2 Chinese POWs after 41 years

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian government has released two Chinese soldiers 41 years after they were captured during a bloody border war between the Asian giants in 1962, a senior diplomat told the news agency.

The Asian diplomat said Yung Chialung, 61, and Sui Lang, 65, were handed over to Chinese officials July 8 at a state-owned psychiatric institution in the eastern city of Ranchi where they spent four decades as India's prisoners of war. "The pair are already back in

their homes in Sichuan province in southern China," the New Delhi-based diplomat said on condition of anonymity. "Both India and China had

agreed that the handover of the two

will remain a secret," the official

Bar Council

FROM PAGE 12 would be affected by the 'irrational' and 'discriminatory' order of mandatory income tax return and demanded that the ceiling for taxable income be raised to minimum Tk 2,00,000 from the existing

He said non-confirmation of 15 judges of the Supreme Court represents a distinct 'government imprint of politicisation' on the judiciary and demanded that the judiciary along with the police

administration be de-politicised. "This is a matter of serious concern. By handpicking judges, the government is undermining the independence of judiciary. This will obstruct the rule of law. which is directly linked with judiciary's independence," Amir-ul-Islam said, adding that judges must be appointed on the basis of seniority, merit, performance and

chief justice's recommendation. He said the move to pass a bar council amendment law is an act of government interference in the activities of BBC in order to exert undue influence on the lawyers' organisation.

He predicted that amendment of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act without consulting lawyers would also create difficulties and fail to ensure justice.

At the outset of the press conference, BBC lawyers paid homage to late Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed and victims of the recent Chandpur

Bush, Blair defend Iraq war

members.

(US) army.

nuclear weapons program and I will remind the skeptics that in 1991 it became clear that Saddam Hussein was much closer to developing a nuclear weapon than anybody ever imagined.

"He (Saddam) was a threat. I

take responsibility for dealing with

that threat," Bush said, adding:

"We won't be proven wrong ... We

will bring the information forward

on the weapons when they find them and that'll end all this specu In an impassioned defense of the war before a joint session of Congress, Blair said that toppling Saddam was justified even though

weapons of mass destruction have

failed to materialize. "Can we be sure that terrorism and weapons of mass destruction will join together? Let us say one thing: If we are wrong we will have destroyed a threat that at its least is responsible for inhuman carnage and suffering," Blair said in what was billed as one of the most important foreign speeches of his six-year premiership.

"That is something I am confident history will forgive. Blair and Bush are under fire for allegedly overstating the threat from Iraq's banned arms to justify

the conflict. What should have been a period of triumph after a quick military campaign has turned into a nightmare for the Political chaos grips parts of

while Bush's approval ratings have slipped since the war ended. "We're being tested in Iraq," Bush said. "Our enemies are looking for signs of hesitation. They're looking for weakness. They will

Iraq, troops are under attack and

public trust in Blair has slumped

at home as he thanked the US tary tribunal process. They have lawmakers, who gave him 17 been designated enemy combatstanding ovations. "I'm deeply touched by that warm and generous welcome," he said. "That's more than I deserve

Blair alluded to the atmosphere

"It was probably as warm a reception as I have seen any foreign leader ever get," said Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota. Becoming only the fourth

and more than I'm used to, quite

joint meeting of the US Congress, Blair also sought to deflect criticism that he was "Bush's poodle." He said he and Bush would

British prime minister to address a

The prison was set up to house Taliban and al-Qaeda suspects captured primarily in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. Inmates could face a death sentence. Britain opposes capital punishment.

expect Bush and Blair to spend much time discussing the intelligence on the Iraq nuclear program, which has been discounted by the CIA. Nor did they expect the president to ask the prime minister to publicly release the British intelli-

US officials said they did not

ject marks.

ers, many of whom are children. Sexual or violent content can and does spark sexual or violent thoughts that are often translated

to TV. Of course, there are worth-

In fact, sexually explicit commercials are very much likely to have a disastrous effect on our future generation as well as the

TV commercials It is unlikely that moral appeals

into action.

Unfortunately, children are becoming more and more addicted while programs on TV suitable for kids, for example local programmes like Notun Kuri or foreign programmes such as Sesame Street and the like. But these kids and adolescents are also bombarded with a procession of commercials replete with adult contents inserted between programmes. The effects of televised sex and violence on TV ad messages, which advertisers know have a broad appeal and therefore use unhesitatingly for promotion of their products, are anything but beneficial for our children. There is a growing amount of evidence that sexually explicit ad messages promote sexual callousness, cynical attitudes about love and marriage, and perceptions that promiscuity is the norm.

society they are going to live in.

from parents and other concerned citizens will influence the TV industry to reduce the amount of violence and sex on television, of which commercials have lately become a considerable vehicle. For a section of advertisers, the bottom line is profit, which actually determines the kind of commercials to be produced. It is therefore necessary for the authorities concerned to regulate commercials and make sure that such wanton display of sexually suggestive materials or violence are effectively kept in

Tigers

FROM PAGE 12 as a Test nation in 2000, when they were blasted out for under 100.

toss and sent Bangladesh into bat on an easy-paced drop-in pitch and by lunch the tourists were reeling at 63 for six against Australia's formidable bowling It was all over for Bangladesh 50

Skipper Steve Waugh won the

minutes after lunch with Mohammad Ashraful top-scoring with 23 off 52 balls and skipper Khaled Mahmud making 21 from 39 deliveries.