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Red Cross shuts Iraq offices

Guerillas kill 2 US paratroopers, American warplanes batter Saddam's hometown

AGENCIES, Baghdad

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is temporarily closing its offices in Baghdad and the southern Iraqi city of Basra following the bomb attack on its headquarters in the capital last month, a spokesman said yesterday. Insurgents meanwhile killed two US paratroopers and wounded another west of Baghdad yesterday as the US military cracked down on residents of Saddam Hussein's hometown after guerrillas shot down

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PHOTO: AFP

US soldiers take position in front of a burning Bradley fighting vehicle following an attack on the highway overlooking Fallujah, 50 km west of Baghdad, which killed two US soldiers and injured one yesterday.

Fresh raids to rescue Jamal end in vain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Law enforcers raided Fatikchhari, Boalkhali, Betbunia and Anwara upazilas in Chittagong in the last two days in a bid to rescue abducted tycoon Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury.

"We conducted the raids after contact with source network was reestablished recently," Superintendent of Police of Chittagong Mahubur Rahman said yesterday.

Search operation got a new impetus after Jamal's wife Nazma Chowdhury and sons met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia last week.

Her husband could be rescued if the government acts seriously without further delay, Nazma told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I believe my husband is still alive. He was abducted for political reasons rather than for ransom. Abductors and their godfather will

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Free movement of media men to top Delhi Saarc talks

RAFIQ HASAN

Free movement of media personnel and formation of a Saarc regional media forum and a media development fund will dominate the discussion at the third Saarc information ministers conference to be held in New Delhi this week.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam will lead a three-member delegation to the conference to be held from November 11-12, sources said.

The first Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) information minis-

ter's conference was held in Dhaka in 1998 where a plan of action on information and media was adopted.

The Dhaka plan of action identified a number of other activities to be undertaken by the member states to ensure free flow of information through newspapers, periodicals, books and other publications.

It also stressed increased co-operation among news agencies of Saarc countries, easier travel rules for media people within the region, regular exchange of TV/radio programmes and media training. The second meeting held in

Islamabad in March 2002 reviewed the plan of actions adopted in Dhaka. The meeting also proposed to set up a Saarc media development fund to promote media linkage within the region, evolve a regional media forum and establish a Saarc information centre.

An expert group recently met in Islamabad to work out technical aspects of the centre and its report will be discussed at the upcoming ministerial conference in New Delhi.

The issue of the information centre also figured prominently

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Misuse of VGF cards reported in monga-hit N-districts

ANWAR ALI, Parbatipur

Misappropriation of relief materials by corrupt local administrations in collusion with union level ruling BNP leaders is seriously thwarting relief distribution efforts in the monga-hit areas of the north.

Even a weeklong effort by four ministers and five additional secretaries to institute a sound relief distribution has done little to check the pilferage of relief.

So far, at least 60 relief distributors including five government officials have been arrested or are facing action for misappropriation of relief, but the situation remains a far cry from being acceptable.

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Notice

Today's issue carries a 16-page, four-colour supplement on the outstanding performers in the O & A level examinations of 2002-2003 sessions. Read the free attractive supplement to know about the nation-builders of tomorrow.

Announcement

In our constant effort to serve our readers better, we are embellishing the editorial content of the paper. The Op-Ed page, hitherto making three weekly appearances under the title Focus has been renamed *Point-Counterpoint* and will appear everyday of the week, starting from Monday, November 10.

US closes mission in KSA

UK citizens in Bahrain on alert

REUTERS, Riyadh

Washington's decision to shut its embassy in Saudi Arabia was based on fresh information about militants' plans in the kingdom and followed a call to target Western "crusaders," diplomats said yesterday.

The US embassy in Riyadh and its consulates in the coastal cities of Jeddah and Dhahran were all closed on Saturday -- a working day in the Gulf -- after what the United States said was credible information "terrorists" were about to strike.

Its warning to US citizens in the kingdom followed raids in which five militants suspected of links to

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FRIGATE CASE

HC judge feels embarrassed to hear petition for quashment

SUPREME COURT CORRESPONDENT

A High Court judge yesterday felt embarrassed to hear the petition for quashing the proceedings of the frigate purchase graft case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The petition under Section 561-A of the Code of Criminal Procedure was filed with a division bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Jinat Ara.

Justice Jinat Ara felt embarrassed to pass any order according to merit of the case and the bench became

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Midnight nightmare at DMCH

NAIMUL HAQ and BINDU SAHA

After midnight, the emergency services at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) become unimaginably bad.

Severely injured, heavily bleeding patients, often from road accidents, are kept waiting till surgeons, anaesthetists and other staff are ready to operate.

With only a handful of common drugs, only one emergency medical officer, one functioning operating theatre, one anaesthetist and a few ward boys and nurses the emergency department of the country's

biggest and busiest hospital struggles to cope with the rush of patients in urgent need of treatment.

Grievously injured patients arrive from far and wide of the city almost every minute, but the hospital apparently lacks all means of responding.

A typical incident at 2:49 a.m. a 36-year-old man haemorrhaging from underneath his lung arrives. His penis is partially severed. The emergency medical officer, Dr Sarwar, sends him to the main casualty ward, 31.

The man, Imam Hossain, is helped to walk the entire distance,

despite his injury, because no trolley can be found to carry him.

After reaching the crowded, rank-smelling ward, he can find no one to attend to him.

About 10 minutes later two intern doctors turn up to examine him.

"Oh God, please save me. I'm dying. Somebody please help," he cries in agony.

Other patients are also screaming for help. But the two young medics flop onto chairs in the centre of the dirty, dingy ward.

The man, an electrician from

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Court orders seizure of magistrate's power

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court has asked the government to seize the power of a metropolitan magistrate for passing unlawful orders in a criminal case.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Matiur Rahman Thursday issued the order against Magistrate Shafiq Anwar for passing irregular, illegal and arbitrary orders on a bail petition to an accused in a criminal case.

The order came upon a criminal revision by the accused on November 3. Copies of the order have been sent to the chief metropolitan magistrate and the secretary of the establishment ministry.

The judge said in his order one Abed Hossain Mukul filed a criminal case with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on August 26 against one Mohammad Ali alias Jinnah on charge of non-payment of Tk 18 lakh.

The court took the case into cognisance and issued a warrant of arrest against the accused. The court also asked the accused to appear before it on December 6.

Meanwhile, the case was transferred to Magistrate Shafiq Anwar for trial, though the time fixed for appearance of the accused -- December 6 -- did not expire.

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2 youths shot dead, 2 more hurt in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two young men were shot dead in Mohammadpur and Badda and two others suffered bullet wounds when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them in front of Dhaka College last night.

Saiful Islam, 30, died after his friends allegedly shot him point blank at Madhyapara in Khilkhet, Badda at around 9:00 last night. Just two hours later, Ejaj, 24, was shot dead at Salimullah Road in Mohammadpur.

Saiful, a driver, was declared dead by doctors after locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 10:00pm. He received four bullets in his legs and other parts of his body.

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