

# US bars anti-war nations from Iraq contracts

## Two American soldiers killed in guerilla attacks at Mosul

### AGENCIES

The United States has barred companies from France, Germany, Russia, Canada and other nations that refused to join the US-led coalition in Iraq from competing for billions of dollars in prime contracts to rebuild the country, a Pentagon memorandum made public.

Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, in a decision dated December 5, cited "essential security interests" of the United States and the need to encourage countries to provide troops for Iraq as

the reason for limiting competition for 18.6 billion dollars in prime contracts.

They range from equipping the new Iraqi army to rebuilding and refurbishing power and water plants, roads, oil installations and communications systems.

Meantime Reuters said two American soldiers were killed yesterday in separate attacks in Iraq.

One soldier died and three were wounded when a roadside bomb hit their convoy in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the US military

said.

"One soldier was killed and three were injured," said a spokesman for the 101st Airborne Division in the city.

In the northern city of Mosul, another soldier was killed when insurgents fired upon troops guarding a gas station, the US Army said.

Another US soldier was wounded in the incident.

Meantime, the US decision, which was posted on a Pentagon website, lists 63 countries that are eligible to compete for some 26

prime contracts that cover the sweep of Iraq's reconstruction needs.

Conspicuously absent from the list are the countries that opposed the war and have declined to send troops to join in the post-war occupation of Iraq, including France, Germany, Russia and Canada.

"It is necessary for the protection of the essential security interests of the United States to limit competition for the prime contracts of these procurements to companies from

## Another 6 Afghan kids killed in attack

AP, Kabul

Six children were killed during an assault by US forces on a compound in eastern Afghanistan, a US military spokesman said yesterday, the second time in a week that civilians have died in action against Taliban and al Qaeda suspects.

The children died during an attack on Friday against a complex near the eastern city of Gardez where a renegade Afghan commander, Mullah Jalani, was believed to have stocked weapons, said Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty.

"The next day we discovered the bodies of two adults and six children under a collapsed," he said. "We had no indication there were noncombatants" in the compound.

Jalani was not at the site, 12 miles east of Gardez, but Hilferty said nine other people were arrested.

Hilferty said that US warplanes and troops attacked the compound in a nighttime raid, setting off secondary explosions. The bodies were discovered the following day. They appeared to have been crushed by a

## Great pied kingfishers spotted in Bandarban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Birdwatchers have sighted crested kingfishers in a remote hill in Bandarban in what could be the latest find on the list of kingfisher species in Bangladesh.

Birdwatcher Enam Ull Haque spotted the birds, also known as great pied kingfishers, on November 22 during a seven-day tour of the Sangu and Matamuhuri valley reserve forest.

The team of birders led by Enam found another pair of the same species in the Remakri stream between the Nafakhu waterfall and the Sangu river near Baro Madok.

The South Asian subcontinent is home to 12 species of kingfishers and Bangladesh recorded all except the crested kingfisher before.

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## Remain alert against propaganda

### PM tells expatriates

BSS, Geneva

Prime minister Khaleda Zia has warned the Bangladeshi expatriates against anti-Bangladesh campaign in foreign lands.

Speaking at a gathering of Bangladeshis living in Europe at Hotel Noga Hilton in Geneva on Tuesday night, she described the expatriates as goodwill ambassadors and urged them to project the true image of the country abroad.

Referring to what she said was a propaganda campaign by a particular party, she said that party believes in one-party rule, not in multi-party democracy.

The prime minister arrived here Tuesday to attend the first ever World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

She said "We are Bangladeshis... your (expatriates) honour and dignity are linked with the honour and prestige of Bangladesh."

Khaleda expressed gratitude to Bangladeshis who gathered here from other parts of Switzerland and other European countries including United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark and Austria.

She gave a brief resume of her two-year-old government's programmes on education, agriculture, health, communications, industry, environment, telecommunication, local government, poverty alleviation and establishment of the rule of law.

The leaders of expatriate Bangladeshis lauded the

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## Dhaka rejects Canadian intelligence report

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday rejected a Canadian intelligence report that Bangladesh may be emerging as a 'haven for Islamic terrorists' in South Asia.

Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) expressed concern about serious attacks by radicals on cultural groups in Bangladesh, hints of collusion with al-Qaeda and the government's alleged unwillingness to crack down on terrorism.

The CSIS report also suggests there could be dangers to Canadian aid agencies with a "strong presence" in Bangladesh, the third largest Muslim country in the world, an Associated Press (AP) report from Ottawa said yesterday.

Reacting to the report, a foreign ministry news release said, "The contents of these reports are far from the reality on the ground. We would like to categorically state that the government of Bangladesh remains firmly committed to the principle of combating terrorism and to uphold the tolerant and non-communal character of the country."

"It is regrettable that some quar

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## Panels plagued by factional feuds

### DU deans' election today

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

Internal feud both within the BNP-Jamaat-backed White Panel and the AL-backed Blue Panel have come to the fore in DU (Dhaka University) teachers' politics centring today's deans' election of the university's seven faculties.

A number of teachers recently reported rivalries within the White Panel over political differences between the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, and a curious rift within both panels over whether the candidate is or isn't from Noakhali district.

Failure to get nomination has also been a bone of contention for aspirants within the White Panel. Sources said some of the teachers left out of the race had distanced themselves from the campaign for panel nominees.

However, there have been efforts in both camps to mend the internal differences. Leaders of both panels organised separate Iftar parties during Ramadan to work out their differences.

Prof. Abul Khaer, president of Dhaka University Teachers'

Association (DUTA) and leader of the White Panel, admitted to conflicts of interest within his panel.

"We have some problems, but hope to resolve them before the elections," he said during an interview earlier.

"We have taken this year's dean's election very seriously considering our government's national politics," Prof. Khaer said, adding that they were making serious efforts to win deans' posts in all seven faculties.

Blue Panel leaders were also busy trying to resolve their differences mainly between the pro-Noakhali and its rival factions, and also held an Iftar party during Ramadan to that effect.

Prof. Khondoker Bazul Haque of the Blue Panel told The Daily Star that panel members have minimised their differences and that election prospects of the Blue Panel are good this year. He added that his panel is hopeful of bagging the votes of a large number of teachers who are not politically aligned.

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## Unocal first US firm to stand trial over rights abuses

AFP, Los Angeles

Oil giant Unocal became the first US firm to stand trial in the United States for alleged human rights abuses abroad, in a case centred on the building of a gas pipeline in Myanmar.

Myanmar villagers have sued the California-based oil titan claiming it was complicit in human rights abuses by the Southeast Asian country's brutal military junta, including forced labour, rape and torture.

The trial in Los Angeles stems from two lawsuits filed by up to 15 unidentified villagers from the nation formerly known as Burma over the construction of the 62-kilometer (39-mile) Yadana natural gas pipeline.

The villagers claim in their seven-year-old lawsuit that Unocal turned a blind eye as junta troops murdered, raped and enslaved villagers and forced them to work on the 1.2-billion-dollar pipeline in the 1990s.

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## Peter out hills problem

### JS body asks CHT ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday asked the CHT affairs ministry to iron out land dispute and refugee problem soon to bring order to restive Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban.

Concerned at the volatile situation in the three hill districts, the committee instructed the ministry to solve the problems through the Land Commission and the taskforce on the CHT.

A meeting will also be held between the government and Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma to discuss the irritants, Muhammad Mosharraf Hossain, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts) affairs ministry, told newsmen.

The committee also decided to visit the districts soon to probe the reasons for the present situation, marked by hartal and abduction.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar assured the parliamentary body of new steps to rescue Rupam Mahajan, who was abducted on August 24 in an incident that sparked a wave of violence in Mahalchhari in Khagrachhari, burning 400 houses and killing two indigenous people.

The committee did not discuss the threat by Larma that if the demand for withdrawal of army from the CHT and implementation of the 1997 peace accord was not met by December 31, the PCJSS would start a tough movement.

On implementation of the peace deal that ended two decades of bush war in the CHT, Moazzem Hossain Alal, a committee member, said: "We want to do everything to implement the accord -- mindful of our standing that our independence and integrity will not be at risk."

Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman, chairman of the Land Commission, and Samiran Dewan, chairman of

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world summit on the information society | Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005

## Summit begins with focus on information society

MUSTAK HOSSAIN, from Geneva

The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) began in the Swiss city of Geneva yesterday stressing creation of an information society for optimum use of information and communications technology (ICT) to 'improve the lives of everyone on the planet'.

"Let us embrace these new technologies. Building up an open, empowering information society is a political, economic and ultimately political challenge," United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan told world leaders at the inaugural ceremony.

The UN secretary-general however observed ICT is not a panacea or magic formula. "Yet, even as we have talked about the power of technology, let us remember who is in charge. While technology shapes the future, it is people who shape technology, and

decide what it can and should be used for," Annan stressed.

He went on, "We are going through a historic transformation in the way we live, learn, work, communicate and do business. We must do so not passively, but as makers of our own destiny. Technology has produced the information age. Now it is up to all of us to build an information society."

This summit is unique as it will consider how best to use a new global asset while most global conferences focus on global threats, Annan said.

"We are familiar with the extraordinary power of information and communications technologies. From trade to telemedicine, from education to environment protection, we have in our hands, on our desktops and in the skies above,

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## Hasina accuses govt of growing human rights abuses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the ruling alliance of rampant human rights violations since coming to office.

At a press conference at her party's Dhanmondi office on the occasion of World Human Rights Day, Hasina said the government was working against people's struggle to uphold their fundamental human rights.

"The BNP-Jamaat led coalition government is the enemy of humanity, democracy and the rule of law," she said.

"On this World Human Rights Day, we find ourselves struggling for our human rights, restoration of the rule of law and freedom of speech," Hasina said.

She observed that the human

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Prayer Timings		
December 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-15	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-21
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Nations to sign landmark UN anti-graft pact

BBC ONLINE

More than 100 United Nations' members are meeting in Mexico to sign a landmark convention against corruption.

The first legally-binding international agreement on the issue is aimed at making it easier to hunt down corrupt officials and to recover illicit funds.

Mexico and the United States were among the first to sign at the three-day UN forum in the southern city of Merida.

The terms of the treaty were agreed in October, but will only enter into force when it is ratified by 30 countries.

Forty-three countries had signed the accord by late Tuesday, the UN legal affairs director Hans Corell was quoted by French news agency AFP as saying.

The Convention against Corruption will require states to criminalise bribery, embezzlement, money laundering and abuse of power.

For the first time, it includes provisions that commit its signatories to return assets stolen and

lodged overseas to their country of origin.

The BBC's Mexico correspondent Clare Marshall says the motivation behind the treaty is to encourage developing countries in particular to take action over corruption rather than accept it as an inevitable part of society.

The aim is to crack down across the world on secret bank accounts and money laundering, both major impediments to a country's development.

The convention will require public officials to declare details of any foreign bank accounts and funds will be monitored.

Mexico - which has seen billions of dollars embezzled by officials - was among the first to sign up to the pledge.

"The issue of corruption is a real scourge for our economies and development," said President Vicente Fox.

"Strengthening the fight against corruption is to strengthen our fight against poverty."

US Attorney General John Ashcroft, who signed on behalf of

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