

Anti-war protest

FROM PAGE 1
of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Marching through the street in Motijheel commercial area, the angry protesters attacked an office of DHL Express and destroyed its furniture. They torched a DHL microbus (No. Dhaka Metro M-51-1738).

A BRAC bank and a restaurant -- Jimmy's Kitchen also came under attack.

Four fire brigade units put out the fires. During the two-hour violent protests, traffic movement from the Jatiya Press Club to Motijheel came to a standstill.

Meanwhile different organisations kept on protesting of the invasion of Iraq and called for boycott of US and British goods.

Bangladesh Communist Party, Ganotantrik Biplobi Jote, Jatiyatabadi Peshabji Parishad, Daowatul Islam Badarpur Darbar Sharif, Ganasanghati Andolan, Jatiya Janata Party, in separate statements called upon the people to boycott US and British products.

Bangladesh Truck Chalok Samrit Federation asked truck drivers not to carry American goods.

UNB adds from Chittagong: Four boys suffered serious burn injuries while frolicking around as devotees after Juma prayer yesterday set ablaze effigies of George Bush protesting the US-led aggression on Iraq.

The four victims--Babu, 7, Tarek, 9, Rana, 11, and Shahjahan, 14, -- were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital "in critical condition".

Witnesses said punjabis (clothes) of the boys caught fire as they gathered amid thousands of protesters who came out from mosques and assembled at the Olankar crossing and started burning the effigies.

The local human rights commission formed a human chain in front of the Chittagong Press Club condemning the US-led war on Iraq.

A watermelon vendor was seriously

injured in police beating while they were trying to clear the road to make way for an anti-war procession at Dampara.

The vendor Zafar-- was at first taken to police hospital and then shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police sources said departmental action will be taken against the policeman who beat the vendor.

Next few days crucial in Iraq war: Howard

REUTERS, Canberra

The next few days will be among the most crucial in the war in Iraq as the campaign has moved quickly forward in the past 48 hours, Australian Prime Minister John Howard said yesterday.

Howard, who spoke to US President George W Bush earlier yesterday, welcomed what he said was the apparent capture of Baghdad airport by US-led forces overnight in the first ground attack on the Iraqi capital since the start of the war 16 days ago.

He said while he was surprised how rapidly US-led forces had advanced on Baghdad and the apparent ease with which the airport was taken, he was not being overly exuberant.

"I'm not saying that Iraqi resistance is crumbling... I don't think anybody quite knows at the moment," Howard told Melbourne radio station 3AW.

"It would seem that the next few days are very crucial."

Australia, a staunch US ally, was the third country to join the military conflict against Iraq, sending 2,000 personnel, including elite forces, jet fighters and warships to serve with US and British troops. No Australians have been reported killed.

Reuters correspondents near Baghdad reported US forces were still fighting yesterday for control of the airport, in the first ground attack on the Iraqi capital since the start of the 16-day-old war.

He immediately informed his seniors. They searched all the packers and recovered the foreign currencies.

The consignment was sent to the C&F agent from FKZ Express, whose office is at Purana Paltan in the city, customs sources said.

A case was filed with the airport police station in this regard.

Tk 1.17cr forex seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on Thursday seized Saudi rials and US dollars equivalent to Tk 1.17 crore just before those were being smuggled out of the country through a courier service.

Employees of C&F agent MS Ahmed and Faisal International handed over a consignment to customs official AKM Azad at the cargo village at ZIA. On suspicion, the customs official opened one of nine packets in the consignment and found some Saudi rials and US dollars inside it.

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Suicide attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two persons accused in an extortion case escaped from police custody while being taken to district jail from Khulna court on Thursday.

The two -- Anwar Molla and Oihadul Molla -- were among eight FIR-named accused in the case, according to Khulna Police Superintendent Moshar of Hossain.

They were produced before the court for hearing of the case, recorded with Terokheda thana under the Speedy Trial Act.

The six others are Amjad Molla, Mostafa Molla, Noor Amin, Gaus, Touhidul Molla and Makbul Shikder.

According to sources, some toll collectors had been demanding a toll of Tk one lakh from shop owner Chandra Shekher at Kolagati bazar under Terokheda thana. Being refused, they stormed into the shop on February 16, ransacked and looted it.

A case was recorded on March 3 against nine toll collectors following intervention by the SP as the OC of Terokheda had refused to record it, the sources said. All the nine were arrested and eight of them were released on bail.

The SP has asked the Additional SP to inquire into the matter and submit a report.

Till the time of filing this report, the escapees could not be re-arrested.

Newly elected UP chairman, member held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A newly elected chairman of Kurnia union parishad (UP) and a member-elect of Gutudia UP, under Dumuria upazila, were arrested by police when they went to the UNO office to take oath.

Rahamat Ali Khan (chairman) and Dulal Chandra Bala (member) were sent to the district jail amid tight security. Two associates of the chairman were also arrested at the same time. They are Abdur Rashid of Kurnia union and Niranjan Pal of Tolna union.

Police said all of them were wanted in several criminal cases recorded between 1996 and 2002.

Besides, two elected chairmen and three members did not take oath on Thursday. They are Khan Alamgir Kabir and Shafiqul Islam Litu, chairman of Gutudia and Bhandarpura UPs respectively. Three members who did not take oath are: Manotosh Basak and Dilip Roy of Shovna UP and Joarder Rafique of Rudaghara UP.

ADC (gen) of Khulna, M.A. Sobhan, who administered the oath, said that the arrested were linked with underground parties.

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It said the woman and the driver also were killed.

Jim Wilkinson, a spokesman at US Central Command, said the incident showed the Iraqi leadership was using desperate measures to remain in power.

Earlier this week, US officials said a man posing as a taxi driver staged a suicide attack that killed several soldiers at an army checkpoint.

"The more desperate the regime gets, the more desperate their tactics become," Wilkinson said. "This is just the latest tragic example."

Troops have been on heightened alert since that attack, and have fired on civilian vehicles that have approached checkpoints.

In the deadliest incident reported so far, 11 members of the same family were killed when troops fired on their car near Najaf on Monday.

US officials have defended the heightened alert of their troops, saying they have a right to defend themselves against what they call "terrorist" tactics by the Iraqi regime.

The Iraqi government has said suicide bombings will be a "routine military policy" and has promised more attacks.

A case was filed.



PHOTO: STAR

A girl wields a toy gun to express solidarity with Iraqi people fighting against the invading coalition troops during a demonstration in Dhaka yesterday.

Godfathers

FROM PAGE 12
from the post of general secretary Feni district AL

With 18 cases lodged against Hazari, who became more ill reputed for brutally torturing journalist Tipu Sultan, has reportedly been out of the country for the last 18 months.

A senior AL leader told The Daily Star that party leaders at any level, who earned public wrath for their criminal activities, will now have 'political death.'

"All the senior leaders present at the AL Secretariat meeting unanimously expressed the view that the party could no longer carry such liabilities," a meeting source said. Party chief Sheikh Hasina was informed of this and she also wanted to see her party 'clean.'

A few leaders' ill reputation made the AL suffer politically for long, the source said. In this context, he referred to the recent city corporation polls in Sylhet and Barisal. The AL fared well in Sylhet but failed to field a mayoral candidate of its own in Barisal as alleged misdeeds by Abul Hasnat and his sons had tarnished the image of the party, he added.

A senior political aide to Sheikh Hasina pointed out that 'family bondage' did not prevent her from sticking to the tough stand against the bullies. Hasnat's (a first cousin of Hasina) wife was a mayoral aspirant in Barisal but she refused to give her party backing.

Diagnostic centres

FROM PAGE 12
chambers to attract patients. The managements of most of the centres, however, claimed the arrangements are for the benefit of patients.

Doctors allegedly refer patients for various unnecessary pathological, biological and biochemical investigations, blood, urine and stool tests and X-ray.

An employee at a diagnostic centre, seeking anonymity, said, "Blood sugar test costs less than Tk 4.50 but Tk 100 to 120 is realised from patients. A routine urine test costs less than Tk six but Tk 52 to 61 is charged for this."

Another employee said, "Cost of reagents for blood grouping is less than Tk three but diagnostic centres are charging Tk 153 on an average for a test involving these."

The centres have different rates for similar tests or investigations in the absence of necessary rules to check this, he mentioned.

"We have no fixed rates," admitted the owner of a diagnostic centre. "The rates are fixed on the basis of mutual understanding among owners of the centres."

About unusual profit margin, the owner of another diagnostic centre said costs of reagents or X-ray films are too insignificant but related expenses including those for establishment, he added.

Mosaraf Hossain, Police Superintendent of Bagerhat, said the bomb attack was launched to snatch Lenin.

Two persons including younger brother of Lenin have been taken into custody for questioning.

On February 5 this year, six police constables were injured in similar bomb attack by miscreants in Kismat Khulna area of Rupsha upazila.

Saddam vows

FROM PAGE 12
Police got down from the van and opened fire in which one of the miscreants was injured. But he fled along with others by a motorbike.

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invaders are defeated and repelled, they retreat in defeat...

"Allahu Akbar (Allah is great); Glory for Allah; glory for the mujahideen of Iraq and disgrace and shame for the enemies of Allah and humanity.

"Long live Iraq; Long live our glorious nation; Long live Palestine. Long live Iraq; Long live Iraq; Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar; and let losers be disgraced."

Russia, Germany

FROM PAGE 1
working together on all problems," Putin said, answering reporters' questions on the war in Iraq.

"Our relationship is based on common principles... We have a special interest in ensuring world peace," he said.

Reuters adds: German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said yesterday it was obvious the US-led forces would win the Iraq war and said any reasonable person should hope for their quick victory.

Schroeder said he and his government remained opposed to the war. But for the first time he said the United States would win.

"Obviously it will end with a victory for the allies because of their relative strength," Schroeder said in a ZDF television interview.

"One can not wish for anything else. Even if one was against the war, one has to wish it ends as quickly as possible. That has to be the wish of every reasonable person."

Schroeder, one of the first and loudest critics of any military action against Iraq last year, said Germany was and would remain a close ally of the United States and Britain.

Iraq: UN to install

ON Thursday, foreign secretary Jack Straw said that US and British forces will occupy Iraq for a short time after the war before an interim authority paves the way for democracy in Iraq.

"There will initially have to be a military occupation because that is the only legal base and practical base for running the country," Straw told BBC's Newsnight programme.

"There will then be a phase, we hope as rapid as possible, which leads to an interim Iraqi authority and that would have to be endorsed by the UN," Straw said in Brussels where he was attending a meeting with NATO and UN counterparts including Colin Powell.

"What we want to see is a very, very swift transition from what will necessarily be a military occupation, where we are, to a situation where we set up an interim Iraqi administration and then a more permanent one which is a government of the Iraqis, for the Iraqis," Straw said.

Asked if the ultimate goal was a democratic Iraq, he answered: "Yes, I am quite sure we will be able to achieve that. It will take some time."

Bangladeshi students

FROM PAGE 12

and 1.00 GMT in the rest of the world.

Organisers in Bangladesh, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPEA), yesterday called upon all to participate in the lesson to help set a new Guinness World Record. Setting a new record would shed light on the long neglected issue of girls and women education.

A total of 70 million girls are still out of school across the globe and 550 million women - nearly one in every five - are illiterate.

The GCE's third Global Week of Action from April 6-13, 2003 is calling for immediate steps to open the doors of learning to women and girls.

"We need your support. If the majority of us demand it, governments will be forced to take positive action to get girls into school," one organiser said.

The single most important lesson of the past century is that education wipes out poverty and nourishes democracy. Educating girls and women is especially crucial: it leads directly to better family health,

economic growth, and lower rates of child mortality and malnutrition.

Organisers said the single biggest mistake of our times has been to deny women and girls the right to read and write - the means to build a better life.