

# Anti-war protest

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

Marching through the street in Motijheel commercial area, the angry protestors 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 Bipolobi Jote, Jatiyatabadi Peshajibi 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 Samik 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 protestors 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

## 'Arab League's future hangs in balance'

**REUTERS, Cairo**

The US-led war on Iraq has cast a shadow over the Arab League, which for 50 years embodied the aspirations of millions of Arabs for unity but is now under fire for failing to stop the latest Gulf war.

Disappointment at its failure to stop the war has sparked talk of scrapping the 22-member league, replacing it with something new, or introducing serious reforms.

Libya this week revived a request in October to withdraw from the League, in the most overt display of frustration. Other members are said to be equally unhappy.

Western diplomats in Saudi Arabia said the oil-rich kingdom was distressed at the League's ineffectiveness and Crown Prince Abdullah was keen to see it reformed.

"The future of the Arab League is now hanging in the balance," said Hassan Abu Taleb of Egypt's al-Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak raised the need for change when he said in a speech this week that it was time to start thinking about the Arab structure to make it more effective.

Arab League officials acknowledge that the body is under great pressure to change but insist it should stay in business.

"Replacing the Arab League with another body is not easy because the League is what brought the Arabs together despite their differences and affiliations," Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa told Reporters on Monday.

He noted that other international organisations such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Union had faced similar rifts over the Iraq war.

# 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,

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.

## 2 accused in extortion case escape from police custody

**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 Ohidul 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 Terokhedha 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 Shekhar at Kolagati bazar under Terokhedha 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 Terokhedha thana 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 rearrested.

## Newly elected UP chairman, member held in Khulna

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

A newly elected chairman of Kharnia 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 Kharnia union and Niranjana 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 Shafigul Islam Litu, chairman of Gutudia and Bhandarpura UPs respectively. Three members who did not take oath are : Manotosh Basak and Dilip Roy of Shovne UP and Joarder Rafique of Rudaghare UP.

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

## 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.

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.

## Suicide attack

**FROM PAGE 1**  
vehicle and wounding two others."

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



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.

# Real estate stake looks rosy

**FROM PAGE 12**  
congestion situation. On the one hand, we have the steadily rising volume of city population and on the other hand, the burgeoning growth of vehicles of all descriptions on the limited road space of the city, creating heavy traffic jams all around. All these phenomena are also contributing to the emergence of threats to the normal functioning of the service sector in such fields as gas, water and electricity which are already overloaded. It is hard to see how infrastructural facilities can be adequately upgraded to meet the challenge of the upswing of pressure on the communication and transport sectors for the city. All these factors make it imperative for city planners to ensure that the city's livability is not threatened by such unplanned activities.

Another important aspect of the present trend in high-rise buildings is whether this really provides any meaningful relief by way of meeting the housing needs of a significant section of the city population, besides the affluent classes and the high-income groups in society. The knowledgeable quarters tend to feel that the present emphasis on high-rise buildings in city areas may be shifted to comparatively low-cost lands available outside the city to ease pressure of a rising city population. The higher profitability of high-rise buildings is perhaps more attractive to the prospective builders at present, which

seems to present a rather gloomy picture about the city's prospects in its expansionist trends, in the near future.

There is, however, a silver lining in the growing congestion situation in the form of new interest being shown by real estate business companies to attract prospective customers to invest in housing plots in the city suburbs, such as Savar, Joydevpur, Ashulia, Nabinagar and even in Dhamrai. The advertisements for housing plots in those areas sponsored by various private housing societies are offering similar incentives in price and easy method of payment. As the price of land in Dhaka city has soared beyond the reach of many with only moderate income, the advertised housing plots in city suburbs may offer people some hope of investment in them. But the main problem is that the full development of such areas may take time on account of inadequacy of infrastructural facilities. As a result, the intended shift of pressure of some population from the metropolis to the suburbs may not be expected soon enough.

Meanwhile, it seems inevitable that the pressure of rising population on the city itself will continue apace, with the likelihood of threatening the livability of the city.

Rajuk has drawn up a plan to build new townships and satellite towns to

## Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF in Benapole

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

A Bangladeshi national was shot dead by Indian border guards near Benapole on Thursday morning.

Witnesses said Nurul Islam, 45, was shot by Border Security Force (BSF) personnel while tilling land at bordering village, Dhanyakhola, at about 8 am. He died on the spot.

Locals said a BSF bid to take the victim's body to their camp was foiled by BDR. Police later rescued the body from the spot.

A case was recorded with Benapole port thana in this connection.

## 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.

disperse the city population and ease pressure on civic services. The plan includes construction of absolutely new township called Purbachal and Jheelmeel and satellite towns like Uttara Phase III and East Baridhara.

Of these projects, Purbachal project is known to have made some progress. But the progress so far made is said to be slow for a number of reasons. This has led many to doubt whether the time-table fixed for completion of the project can be adhered to unless the pace of work is speeded up.

As regards the other projects of RAJUK, they are yet to be taken up for implementation. As such their possible impact on easing the population pressure is far from reality. The expansion of the Dhaka city on the northern and north-eastern sides appears to be taking place more rapidly on account of absence of any natural obstruction. But the river Buriganga seems to act as a deterrent to any appreciable expansion of the city southward.

The pace of development of the housing plots under private ownership in the city suburbs, it is felt, is bound to be slow for obvious reason, particularly on account of inadequacy of communication and transport facilities. Therefore, the expected easing of pressure on city population seems to be a far cry at present.

## 2 held with revolver in Munshiganj

**UNB, Munshiganj**

Two youths were arrested along with a revolver from Tongibari upazila early yesterday.

Police said they arrested Mamun Molla, 26, an activist of ruling party backed Sechchasebok Dal and recovered the revolver loaded with six bullets from his possession.

Abdus Salam Biplob, a Chhatra League worker, who was accompanying Mamun, was also arrested.

# 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,

## Rupsha

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Policemen 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.

Mosharaf 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.x

# Saddam vows

**FROM PAGE 1**

around for our divisions to come and confront them and fire a large number of missiles on us -- acting in the way that we had expected, and according to our expectations, we have organised our defences, including the defences of Baghdad...

"Whenever the enemy is confronted, it moves along to another place in the precious land of Iraq..."

"And now the enemy is approaching Baghdad in the same way, and the defences of Baghdad's walls is the responsibility of the Republican Guard and the army..."

"(The enemy) will not be able to storm Baghdad, because there are believers who are willing to sacrifice their lives for Allah and the nation, so every Iraqi family be assured and have no fear..."

"I say, as I have said before, we are not waiting for victory, because it is in our hands... This is Allah's promise to the believers, and it is our right to achieve this victory..."

"We are determined to repel them and destroy them at the walls of the capital Baghdad, as we are determined to destroy their armies on every inch of Muslim Iraq land..."

"Fight them brothers, hit them day and night and let the land of Muslims be a scorching fire for their feet and their faces wherever they pass. With Allah's help, their stomachs may grill in hell forever and our martyrs will attain paradise..."

"Throughout history evil invaders have targeted capitals and believed battle would be decided in the capital. But when the capital is steadfast and the

electricity, staff salary and many other things raise the costs of tests.

The managing director of a diagnostic centre said, "We are in a competitive market. If tests are costlier at one centre, clients would naturally go to another. So, it is not true that diagnostic centres are charging unusually high rates."

An official at Modern Diagnostic claimed, "We don't pay commission to any doctor. We have representatives who visit doctors for advertisement."

The managements of Comfort and Popular diagnostic centres also made similar statements regarding the allegations.

The health directorate is silent on such issues and it seems to have no control over the diagnostic centres, many of the sufferers alleged.

Although rules provide for regular visits by officials of the directorate for checking if the diagnostic centres have necessary manpower, equipment and devices, no such visit took place over the years, a senior official of the directorate said.

## Aftab murder

**FROM PAGE 12**  
local gang of extortionists and the doctor.

The quarrel took place as Dr Aftab declined to pay the demanded amount of money to the criminals from Dhakadakhshin bazar, where he used to attend his private chamber for over two decades. The extortionists reportedly demanded a big amount of money for releasing one of their fellows, who had been in jail.

Dr Aftab Hossain was taken to a remote village, Ghoshgaon, on the plea of a call on the night of 14 September, 2002. The miscreants stabbed him severely, causing his instant death. The body was recovered next day.

People of Sylhet expressed their utter discontent over the failure of the police to arrest the murderers. There are allegations that the OC of Golapganj PS, who was made the investigating officer of the case, helped the killers escape. However, he was later transferred and the case was shifted to the DB.

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

**FROM PAGE 1**

British Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged yesterday that a post-war Iraq would be run by Iraqis, not Britons or Americans and that UK troops would not stay in the country any longer than necessary.

His promise came in an open letter to the Iraqi people which will be handed out by British troops on the ground, posted on websites and sent out by e-mail.

"As soon as Saddam Hussein's regime falls, the work to build a new, free and united Iraq will begin," Blair says in the letter. "A peaceful, prosperous Iraq which will be run by and for the Iraqi people, not by America, not by Britain, not by the UN."

"Our troops will leave as soon as they can," he said. "They will not stay a day longer than necessary."

Blair's official spokesman said the leaflet, in Arabic, would be distributed as widely as possible. It will be dashed out on print runs at a rate of 60,000 per day.

In the letter, Blair also insists that all the money made from Iraqi oil will be Iraq's. "It will be used to build prosperity for you and your families," he says.

# Airport falls, claims US

**FROM PAGE 1**

But the Iraqi leader remained defiant despite the symbolic and strategic loss of the airport. The Iraqi satellite television aired footage of President Saddam Hussein chairing a meeting and vowing that victory against the advancing US-British forces was certain.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Naji Sabri said Iraq would inflict a "resounding defeat on the aggressor," calling on Arabs and Muslims across the world to defend the country.

Terrified people fled into Baghdad in vehicles piled high with blankets and possessions to escape the fighting around the airport, just 12 miles southwest of the city centre.

Meanwhile, US marines said the Nida division of the Iraqi Republican Guard had been defeated by US-led forces pushing toward Baghdad.

As US forces consolidated their hold on the outskirts of Baghdad, news emerged of a second suspected suicide car bomb attack on American-led troops at a checkpoint, northwest of Baghdad, killing three soldiers, a

pregnant woman and the driver.

About 2,500 Iraqi Republican Guards surrendered between the cities of Kut and Baghdad, US Central Command said yesterday. The surrender apparently occurred after clashes of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and the Republican Guard's Baghdad Division, said Navy Capt. Frank Thorp, spokesman at US Central Command.

US-backed Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq clashed with Iraqi troops near Khazir, a strategic junction on the road to Mosul, as US special forces and Kurds advanced on the oil capital of Kirkuk.

In southern Iraq, British forces said they killed eight Iraqi militiamen yesterday in a street battle on the edge of Basra.

**'CHEMICAL PLANT' FIND**

US troops claim to have found thousands of boxes containing vials of unidentified liquid and powder, as well as manuals on chemical warfare, at a plant near Baghdad.

"It's unclear, at this point, what the vials contain, and we're sending a team of experts to examine them,"

Captain Kevin Jackson told Reuters.

The facility, which is close to the southern suburb of Latifiya, had been identified by the International Atomic Energy Agency as a suspected chemical, biological and nuclear weapons site and was checked by UN inspectors before the war.

Separately, Brigadier General Vincent Brooks of central command told a news briefing in Qatar that special forces in Iraq's western desert had found what they believed to be a training school for handling nuclear, chemical and biological warfare.

**RESIDENTS STAY INDOORS**

Baghdad was rocked overnight by several loud explosions. In central areas, many residents stayed indoors, leaving the streets largely to knots of armed militiamen.

"The enemy is trying to enter Baghdad," Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf said, quoting a statement he said was from Saddam. "Fight them brothers, hit them day and night and let the land of Muslims be a scorching fire for their feet."

The capital is now in force of the rockets and artillery of US forces who have driven over 300 miles from Kuwait since starting the war on March 20.

**BAGHDAD BLACKOUT**

For the first time since the conflict began, city power went off late on Thursday, plunging Baghdad into darkness and silencing loudspeakers that call Muslims to pray.

It was unclear why power went out in Baghdad, although there was speculation that coalition forces had used a "blackout bomb", a device designed to short-circuit power station grid connections without the need for high explosives.

In Washington, General Richard Myers, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Thursday night the US military had not targeted the city's power grid.

Most of Baghdad's power comes from the al-Doura power station south of the capital, and is essential for maintaining clean water supplies to the populace.