

Fear, anger, relief

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Baghdad "constitutes the high-water mark for a new American determination to use the nation's military might to project its power around the world."
Prince Hassan of Jordan told the BBC: "There are jitters throughout the region about the possibility of (US) threats to Syria and possibly Iran resulting in the domino effect."
That view was echoed even in Britain, the United States' staunchest European ally and its partner in the Iraq war.
"This unprecedented show of US offensive power sends a daunting message. Who knows which way the Abrams tank barrels will swivel next?" the left-leaning Guardian newspaper asked.
US motives in doubt
France, a vociferous opponent of the conflict, said "bravo" to the end of the war and fall of Saddam Hussein.
A statement issued in the name of President Jacques Chirac said: "France, like every democracy, welcomes the fall of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, and hopes there will be a rapid and effective end to the fighting."
But presidential aide Alain Juppe struck at the heart of Washington's justification for its actions, adding: "We were right to say that there were other ways to disarm Iraq. Iraq did not use weapons of mass destruction."
"It's a day of shame," said Ali Jaddah, an engineer in the Palestinian city of Ramallah. "On this day, Arabs have become slaves. The only man who dared to say 'no' to the Americans' face has vanished today. What is left is a bunch of bowing and scraping Arab leaders."
A front-page editorial in Beirut's The Daily Star said: "The Americans should not confuse happiness at the tyrant's fall with a willingness to accept occupation. The only time they will be truly welcome in Iraq will be when they leave."
The world's thoughts turned quickly to rebuilding oil-rich Iraq, and again there was suspicion of US motives.
"It remains to be seen whether it is a good idea to confine the reconstruction of Iraq to retired American generals who have close relations with the arms industry, the oil business and the hawks of warlord George W. Bush," wrote the Belgian daily De Morgen.
"There is too much at stake to allow the future to be determined by arms lobbyists, since stability in the Middle East is at stake," added the left-leaning newspaper.
Gamble on peace
Syria's Tishreen newspaper, a mouth-piece for the government, which has been accused by the United States of backing Iraq, warned that problems were only just beginning "after the killing, destruction, terror and hunger."
Germany's Sueddeutsche Zeitung said recent experience in Bosnia and Afghanistan showed that peace could not be taken for granted even after the old guard was swept away.
"After the necessary phase of ensuring security, Iraq must recover its full sovereignty in a region of stability with the legitimacy that the United Nations gives," said Chirac's statement.
That view won backing yesterday from mainly Muslim Indonesia, and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi urged international cooperation to create a government for Iraq.
Words of World Leaders
"I stress the necessity to work as soon as possible for the Iraqis to take in hand the government and administration of their country," said Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. "The fact of Iraq being governed by its sons, and as soon as possible, is the quickest way to ensure stability for the Iraqi people."
"We don't believe that the United Nations is equipped to play that central role (in rebuilding Iraq)," says US Vice

President Dick Cheney.
"We're happy that the war is almost over. We are happy that, you know, the misery of the people of Iraq has been terminated," said Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien.
"It seems this is a moment that Iraqis and the rest of the world have awaited for too long," said Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende. "I hope this marks the end of suffering for the victims even if one can not exclude further incidents."
"The Iraqi people's suffering must come to an end ... and the international community is called upon to listen to the Iraqi people so that they can succeed in installing their political system...and maintaining their sovereignty and unity," said Bahrain's King Hamad.
"The images from Baghdad awaken hope," Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski. "We have lived through past events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the events in Bucharest (when dictator Nicolae Ceausescu fell) and we know there is no regime capable of restraining the human will to freedom."
"As long as an Iraqi government has not been installed, we would like the main role to be given to the United Nations," said Kuwaiti State Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah. "The Iraqis must govern themselves."

Hosts meet India

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new-look national team against Saurav Ganguly's under-strength India side.
World Cup runners-up India will be without their premier batsman Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid. Besides, Ganguly will be banking on a relatively inexperienced attack in the absence of Javagal Srinath, left-arm pacesman Ashish Nehra and leg-spinner Anil Kumble.
But despite the absence of some key players the inspirational Indian captain said that the present side has plenty of 'potential winners' to go all the way in the meet.
Ganguly also ruled out the possibility of taking the championship 'as a vacation' for him.
"I will definitely play every game and of course will bat at number three," said Ganguly after the teams trained at the venue yesterday morning.
While the Indians are taking the tournament as opportunity to expose some young talents at the highest level, Bangladesh will try to lift their battered image on home soil.
The tournament will also divert attention of the millions of sports lovers in the country from the happenings in Iraq to a battle of a different kind.
The match is expected to draw a big holiday crowd after the West Indies toured in December last year.

US embassy

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overseas, it said.
The statement said Executive Order 11246 having the full force of US law explicitly states that contractors for the US government cannot "discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin".
The statement also said the law states categorically that any contractor engaging in discrimination is liable to have his contract "cancelled, terminated, or suspended in whole or in part and the contractor may be declared ineligible for further government contracts".
It added religion would not be the basis for hiring or denying employment in the case of the Kuwaiti company.

Commuters

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restriction," said an official who attended the meeting.
He said that the army unilaterally imposed the new timetable.
Representatives from Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB), Department of Roads and Highways and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) also attended the meeting.
An official close to the Prime Minister's Office, however, expressed the optimism that the problem would be resolved soon.
"Prime Minister Khaleda Zia asked the principal secretary to take up the matter immediately and restore the road link ---. I hope the army will withdraw the restriction very soon," he said.
Meanwhile, commuters continued to suffer.
Ayesha Kabir, editor of an English magazine, who uses the road to attend work, said: "The other day, it took two hours to reach my office, which is quite unacceptable."
"The jam from Kakoli to Mohakhali was awful. My car approached at snail's pace," she added.
Thousands of motorists used the cantonment road every day to shuttle between southern and northern parts of the city to avoid traffic jams at Mahakhali.
Traffic clog at Mahakhali due to work on a one-kilometre long flyover there.
With the launch the flyover project last year, the cantonment authorities lifted the ban on all civilian vehicles and opened the relief road for small vehicles from 7:00am to 8:30pm.
The opening of the cantonment brought relief to people who live in Gulshan, Khilkhet, Uttara, Tongi and Gazipur areas.
"The new restriction -----has failed to address sufferings of the common man," said Sujit, a resident of Khilkhet.
The restriction has also affected private bus and human hauler operators.
"The large queues of vehicles reduce our number of trips," said Aziz, driver of a human hauler.

Iraqi embassy

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Embassy Adnan M Hatab Sultan also skipped a scheduled press briefing at the National Press Club. The Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh (DCAB) that arranged the briefing on the Iraq situation was told that due to the unclear situation in Iraq, he could not attend the programme.
The DCAB later postponed the press briefing.
On Wednesday, foreign ministry officials said the government would maintain a usual diplomatic relations with Iraqi Embassy in Dhaka.
"The embassy would be there as long as the Iraqi authorities wish and our relations would be normal," said acting Foreign Secretary Anwar-ul-Alam.
Asked what would be the future ties between Baghdad and Dhaka once Baghdad falls, he said it was too early to comment.
"Until now, we don't know what changes would take place in Iraq. But the changes might not affect diplomatic relations," he added.
He noted that Dhaka was still observing the situation and it would act as per the United Nation's decision once the crisis was over. The decision would depend on how the situation developed.
When the US-led forces invaded Iraq, the US government asked Bangladesh alongside other countries to trim officials in the Iraqi embassy and lessen diplomatic amenities for them. However, Bangladesh did not entertain the US request.



Students, left, of the Spectrum International School form an anti-war human chain and members of the Sylhet Division Development Action Council stage a hunger strike to protest the US-led invasion of Iraq in Dhaka yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Looters rule Baghdad

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who set about seizing everything they could find entered the embassy in Karada Street in central Baghdad.
Many of the looters moved into the city centre from the poor outlying districts with wheelbarrows and pushcarts, intent on getting their share of the booty.
The looters drove tractors, pick-up trucks and trailers and even a large bus up to a large villa belonging to Tareq Aziz, Saddam Hussein's deputy prime minister. They stole everything from furniture and paintings to chandeliers and curtains, and stripped the electrical wires from the villa's main switchboard. Aziz's library was also ransacked.
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was concerned about the looting of hospitals.
"The hospitals themselves have come under attack for the purpose of looting. There are lots of people carrying weapons around and they make it very difficult for civilians in need of medical care to actually reach the hospitals," ICRC spokesman Roland Huguenin-Benjamin in Baghdad told CNN.
Meanwhile, smoke billowed from buildings across the city. US Marines said Iraqi holdouts were setting fire to their own quarters and blaming the Americans. In at least one case, however, looters were seen setting fire to some buildings in the Interior Ministry complex.
US troops occupied the Oil Ministry. But the nine-storey Ministry of Transport building was gutted by fire, as was the Iraqi Olympic headquarters, while the Ministry of Education was partially burned. Near the Interior Ministry, the office building of Saddam's son Oday stood damaged, its upper floors blackened.
A building on fire near the Interior

Ministry was rocked by deafening explosions apparently caused by ammunition and rockets stashed inside. The blasts went on for more than 15 minutes.
In and around the capital, skirmishes flared between US forces and Iraqi holdouts, and bursts of gunfire and explosions continued to echo through the city nearly a day after the people of Baghdad danced in the streets over the fall of Saddam.
Around the city, looters hit stores and government installations, including the Irrigation Ministry, the Transport Ministry, the Air Force officers club, the government computer centre, the Olympic hospital and state laboratories.
In the city centre, donkey-drawn and horse-drawn carts were seen loaded with office furniture, TV sets, appliances and carpets.
A house in southern Baghdad belonging to Saddam's notorious cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid -- known as "Chemical Ali" -- was also robbed.

Garner

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people are going to be killed," he said.
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers said Garner is able to accomplish important work without being in Iraq.
"It really doesn't matter where general Garner and his group is because they are, in fact, acting now," he said.
"The restoration of water supplies in several southern towns, the restoration of electrical power grids, he's the one that is overseeing that work."
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went to Latifur Rahman's (Shazneen's father) Gulshan residence to join a party.
He said, "I saw two persons -- drivers Sadeq and Asgar -- at the main gate of the house. But no guard was there. They opened the gate and I entered the house. Security lights on the compound were off. I went upstairs where the party was going on. I met Mrs Latifur Rahman and asked about her health condition. She replied that she had high blood pressure."
"At about 9:30 pm, guests were entertained. At about 10:15 pm, we heard a scream. Latifur Rahman rushed out of the party room. After a while, we again heard a scream. Then we all went downstairs and came to know that something happened to Shazneen. I went to her bedroom and saw her body on the floor. There was a deep wound on the left side of her neck. While crying, her father said Shazneen was no more,"

War impact limited

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the Awami League and the Jatiya Party, academics, business leaders and NGO and civil society representatives participated in the discussion.
Dr Debapriya said rise in oil price, increased trade-facilitation charges, possible economic slowdown in the US, UK and Euro Zone countries may aggravate the ongoing vulnerabilities of the export sector.
Prospect of participation of workers in the post-war reconstruction activities may be dim because of the alleged discriminatory recruitment practices, he added.
"Bangladesh's access to concessional overseas resources may suffer as development priorities may get significantly undermined due to the changed paradigm and resource diversion," Dr Debapriya said.
Global economic uncertainties may deepen leading to increased arbitrary treatment of trade partners. In the process, Bangladesh may get sidelined.
Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh, said world political economy and social behaviour would change due to the war in Iraq.
"As our annual remittance is over two billion dollars and around 76 per cent of this comes from the Middle Eastern countries, sustainability of foreign exchange reserve and import mostly depends on this," he added. "We have to be realistic and extremely careful in diplomatic and trade relations."
BNP lawmaker Mashhur Rahman said the government has already formed an interministerial taskforce to assess the

impact of Iraq war and identify the solutions
Referring to the kerosene issue, Awami League lawmaker Faruque Khan said the war would not dent economy and felt that the government should carefully handle the petroleum issue.
Earlier, economist Dr Atiur Rahman said foreign direct investment would be affected if threats of boycotting US and UK products continue.
Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers Party of Bangladesh said domestic factors like hartal and deteriorating law and order are the main reasons for poor foreign investments.

Female workers

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whatever services are available because the service providers are not women-friendly.
Lack of effective referral system and long-term follow-up mechanisms on common health problems also works as impediments.
"Everyday about 50 women die during childbirth, one of the highest in the world. Unsafe abortion, lack of access to emergency obstetric care, delay in reaching healthcare services and delivery in the hands of untrained birth attendants account for such high rate of maternal mortality," said Dr Halida Hanum Akhter, managing director of Health Promotion.
"Roughly 70 per cent of women are malnourished which also accounts for a large number of women who are also stunted, underweight and suffer from many diseases. Today there is a trend of early marriage, which is a serious concern. Practically adolescent girls in the country have no access to healthcare services which is a violation of their rights," said Salma Khan, chairperson of NGO Coalition Beijing Plus five.
Dr Khairul Alam of Plan International said there is a need for national maternal strategy. Such strategy was being worked out but since it has not been pursued the draft has disappeared.
He also said political commitment must come from all parties irrespective of party interest.
Nashid Kamal of Population Environment Division of Independent University said, "HPSP (health and population sector programme) is a good document which largely reflects

nal newspapers, press staff print some extra copies in exchange of money by removing original matters from the plate. The DFP officials then submit the fake copies to the departments concerned.
The corrupt DFP officials also earn a huge amount of money through giving special supplement to unknown newspapers that in turn offer half of the total amount to the officials as bribe.
There are instances that DFP's film section gobble up the whole amount allocated to produce new documentaries. They show old films in the name of new ones.
Corruption is also rife in purchases of films and chemicals.
Several inquiry committees, including one by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption, were probing allegations of corruption, forgery and purchase in the Department of Films and Publications (DFP).
Some probe bodies observed that the corrupt officials at DFP were running the department flouting all rules and policies of the government for personal gains.
There are allegations that two officials at the Prime Minister's Press Wing and some officials at the Ministry of Information maintain close links with the DFP-men.
The Ministry of Information found a number of allegations true in investigation, but no action has been taken against the guilty.
Besides, some officials say a number of probe bodies were virtually purchased by the corrupt DFP clique.
Previously a section of junior officials were engaged in corruption, but the clique is snowballing with the passage of time, some information ministry officials said.
A probe committee headed by Deputy Secretary (Press) Alamgir Bhuiyan is under tremendous pressure for not submitting its report, they said.
The Bureau of Anti-Corruption recently seized different DFP files to investigate some specific allegations, but hectic effort are on even from the Prime Minister's Office to block the process.

Shazneen case

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DESCO

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DESCO said.
DESCO has already taken necessary steps to ensure continuous power supply in the circle, the press release added.
DESCO, established in 1996, started its commercial operations in 1998 with the assistance of Bangladesh government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

New healthcare delivery plan

women's health needs. It also had specific allocation for women's health but the policy makers stopped door-to-door family planning services and started services from a static point or community clinic.
"In a study we predicted that sudden change in such services would fail to have desired impact and had recommended phasing out door-to-door services especially by family planning workers."
Jahangir Hyder, managing director of Reed, said decision to seek healthcare services has a link with socio-economic status of women and their education. It is observed that women in general have very little knowledge about healthcare services in a hospital. Since women traditionally have less physical mobility in villages, they hardly seek healthcare services where it is actually available.
"There is a need to adopt a strategy to establish a referral system from grassroots to tertiary healthcare delivery system so that maternal mortality can be addressed. That's not to say traditional birth attendants (TBA) should be left out," Farida Akhter, executive director of Ubining, said.
"Over 95 percent babies are born at home in the hands of TBAs and we must make every effort to train them to avoid unsafe delivery and establish referral system."
Professor Rahid-e-Mahbub, former Bangladesh Medical Association president said, "Unfortunately, we have observed that most policies are donor driven so the needs of the women is not usually reflected.

Arab volunteers fight on

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ling the area.
The Arab fighters were also out in force on the streets of the Mansur district west of the Tigris river close to the Iraqi intelligence service headquarters.
US planes swooped overhead, hitting targets in areas under Arab control. But US troops were nowhere to be seen in Mansur.
There was also no sign of Iraqi forces. Abandoned Iraqi artillery pieces and missile launchers could be seen in the streets. The Arab fighters appeared to be putting up the main resistance to US troops in the city.
Thousands of "Mujahideen" volunteers from across the Arab world are thought to be in Iraq. Ahead of the war, an audio-tape believed to be from al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden exhorted Muslims to fight US forces.
In southwest Baghdad, a Reuters cameraman saw 21 bodies of what appeared to be Iraqi soldiers and civilians. People in the area said there had been heavy fighting earlier and that US soldiers had already removed many more bodies.
Kurds take Kirkuk
Kurdish peshmerga fighters took control of the northern oil-rich city of Kirkuk yesterday. Hundreds of fighters from the Kurdish autonomous area, who have been supported by US Special Forces, drove through an industrial neighbourhood into a city that they have long dreamed of regaining.

But a senior diplomat at the Turkish foreign ministry told AFP that any attempt by Iraqi Kurdish forces to take permanent control of the northern Iraqi oil city of Kirkuk would be unacceptable.
There was shooting on the northwest edge of the city, but the oil wells appeared to be undamaged.
The fall of Kirkuk brought a swift response from Turkey, which fears that the city could be used by the Kurds as a base from which to build a Kurdish state. Abdullah Gul, Turkey's foreign minister, was reported to have said that the peshmerga fighters could not stay in Kirkuk and added that "whatever is necessary will be done."
A US military official said that Special Forces were attempting to get an American presence into the city "in the interest of regional stability".
More than 100 vehicles, from pickup trucks to a garbage truck laden with Kurdish fighters, drove thought the streets.
The cars and trucks flew the flags of the two major political parties who rule the two sectors of the autonomous region; yellow for the Kurdistan Democratic Party and green for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.
Advance on Tikrit and Mosul
Kurdish political officials yesterday said another northern town, Khanaqin, had fallen to its forces and peshmerga fighters were now moving towards Mosul, Iraq's third city.
The Dubai-based al-Arabiya television station, quoting its correspondent on a peak overlooking the city, reported US air strikes on Iraqi frontlines.
Reuters added that a convoy of US Abrams tanks and armoured personnel carriers are now rolling towards Mosul on the road from Irbil, the largest city in Kurdish-ruled northern Iraq.
Captain Thorp said elements of the Republican Guard were gathering around Mosul and Tikrit, Saddam's birthplace.

Hasina

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parliament was addressing a series of gatherings at various places including Kulaura and Majijgaon on her way to Sylhet by train yesterday on a three-day visit.
Hasina visited the shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Poran (RA) and offered fateha on her arrival here by Parabat Express yesterday.
The AL chief is scheduled to address a Shukrana gathering and reception meeting today (Friday) afternoon organised in connection with the victory of AL-backed Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran in the mayoral run of Sylhet City Corporation. They city and district AL organised the gathering at Government Alia Madrashah Maidan at 3pm today.