

## Soldier killed as US troops reinforce restive town

REUTERS, Falluja (Iraq)

AUS soldier was killed and five were wounded when an assailant fired at least one rocket-propelled grenade at them in the restive Iraqi town of Falluja yesterday, the US military and residents said.

The attack took place as the United States sent more than 3,000 soldiers from the 2nd Brigade and dozens of tanks to the Sunni Muslim town to contain attacks on its forces.

A US military spokesman said two American soldiers had also been wounded in Baghdad when two attackers fired on them as they were guarding a bank. No details were available.

There are now an estimated 6,000 US soldiers in and around Falluja, including more than 4,000 from the 2nd Brigade.

Residents said the soldiers were in front of the police station when they were hit. The explosion made a hole in the outside wall, and pieces of wreckage and intravenous drip bags were on the ground.

Blood stains were visible on the wall and ground.

Iraqi crowds gathered in front of the station and raised the Iraqi flag on the entrance.

"The Americans are behaving like the Israeli army. They have been here every night, looking over our houses and preventing us from moving," Falah, a resident, said.

"This is a tribal area and we do

not accept this. The attacks have nothing to do with Saddam," he said.

The army said the wounded soldiers, from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, had been driven to a military medical facility nearby.

Falluja, 70 km (45 miles) west of Baghdad, is a cauldron of hostility to US forces, who killed 15 townspeople in two clashes there in April, following the fall of Saddam.

Troops, boosted by more armored cars, were out in force in the streets. Soldiers searched houses as residents were told to stay inside. The army plans to deploy more tanks in the city.

"One second you could be sitting down and the next someone is attacking you from out of nowhere. This is not like the war, when we attacked them," Specialist Terry Martin said.

Last week, two US soldiers were killed and nine wounded when gunmen attacked an American army unit with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms in the city.

The top US commander in Iraq, Lieutenant General David McKiernan, said on Wednesday that attacks on US troops in the area were the work of remnants of Saddam's government, toppled by US and British forces eight weeks ago.

Residents of Falluja disagreed, saying the United States did not understand the nature of Falluja, or

Iraq.

"Saddam's Baath Party was hated here. It used to extort money from us. Services, such as power, were appalling. But people worked hard in smuggling, agriculture and contracting and did well. They do not stand occupation," a shop owner said.

"The Sunnis have taken up the mantle of resistance," he said. "The Shi'ites are giving the United States a chance for now. But they will follow."

## AL again demands midterm polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday asked the BNP-Jamaat coalition government to quit immediately and renewed its demand for midterm polls.

Awami Jubo League, the youth front of AL, organised a rally yesterday to protest the filing of cases against former Jubo League chairman Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Dhaka City AL President Mohammad Hanif and former AL lawmaker Dr. HBM Iqbal.

The rally was held in front of AL's office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

Addressing the rally, the AL leaders said since taking office through 'rigged polls', the alliance government has lodged a number of false cases across the country in an effort to suppress the opposition.

The AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said violence and price-hike of essentials marked the BNP-Jamaat rule. He called upon party workers to strengthen the movement for midterm polls, and oust the government.

Rahmat Ali MP, Dr. Mizanur Rahman and Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury also addressed the rally.

## Suicide bomber

FROM PAGE 12  
Chechnya and has escaped relatively unscathed from violence since the conflict erupted in 1994.

Russian officials assumed the attack was the work of Chechen rebels.

On May 12 a woman was part of a group that drove a truck packed with explosives into a government complex in Znamenskoye in northern Chechnya, killing 59 people. Two days later a woman blew herself up at a Muslim festival in another part of Chechnya, killing at least 16 people.

Chechen separatist warlord Shamil Basayev has claimed responsibility for the two attacks in May and threatened to launch "a whirlwind" of violence in the future.

Last March the Kremlin, as part of its peace plan, staged a constitutional referendum that anchored the territory in Russia and has set dates for parliamentary and presidential elections.

As part of the plan the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, was to take a final vote on Friday to bring a partial amnesty into force.

Chechen rebels and human rights groups have ridiculed the limitations of the amnesty offer, saying it excludes hard-core fighters while benefiting many Russian servicemen suspected of abuses in the region.



A bus after an ambush by a woman suicide bomber near Chechnya yesterday, in which at least 18 were killed. The bus was carrying Russian air force pilots and civilians.

## Give up offensive

FROM PAGE 1  
while in power and now they were up for damaging the image of the alliance government.

"Rather than helping the development initiatives, they are now creating chaos in parliament," she alleged.

She was addressing a gathering, organised by local BNP at the Women's College in Godagari upazila in Rajshahi.

Chaired by Godagari Municipality Chairman and upazila BNP General Secretary Anwarul Islam, the meeting was also addressed by Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj, Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haq, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu and lawmakers Kabir Hossain, Shahjahan Mia, Sayed Manjur Hossain and Harun-ur Rashid.

Begum Zia praised the Barind Project and said that a clique was active to destroy the project that opened a window of opportunities for the region's farmers to harvest three crops a year.

She said her government was pledge-bound to build an educated nation and set up an example by remarkably checking unfair means in public examinations.

During the AL rules, cheating in examinations spread like conflagration, she alleged.

The prime minister said a dam in Godagari-Baliagati area would be constructed soon to protect Godagari upazila from the Padma erosion.

She reiterated her government's commitments to eradicate poverty, create jobs and educate people.

Earlier at around 4:00pm, Khaleda reached Godagari by road from Dhaka and opened the Sharmongla canal. She planted saplings of mango on the banks of the canal released fish fry in the canal.

## Khoka for special cops

FROM PAGE 1  
they are not available all the time," the mayor said in his address as chief guest to a session on City Governance of the National Policy Review Forum 2003 at CIRDP.

Khoka also reiterated his demand for bringing the DCC under the Prime Minister's Office for quick execution of decisions and implementation of development plans. He underscored upgrading of the DCC to strengthen its executive power.

A 4.5-kilometre flyover from Shanir Akhra to Gulistan will be built soon, the Dhaka mayor promised in his presentation of DCC plans.

Private management in 10 DCC wards took charge of garbage collection, and four additional dumps will be selected to roll back waste problems, said the mayor.

Khoka also declared that all illegal billboards and neon signs would be removed from crossings by June-end. The DCC has scaled up the charge of outdoor advertisement to discourage people from erecting billboards, he said.

Chittagong Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, who spoke as special guest at the dialogue co-organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo, accused the government of non-cooperation that led to failure of many projects he took up.

The government curtailed the

mayoral power by adding a post of chief executive officer to every city corporation, who often tries to create bureaucratic tangles in implementation of decisions, said Mohiuddin.

Mohiuddin blamed all governments for taking a negative attitude toward Chittagong. "But if Chittagong, dubbed the commercial capital, prospers economically, the nation will benefit from it," he said.

The Chittagong mayor, to back up his claim, said a satellite town for 3,000 families was abandoned only because the government did not approve.

Leading town planners and urban development and transport experts who attended the session fear if development work is not carried out in a holistic way, Dhaka and Chittagong would turn into sprawling slums.

They also suggested decentralisation of utility services, especially garbage cleaning, and said the city corporations and municipalities lack transparency and accountability.

Three major recommendations were put forward in the taskforce report on City Governance: formation of a municipal commission on policy guidance of urbanisation, an independent association of all municipalities, and enough training and monitoring system for urban planning and city management. The

## US troops to move from Korean DMZ

AP, Seoul

The United States agreed Thursday to dismantle its bases and withdraw American troops from positions they have occupied for decades near the tense Demilitarized Zone separating South Korea from communist

The troops will eventually be moved to "hub bases" at least 75 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone, according to a joint statement after two days of talks between U.S. and South Korean officials. Even after the redeployment, however, US troops will continue to train north of Seoul and close to the DMZ, the statement said.

The redeployment will remove US military bases from the Korean front line for the first time since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. Plans for the redeployment were announced amid high tensions caused by an international standoff over North Korea's suspected developments of nuclear weapons.

taskforce report was prepared by a group of urban development experts, headed by Professor Nazrul Islam.

Dr Nurul Islam Nazem, Tanvir Newaz, Rosy Ahsan, Abdul Motlib Ahmed, SM Shah Alam, Rita Afsar, Dr Shahhaj Hossain, Gul Afsan, Abdul Haque, Dr Sarwar Jahan, Tanvir Newaz, Deen Mohammad Khan, Dr Rahmatullah, Arshad Ali and Mahmudunnabi, among others, took part in the dialogue.

## Remittance

FROM PAGE 1  
Bankers attribute this higher inflow to different central bank measures to check hundi, the illegal money transfer system.

Expatriates sent in \$1882.10 million in fiscal 2000-01 while the amount was \$1949.32 million in fiscal 1999-2000.

Exports fetched US\$ 4,722 million during July-March this fiscal, 6.15 per cent higher than last fiscal's same period.

On the other hand, letters of credit (LCs) worth \$7,410.60 million were opened during July-March of the current fiscal.

## Top New York Times editors resign amid scandal

REUTERS, New York

The New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines, dogged in recent weeks by a plagiarism scandal by a young reporter, and Managing Editor Gerald Boyd resigned yesterday, the newspaper said.

The two editors were severely criticised after it was revealed that former reporter Jayson Blair had plagiarised and fabricated numerous stories in his four-year Times career. Since the scandal broke, Rick Bragg, a Pulitzer Prize winner, resigned from the Times amid

accusations of dishonest reporting. Raines and Boyd were blamed for overlooking Blair's errors and warnings about the quality of his work by other editors. They were also accused of promoting the young black reporter despite his known shortcomings.

"Howell and Gerald have tendered their resignations, and I have accepted them with sadness based on what we believe is best for the Times," said Arthur Sulzberger Jr., publisher of The New York Times and chairman of the New York Times Co. said in a statement

## Housework can help prevent cancer

REUTERS, Canberra

Housework is good for you. According to a new Australian-Chinese study, dusting and vacuuming could help prevent ovarian cancer.

The study, published in the International Journal of Cancer this week, found moderate exercise such as housework decreased the risk of ovarian cancer with the benefits increasing the harder the work.

Head researcher Colin Binns from Perth's Curtin University on Australia's west coast said the two-year study of 900 Chinese women found the risk of ovarian cancer declined with increasing physical activity. Housework was on the list.

"If you are only doing the housework 20 minutes a week... it does not really count, but if you are doing three to four hours a day, this is fairly vigorous exercise and increases protection from ovarian cancer," Binns told the news agency.

The study was carried out at Xhejiang University Hospital in Hangzhou in Xhejiang Province just south of Shanghai.

Binns said the study backed the previously disputed idea that exercise helped stave off ovarian cancer and, possibly, other hormone-related female cancers such as of the cervix and uterus.

He said the reason was unknown

but suggested it could be because exercise prevented excess fat storage, which influenced hormonal activity. The immune system may also be enhanced through exercise, he said.

## Budget

FROM PAGE 12  
Bill 2003 and Criminal Procedure (amendment) Bill 2003.

The secretariat has 10 more bills of last session, which are expected to be placed in this session.

Five of those bills are concerned with salaries, allowances and financial benefits of the prime minister, speaker, deputy speaker, ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers and Members of Parliament. Four bills are on establishment of engineering university in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and Gazipur and one bill is on Civil Procedure (amendment) Bill 2003.

The government may place more bills in the House during the session, sources said.

Members of Parliament have so far submitted 114 notices, of which 76 are adjournment motions under section 62, two for general discussion under section 68 and 36 others under section 71 of the Rules of Procedure.

## Sangu resumes production

FROM PAGE 1  
diate repairs," said a top PDB official.

"They will shut it after the peak hours tonight (Thursday). The demand for power will be low on Friday and we expect the Meghnaghat to resume production before the evening peak hours on Saturday," he added.

The peak power demands this summer exceeded 3300 megawatt (MW). The demand will be lower for 100 MW to 150 MW on Friday, the weekly holiday.

Meanwhile, Petrobangla experts continued to warn about gas pressure and supply crisis ahead as demand showed a growing trend beyond capacity.

"We have shut the Ghorashal Fertiliser Factory to handle the low gas pressure situation," said a Petrobangla source.

"If we resume gas supply to the Ghorashal factory now, pressure would fall further and adjacent power and fertiliser plants would collapse."

He added that the gas pressure was '51 bar' instead of the minimum '55 bar' in and around Dhaka and Ghorashal.

With the resumption of Sangu gas production, power generation in Chittagong was near normal.

The second unit of Raozan 210 MW power plant and 60 MW Sikalbaha plant went into operation

yesterday afternoon.

However, it will take at least three days to start the old first unit of the Raozan power plant and ensure full supply in the Chittagong region.

Bakharabad Gas System Ltd (BGS) sources said normalcy was restored and supply to the gas-run units also started. They expected full operation of all the industries by 7:00pm last night.

When contacted, the KAFCO, CUFL and KPM officials said they were set to start operation by 7:00pm to 8:00pm.

Meanwhile, despite disruption of supply from Sangu, domestic supply of gas continued from Salda, Bakharabad and GTCL, sources said.

## Robbers

FROM PAGE 1  
the law-enforcers near Deedar Bazar and started firing on them.

Police recovered the body of Sardar Manik (26) and claimed that the bodies of four others killed in action were taken away to deep forest by their associates.

Critically injured constables Abdul Wadud (45) and Jasimuddin (25) were admitted to Noakhali hospital.

Senior police officials visited the area and deployed additional force.

## BNP, AL stalwarts

FROM PAGE 1  
"Let us make a list of godfathers and expel them from our parties. If we want to maintain our parties clean, there should be a mutual commitment. If Awami League expels one, BNP would not take him and vice versa," Mannan Bhuiyan said.

He said criminals could not be assets for any party, rather they are liabilities. He claimed that during the countrywide army-led clampdown on criminals, majority of the criminals belonging to his party were caught. "We didn't even press for their release as we wanted the nation to get rid of these elements."

Speaking on the same issue earlier, Jaill said that both BNP and AL have to reach a consensus that none draft in godfathers thrown out by the other party. "I'll not deny the presence of godfathers in our party but the government should also acknowledge theirs."

Both the leaders were also concerned at the criminalisation of politics. Career politicians are being marginalised with the entry of black money holders and retired bureaucrats into politics.

Jaill made a specific proposal that no party should nominate a retired bureaucrat to run member of parliament or to become minister unless they (bureaucrats) worked for party for five years.

Both leaders also expressed similar views on development policy formulation. They disfavoured donor-prescribed reforms and emphasised using local policy-planning capabilities for necessary reforms in various sectors.

They appreciated the tasks carried out under the 'National Policy Review Forum 2003' initiative and assured that due importance would be given to its recommendations in their party forums.

Jaill alleged the government was not giving the opposition enough opportunities to speak in the parliament and that microphone of even the opposition leader was put off.

In response, Mannan Bhuiyan assured of all cooperation from the government in the coming sessions of the parliament and urged the Awami League to join the budget session beginning from June 10.

He said while in the opposition, the BNP had boycotted the sessions of the parliament although he was against "the culture of boycotting parliament."

In a lighter vein, he said while a political party has to spend about Tk 20 lakh to organise a public meeting, it is a good opportunity to speak in the House against the government without having to spend.

Turning to the role of the press, Bhuiyan called for a more positive projection of happenings in the society and discarding a negative portrayal of those. He hoped the members of the civil society would take a neutral stand on issues of national development.

The CPD chairman said if politicians can have meetings in a cordial atmosphere in such forums, there should be no bar for them to play their due role in the parliament.

Referring to loan default culture, Prof. Rehaman Sobhan said given the magnitude of the problem, a cosmetic surgery would not do. "We need a deep surgery."

He suggested that ministers and parliamentary standing committees can have meetings, time to time, with the taskforces which prepared the policy recommendations under the 'National Policy Review Forum 2003' initiative.

Earlier, CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said their organisation would go for another round of policy review to evaluate the progress of implementation of the recommendations prior to the next parliamentary polls. The recommendations would soon be handed over to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina.

Debapriya said the taskforces which worked on policy issues under the CPD initiative would have meetings with the parliamentary

standing committees concerned when all the bodies are formed.

Editor of the Prothom Alo Motiur Rahman emphasised putting an end to rivalry and strife between the BNP and the AL, which he thought, was holding the country back from achieving the desired development.

He said democracy would not be consolidated if the parliament remained ineffective. He reminded the ruling alliance that it could not do much on two major fronts - curbing criminal activities and corruption. He also reminded the main opposition that it failed to live up to its promise of not calling hartal anymore.

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said people want to get rid of a cycle of patterned behaviour with the political parties disregarding each others' rights. Both the AL and the BNP tend to treat the opposition in the same manner while in power, he observed.

He wondered why people have to wait for the Armed Forces Day to see their top two political leaders (the prime minister and the opposition leader) sit together and smile at each other. He emphasised mutual respect and amity in political culture.

With its overwhelming majority in the parliament, the BNP has got ample scope to show magnanimity, Mahfuz Anam noted.

## 'Solve water problems through dialogue'

BSS, Nachol

Bangladesh yesterday staged the official World Environment Day programme at Nachol, the country's worst drought-prone area, as "Water-two billion people are dying for it" was fixed as the theme of the day this year.

Thousands of people from different social groups and occupations, joined the programme under a makeshift huge pande at this north-western town, 19 kilometres off Rajshahi, as politicians, experts and local representatives called for resolving the water problems through dialogues at international, regional as well as national levels.

Inclement weather barred Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from joining the inauguration of the United Nations sponsored programme here in the morning but later she flew into nearby Godagari to open a 21-kilometre canal to be used as a reservoir and irrigation facility in lean period.

Environment and Forest Minister Shahjahan Siraj identified the impact of Farakka Barrage as one of the major reasons to cause water scarcity in the region and said it eventually affected the ecology and livelihood of people of the entire country.

"If needed, Dhaka will be forced to raise the Farakka issue with International Court of Justice," Siraj told the function, joined, among others, by Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque, State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, Mayor of Rajshahi Mizanur Rahman Minu as special guests.

Lawmakers of different constituencies of the region Syed Manjur Hossain, Mohammad Shahjahan Mian, Dr Sadeq Chowdhury, Harunur Rashid and Nadim Mostafa and secretary of environment and forest Sabihuddin Ahmed, director general of environment Dr O F Faruque and UNDP resident representative Jargon Lissner also spoke.

## Corruption eating into education

FROM PAGE 1  
the three-day National Policy Review Forum 2003, jointly organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star, and the Prothom Alo at the Jatiya Press Club.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk attended the function as chief guest while former education minister ASHK Sadek attended the function as special guest.

Economist Professor Muzaffer Ahmed presided over the session while Professor Md Masum presented the CPD task force recommendations on Education Policy.

Professor Masum said total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP increased steadily from 1973-80 on an average of 0.9 per cent to 2.4 per cent in 1994-95. "But since then there has been a downward trend, with the expenditure falling to 2.30 per cent in 2000-01 and 2.21 per cent in 2001-02."

He said the allocation for education in the revenue budget also indicates a downward trend. The allocation dropped from 19.5 per cent of total revenue budget in 1994-95 to 15.9 per cent in 2002-03.

A similar trend is also seen in case of development budget where

the allocation for the education sector declined from 13.6 per cent in 1994-95 to 12.9 per cent in 2001-02.

Allocation for education declined from 16.4 per cent in 1994-95 to 15 per cent in 2001-02, he added.

"Teachers are at the core to improve education quality. They need to meet professional standards and must receive handsome wage," he added.

The University Act of 1973 has to be amended as it has been proved to be non-effective to impart congenial academic atmosphere on the campus.

Nurul Islam Nahid, education secretary of the main opposition Awami League, said education sector has been gripped by a vicious circle and the civil society should come forward to salvage it.

He blamed the government for suspending various steps initiated during the Awami League government. "The party in power did not even bother to give an explanation reasoning the suspension."

Academic Prof. Kabir Chowdhury urged the ruling, opposition and civil society to come up with a holistic approach for the development of the education sector.

Moinul Islam of Dhaka University urged the government to take effective steps for lowering the quality gap between urban and rural education. He termed the prevailing three-tier education system discriminatory.

GM Kader MP blamed a vested quarter for misappropriating education fund.

Former education minister ASHK Sadek underscored the need for political consensus and patience to enhance the quality of education.

He said there has to be a vision and patience for development of the education sector.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk differed with the idea of increased allocation for education sector. But he underscored the need for proper utilisation of the allocated funds. "We need to curb wastage and proper utilisation of allocated fund for the sector," he said.

"It is a huge wastage of public money when we see only 30 per cent of examinees come out successful in public examinations. I don't find any logic in spending on unskilled human resources," he added.

We have to improve the quality of

education and curb cheating in the examinations," he said, adding improvement of classroom teaching and morale boosting is the key to stopping cheating in public examinations.

The education minister said a revised education policy would be published within five to six months.

The minister said the Private University Act should be amended and an accreditation council will be formed for improvement of quality of education at private universities.

Prof. Muzaffer Ahmed, who presided over the session, underscored the need for consideration of the task force recommendations for development of the education sector.

Former principal secretary Dr. ANM Eusuf, Jaglu Ahmed Chowdhury, special correspondent of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), Mushfiq Ahmed, a teacher of Rajshahi University, Satish Chandra Sarker of BRAC, Nurul Islam of UNICEF, A.N. R