

# Lawyers to sue Blair over war

**BBCONLINE**

Top lawyers from Greece are filing a lawsuit with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague yesterday against senior UK officials.

They want to indict Prime Minister Tony Blair and other senior members of the UK government and military for allegedly breaching international law by attacking Iraq.

The lawyers, from the Athens Bar Council, say they have compiled a dossier of "strong evidence" against the officials, including more than 20 alleged war crimes.

They include the killing of Iraqi civilians, depriving the population of drinking water in cities such as Basra, the destruction of food supplies and the bombardment of residential areas.

A senior member of the association told the BBC the information had come from a variety of sources including doctors and journalists who were in Iraq during the war.

He said the alleged crimes breached the statute of the International Criminal Court.

Among those accused with Mr Blair are Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon and the Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.

The heads of the armed forces have also been named.

The prosecutor of the

International Criminal Court will have to decide whether the case falls within its jurisdiction. If he thinks it does, a panel of judges must also give approval before an investigation can begin.

The Greek lawyers announced in May their intention to take legal action.

They said the war in Iraq breached international treaties such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions and the ICC's own Statute.

But the British Government has always argued that the invasion of Iraq was in accordance with international law.

The Greek case has several hurdles to clear before proceeding at the ICC.

After the prosecutor has reached his conclusion, three judges must also decide whether the court has jurisdiction.

The ICC has already rejected almost 40 cases over the war in Iraq.

## Judgement in Humayun Kabir murder case today

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The judgement in the Engineer Humayun Kabir murder case will be given today.

Mohammad Sirajul Islam, judge of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, will pronounce the verdict at 12:30pm, court sources said.

Both the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments on July 21.

Earlier, the court had recorded statements of 28 out of 34 prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on November 27, 2000. The trial of the case began on January 29, 2001.

Humayun Kabir had been in America since 1981. He came to Bangladesh on November 13, 1999 and was shot dead by his partners in oil business in America at Central Road in Dhanmondi on November 21, 1999.

The victim's brother Enamul Kabir filed a murder case with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing Faisal Alam Ansari, his brother Saiful Alam Ansari and a hired hoodlum, Rana Ahmed, the same day.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted a chargesheet against the three on June 4, 2000.

Accused Faisal Ansari is now in jail custody while Saiful Ansari and Rana Ahmed have been absconding since the incident.

## Tremors

**FROM PAGE 1**  
planning by unscrupulous real estate developers might prove disastrous in case of a strong shudder.

Meanwhile, a three-member committee was formed to estimate the extent of loss caused by the transformer blast in Modunaghat grid station in Sunday's quake.

The committee, headed by deputy general manager of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) Rafiqul Islam, has been asked to submit its report within three days.

General Manager (Technical) Harun-ar-Rashid and Deputy GM (Protection) Amir Khosru of the PGCB visited Chittagang and held a meeting with officials.

Harun-ar-Rashid said it will take a month to reinstall the transformer.

AF Jamaluddin, manager of the branch, filed a fraud case accusing the five on November 18, 1992.

Five out of the 13 prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

## Runaway

**FROM PAGE 1**  
and the roads become unfit within a short time," said a contractor.

Sometimes the contractors get full payment even before completion of work. In such special cases, they have to pay at least 40 per cent to the engineers. However, such practice has reduced in recent times.

According to the DCC officials, over 2,500 kilometres of lanes and by-lanes of the city's 3,200-kilometre road network are in rundown conditions. The DCC has not undertaken any major repair works for more than two years.

Recently, it has given work orders for repair of 121-kilometre of road, 70-km of drain and 17-km of walkway at a cost of Tk 47 crore.

The DCC spent Tk 65.5 crore in FY01, Tk 49.3 in FY02 and Tk 88.80 crore in FY03. This fiscal, Tk 72.5 crore has been allocated for road construction and repair.

After taking office last year, the mayor has put road repair on top of his agenda. He promised in his last budget to repair all roads by February next.

## Study says 1 in 20 slum women has syphilis

**BSS, Dhaka**

At least one in 20 women in slum areas suffer from syphilis with high risk of spontaneous abortion and stillbirths, a research organisation said yesterday.

International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) said prevalence of syphilis in the groups vulnerable to HIV/AIDS is very high in Bangladesh, but people in general are ignorant about it.

In a recent study, the ICDDR,B said more than 11 per cent of men and five per cent of women in Dhaka's slum areas were found to have been infected with syphilis and almost none of them sought medical help because the primary lesions are often painless and unseen.

Moreover, the women are reluctant to have their blood, serum or plasma tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The study, however, said syphilis infections in pregnant women can be prevented effectively if appropriate treatment is given during the first or early second trimester of pregnancy. It also said one per cent of the total population have some sort of syphilis infections.

The report underscored the need for designing strategies for improved syphilis screening. It also suggested using 'triple antigen specific-rapid' tests for screening the disease. The paramedics can do it easily, the report said.

## Bogra ammo

**FROM PAGE 12**

Jatija Sangsad after the first haul that it exposed opposition Awami League's (AL) plot to destabilise the government.

The police headquarters then issued a statement echoing the home minister's contention. It accused an AL activist of possessing the ammunition but refrained from naming a BNP worker, who also possessed a portion of the ammunition.

Investigators believe the incidents had nothing to do with internal politics of the AL and BNP. There are indications that some other people responsible have a good chance of getting away as there is a lack of political will to bring out the truth, punish the criminals and act decisively to put a cap on such subversive operations, sources pointed out.

## Pubali Bank

**FROM PAGE 12**

The court found the five guilty of misappropriating Tk 14,43,248 from the bank in February, 1988.

The court framed charges against the accused on September 15, 1996 and the trial began on October 12, 1997.

In the case filed with the Lalbagh Police Station, it was alleged that Selim Chowdhury, proprietor of M/s Chowdhury and Co Ltd., opened a loan account of \$28,000 with the Chawkbazar branch of the Pubali Bank in the city on February 12, 1988. He entered into an agreement with M/s VM Voliboy Trading Pvt Ltd. of Singapore to import 'thermoplast compound' from the company.

Later, the materials were brought to Chittagang port on March 8, 1988 and Selim was summoned to receive the same. But Selim in collusion with the officials of the bank sent the materials to another godown, though these were supposed to be deposited with the bank godown. It caused a loss of Tk 14,43,248 to the bank.

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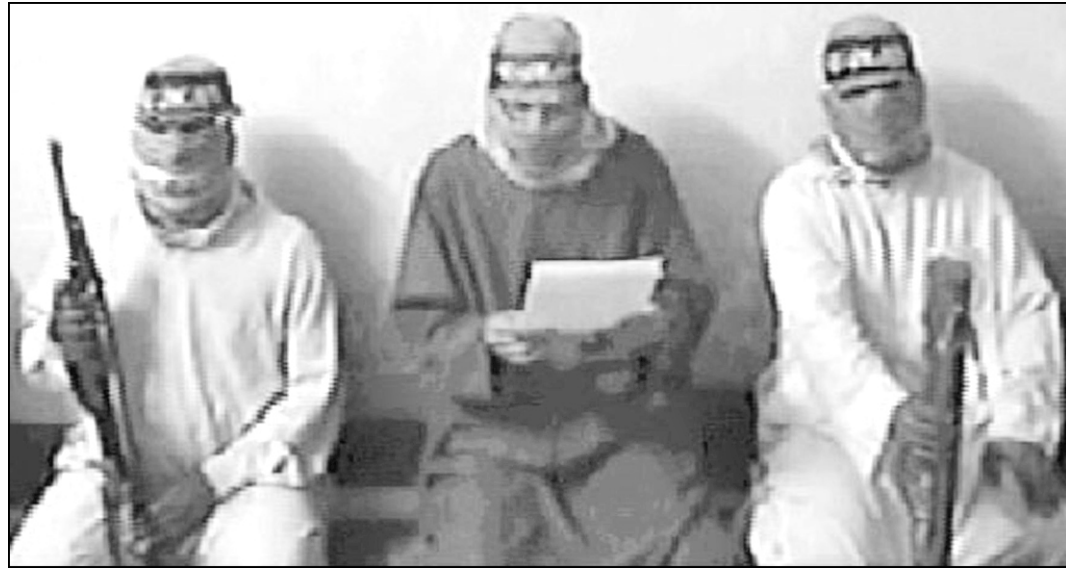
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A TV frame grab taken from Al-Arabiya satellite news channel shows a group of masked militants calling themselves the Salafi Jihad Group reading a declaration threatening the lives of US President George W Bush and his Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld yesterday.

# Iraqi group threatens 'holy war'

**REUTERS, Dubai**

A hitherto unknown group of Iraqi Muslim militants has warned in a video tape aired on an Arab television channel that they will fight a "holy war" against US President George W Bush and his administration.

"Bush, Rumsfeld and decision makers in the 'Black House' and in the Pentagon...we will shake the ground under your feet and we will send a fire upon you which only God can prevent," a masked man said on a tape aired on the Dubai-based Al Arabiya.

The man called his group the 'Salafist Jihad Group'.

"America -- you have declared war on God's soldiers...you will have no security or peace of mind as long as you are an infidel and fighting a war against Islam and Muslims," said the man, standing amid a group of similarly masked men holding weapons.

He pledged to avenge the arrest of religious figures and Islamist activists in prisons all over the world including Iraq, the US base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, Morocco, Kenya, Egypt, Syria, Pakistan and India.

In recent weeks, many groups -- some saying they are Saddam loyalists and one claiming links to the militant al Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden -- have claimed responsibility for attacks on U.S. occupying forces in Iraq.

U.S. Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz on Sunday accused the Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera channels of biased reporting from Iraq, adding that Washington was talking to unnamed governments to try to get more "balanced" coverage.

At least 49 U.S. soldiers have been killed since Bush declared the end of major combat in Iraq on May 1.

# Arabs avoid US for medical care, look to Germany

**REUTERS, Berlin**

When a wealthy Arab patient flew to Germany for medical treatment last year he arrived on his own jumbo jet filled with so many bodyguards, staff and family that he rented an entire luxury hotel floor for his month-long stay.

The man from Qatar was among the richest but hardly the only foreigner to get health care in Germany to avoid the rigors of entering the United States, where anti-terror vigilance since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks has frightened many Arabs away.

German hospitals are reporting huge increases in the number of Arab patients since 2001 -- at the expense of US medical centres such as the Mayo Clinic and Johns Hopkins that they compete with in the \$2 billion international patient industry.

Health care officials said Arabs patients are turning to Germany

because they're fed up with hassles at US airports with customs officials. They also deplore invasive interviews and what they see as degrading background checks needed to obtain US visas.

"We're seeing a lot more Arab patients," said Stefan Loening, head of urology at Berlin's Charite hospital. "There is a multitude of reasons, but 9/11 and the paranoia in America about security certainly has a lot to do with it."

Loening, who worked in American hospitals for 20 years, said the level of treatment in Germany is on a par with the United States and yet the costs are often roughly one-third as high. He said the price is not the main issue for wealthy Arabs.

"They can fly in and out of Germany without any problems and don't have to worry that a nail clipper in their bag is going to raise eyebrows," Loening told Reuters. "No one is going to anger them at the airport and their privacy won't

be intruded upon."

Other officials said the trend to Germany is gaining pace as Arab patients spread the word and help refute any notion of a gap in health treatment between the United States and European countries like Germany -- which was the case several decades ago.

"Germany has acquired an excellent reputation among Arabs and word is spreading fast that hospitals and doctors are first rate," said Ozan Samtimiz, medical manager at German Health, an agency that arranges treatment for Arabs. But he said the main issue for the trend to Europe was America's security obsession.

"When Arabs travel to the United States they're viewed as potential terrorists," he added. "It's very difficult, almost impossible, for them to get US visas. These people may be ill and don't want delays, don't want an interrogation by customs."

# Fighting rages as Liberians forage for food

**REUTERS, Monrovia**

Heavy gunfire has rung out across Liberia's capital Monrovia as rebels and forces loyal to President Charles Taylor battle for key bridges while desperate residents dodged bullets to search for food.

Rebels thrust along a main road on the route to the airport but government forces pushed the insurgents back and the fighting quietened somewhat under pelting rain.

People set buckets, bowls and cups under tin roofs to collect pouring rain for drinking. Food was harder to get -- people scraped whatever they could from makeshift markets.

Earlier, bursts of heavy gunfire echoed around two bridges at the threshold of the city centre after rebels rejected a U.S. call to pull out immediately so peacekeepers could deploy.

"We managed to hold them off at the bridge and push them back," army chief of staff General Benjamin Yeateen told Reuters.

The rebels of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) have been battling inside the city limits for 10 days to oust Taylor, a former warlord who has agreed, under US pressure, to quit

if peacekeepers come.

West African officials began meeting in Ghana's capital Accra on Monday with the Nigerian head of a planned peacekeeping force, Brigadier-General Festus Okonkwo, and U.S. military experts to finalise plans to send in troops.

The top official of West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS has said troops will arrive this week but not date has yet been set. West African leaders have pledged to deploy some 1,300 Nigerian soldiers as the vanguard force of a larger mission.

The government says 1,000 civilians have been killed in the latest attack on a city battered by 14 years of violence. Among the dead are scores of civilians, killed when mortars slammed into the flimsy buildings where they were sheltering.

On Sunday, at least 14 people were killed as fighting raged, but by the end of the day the front line had changed little.

Aid workers said there were no reports of starvation, but hunger was growing. The traditional staple of green leafy sauce with rice has often become little more than the sauce.

## 20 held in raid at city bus terminals

**UNB, Dhaka**

The joint forces last night raided five bus terminals in the city and arrested 20 alleged extortionists.

The crackdown came hours after the prime minister directed the law enforcers to rid the passengers of harassment by criminals and extortionists at bus terminals.

"There are allegations that extortionists and criminals have gripped the city's bus terminals and we have launched a crackdown on them," said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ashrafur Huda.

Earlier in the evening, the DMP commissioner briefed his officials and asked them to make the drive a success by nabbing the extortionists from the bus terminals.

Sources concerned said the joint forces manned by police, paramilitary BDR, Rapid Action Team (RAT), Detective Branch (DB) of Police swooped on the terminals at about 9.30pm.

Earlier, police made a list of criminals and extortionists who are active at Sayeedabad, Joy Kali Mondir, Gulistan, Mohakhali and Fulbaria bus terminals.

According to the sources, every day several lakh of taka are being collected from each of the terminals by the extortionists in the name of various associations with whom some influential people are also involved.

# 2 marines die

**FROM PAGE 1**  
official end of major combat three months ago to 50.

Sixteen of the 49 confirmed dead have been killed in the past 10 days alone, although US officers say the number of attacks is constant at an average of about a dozen a day.

Those behind the attacks remain largely unseen and US commanders have been playing down the possibility that Saddam may be orchestrating them or that the killing of his once powerful sons a week ago should slow the attrition rate. Saddam, they say, has little room for maneuver as troops hunt him down.

As the quest goes on for him, however, the US forces seem to be stumbling at times in their efforts to win friends among the vast majority of Iraqis who detested the old regime.

In Mansur, an upscale district in western Baghdad, troops from Task Force 20, the special unit hunting Saddam and his inner circle, raided a house Sunday evening. But they came away empty-handed, leaving the shattered wrecks of cars that were shot up apparently in error -- and seething neighbors.

US military spokesmen declined even to discuss the inci-

dent beyond confirming Task Force 20 was involved. Soldiers told Reuters five men died, one of them a teen-ager.

Several local residents, interviewed by Reuters Monday, said the Americans had erected a single roadblock leading to the house but failed to prevent innocent motorists straying into the fire zone from quiet side streets. They accused the troops of machine-gunning two cars, killing the occupants.

"In the beginning all the Iraqi people welcomed the Americans," said one middle-aged neighbor, who gave his name only as Mohammed. "But now the Americans have built a wall between themselves and the Iraqis."

US officers sound ever more confident of finding Saddam, as the \$25 million reward money entices more informants to come forward. Washington has made much of its plan to pay out \$30 million to the person who betrayed his sons, Uday and Qusay.

Troops have been searching hard around Saddam's home town of Tikrit and raided three farms near there Sunday, a US military spokeswoman said in Baghdad.

"We're close to catching Saddam. A lot of people are stepping forward with information.

He's running out of places to hide," spokeswoman Sergeant Amy Abbott said Monday.

What remains to be seen, however, is whether eliminating the remnants of the old guard will help reconcile Iraqis to a US occupying force that shows no sign of leaving very soon.

Many, not just in Saddam's Sunni Muslim heartlands north and west of Baghdad but also in the Shi'ite south, resent daily encounters with nervous and heavily armed soldiers. They worry, too, that invasion and occupation have left basic services in a mess and created a power vacuum to be filled by gang law.

Washington's top soldier, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers, was in Baghdad Monday offering assurances that his troops were committed to helping Iraqis rebuild their country after three decades of Saddam.

Speaking Sunday, he dismissed many of those conducting attacks on Americans as "mercenaries." He rejected talk of reaching an unacceptable level of US casualties, insisting: "We're here to do the job. We understand that there will be casualties. The soldiers understand what this is all about."

## Milosevic's trial halted again

**REUTERS, The Hague**

The war crimes trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic has been suspended again because he is ill, a judge told the United Nations court in The Hague.

"A report has reached us...of the illness of the accused in the detention unit. A doctor is apparently on his way to see him..." presiding judge Richard May said yesterday, adding that doctors would submit a medical report later.

Milosevic's landmark trial for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo has been repeatedly interrupted by the accused's bouts of ill health since it began in February 2002.

## 21 ministries

**FROM PAGE 1**

resources, primary and mass education, LGRD and cooperatives, expatriates welfare and overseas employment, and the shipping.

On the other hand, the foreign ministry, commerce ministry, CHT affairs ministry, defence ministry, the Economic Relation Department of the finance ministry and the Planning Division of the planning ministry have not given any assurances in the eighth Parliament.

Moulana Abdus Sobhan presided over the meeting attended by lawmakers Mostafa Kamal Pasha, S A Sultan, Mia Golam Mohammad Parwar and the officials concerned.

## Ctg businessman

**FROM PAGE 1**

in the Principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case.

JU Chowdhury was abducted Thursday night while he was returning home at Chandgaon Residential Area.

The abductors demanded Tk 50 lakh in ransom over telephone Saturday night but ceased contacting JU Chowdhury's family since then.

Police sources however say they would be able to rescue Jamal Uddin soon.

# IOJ faction

**FROM PAGE 12**  
does not interfere in court affairs." She however assured them that she will see if anything could be done.

Khaleda also promised to assess the proposal for 'kawmi madrasahs' before giving recognition, sources said.

Turning to corruption, she said the government is determined to stamp out the evil, and that is why it placed the bill to form an independent anti-corruption commission, which, she hoped, will be passed in the next session of parliament.

The PM also asked them to provide evidence of corruption, if any, and inform her instantly if they find any specific instance of corruption.

Their other demands include trial of the killers in the Brahmanbaria incident during Awami League rule as well as compensation to the families of the victims, ban on Moududi's book in madrasah level and withdrawal of 'false' cases against IOJ leaders and activists.

The PM assured them of providing house to families of the victims in the Brahmanbaria killing.

The IOJ also urged the PM to induct their leaders into various government bodies like the district

law and order committee and grant special allocation for their constituencies.

Unlike the other faction led by Fazlul Haq Amini, the IOJ did not however press the BNP to include its leaders in the cabinet.

## Extortionists

**FROM PAGE 1**  
tion in the area and kept a watch.

The victim's wife, Janu Akhter Pakhi, and other family members tried to take Sohrab to Mirford Hospital. The assailants forced them back to their residence at gunpoint.

Using a different lane, the family members took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died at 4:00pm.

Locals said the gang fled in a trawler, kept anchored in the Buriganga.

Pakhi said she identified the attackers, but declined to disclose their names on security grounds.

The same group shot Sohrab at Mirerbagh paka pool 27 days ago as he refused to oblige them by giving money, but he survived as the bullets hit his legs. The extortionists then went to his residence several times learning that Sohrab was alive.

No case was filed till filing of this report at 7:00pm yesterday.

# Flood damage repair

**FROM PAGE 12**  
some 6,932 cattle perished during the floods.

The floods completely damaged some 1,888km roads and partially another 14,626km. Floodwaters washed away 288 educational and religious institutions and partially damaged another 3,555.

Moreover, 1,460 kilometres of embankment were damaged. The number of damaged bridges and culverts stand at 2,387 in the affected areas.

However, the unofficial estimates of damage caused by floods are much higher.

The government has so far opened 39 flood shelters and 26,628 people are still staying in the shelters.

The floodwaters have inundated about 20 per cent of the arable land in the affected areas.

According to an estimate of the Ministry of Agriculture, standing crops on 3.70 lakh hectares of land have been inundated by the floods.

The break-up of the inundated standing crops is: Aus on 1,00,537 hectares of land, Aman on 1,60,398 hectares, seedbed of transplanted

Aman on 16,306 hectares, Jute on 32,730 hectares, vegetables on 26,646 hectares and other crops on 27