



Iraq Insurgency

After the much-hyped transfer of power, Iraq continues to receive its fair share of mortar attacks, suicide bombings and even kidnappings. Samara was the latest target of the anti-occupation forces that are showing no sign of letting up. Samara is the hotbed of the latest conflict, where the Iraqi National Guard Head Quarter was hit by a mortar killing ten people including five US troops. One day after Prime Minister Lyad Allawi was granted wide powers to impose emergency measures to fight the insurgency that has left thousands dead since last year's US-led invasion.

While the fledgling interim government is struggling to gain control over security, the US troops backed by the Iraqi guardsmen are mounting their actions against the ingredients. In Samara the US forces managed to kill three four insurgents by firing hellfire missile from an apache helicopter. Samara, which is a bastion of Sunni Muslim insurgency, has become the testing ground for the new premier's power. Meanwhile, the Iraqi health minister reveals that 388 Iraqis have been killed and 1,680 wounded in the month of June alone.

Under the new security law, the prime minister has the right to declare a state of emergency in a limited area and for a limited time. It also grants him the power to ask judges to issue arrest warrants and impose restrictions on the movement of foreigners. Although the new government defended the move as a vital response to the insurgency, human rights experts say that the measures infringed on individual freedom.

RAB Rescues 14 Girls, Nabs 11 Traffickers

A Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) team led by Golam Mostafa rescued 14 girls and arrested 11 traffickers from Baridhara. A team of RAB-4 first raided the Baridhara Defence Officers' Housing Society and arrested Abu Baker and GM Haider. The recently formed anti-crime force then raided other parts of the capital and rescued eight girls and nabbed nine traffickers. The arrestees have long been involved in trafficking of woman and child, a *Daily Star* report says, quoting an unnamed RAB source. RAB is still interrogating the 11 traffickers to hunt down the mastermind behind the syndicate.

Ten Murders per Day

After acquiring titles like the most corrupt country in the world and the most dangerous place in Asia for journalists, we have a new feather to add to our cap. With '10 murders per day' Bangladesh can certainly claim to be one of the most murderous countries in the world. (Countries like Iraq or Palestine are not being considered for understandable reasons). This 'great achievement' has been made in the last 32 months since the BNP-led four party alliance came to power. Interestingly, lest one should forget, BNP won the last election pledging that they would correct the terrible law and order situation, which is often cited as their preceding AL government's greatest failure. Former Home and presently Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, who informed the JS of this remarkable achievement upon a query made by an MP in the JS, however, claimed that the law and order situation has improved since the present government came to power about three years back. One will have to give Altaf credit for his 'courage', especially because MPs from his own party were vehemently criticising the ever deteriorating law and order situation of the country. Altaf, of course, never bother about what others have to say.