

## Rice replaces Powell

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installing a loyalist who would be reluctant to offer dissenting views to the president.

Bush said Rice will take office at a critical time, citing the war on terrorism and efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and control the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

"Meeting all of these objectives will require wise and skillful leadership at the Department of State, and Condoleezza Rice is the right person for that challenge," he said.

Rice heaped praise on Powell, who was not at the ceremony, as "one of the finest public servants our nation has ever produced," and a great inspiration for her.

And she reached out to career diplomats at the State Department, some who might be wary of the arrival of the White House insider, and pledged to ensure they have all the tools they need to succeed.

"I have the utmost admiration and respect for their skill, their professionalism and their dedication," she said.

Rice could face some questions in the Senate confirmation process about her role in decision-making that led to the US invasion of Iraq based on now-discredited claims that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

As part of the run-up to the war, she expressed fears that Saddam might be trying to develop nuclear weapons, saying famously, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

Rice is considered more hawkish than Powell and will inherit a number of serious global challenges.

Attempting to steer an unstable Iraq toward elections, seeking peace in the Middle East, fighting the war on terror, stopping suspected nuclear weapons programs of Iran and North Korea, and patching up strained ties with European allies over the Iraq war.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar of Indiana said he had strong confidence in Rice and would work to expedite her confirmation hearing.

Her nomination was the latest move in a sweeping overhaul of Bush's Cabinet after he was elected to a second four-year term two weeks ago.

The fate of Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, with whom Powell often disagreed, remained unknown.

He is said to be wanting to stay on for a while and a senior administration official noted that the United States was in a war, suggesting Bush might be reluctant to make a change at this stage.

In naming Rice at a White House ceremony, Bush also said he would promote deputy national security adviser Stephen Hadley to succeed her as national security adviser.

Rice has been a consummate

## Father gets double life for killing 2 daughters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Barisal court yesterday handed down double life imprisonment to a father for killing his two daughters.

Judge Abdul Matin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Barisal gave the verdict in absentia of Babul Howlader, 29, of Badura village of sada upazila in Patuakhali.

Babul abducted his daughters Sharmin, 2, and Palashi, 5, after an altercation with Zahran Begum, his wife, on February 22, 2000.

As his relatives held him the next day, he confessed to strangling his daughters and dumping their bodies in a nearby pond. However, he fled when the bodies were being recovered.

## ICRC worried over

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Article three of the Geneva Conventions "clearly bans any attack against a person who is not taking part, or is no longer taking part, in hostilities, that includes those wounded, taken prisoner or a civilian," ICRC spokeswoman Antonella Notari spelt out.

NBC correspondent Kevin Sites, who filmed the incident, said he saw the marine raise his rifle and fire point-blank at the head of a man, who was slumped against a wall in a mosque.

US networks and television channels in other countries have widely shown Sites' footage, taken on Saturday, but halted it in the second before the shot was fired.

The First Marine Division said in a statement released in Iraq that the marine "has been withdrawn from the battlefield pending the results of the investigation."

The military said it wanted to determine whether the marine acted in self-defence, violated military law or failed to comply with the international Law of Armed Conflict.

The ICRC welcomed the inquiry with Notari saying that "the court martial will determine whether this person was still participating in the hostilities or not."

"If he was not taking part in the combat, the action of the marine was prohibited. If this individual was a combatant, the American soldier had the right to defend himself," she added.

## Eid Day push-in bid foiled

BSS, Rangpur

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) foiled push-in attempt by the Border Security Forces (BSF) of India through Jyoti border on the Eid Day, BDR sources said.

They said the BSF men brought over 25 Bangla-speaking Indians, including women and children, by several trucks to the barbed-wire fencing gate near sub-pillar no 23 along Jyoti border about 11:15pm.

As the Indian border guards tried to push their citizens into Bangladesh, the patrolling BDR men, Ansar-VDP members and villagers built up resistance to the BSF move. In the face of strong resistance, the BSF men left the place along with the victims.

## 13 murdered

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worker, was retrieved from a lake at Monsurabad in Mohammadpur in Tuesday morning. His family members said Russell, 18, along with a couple of his friends went out in the Eid day afternoon and did not come back.

In a separate incident, Nayeem Sikdar alias Bindu, 45, general secretary of the ruling BNP's ward no 90 unit, was gunned down at Postogola in Shyamnagar.

The killers sprayed bullets on Nayeem, also an accused of former ward commissioner Shahadat killing, when he was gossiping in a barber shop. He received seven bullets in the head and died on the way to the DMCH.

The victim's wife Sabina Yasmin Runa filed a case with Shyamnagar Police Station against 11 including his four brothers and Moazzamul Sikdar, local ward commissioner, but police could not arrest anyone until 8:30pm yesterday.

Garment worker Mohammad Emom allegedly strangled his wife Ayesha Siddika, 20, at their house in Pallabi on Tuesday night and fled from the house. The body was found with a wire tied in the neck yesterday morning.

NOVEMBER 17

Unknown assailants strangled Mohammad Ali, 28, a labourer, at his house on Tejgaon Rail Station Road yesterday noon. His sister Rahima rushed the body to the DMCH where the doctors declared him dead at 2:15pm.

## British

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Al-Jazeera has not shown the video, which it says shows a man shooting at a blindfolded woman, who appears to be Margaret Hassan.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said Hassan was probably dead, and Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed his "abhorrence" at the apparent killing.

A statement from Nielson said "this kind of savagery makes it almost impossible for relief agencies to continue their crucial work in Iraq."

"The main victims are the innocent and suffering Iraqis that benefit from international aid programmes."

However, the report said there were bright points with some species recovering after concerted conservation campaigns and others once thought extinct had been rediscovered.

The New Zealand storm petrel was presumed extinct but there were two separate sightings in 2003 and further ones this year.

And the European otter has moved out of the threatened categories amid signs of a recovery in western Europe and the former USSR.

The report was released to coincide with the opening of the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok with more than 5,000 people including activists and more than 50 environment ministers expected to attend over nine days.

The congress, bringing together scientists and experts from 181 countries, will debate the escalating extinction crisis and form a conservation blueprint for the next four years.

## Opposition

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for what they said were its failure to arrest slide in law and order, price hike of essentials, curv corruption and for state patronisation to the extremist groups.

"Leaders of different opposition parties have initially agreed to form a human chain from Teknaf to Tenthala to show no-confidence in the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition and it may be formed in mid-December," said an opposition leader attending the meeting.

The opposition leaders decided to sit again before making announcement of the simultaneous agitation programmes from separate press conferences at their offices today.

The meeting attended by senior leaders of different opposition parties is fourth of its kind since November 2.

## Manmohan offers

FROM PAGE 1  
were denied by the Central Reserve Police Force.

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trigger of two of the three wars between them since 1947.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz is due in New Delhi next week for talks and another round of dialogue is set for the end of the month.

In a nod to separatists, Singh also

renewed a promise to hold "unconditional dialogue" with "anyone and everyone in the state who abjures violence."

In the same Srinagar stadium former Indian premier Atal Behari Vajpayee addressed a meeting in April last year and extended a "hand of friendship" to nuclear-armed rival Pakistan.

Singh himself announced the

troop reduction last week.

The first Indian forces left in a

convoy of trucks and buses, an AFP

correspondent said.

The paratroopers, stationed at

Anantnag, 50 kilometers (30 miles)

south of Srinagar for the past six months, headed for the northern Indian city of Agro.

Singh had told the students his

government was committed to a

"positive" dialogue with Pakistan to settle all outstanding issues.

"Our only condition is that, as

agreed to by Pakistan, territory under

control of Pakistan should not be

promote cross-border terrorism directed against us."

Pakistan welcomed the first

withdrawal of Indian troops from

disputed Kashmir.

"This is a positive development

and a good beginning," foreign

ministry spokesman Masood Khan told AFP.

"We hope that gradual reduction

of troops would provide relief to the

Kashmiris, promote respect for their

human rights, and reinforce the

dialogue process."

The neighbours began talks

earlier this year on resolving all

disputes including Kashmir, the

region.

13 murdered

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villages and towns.

Newspaper offices were scheduled to observe a three-day Eid vacation, but the holiday was extended for another day, November 16, due to the perennial confusion over the moon.

The capital yesterday looked

different.

The notorious city traffic was less

chaotic in the last few days.

Numbers of pedestrians, rickshaws,

auto-rickshaws, minibuses and

other modes of vehicles were fewer

than normal. The usually crammed

buses had plenty of seats for passengers.

Movement of rickshaws, auto-

rickshaws and minibuses increased

yesterday, but they plied with fewer

numbers of passengers.

Rickshaw pullers and auto-rickshaw

drivers charged higher fares in an

attempt to compensate for the lack

of passengers.

Attendance of officials and

secretaries at the Secretariat

remained open to all to facilitate

exchange of Eid greetings with the

officials and staff. All most all minis-

ters and secretaries passed yester-

day in a relaxed manner.

Offices of all insurance compa-

nies, semi-government and autono-

mous bodies, multinational compa-

nies and businesses in Motijheel

commercial district, the business

hub of the country, opened, the staff

seemed too inadequate to run

business.

Most shopping malls and mar-

kets remained shut.

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