

# ICRC demands probe into Iraqi prison riot

AFF, Baghdad

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) demanded an investigation into a riot at the US-run Camp Bucca prison camp in southern Iraq.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi general was kidnapped in Baghdad and the US military announced the deaths of four of its troops, while the country's splintered Sunni Arab community quarreled over a vice presidential candidate.

"We are asking the US army to investigate the cause of the riot which happened at the detention centre" Camp Bucca, Rana Sidani, spokeswoman for the ICRC, told AFP.

The US military announced early Tuesday that 12 Iraqi prisoners and four US prison guards were wounded when inmates rioted at Camp Bucca Friday, torching tents and hurling rocks in Iraq's largest US-run detention centre.

The riot at the desert camp in southern Iraq, where more than 6,000 prisoners are held, was first reported by radical Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr's movement and confirmed by the ICRC.

The US military had said initially it was unaware of the violence and only came forward with details after the ICRC revelations.

The violence erupted when inmates "protested the transfer of unruly detainees to another compound," the military said.

"During the disturbance, the detainees chanted, threw rocks and set several of their tents on fire. The disturbance was brought under control with only minor injuries to four guards and 12 detainees," said the ICRC spokeswoman.

The ICRC spokeswoman said at least 14 detainees were lightly wounded and possibly more when US soldiers fired rubber bullets to end the riot, which happened as an ICRC delegation visited the camp.

"We heard shots and saw smoke. It lasted one hour. We were a kilometre (half a mile) from the incident. We asked the American forces what happened and they told us

they had problems with the prisoners," Sidani said.

"The soldiers fired rubber bullets and at least 14 detainees were lightly wounded."

The ICRC warned that a tense atmosphere existed in Camp Bucca, where many detainees are ignorant of their legal status and complain about living conditions.

"The detainees complained about their conditions at the camp where they are living in the desert in tents where it is hot in the day and too cold at night," Sidani said.

"Many of the detainees complained they were not aware of the reasons for their internment or its duration. The Americans consider them 'security detainees'. There is no clear trial or legal process. In this climate, it takes one incident to ignite things."

The US military and Iraqi government reviews every 90 days the more than 10,000 detainees to determine whether they are still viewed as a security threat, should be forwarded to a criminal court or released.

The prison population has swelled since the US-led offensive on Fallujah last November.

Sadr follower Saheb al-Ameri, secretary general of the Shahidallah charitable organisation, said the unrest was provoked by the refusal of prison authorities to give medical treatment to a detainee who had fallen sick and who was a member of the Sadr movement.

Other inmates became violent and US soldiers then fired rubber bullets and beat some prisoners, wounding 70 to 100 of them, he said, adding that since the riot, inmates have had no water or electricity.

Camp Bucca was the site of a huge riot on January 31 that spread through four compounds, housing more than 2,000 detainees, and ended with US soldiers firing into a crowd and killing four detainees.

The latest riot comes almost a year after details emerged of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal that sullied the reputation of the US

detention system in Iraq.

In other violence, the general commanding the Iraqi interior ministry's 1,600 strong armoured brigade was kidnapped in Baghdad Tuesday morning as a pair of bombs ripped the capital, killing a civilian and wounding six others, security sources said.

## Strings of co-op

**FROM PAGE 1** that Bangladesh and China have a very good defence cooperation.

When asked if Khaleda-Ven's talks would also focus on the purchase of military hardware, he said, "I don't think so." But he agreed that the two prime ministers would discuss entire gamut of bilateral issues, including defence cooperation.

He said Dhaka will seek Beijing's support for enhanced capacity building of the police and other law-enforcement agencies.

Depicting a dismal trade scenario, the foreign secretary said the two-way trade stood at \$1143 million in 2003-04. Bangladesh imported goods worth \$1079 million against its export of \$46 million to China.

On duty-free access of Bangladesh products, he said 84 items will enter the Chinese market from January 2006 under the Hong Kong Agreement to narrow the trade gap.

He said Chinese companies registered 107 projects with Bol with investment prospects of \$246.75 million till March this year.

Asked about recent Dhaka-Beijing bickering on Taiwan issue, the foreign secretary clearly said Bangladesh firmly believes in one-China policy with Taiwan being a province of China.

He said the Chinese premier will lead a 102-member team that includes four cabinet ministers, four vice-ministers, senior officials and a large number of businesspeople.

Bangladesh Ambassador to China Ashfaqur Rahman and other senior foreign ministry officials were present at the press briefing.

# Govt order to stop

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Sources said the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in a letter asked the team to stop excavation and return the artifacts found at the site. The team of archaeologists are now examining the artifacts that include a furnace, earthen pots and bronze items.

Head of the JU excavation team Prof SS Mostafizur Rahman has confirmed receipt of the March 9 letter signed by Manoj Mohan Mitra, senior assistant secretary of the ministry.

The discoveries of young archaeologists drew a huge attention of the archaeologists from home and abroad but the government, instead of assisting the excavation, has stopped the digging of a glorious past, the team members alleged.

Many experts believe the discoveries revealed that the area was the eastern limit of Mauryan Empire and that Buddhism was practised there. The remains of the Wari-Bateswar also show that the region was developed in trade and industry.

The knobbed pottery pieces found at the site suggest the practice of Buddhism in the locality in the ancient period, the archaeologists observed.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Prof Mostafizur said they are now examining the relics to make a final report on the archaeological site. "Obviously we will give back the national treasure but we have to analyse and make report out of those."

"We have been digging the site to reveal the history of a glorious civilisation with the prior permission of the government. We have not done anything wrong," he said.

During the third-phase excavation that ended on February 8, the team discovered a furnace from the mortar pavement at the site. Experts believe it had been used in domestic work or to melt iron.

Earlier, the team discovered the mortar pavement and a road. After the discovery, a carbon-14 dating showed the two villages (Wari and Bateswar) were part of an ancient city, possibly of the oldest civilisation in this region.

During the first-phase excavation in 2000, a team of JU students

led by Prof Mustafizur found some symbols of an ancient fort city of 450 BC. Pundrabardhan, now known as Mahasthan Garh, is a civilisation of 400 BC.

"If we want to say anything about the civilisation, we have to keep on excavating the site. It's a huge task. Now we are just assuming things based on some artifacts," said Prof Mustafizur who along with his students arranged funds for the excavation.

Asked why the ministry directed him to stop excavation, Mustafizur blamed one official of the Department of Archaeology. "It is nothing but professional jealousy," he said.

## 'Improper probe,

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of strong evidence. Prosecution witnesses, who have so far deposed in the court, gave no important information required for conviction of the accused, he mentioned.

Thirty-four out of the 54 prosecution witnesses have so far deposed. The investigation officer of the case failed to name in the charge sheet any 'reliable eye-witness', the special PP said.

The charge sheet was submitted on June 20 last year naming 12 outlaws as accused.

Of them, BDR Altaf and Mofiz died in 'crossfire' last year. Four accused -- Sumon alias Nuruzzaman, Bulbul alias Bulu, Bomaru Akram and Shaon -- are in Khulna jail while six others -- Disco Sathul, Bellal, Omar Faruque, Mitul, Shawkat and Sarwar -- are absconding.

Manik Saha was killed in a bomb attack on January 15 last year near Khulna Press Club. A case was filed with Khulna Police Station without naming any accused.

Of the four arrestees, Sumon made a judicial confession without directly admitting to his involvement in the incident but disclosing the names of 'killers and planners' of the murder. The charge sheet however did not mention their names, sources said.

Local journalists might demand reinvestigation of the case.

# Ancient Maya entrepreneurs made salt

REUTERS, Washington

Ancient Mayan entrepreneurs working along the coast of what is now Belize distilled salt from seawater and paddled it to inland cities in canoes, all without government control, researchers reported on Monday.

They found evidence of 41 saltworks on a single coastal lagoon and the remains of a 1,300-year-old wooden canoe paddle.

Their study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shows the extent of trade just before the Mayan civilization in that region mysteriously fell apart.

"The discovery of the saltworks indicates that there was extensive production and distribution of goods and resources outside the cities in the interior of the Yucatan," they wrote.

"To me the exciting thing is that, in addition to the paddle ... these saltworks that we have found in the lagoon indicate the importance of non-state-controlled production in pre-industrial societies," said Heather McKillop of the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University, who led the study.

"I think at some point there was a complex system of production and trade that is only beginning to be figured out, including, probably, overland transport using human porters and also travel up and down river and lagoon systems using canoes," she added in a telephone interview.

Although Mayan art depicts canoe traders, the discovery of the paddle fragment is the first wooden artifact from the period, McKillop said.

McKillop and colleagues discovered the salt factories by snorkeling in the clear waters of the Punta Yucacos Lagoon on the coast of Belize. They date to between 600 and 900AD.

"They were abandoned about AD 900, at the same time as the inland cities were abandoned," she said.

Ceramic pots at the sites suggest Maya workers boiled seawater to collect the salt.

The trade clearly went both ways. In the salt-producing areas, McKillop's team also found artifacts that would have been inland.

"There are little figurine whistles and also some pottery with stamped decorations around the shoulders of jars and outsides of vessels," she said.

Before her team's search, four other salt workshops had been found in the lagoon but the extent and details of the regional salt-making operations were unclear.

## PM says

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statement at a public meeting at Moulvibazar Government High School ground after the inauguration of gas extraction from the Moulvibazar field.

Presided over by M Naser Rahman MP, the meeting was also addressed by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrif Hossain, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury and former state minister Ebadur Rahman.

The prime minister said people want progress, peace and environment for doing business and education of their children. They are "fed up with the opposition party's politics".

The prime minister said it has again proved that BNP is not only a successful political party, but also a successful government.

Criticising the main opposition for their "anti-development" activities and "false propaganda" both at home and abroad, she said communal harmony is prevailing in the country with people of all faiths living peacefully and performing their religious activities.

Listing her government's various development activities the prime minister said foreigners remarked that a 'silent revolution' has taken place in education and health sectors and many could learn from Bangladesh.

Earlier in the day, the prime minister inaugurated Moulvibazar gas field, terming it a milestone on the road to higher stages of development of the country to fulfil people's long-cherished desire.

She urged people to stand united in the struggle for economic emancipation as they did in the struggle for independence in 1971.

The new gas field, developed by Unocal Bangladesh in 18 months time, will produce 70 mmcf initially. With the beginning of production in the Moulvibazar field country's total gas production reached 1,470 mmcf that exceeds the total domestic demand for about 1,450 mmcf.

The US-based international oil company, Unocal, has developed the field under a Gas Purchase and Sales Agreement (GPSA) signed with Petrobangla, the state-owned hydrocarbon agency.

Some 50 percent of the gas produced in the country is consumed in power generation while the rest goes for manufacturing fertilizer, fuelling transport, and commercial and domestic usage.

The prime minister said, "The valuable gas resources are playing an important role in the industrial and economical development of the country."

She said the government has planned to expand the gas network to Rajshahi and Khulna cities.

# \$200m audit objections

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million, which is cost-recoverable, in blocks 12, 13 and 14 between 1995 and 2003. Of this sum, Petrobangla's audit raised objections on \$200 million.

On the other hand, Petrobangla has so far cleared \$175 million to Unocal against its cost-recoverable investment in the Jalalabad gas field.

According to a breakdown of the total cost-recoverable expenditure, Unocal spent \$192 million to develop the field, which was given to Unocal's predecessor Occidental as an incentive. The field was discovered in the early nineties by a corrupt and failed Canadian company called Scimitar.

The Jalalabad field started gas production in 1999 with a reserve of 1.6 trillion cubic feet, and presently produces 180 million cubic feet a day (mmcf) of gas -- the majority free gas for Petrobangla as per the PSC.

Unocal spent another \$97 million in block 12 for a seismic survey, a three-dimensional survey, drilling of exploratory wells and discovery of the Bibiyana gas field in 1999 -- to date Unocal's biggest find in Bangladesh.

Unocal has committed \$230 million in investment to develop the field, which is expected to come online in 2007. For exploration activities in blocks 13 and 14, Unocal spent \$41 million.

In the same blocks, Unocal discovered the Moulavibazar gas field, which came online last month after an investment of \$49 million.

The Moulavibazar gas field is located in the same geological area where the Magurghara gas field explosion took place in 1997 due to the negligent operations of US company Occidental, which later sold its concerns to Unocal.

"Unocal however does not claim

the cost of the Magurghara gas field as cost recoverable. Therefore the expenditure of \$380 million excluded the Magurghara field," said a competent Petrobangla source.

"We don't want a dispute with Unocal. We can settle the issues easily and very amicably," he said, citing the example of how British company Cairn dealt with similar situation.

Petrobangla had audit objections worth \$330 million with Cairn and Shell for their operation in blocks 15 and 16, most of which deal with expenditures outside budget. Petrobangla itself was partially at fault for not properly handling all the budget issues.

Cairn is now fully cooperating with Petrobangla on the issue and has settled the majority of the audit objections by regularising the budget and reducing some of its claims. "Unocal can follow that example," the official quipped.

## Ex-CJ Mustafa

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"I am finding many proposals in newspapers regarding the chief of the caretaker government and also the objections to such proposals. It would be better if any retired chief justice could be made the head of the caretaker government," he commented.

Justice Kamal said in the present system, all eyes are on only one person, the chief justice, when he performs as the sitting chief justice and also after his retirement. "Making comments on anybody's being the head of the caretaker government is embarrassing and contemptuous for us. I'm very shocked to see this situation," he added.

# Vatican gridlocked

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A group of friar scouts had come by bus from Nantes, in western France. Their leader was holding a guitar above her head so they would not get separated and they were singing at the top of their voices.

"This is extraordinary. What a proof of love for the Pope!" said 18-year-old Marine Naudet, wearing a beige uniform with a red and white kerchief and waving a small French flag.

Big groups of young Italians sang and clapped as they joined the scrum, carrying banners with messages for the Pope from parishes all over the country. "We miss you, John Paul. Thank you," read one banner from Bari, in southeastern Italy.

Other pilgrims carried wooden crosses, flags from countries as distant as Ecuador and Nigeria, and umbrellas to shield against the sun. BEARING WITNESS

On the Via della Conciliazione the mood was more sombre, partly because people there had already been waiting for hours but also because of growing emotion as they neared St. Peter's Basilica where the Pope's body was lying in state.

"When we started this morning we were singing and laughing, but the closer we get to the basilica, the sadder we feel," said 21-year-old Caterina Avantiagato. She had

come with two friends on a night train from a village in the heel of Italy.

"It's a beautiful experience to be here and see how many people have come to bear witness to the passing of this great Pope. But it's also very sad, very emotional," she said, as solemn music and prayers in many languages echoed from loudspeakers.

Watchful volunteers scanned faces for signs of exhaustion or dehydration. Paramedics in bright orange stood by with stretchers, while officials unloaded trucks of bottled water for free distribution.

A few km (miles) away at Termini, Rome's main train station, hordes of pilgrims pouring out of the concourse and into the middle of the street to pore over maps caused traffic chaos.

Armando Antonio Monteiro Barbosa, a Spanish builder, had just arrived by train from the airport after impulsively catching a flight to Rome, and did not know how long he would stay since he had not found a return flight.

"We're not sure where we are staying ... If you have inner peace, the when, where and how doesn't matter," said his Colombian girlfriend Mojin, her hair in dreadlocks and a woollen blanket wrapped around her waist.

# Govt to update

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ters were making irresponsible comments against the press, saying such remarks encourage the hoodlums who do not believe in press freedom.

They also interpreted the present situation in the country as not congenial to independent journalism and urged the government high-ups to act as a supporting force in countering those who threaten press freedom.

Defending himself, the law minister asserted that the present government will not enact any law or take any step contrary to the independence of the press, though there are pressures on him from certain quarters to do so.

"The government will not impose anything," he said, "as we believe in unrestrained freedom of the press."

Taking part in the discussion, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam referred to the government's criticism of the media for tarnishing the country's image and asked, "How can the media improve the country's image when the government is yet to take a single step to halt corruption?"

He said, "A responsible government should take account of the media reports and inquire the facts. And if the reports are found true, the government should act immediately."

Instead of blaming the media, the government should co-operate with it to unearth unethical business practices, corruption in the bureaucracy and elsewhere, appropriation of public property by politicians and abuse of power, said the senior journalist.

The Daily Sangbad Executive Editor Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul also lamented that some senior minis-

ters were making irresponsible comments against the media, which, he said, would encourage the people working against the press. Referring to a comment of Moudud he said, "We rather have witnessed an exercise of the 'freedom to lie' not by the mainstream media outlets but by the state-owned news agency within just three days of the minister's comment."

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh School of Social Science Dean Prof Shakhwat Ali Khan chaired the discussion, where Dhaka University Department of Mass Communication and Journalism Chairperson Prof Golam Rahman, Press Information Department Principal Information Officer Abu Zafar, Jatiya Press Club General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud, Daily Jugantor Deputy Editor Sohrab Hasan and Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh General Secretary Harun-ur-Rashid also spoke.

MMC Executive Director Quamrul Hasan Manju moderated the programme and KM Robul Alam placed the MMC study report.

## Dhoni drives

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sixes in his 56-ball 71. But it was all over for the visitors when he became the seventh wicket to fall with 94 still needed off 12 overs.

Left-arm seamer Ashish Nehra picked up four for 72 and occasional spinner Yuvraj Singh claimed three for 55.

The next match will be played in Jamshepur on Saturday.

## Wrong identity

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Khligon police in Dhaka taking him to be Iqbal Hossain Fand Khokon, son of late Jaban Ali Khan of Mahespur village of the same upazila, a listed criminal accused and convicted in a number of cases.

To prove his identity, innocent Iqbal showed police a certificate from the local union parishad chairman and also presented witnesses. But police defiantly ignored all that and arrested him.

The arrestee was then sent to Barisal jail as an accused in a case filed with Bakerganj Police Station in February 2002.

The truth came to light when Liakat Ali Khan, assistant public prosecutor (APP) of Barisal Bar, learnt about the arrest of the accused in the case, Iqbal Hossain Farid alias Khokon, as an accused in another case filed with the same police station on January 11 this year.

The APP then submitted a prayer to the court on April 2 for release of the innocent person.

Judge Muhammad Asaduzzaman heard the case and ordered release of Iqbal Hossain Masud.

The judge also asked the authorities concerned to take action against the police personnel involved in the incident for negligence to duty.

## Alia Madrasa

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Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Dhaka Medical College to avert any untoward incident

The authorities formed another committee Monday night to probe the incident, though there was a committee for that purpose.

## 2 accused

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their bail prayers and sent them to jail.

On April 1, 2004, law-enforcement agencies seized 10 truckloads of illegal arms and ammunition from the CUFL Jetty in Chittagong.

Later, two cases were filed in this connection against 45 people. Of them, 22 were arrested, 13 released on bail, five surrendered and the rest were absconding.

The court fixed April 10 to frame charges against the accused and asked police to produce arrested Yakub Mollah, one of the main accused in the cases, in the court on the day.

## Housewife

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said in the inquest report adding that it bore marks of injuries.

Sufia's sister Sakhina alleged that Al Amin murdered her sister after an altercation over dowry Monday night. Locals said Al Amin is a drunkard and used to torture Sufia for cash.

The body was sent to the Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, a mob yesterday beat one Badshah, 25, who claimed himself to be an employee of a hotel at Sadarghat, for making an attempt to abduct a boy.

"When children were coming out of Taqwa Jame Mosque at Khligon Block-C at 4:30pm, the youth tried to take one with him," said a police official who took Badshah to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for treatment of his injuries.

# Los Angeles Times wins major Pulitzer

REUTERS, New York

Gareth Cook of The Boston Globe won for explanatory reporting for his articles on stem cell research, while Julia Keller of the Chicago Tribune won in the category of feature writing for her account of a deadly 10-second tornado.

The Associated Press staff won for breaking news photography for its pictures of combat in Iraqi cities, and Deanne Fitzmaurice of the San Francisco Chronicle won for feature photography for her essay on a local hospital's efforts to treat a badly injured Iraqi boy.

Gissler noted the danger and limited mobility reporters face in Iraq. "The war in Iraq seems less present this year ... probably because of the barriers to coverage," he said.

The award for commentary went to Connie Schultz of The Plain Dealer in Cleveland for her columns on "the underdog and underprivileged," while the prize for editorial writing went to Tom Philp of The Sacramento Bee.

The prize for editorial cartooning went to Nick Anderson of The Courier-Journal in Louisville,

Kentucky. For fiction, the Pulitzer went to "Gilead" by Marilynne Robinson, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

The prize for drama went to "Doubt, a parable" by John Patrick Shanley, and the prize for history went to "Washington's Crossing" by David Hackett Fischer, published by Oxford University Press.

The Pulitzer Prize for biography was awarded to "de Kooning: An American Master," written by Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan and published by Alfred A. Knopf. Stevens and Swan are a husband-and-wife team, the Pulitzer administrator said.

The Pulitzer Prize for poetry was given to "Delights & Shadows" by Ted Kooser, published by Copper Canyon Press, while the award for general nonfiction went to "Ghost Wars" by Steve Coll, published by The Penguin Press.

Coll also won a Pulitzer in 1990, when he shared in the explanatory journalism award while at the Washington Post.

The prize for music was given to the Second Concerto for Orchestra by Steven Stacky.