

VIETNAM LESSON  
US must stay patient  
in Iraq, says Bush

AFP, Hanoi

US President George W Bush, making his first visit to Vietnam, said yesterday that one lesson of the bloody US military defeat here a generation ago was that the United States must be patient in Iraq.

"We'll succeed unless we quit," promised Bush, the second US president to visit post-war Vietnam, after talks with close ally Australian Prime Minister John Howard on the sidelines of an Asia Pacific summit in Hanoi.

Bush's brief state visit here, 10 days after US voter anger over Iraq swept the opposition Democrats to control of the US Congress, has inevitably raised comparisons between the Vietnam war and the

ongoing conflict in Iraq.

Asked whether the US defeat in Vietnam offered lessons, the US president replied: "We tend to want there to be instant success in the world, and the task in Iraq is going to take a while."

Democrats have rallied behind calls for a phased redeployment out of Iraq, but the White House has rejected setting any firm timetable for bringing home the roughly 150,000 US troops there.

But Bush also hinted at the results of several efforts under way to revamp US strategy in Iraq, vowing to consult Howard on "any repositioning of troops, if that's what we choose to do".

"We've got a lot of people looking at different tactical adjustments.

Once I make up my mind what those will be, I'll share it with him (Howard) right off the bat."

The meeting came as a heavy-weight commission of US experts, led by former secretary of state James Baker, is expected to report next month with plans to revamp US strategy in Iraq.

Bush himself has removed US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and ordered a comprehensive, government-wide strategy review White House aides say could be complete within 10 days.

"The elections mean that the American people want to know whether or not we have a plan for success," said Bush.

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Ctg OC shifted  
after attack  
on 14-party

UNB, Ctg

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Doublemooring Police Station Miah Kutubur Rahman was stand released on Thursday night and transferred to city Special Branch (SB).

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner issued the order after a departmental inquiry committee found the OC guilty of negligence of duty during Tuesday's attack on the 14-party rally allegedly by the activists of four-party alliance at Barik Building Crossing in the port city.

Inspector Mohammad Shahid, Doublemooring zone, has also been transferred to Chandgaon Police Station for the same reason.

Earlier, the leaders of the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine had demanded punishment to the policemen for not taking any action during the attack.

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PHOTO: STAR

An organisation of people from Barisal yesterday places essential items in front of the city residence of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz, who hails from that district. A section of the traders earlier said they would not sell anything to Aziz.

Food arrives in  
trucks to Aziz  
after traders' boycott threat

BSS, Dhaka

A group of traders and farmers yesterday carried essential commodities in three trucks and supplied them to the Kakrail residence of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz.

The suppliers, claimed to have come from Chittagong, Barisal and Sirajganj, said they supplied the essentials to Aziz's residence protesting the call of another group of traders not to sell essentials to his family.

"The CEC is an honest person. We condemn the call of some traders to stop supply of essentials to his residence," one of the suppliers said.

Fifty farmers from Chittagong arrived at the CEC's residence at 3:00pm in a truck loaded with essential commodities including

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Five held in  
murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective and Criminal Intelligence branch of police, formerly known as Detective Branch, arrested five people accused in Awami Swechhasebak League leader Haji Manir Uddin Manu murder case from Pinerbagh area in Mirpur on Thursday.

The arrestees are Noman Ibn Bashar alias TVS Babu, Nazmul Huda alias Naju, Jashim, Mahfuz and Hafiz.

Police said the arrestees are killing-squad members of the infamous Shahadat Group, which allegedly carried out the murders of several businessmen of Mirpur area after failing to get tolls from them.

Police said they also seized a

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Ctg port in full  
swing operation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Activities in the Chittagong port were in full swing at the weekend yesterday after being suspended for five long days due mainly to the countrywide blockade enforced by the Awami League-led 14-party combine.

Five vessels including four carrying export goods left the port while five others entered the harbour.

The officials and employees of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), customs and the other organisations concerned attended their work to keep the country's premier port operational round the clock.

The users and importers too were on the go all day to facilitate handling and delivery of goods to and from the port, said the sources.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed CPA Chairman Md Mosleh Uddin yesterday held a meeting with the CPA officials and Bandar CBA and non-CBA leaders. Later, he went on an inspection of the port activities, sources said.

Mosleh Uddin assumed the responsibilities immediately after arriving in the port city on Thursday.

He took on the job after the contractual appointment of AMM Shahadat Hossain was cancelled

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Boy hurt as  
bomb goes off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A boy was wounded when a bomb exploded at the city's Jatrabari area yesterday noon.

The victim Yusuf Ali, 14, son of Shamsul Haque of Dhalpur in Jatrabari, received splinter injuries to his face, neck, hands and legs.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he told reporters that someone hurled the bomb at him when he was returning from a local kitchen market.

Witnesses to the incident, however, said the bomb was inside a bag Yusuf was carrying and it might have exploded due to jerking.

Police went to DMCH last evening in order to question Yusuf but they were unable to find him in the hospital. They suspect he might have received the injuries while trying to make the bomb.

MANPOWER  
Ex-state minister, agents  
tussle affects export

PORIMOL PALMA

Persisting tussle between the state minister for expatriates welfare and overseas employment in the immediate past government and the president of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) – both from the BNP – is greatly affecting manpower export, particularly to Malaysia.

Former state minister Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad and Baira President and former BNP law-maker MAH Salim are still trading allegations of extortion, bribery and

gross mismanagement in the overseas employment process.

Some of the Baira executive committee leaders are supporting the former state minister while some others are siding with the Baira president in their blame game against each other.

Under the circumstances, Malaysia has slowed down the visa process for the Bangladeshi workers. As of yesterday, it has issued less than 1,500 visas against over 25 thousand job approvals that it had sent earlier, Baira sources said.

Salim alleged on Monday that while in office Lutfur Rahman

demanding Tk 25 crore from him. "As I refused to pay the money, he asked the commerce ministry to suspend Baira executive committee."

When contacted, Lutfur Rahman denied the allegation and said he would soon make public all documents in support of the allegations against Baira and its president.

"Baira did not come up with the allegation against me earlier. There is a big mafia in manpower business. None dared to take any action against it but I did as I had enough

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India observing  
situation, acting  
envoy tells  
Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

India would like to see the people of Bangladesh to constitute the next parliament through peaceful, stable and democratic elections, Acting Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarvajit Chakraborty said yesterday.

"We want this as a good neighbour of Bangladesh... we're observing the overall situation," he told newsmen, replying to a question after calling on Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence.

Chakraborty called on Hasina to invite her to attend the January 29-30 programme marking death

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Shop owner  
killed in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of assailants killed a shop owner in the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday.

Mohammad Arif, 24, owner of an electrical accessories shop Ismail Electric on Commissioner Lane in Jatrabari, was attacked near the shop around 10:30am by the group which hacked him indiscriminately with sharp weapons.

After being rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) the on duty doctors declared him dead.

Father of the deceased, Ismail

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Austrian, four US guards  
in Iraq kidnapped

2 gunmen, GI killed in fighting

AP, Baghdad

British ground forces and US military helicopters fought with gunmen yesterday in southern Iraq where four American security contractors and their Austrian co-worker were abducted in a convoy hijacking.

It was not known whether the five were still in the area or whether the gunmen were involved in the kidnapping, said Capt. Tane Dunlop, a spokesman for British forces. He said two of the gunmen were killed.

Nine other civilians were in the convoy when it was attacked Thursday near Basra. The men were Asian and have been released, said the contractors' employer, Crescent Security Group.

"We have four American security contractors and one Austrian unaccounted for," he said in a telephone

interview from the firm's headquarters in Kuwait. "All the civilian truck drivers have been accounted for, a mix of men from countries such as India, Pakistan, the Philippines."

The Iraqi official, who declined to be named for personal reasons, refused to say how many vehicles were in the convoy, who hijacked it and how the freed captives were released, explaining that he didn't want to jeopardise the work of US and British forces.

A US Embassy official, who refused to be identified because he was not authorized to release the information, said the convoy included 43 heavy trucks and six security vehicles. Some of the hijackers were dressed as Iraqi police and those men took away 20 vehicles, he said.

Dunlop said in a telephone

interview from Basra that the hijacking occurred Thursday at 1 pm in Safwan, an Iraqi city near the Kuwait border. He said the convoy was coming from Kuwait.

At dawn Friday, British ground forces and helicopters searched an area of Safwan for gunmen who had attacked coalition forces in the past few days when about 10 of them opened fire from farm buildings, Dunlop said. The British and US forces returned fire, killing two of the gunmen, Dunlop said.

An Iraqi police officer confirmed the fighting and gave higher casualty figures, saying five of the gunmen and one British soldier also had been wounded. But

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Robot, heal  
thysself --  
welcome to  
future

REUTERS, Washington

It's an achievement that inspires notions of robots with consciousness and independent minds.

Scientists said on Thursday they created a brainy, four-legged robot resembling a starfish that can sense damage to its body and, on its own, think up a way to recover.

Researchers Hod Lipson and Victor Zykov of Cornell University and Josh Bongard of the University of Vermont made a robot that observed its own motion using built-in sensors in its joints and then generated its own concept of itself, or at least its physical structure, in its internal computer.

The video game industry's own clash of the titans reboots this week with the midnight launch of Sony's PlayStation 3 and Sunday's debut of Nintendo's Wii.

It used this internal model of itself to figure out how to walk on its four legs and eight motorized joints.

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PHOTO: STAR

Parents wait in front of Kala Bhaban (arts building) of Dhaka University yesterday as their wards sit for admission test for the 14 government medical colleges in the country.

Darfur conflict  
spreads as  
Annan  
announces deal

REUTERS, Addis Ababa

The Darfur conflict escalated into neighboring countries on Friday even as Sudan for the first time accepted the principle of allowing U.N. troops to help end one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Western leaders hailed a "breakthrough" agreement with Sudan brokered by outgoing U.N. chief Kofi Annan, but significant differences remained over the shape of a peacekeeping force.

Shortly after Annan declared the outcome of a high level meeting in Addis Ababa, Chad announced plans to send troops to help Central African Republic confront cross-border rebels in what it said was a spreading regional war waged by Sudan.

The video game industry's own clash of the titans reboots this week

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PHOTO: STAR

Traffic police in the capital allow goods-laden trucks, which were stranded at different places in the country during the 14-party blockade, to ply the city streets during daytime yesterday. Normally, trucks are allowed in the city only at night. The photo was taken in front of the Jatiya Press Club.