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TRANSCOM  
ELECTRONICS

# Bombings, clashes kill 62 in Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

A spate of bombings across Iraq and a fresh surge of fighting between Shia militiamen and US forces in eastern Baghdad killed at least 62 people yesterday, Iraqi officials said.

The car bomb outside a courthouse in the central city of Baquba, a stronghold of al-Qaeda, killed at least 40 people and wounded 80 in the most devastating attack in the violence-wracked country in a month, police said.

Medical officials said many of the victims were charred beyond recognition and people were crowding the local hospital trying to identify the remains of relatives.

Three minibuses were destroyed and 10 houses damaged in the blast, which sparked pandemonium, an AFP correspondent

said.

"At least 40 people were killed, including one woman and a police officer, when a car bomb exploded outside the main courtroom in Baquba," said a police official who would not be named.

"At least 80 other people were wounded, among them women and children," he added.

Dr Ahmed Fuad at the local hospital in Baquba, 60 kilometres (35 miles) north of Baghdad, confirmed the toll.

"At least 40 people have been killed and most of them were burnt beyond recognition," he told AFP.

Baquba, capital of the central province of Diyala, is one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq and regarded as an al-Qaeda stronghold.

Since early January, US and Iraqi forces have been engaged in inten-

sive operations against the jihadists throughout Diyala province.

Soon after the car bomb attack, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives in a restaurant in the western city of Ramadi killing 13 people, the city's police chief said.

Major General Tareq al-Youssef said another 14 people were wounded in the attack which occurred at around 12:30 pm (0930 GMT).

He said the restaurant was near the western outskirts of the city, the capital of Sunni Anbar province.

Ramadi, 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of Baghdad, was a key Sunni insurgent stronghold in the aftermath of the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime by US-led forces in 2003.

But since 2006 local Sunni tribes there have sided with the US

military to fight al-Qaeda in Iraq militants and the violence had dropped substantially.

Security officials in Baghdad, meanwhile, reported two workers killed and two policemen wounded on Tuesday by a roadside bomb planted near a police station in Baghdad's central Karrada neighbourhood.

A later car bomb also in Karrada killed one person and wounded six others, including four policemen.

Since Monday, more than 80 people have been killed in a surge of insurgent attacks across Iraq, which come at a time security forces are fighting street battles with Shia militiamen in Baghdad's Sadr City.

Renewed fighting on Tuesday between Shia militiamen, mostly linked to radical Shia cleric Moqtad

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## Left parties form human chain for rationing of essentials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democratic Left Alliance (DLA) formed a human chain in the capital yesterday demanding introduction of rationing system of essentials across the country and cent percent dearness allowance for labours.

Police tried to take away the alliance's banner and threatened its leaders with filing cases after the human chain at Paltan.

Later, at a press briefing at the DLA head office in Paltan, the leaders condemned the police action.

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## DU student commits suicide at Rokeya Hall

DU CORRESPONDENT

A female student of Dhaka University (DU) committed suicide yesterday noon.

The body of Chhanda Rani Sarkar, a new fourth year student of the Institute of Education and Research and a resident of the extension building at Begum Rokeya Hall, was found hanging from a ceiling fan with a scarf at about 2:45pm.

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## ACC sues Patal, family for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sued BNP leader Fazlur Rahman Patal and his two family members for amassing assets beyond known sources of income and concealing wealth information.

ACC Assistant Director Helaluddin Sharif filed the graft case with Ramna Police Station.

According to the first information report, the now detained former state minister for youth and sports accumulated wealth worth around Tk 7.38 crore through dishonest means. Besides, in his statement to the ACC, he held back information about assets worth around Tk 4.42 crore.

His wife Kamrunnahr and son Yasir Arshad Rajan were accused of aiding and abetting him in the acts.

## Man found dead in Banani flat along with maid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladesh-born US citizen and his domestic help were found killed inside his apartment at Banani in the capital early morning Monday.

Police had to break open the apartment door to recover the bodies of the victims -- Faruq Ahmed Bhuiyan, 45, the US citizen, and Sumi Begum, 28, his domestic help.

Hands and legs of both the victims were found tied up, with Faruq lying on his bedroom floor with two stab wounds in his chest and forehead. Sumi, found in the kitchen, had signs of strangulation.

Police on Monday arrested Faruq's wife Minara Begum Mili, 33, and a youth named Amir Faisal

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Maj (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed talks to newsmen after the dialogue preparatory meeting between the government and Saifur Rahman-led BNP faction at the state guesthouse Meghna in the capital yesterday. Story on page-1

## NEPAL ELECTION

# Abolition of monarchy very soon, say Maoists

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoists said yesterday the abolition of the Himalayan nation's monarchy was now just a "matter of procedure" as they held a commanding lead in the count from last week's landmark elections.

Up for grabs are 601 seats in an assembly that will decide the impoverished country's political future, and with the count edging towards the halfway mark, the former rebels are on track to win an absolute majority.

"The monarchy is finished. There should be no doubt about that, it's just a matter of procedure," senior Maoist official Prababkher, who uses one name,

told AFP.

He predicted that when the new assembly convenes, it will waste little time in declaring a republic.

"We may not declare a republic on the first day of the first constituent assembly meeting. Declaring a republic may take a few days, but there is no doubt it will happen," said the Maoist official, a senior party member with a seat in the new body.

The April 10 elections were a central plank of a 2006 peace deal under which the Maoists agreed to end their decade-long insurgency - which left at least 13,000 people dead -- and enter mainstream politics.

Although other mainstream parties had agreed with the Maoists

to sack the unpopular King Gyanendra, some politicians have been arguing that Nepal should keep some kind of monarch as a symbol of the neutrality of the country sandwiched between Asian giants China and India.

King Gyanendra ascended the throne after a palace massacre in 2001 -- in which the former king and much of the rest of Nepal's core royals were gunned down at a family get-together by a drunken and suicidal prince who was furious at not being allowed to marry the woman he loved.

The monarch's status sank in 2005, when he fired the government and seized absolute power to fight the Maoists, only to finish up

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## 15yrs in jail without conviction

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Four people arrested on charge of robbery have been held in confinement in Dhaka Central Jail without conviction for around 15 years since 1993.

Although the court granted bail and released five other accused of the same case a few years into their arrest, it denied bail to the four -- Sirajul Islam from Laxmipur, Abul Kalam from Barisal, Nurul Haque from Madaripur and Alauddin from Munshiganj, saying that there are specific allegations against them.

According to case documents, only two out of the five who received bail now attend hearings of the case as the other three went into hiding.

On April 22, 1993, Dhankhondi resident Ulfat Rana

alias Rafiqul Alam filed the case with Dhankhondi Police Station against three to four unknown individuals who broke into his house, blindfolded him and made off with 15 tola of gold, Tk 40,000 worth of clothing, Tk 90,000 in cash and other materials worth Tk 20,000.

Though the trial of the case began in 2001, the hearing of the case has yet to be completed even after around seven years. The hearing of the case is scheduled to resume on April 17.

When The Daily Star spoke with Assistant Public Prosecutor Faiz Uddin and asked for his comments over the delay in disposing of the case, he said he had urged the court to dispose of the case on several occasions. "I will move for the disposal of the case again on the next day of hearing," he added.

Eminent jurist and former

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Can Tigers now pull one back?

SPORTS REPORTER

The series is over but Bangladesh still have plenty to prove when they go into the fourth one-day international of the five-match series against Pakistan at the Multan Cricket Stadium today.

Despite the Tigers' exciting show in the previous game in Lahore on Sunday, the most competitive game so far in the series after dismal performances in the first two matches, the home side confirmed the series with an unsailable 3-0 lead to make way for

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## Prayer Timing

April 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## GMG's Dubai flight delayed by 24 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A GMG Airlines Airbus had to return to Zia International Airport (ZIA) an hour after it took off Monday due to technical problems.

The flight ZS-091 finally left Dhaka 24 hours later, causing sufferings to passengers.

The plane with 500 people on board left for Dubai at 4:30pm Monday. "One hour after take off from ZIA, the pilot discovered technical glitches in one of its engines," an air-traffic officer of GMG Airlines told The Daily Star.

"The pilot informed the control tower at ZIA about it and turned back," he said requesting anonymity. Shahab Sattar, managing director (MD) of GMG Airlines, the country's biggest private airlines, told The Daily Star that it was a minor technical problem and the flight had already left for Dubai after a fix.

On March 3, a GMG Boeing 747 with 160 on board had to return to Dubai airport shortly after take off due to problems in one of its engines.

## Cylinder blast kills balloon seller in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A balloon seller died on Monday following an explosion in a gas tank at Dhanmondi Lake amid Bangla New Year celebrations.

The victim, Babul Sardar, 20, was declared dead after he was rushed to Pangu (Orthopaedic) Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city at around 1:30pm.

"There was a huge bang at Dhanmondi lakeside just before 1:00pm," schoolboy Noor Mohammad Manik, who was a witness to the incident, told The Daily Star.

Officer-In-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station Monwar Hossain said after the incident the man was rushed to the hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

The manhole without its lid on DIT Road in Fakirapool in the city may cause accidents any time with the authorities turning a blind eye.

## CONGRATULATIONS



Mr. Mahmudul Haq, Managing Director, Sadat Jute Industries Ltd. is receiving the National Export Trophy (Bronze) 2002-2003 from Commerce Adviser Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman



Mr. Najmul Haq, Chairman, Sadat Jute Industries Ltd. is receiving the National Export Trophy (Gold) 2004-2005 from Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, The Chief Adviser

**Our Hearty Congratulations to The Chairman and Managing Director of Sadat Jute Industries Ltd on Receiving The Prestigious National Export Trophy**

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