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## Bush sees attackers as growing desperate

Allies react with horror

AP, Washington

President George W. Bush yesterday said US progress in Iraq is making insurgents more "desperate" and spurring attacks such as the bombings at the international Red Cross headquarters and four police stations across Baghdad that killed dozens of people.

"The more progress we make on the ground, the more free the Iraqis become, the more electricity that's available, the more jobs are available, the more kids that are going to school, the more desperate these killers become," Bush told reporters at the White House.

Bush spoke after meeting with civilian US Iraqi administrator L. Paul Bremer.

Bush, sitting in the Oval Office, said those who are continuing to engage in violence "can't stand the thought of a free society. They hate freedom. They love terror. They love to try to create fear and chaos."

But Bush said he remains "even more determined to work with the Iraqi people" to restore peace and civility to the war-torn nation.

Bush called those orchestrating the attacks "cold-blooded killers."

He vowed to track down those carrying out the escalating attacks, which the president said are being conducted by a minority in Iraq.

Allies' reaction

Meantime, US allies condemned the attacks.

# Baghdad bloodbath kills 35

## Over 200 wounded as Red Cross HQ, police stations made car bomb targets

AP, Baghdad

Suicide bombers struck the Red Cross headquarters and three police stations across Baghdad on Monday, killing at least 35 people and injuring more than 200 in a coordinated terror spree that stunned the Iraqi capital on the first day of the Islamic holy month of fasting, Ramadan.

The string of car bombings, all within about 45 minutes, was the bloodiest episode yet in the city of 5 million by insurgents targeting the American-led occupation and those perceived as working with it.

It also appeared to mark a dramatic escalation in tactics, suggesting a level of organisation U.S. officials had doubted the resistance possessed. In past weeks, bombers have carried out heavy suicide bombings but in single strikes.

President Bush said progress in Iraq is making insurgents more "desperate" and fueling attacks.

Sitting next to civilian U.S. Iraqi administrator L. Paul Bremer in the Oval Office, Bush said he remains "even more determined to work with the Iraqi people" to restore peace and civility to the war-torn nation.

At the Pentagon, officials described the two days of violence as a significant spike in attacks that showed some level of coordination.

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PHOTO: AFP

Iraqi police evacuate a wounded man from the International Committee of the Red Cross Baghdad headquarters, right, and a US soldier radios as rescuers search the debris of a blast site, left, in the Baghdad suburb of Sha'ab yesterday.

## Red Cross mulls cutback in Iraq operations

UN agencies shocked, not surprised

AP, Geneva

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said yesterday it is considering cutting back its operations in Iraq after a bomb attack on its Baghdad headquarters that shook the neutral Swiss-run organisation.

The attack killed two Iraqi employees of the ICRC and as many as 10 other people outside the agency's compound, said agency spokesman Florian Westphal.

Several ICRC employees were injured.

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## 'Syrian bomber' held in Baghdad, US says

REUTERS, Baghdad

A U.S. general said the one attacker captured in the bombings that killed about 40 yesterday had a Syrian passport, fuelling suspicions that foreign fighters were behind a rising tide of violence.

Brig. Gen. Mark Hertling of the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division said police shot and wounded the man when he got out of a car and tried to hurl a grenade at a Baghdad.

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## Fingers pointed at hoarders

### Commerce minister comes under PM fire for price spiral, asked to visit market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As prices of essentials continue to soar on the eve of Ramadan, the government yesterday held a series of meetings, one featuring the prime minister, to put brakes on prices blamed mainly on hoarders close to the government.

Highly placed sources said in each meeting Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury came under fire for what they said was "his failure to control the market".

The meetings blamed the ministry for neglect to take adequate steps to stem the upswing of prices despite advance report from several government agencies.

They said a government body in a report more than a month ago

tipped off price hikes of onion and asked for urgent steps.

But the report was allegedly leaked to a section of unscrupulous businessmen, who used the information and the government's weak market monitoring to make brisk money.

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said they came to know that some influential businessmen, who have close links with the alliance government and control over market, are responsible for the price spiral.

Officials said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sat with senior cabinet colleagues, including Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman and Local Government, Rural

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## Ramadan begins

UNB, Dhaka

The holy month of Ramadan begins today as the moon of the lunar month, Saban, was sighted yesterday. The month-long fasting during daytime was supposed to start yesterday, but it was deferred for a day as the moon was not sighted on Sunday.

The holy Lailatul Qadr will be observed on the night of November 22, Islamic Foundation sources said last night.

According to Islamic tenets, Ramadan was the month when the almighty Allah began to reveal the holy book, Al-Quran, to Prophet Muhammad (Sm) some 1400 years ago.

Ramadan office hours for government, autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies will be as follows:

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### Notice

The Daily Star runs the list of remaining plot allottees in Rajuk's Purbachal project on pages 17, 18, 19 and 20 today.

## Price bull mauls middle-class

### Inflation creeps up, dearness allowance erodes

REJAU KARIM BYRON

The cost of living has been on a wild run because of price spiral of essential items.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), inflation measured on a point-to-point basis stood at 5.14 percent in July, up from 5.03 percent in June. In July last year, inflation clocked 3.55 percent.

According to official sources, inflation rate would record a further rise after July because of the increase in food items.

The BBS figures support this forecast as it is found that the food index recorded a rise in July, from 5.22 percent in June to 5.86 percent. In July last year, the food index clocked only 1.49 percent.

On the other hand, non-food inflation fell slightly from 4.68 per-

cent in June to 4.10 percent in July. Whatever may be the rise in inflation, the fixed-income group has been hard hit and finds it difficult to make ends meet.

A finance ministry official yesterday gave The Daily Star an account of how his dearness allowance eroded because of price hike.

His (the name undisclosed for obvious reason) salary increased Tk 570 due to 10 percent dearness allowance in July. But his electricity bill increased Tk 150 as tariff hiked, monthly grocery bill shot up by Tk 800 and transport cost to office doubled to Tk 50.

"I have not counted other cost increases and still I am poorer by about Tk 500 a month," he said.

Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, a typist at the finance ministry, said

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## 8th JS limps to third year with crises

SHAKHAWAT LITON

With uncertainty hanging over its fate, the eighth parliament completes two years of its five-year tenure today.

The Jatiya Sangsad has yet to begin effective functioning for what analysts say was negative politics of both the ruling and opposition parties.

The configuration of parliament is not yet complete, although it sat on 153 workdays and passed 78 bills.

The parliamentary standing committees, vital institutes in a democracy, are limping with the main opposition Awami League (AL) yet to nominate their deputies to the bodies.

And until now, the House has not nominated a deputy leader.

Serious quorum crisis dogged all the nine sessions of the current parliament and on most days the sittings began well behind schedule, wasting a huge amount of government fund.

As the main opposition boy

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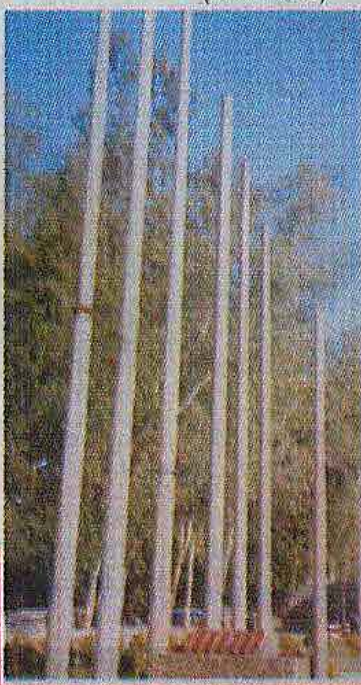
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## Khilgaon OC taken off over killing in custody charge

### Locals observe half-day hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Khilgaon Police Station was withdrawn yesterday following an allegation that a young man was beaten to death in police custody.

"I have issued an order for withdrawal of Entejar Rahman in the afternoon," Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Ashraf Huda said.

"Actions would have been taken against him had the one-member probe body that I formed in the

morning found him guilty," the commissioner said.

Additional DMP Commissioner Mizanur Rahman is the lone member of the body.

"I am expecting to get the probe report tonight," Huda told The Daily Star.

Sub-Inspector of the Detective Branch of Police Arman Ali was yesterday appointed the OC of Khilgaon Police Station yesterday.

Locals of Meradia observed a half-day hartal in the area yesterday.

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## The one time paint for many seasons...

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