

# US air strike kills 9 Afghan children

REUTERS, Kabul

US-led forces in Afghanistan have mistakenly killed nine children during an air strike on a leader of the banned Taliban regime, the US military says.

Saturday's strike near the town of Ghazni also killed the Taliban leader, who has been blamed for the killing of two workers on a key highway project in the troubled south of the country.

Hours after the strike, suspected Taliban guerrillas kidnapped two Indians working on the same road.

A statement from spokesman Colonel Bryan Hilferty at the US headquarters in Afghanistan said yesterday the children's bodies had been found by ground troops of the US-led force near the body of the intended target.

It said it regretted the loss of innocent life and the "tragic incident" was being investigated. It said the US-led force had acted "after developing extensive intelligence over an extended period of time".

The statement did not identify the target, but Ghazni's deputy

governor, Kheyal Mohammad Hussaini, said he was Mullah Wazir, a local Taliban leader. He said US planes had conducted the attack and local authorities had not been informed beforehand.

The United Nations said it was "profoundly distressed" by deaths of the children and called for a swift investigation.

"This incident, which follows similar incidents, adds to a sense of insecurity and fear in the country,"

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# Bar on UP leaders goes amid flak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives yesterday cancelled two identical circulars that restricted union parishad (UP) representatives' participation in programmes at home and abroad amid widespread criticism of the directive.

A circular, signed by local government division's Senior Assistant Secretary Nasima Begum, overrode operation of the

directives bringing relief to the representatives.

The ministry in a October 1 circular asked the local body leaders to take 'permission' of the deputy commissioners through upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) to attend training, seminars and workshops.

It also directed them to take permission from the local government ministry in case of foreign tours for such purposes.

The circular drew flak from the

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## New Indian envoy due Dec 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veena Sikri, the newly appointed high commissioner of India to Bangladesh, arrives in Dhaka on December 10 to take over responsibilities.

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Prayer Timings		
December 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-21
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

# World meet to end digital divide starts in Geneva Saturday

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Leaders from nearly 200 countries including 60 heads of state and government will attend the first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva Saturday aimed at bridging the digital divide between the rich and poor.

The aim of the United Nations summit is to come up with a global plan to ensure everyone's access to

information and communications technologies.

With the WSIS due to be launched, last ditch efforts are continuing to reach agreement on key issues such as the role of the media in the digital age and who should run the internet.

Currently, the Net is managed by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers,

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## Govt mounts watch on BChy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has intensified intelligence surveillance on AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury as he is readying to float a new political party in January.

Additional staffs of different agencies were deployed in front of the former president's residence at the KC Memorial Tower in Baridhara yesterday to keep a close eye on him.

"People, claimed to be agents of different agencies, were deployed in front of our residence and the

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Mosquitoes breed unchecked in the standing waters in a drain, transformed virtually into a garbage dump, in Banani's Block C area. Lack of cleanliness is a major cause for mosquito menace in Dhaka.

PHOTO: STAR

# DCC kicks off weekly mosquito control drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday launched a two-day special mosquito control programme under the supervision of the DCC zonal executives instead of ward commissioners to ensure effectiveness of the drive.

Col Md Azizul Hoque, chief health officer of the DCC, yesterday said the city corporation is spraying larvicide routinely six days a week under the supervision of ward commissioners to eradicate mosquitoes in all the 10 zones identified as mosquito breeding points of the city including its 90 wards.

"But we have fixed Sundays and Wednesdays for spraying larvicide and adulticide under the zonal executive officers' supervision to make the programme much more fruitful," Hoque said.

As it is reported that the ward commissioners do not conduct the spraying one hour before sunset, the DCC has issued the order to run the spray at the recommended time, he added.

The special drive on the two particular days in a week will continue in all the 10 zones. State

Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammed Quamrul Islam inaugurated the programme at 3:00pm yesterday at Gulshan-2 Ward No. 19 under zone 9.

Acting Mayor MA Quaiyum, Hoque and Assistant Director of Dhaka Mosquito Control Department (under Rural Government Division) Farid Uddin Ahmed, among others, attended the programme.

Hoque said his department has sought approval to purchase about 200 new foggers to offset the shortfall in the number of such machines.

Ahmed hoped the special drive will make mosquito control programme effective as most points of the city will be sprayed during the two-day period.

Currently, there are 565 hand sprayers and about 350 foggers, five ultra low volume (ULV) spray machines and 45 wheel-mounted spray machines in working condition, while 500 hand sprayers, 290 foggers and 47 ULV machines are out of order, said a DCC official.