

Israel detains Palestinian prime minister

REUTERS, Ramallah
Israel seized Palestinian Deputy Prime Minister Naser al-Shaer, a top official of the Hamas militant group, at his home in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

Hours later, a Palestinian gunman killed an Israeli soldier in a drive-by shooting near the West Bank city of Nablus, the army and medics said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Israel has more than two dozen Hamas lawmakers and several other cabinet ministers in custody since late June, after it launched an offensive in response to the kidnapping of a soldier in a cross-border raid from the Gaza Strip.

Violence has continued in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since war broke out with Lebanese Hezbollah

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Israel kills 3 Hezbollah men in Lebanon raid

Lebanese PM accuses Tel Aviv of 'naked violation' of truce

AGENCIES, Beirut

Israeli aircraft and commandos raided a Hezbollah bastion in eastern Lebanon and killed three guerrillas yesterday in the first big attack since a truce halted Israel's 34-day war with the Shia Muslim group.

Lebanese PM Fouad Siniora has accused Israel of a "naked violation" of the five-day-old ceasefire, after a raid by Israeli commandos deep inside Lebanon.

The operation came hours after UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned of a "fragile" situation on the ground.

"It is a naked violation of the

cessation of hostilities declared by the Security Council," he told reporters.

He said a complaint had been made to visiting UN envoys about the operation.

Lebanese security sources said commandos in two vehicles unloaded from helicopters were on their way to attack an office of senior Hezbollah official Sheikh Mohammed Yazbek in the village of Bodai when they were spotted and intercepted.

Three Hezbollah fighters were killed and the Israeli force also suffered casualties before pulling out under the cover of fierce air

strikes, the sources said.

Hezbollah fighters battled Israeli commandos who landed near the militants' stronghold deep inside Lebanon early yesterday, killing one soldier, in the first apparent large-scale violation of the UN-brokered ceasefire between the sides.

Hezbollah said its guerrillas foiled the raid after a gunbattle, and the Israeli army said one soldier was killed and two were wounded, one seriously.

Witnesses said Israeli missiles destroyed a bridge during the raid,

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AL to observe grenade attack anniversary tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will observe a daylong programme tomorrow (August 21) as a mark of protest against the grenade attacks on its rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on this day in 2004 and to pay homage to those killed in the deadly attack.

The programme will begin through placing wreaths at the monument built in memory of the deceased on the Bangabandhu Avenue at 11:00am.

Road marches will start at 3:00pm from different parts of the capital towards Bangabandhu Avenue where a rally will be held.

The AL and its front organisations will also observe a

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China drought causes water shortage for 18m

REUTERS, Shanghai

Hot weather and a severe drought have left over 18 million people short of drinking water, damaged millions of hectares of cropland and reduced water supplies for millions of livestock, Xinhua news agency said yesterday.

The Sichuan basin, including the municipality of Chongqing in southwest China, is suffering its worst drought in over 50 years. Low rainfall and high temperatures have also hit a swath of central China.

By Thursday, 18 million people in fifteen Chinese provinces and regions were suffering drinking water shortages caused by the drought, according to Chinese Ministry of Water Resources. More than 130 million hectares of cropland and more than 17 million livestock were affected.

"The severe drought will not ease up and is very likely to get worse," Xinhua said, quoting a ministry statement.

Prayer Timing		
August 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zorh	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

This damaged minaret of Curzon Hall next to the department of physics of Dhaka University has been in this state for two years as the authorities concerned do not attempt to restore it.

Zawahri's son-in-law mastermind of airliner blow up plot

REUTERS, Islamabad

A son-in-law of al-Qaeda deputy Ayman al-Zawahri was the mastermind of a plot to blow up transatlantic airliners unearched in Britain this month, a Pakistani newspaper said on Saturday.

British police said on Aug. 10 they had foiled a major plot to carry out suicide bombings on aircraft bound for the United States and are questioning 23 suspects.

Pakistan said last week it had arrested seven people, including two British Muslims of Pakistani descent, in connection with the plot.

One of the arrested Britons was identified as Rashid Rauf and Pakistan said he was an al-Qaeda operative with links in Afghanistan

and was central to the plot. Pakistan's Dawn newspaper, citing what it described as credible sources, said a son-in-law of the fugitive Zawahri was the mastermind and was being hunted.

The newspaper did not identify the suspected mastermind but said Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, was known to have several sons-in-law.

Senior Pakistani security officials were not immediately available for comment.

Zawahri is believed to be hiding out along the Afghan-Pakistani border, in the area of the eastern Afghan province of Kunar and the Bajaur region in Pakistan.

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Makeshift sub-jail for arrested militants creates controversy

BISHAWJIT DAS, back from Chandpur

The government has declared a part of the second floor of Chandpur deputy commissioner's office as sub-jail to keep the top militants during trial, adding to the ongoing controversy on legal and security grounds about such a prison house in the capital.

The district election office is also under the same roof of the recently declared Chandpur sub-jail, while the district collector's office within 20 yards and the judge court right behind the building on the same premises.

The top militants, who will be taken there during their trial, will also have to share common toilet with the officials who work in the building and visiting people.

For the sub-jail, the authorities have engaged 'on attachment basis' a deputy jailer and a havildar working in the district jail.

Security of the sub-jail is questioned as one of its rooms has glass windows in two walls, a big open space adjacent to its eastern wall and it is visible from the adjacent buildings.

On October 3, Abul Hashem Bakaul, 60, was killed and five others including two lawyers were injured in bomb blast at a Chandpur court.

"They [militants] are kept in luxury. They will not be tried. They may even be released," Hashem's son Tuhin Bakaul said at his Chandpur residence yesterday.

"What is the use of keeping them alive? They will kill more people and make more women widows," said Hashem's wife weeping.

Meanwhile, Superintendent-in-charge of the district jail Abul Hasanat Humayun Kabir said, "Although a public place, it [sub-jail] is close to the court and Rab [Rapid Action Battalion] men will secure it."

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3 coalition troops killed in Afghanistan

AP, Kabul

Three US-led coalition soldiers were killed during a combat operation yesterday in eastern Afghanistan, a coalition spokesman said.

Col. Tom Collins said an unspecified number of coalition soldiers also were wounded in the operation in Pech district of Kunar province. He did not give the nationalities of the soldiers. Most members of the coalition operating in Kunar are American.

American forces are keeping up their hunt for Taliban fighters and extremists close to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, and in recent weeks have been pushing farther north along the remote mountains hugging the Pakistani border.

Saturday's attack follows an Aug. 11 ambush by militants firing rocket-propelled grenades who killed three U.S. soldiers on patrol in Nuristan province, which lies north of Kunar.

Another coalition soldier was killed and another wounded in an ambush Thursday on their patrol near Asad Abad, the capital of Kunar.



PHOTO: STAR

A box-culvert is being constructed near Zia Sarani at Shyampur in the capital. The culvert is being built to help better drainage of sewage and rainwater from the city to the Buriganga.

Hasina accuses PM, Zia of complicity in Bangabandhu killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her accusation against Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her late husband Ziaur Rahman that they had been complicit in the killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15 in 1975.

She also harshly criticised the prime minister for celebrating August 15 as her birthday and alluded that the date might be false and an acknowledgement to the

killers.

Hasina, also president of the main opposition Awami League (AL), was addressing the discussion marking National Mourning Day (August 15) organised by Peshajibi Samannoy Parishad, a platform for different professionals, in the auditorium of Institution of Diploma Engineers in the capital. Parishad Convener Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud chaired the discussion.

Hasina burst into tears while recalling her father, mother, brothers and other relatives who had been assassinated on August 15,

1975. She said the August 15 massacre dwarfs the massacre in Karbala.

The AL chief, who is the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, said late president Ziaur Rahman allowed indemnity to the killers of Bangabandhu to save them, a stance his wife the prime minister is maintaining and for this reason she has chosen August 15 to celebrate her birthday.

The prime minister's 'patronisation of the killers' raise questions about her respect for the

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Rift in Khulna BNP, Lobi's men occupy party office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Lawmaker Ali Asghar Lobi and Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman's faction of Khulna BNP occupied the party office in the city yesterday morning, obstructing their rivals to enter the office.

The faction of Nurul Islam MP and former secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju tried to march towards the office thrice but the activists of Lobi-mayor faction obstructed them on each occasion.

The Nurul-Manju faction also announced agitation programmes for August 20-23 in protest against Friday's decision of its convening committee ostracising Whip Ashraf Hossain MP and expelling Manju, UNB reports.

Manju said he rejected the expulsion notice served upon him

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'Criminal' hurt in bomb explosion

UNB, Savar

An identified criminal was critically injured in an explosion when he along with his accomplices was making bombs in Uttarpara village in Dhamrai upazila early yesterday.

The criminal, Rezaul Karim Kazal, 20, was rushed to Enam Medical College Hospital at Savar where doctors operated upon him. He is now in intensive care unit.

Villagers said Kazal and some of his associates were making bombs in a garden.

Dhamrai police confirmed the incident but said the incident took place within the jurisdiction of adjacent Mirzapur Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

A lid-less manhole in front of Matsha Bhaban in the city puts vehicles, especially smaller ones, in danger of accidents. Drivers swerve around the hole to avoid it at the last moment as they cannot see it at night during power outage.