

**Tax holiday to continue**  
NBR chief says after meeting with IMF team

UNB, Dhaka

National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman M Abdul Karim has said tax exemptions and tax holiday will continue although International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are repeatedly pressing for the withdrawal of these.

"We will do it by ourselves when we think the time has come for such withdrawal," he said after a meeting with a visiting IMF delegation at his office yesterday. IMF Advisor for Asia Pacific Department Thomas Rumbaugh led the delegation.

The NBR chairman said tax exemptions and tax holiday are offered for the national interest and welfare of the local industries.

He indicated that the government would withdraw tax exemptions and tax holiday gradually when "we will find a particular sector has become self-reliant."

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**Swachhasebak League leader shot dead**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants gunned down a ward unit leader of Swachhasebak League at East Badda in the capital yesterday.

Yusuf Khan, 25, was the president of Badda ward No 3 unit of Swachhasebak League.

Locals said a gang of three to four youths came and one of them shot Yusuf in the chest once while he was talking with two other people some 20 yards off his sister's house at Post Office Goli at around 10:20am.

"Bullet-hit, Yusuf ran to our sister's house where he collapsed," said the victim's elder brother MA Gani. Relatives and locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) immediately, but he died on the way, he added.

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**NAGORIK COMMITTEE**  
Regional dialogue tomorrow at Narayanganj

STAR REPORT

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel i will jointly organise their last regional dialogue on "National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development" tomorrow at Narayanganj.

Eminent academics and professionals, development and cultural activists, public representatives and political leaders and other civil society representatives of Narayanganj will speak at the dialogue, says a CPD press release.

The members of the 'Nagorik Committee 2006' who are preparing a Vision Paper for Bangladesh will also be present in the meeting.

**US hands over army control to Iraq**

39 killed in attacks, 27 convicted 'terrorists' hanged

AFP, Baghdad

Insurgents killed at least 39 Iraqis on Thursday as a wave of car bombings in the capital marked the day when the embattled Baghdad government began to take command of its own armed forces.

Meanwhile, as lawmakers debated a controversial law which could see the country divided into rival regions, gunmen kidnapped a nephew of parliament's hardline Sunni Arab speaker, who opposes the break-up.

Two more American soldiers also died, the US military said, bringing the week's coalition fatalities to 17.

The latest violence came as Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki signed an accord with US commander General George Casey to begin taking back control of Iraq's armed forces, which had hitherto come under US command.

The handover gave Maliki operational control of Iraq's fledgling air force and navy, and began the process of putting the army's 10 divisions under a newly-created joint headquarters, independent of US control.

"It's a great step and a great day in Iraqi history," Maliki said.

"The new Iraqi army is being built by the courage of its sons, who will dedicate their lives to protect their citizenry, and today the new Iraqi army has been rebuilt on values other than sectarianism," he added.

Nevertheless, Thursday's signing ceremony only marked the

beginning of the handover process. The 8th Iraqi Army Division, stationed in Najaf, will come under Iraqi command, with two more divisions added every month afterwards.

"From today Iraqi military operations will be increasingly conceived and led by Iraqi forces. It marks a milestone in the relentless journey of Iraqi forces, a study in courage, perseverance and the values of Iraq," Casey said.

He added, however, that America's troops would not head home soon.

"We will continue to fight with you to protect the Iraqi people, wherever they are threatened," he said. "We still have a long way to go."

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**Polls to be held in time**  
Says Khaleda

UNB, Keraniganj

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated that the upcoming general elections would be held in time under a caretaker government.

She categorically said the chief adviser of the caretaker government will be appointed as per provision of the constitution.

The prime minister's observations apparently came in response to the Awami League-led opposition's demand for reforms of the caretaker government system and the Election Commission.

Addressing a public meeting at Kadamtali on the southern outskirts of the capital, Khaleda, also the chairperson of the ruling BNP, said the opposition is trying to foil the polls to create anarchy and mislead the people, sensing no chances of winning the next elections.

"But the people are united in favour of politics of democracy, peace and development, and they

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PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Agitating jute mill workers set fire to tyres on a road at Khalishpur in Khulna yesterday following clashes with the law enforcers. The clash ensued when they brought out a procession demanding arrears.

**34 Bangladeshi crew rescued**  
by Lankan navy

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's navy rescued 34 Bangladeshi nationals yesterday who were aboard a crippled merchant vessel that sank off the island's southern coast, officials said.

The cargo carrier, MV Annet Sha, was being towed by a tugboat when it sank in rough weather off the coast of Koggala, said an official at the Colombo Radio rescue coordinating centre said.

A navy spokesman said the vessel ran into difficulty and was being towed to the port of Galle, 112 kilometres (72 miles) south of here, when its hull broke.

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**1 killed, 100 hurt in cop-workers clash**  
Khalishpur industrial belt in Khulna turns battlefield

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One person was killed and over 100 others were injured, 14 of them severely, in clashes between law enforcers and unruly jute mill workers at Khalishpur in the city yesterday.

The dead, Mohammad Hanif, 30, was a casual worker of Eastern Jute Mills of Atra industrial belt of the city.

The injured include 14 police personnel and General Secretary of Khulna Union of Journalists Sarwar Ahmed Kajol, who is also a

staff photographer of the Dainik Purbanchal.

Police cordoned off Khulna Medical College Hospital where worker Hanif succumbed to his head injuries at around 3:00pm.

As the death news spread, the entire industrial belt became tense and jute mill workers started angry demonstrations.

Police lobbed a large number of teargas shells and fired rubber bullets in the air to disperse unruly

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**Injured Saber may be flown to S'pore today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, is likely to be flown to Singapore today if his physicians allow, family sources said.

Saber is out of risk now but his condition is still critical due to internal bleeding, the physicians told reporters yesterday.

Hospital sources said blood clots have formed in the lower abdomen of the Awami League (AL) leader, who is still unable to sit or talk.

Police attacked Saber at Russell Square in Dhanmondi during the opposition's EC siege programme

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PHOTO: STAR

Demonstrators hold placards with cartoons mocking the government's failure to contain price hike of essentials at Muktangan in Dhaka yesterday. The demonstration was organised by 14-party opposition combine.

**Govt given Sept 18 deadline for reforms**  
Opposition threatens topple-govt agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The city unit of the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine at a rally yesterday demanded that the alliance government accept the proposed electoral reforms by September 18, and warned of a one-point agitation to topple the government if it fails to do so.

The rally was held to mark the 'day against torture', and protest police atrocities on opposition leaders and workers during the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat siege programme on Wednesday, leaving around 100 leaders and workers including AL

chief Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury injured.

Meanwhile, Hasina sat last night with senior party leaders to discuss the final round of anti-government agitation.

Asked prior to the meeting if it would decide on one-point agitation to dislodge the government, AL Presidium Member Kazi Zafarullah said they would discuss the overall political situation in the country.

Zafarullah, a close aide to

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**Israel starts to lift Lebanon blockade**

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel said it started to lift its eight-week air and sea blockade of Lebanon at 1500 GMT yesterday, three weeks after a ceasefire brought an end to its offensive against Hezbollah.

"It's now six o'clock, the blockade is being lifted," foreign ministry spokesman Marc Regev told AFP.

A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office, Miri Eisin, said that the lifting would involve a "gradual handing over of control of Lebanese maritime territory" to UN forces.

Israel had begun to coordinate with UN troops in Lebanon on the lifting of the restrictions 24 hours earlier, she said.

Israel was ending its punishing

eight-week blockade of Lebanon amid intense international efforts to ensure a ceasefire holds between Israel and the Shia Muslim militant group Hezbollah.

Israel announced it had begun to lift its air and sea blockade at 1500 GMT after receiving assurances that international peacekeeping forces stationed in Lebanon would enforce an arms embargo against the Syrian-backed Hezbollah.

However it said it reserved the right to attack suspected Hezbollah arms convoys on the Lebanon-Syria border.

And a flight by the Lebanese national carrier Middle East Airlines touched down on the dot

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PHOTO: STAR

Buddhist community yesterday celebrated Modhu Purnima, a religious festival, at Dharmarajik Bouddha Mahabihar at Kamalapur in the capital.

**NOTICE**

সিপিডি প্রথম প্রাপ্তি The Daily Star চ্যানেল আই

আজকের নির্বাচন ২০০৭ জবাবদিগির উদ্বল প্রকৌমারী সুলীল কবাজের উদ্বোধন

Channel i will telecast a special programme today at 5:30pm on "Regional Dialogue on National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development" organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue, The Daily Star, Prothom Alo and Channel i in Tangail on September 2.

**Prayer Timing**  
September 8

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

