

# Israeli forces destroy bldgs at Arafat HQ

REUTERS, Ramallah

Israeli troops raided Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's compound early yesterday, bulldozing buildings damaged in a similar action last week, Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo and local residents said.

Abed Rabbo said Arafat was in the compound but was safe. Israel has repeatedly said it does not intend to harm the Palestinian leader.

"Arafat is inside the compound and he is unhurt," Abed Rabbo told Reuters.

Israeli tanks stormed Ramallah and encircled the Arafat headquarters at about 3:30 am local time. A Palestinian was shot dead during the operation.

Residents said at least two dozen tanks, armoured personnel carriers and jeeps thrust into the West Bank city from several directions shortly before dawn yesterday covered Apache by helicopters hovering overhead and bursts of machinegun fire. They said the firing stopped once they entered the city.

"Tanks entered Ramallah from all sides. They reoccupied Ramallah and al-Bireh and now they are besieging Arafat's compound," Abed Rabbo told al-Jazeera television earlier.

An Israeli military source confirmed there was an operation underway in Ramallah and said it was aimed at "arresting militants and destroying the terror infrastructure".

"Forces have been operating in the city since the early hours, carrying out searches and arrests. Until now, nine wanted Palestinians have

been arrested and weapons have been seized," an army spokeswoman said.

An Israeli military source said the army had not entered Arafat's compound and was only surrounding it as a preventative measure.

"We have not entered the Muqata, we have only encircled it in order to prevent terrorists from escaping there," the source added.

Israeli forces raided Arafat's compound last Thursday after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 17 people in northern Israel.

In the Gaza Strip, more than 30 Palestinians were injured when a violent blast rocked Jabalya refugee camp, destroying a three-storey house. The cause was not immediately clear.

The offensive came after the

Palestinian Authority unveiled the first of a string of political reforms aimed at countering growing criticism, with Sharon in Washington seeking US support to dump Arafat as a negotiating partner.

Palestinian information minister Yasser Abed Rabbo announced that the cabinet would be cut from 31 to 21 ministers, including for the first

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Israeli armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and a jeep take position near the destroyed Palestinian Authority headquarters (back) in the West Bank city of Ramallah yesterday.

## Cabinet okays proposals Bodies soon to review govt expenditure, revenue reform

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday approved proposals for the formation of two commissions for reviewing government expenditure and revenue reforms.

An official announcement said the cabinet in a meeting at the PM office endorsed proposals for setting up the Government Expenditure Review Commission and the Government Revenue Reforms Commission.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting of the council of ministers that also approved another proposal for ratification of the SAARC convention on "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children".

Besides, the cabinet approved the proposals for endorsing SOLAS Protocol 1988, Load Line Protocol 1988 and MARPOL Convention.

## Students lock administrative building of Gazipur BIT

UNB, Gazipur

Classes of the local Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) remained suspended for last two days as some students put the administrative building under lock and key.

Campus sources said nine students of Mechanical Department became unsuccessful in the final year examination.

The failed students met the concerned teachers and demanded pass mark after publishing the results on Saturday.

As the teachers did not comply with their demand, they hurled abuses at the teachers and threw bricks on the teachers' residences Sunday.

Meanwhile, teachers' council at a meeting demanded punishment to the students responsible for campus impasse.

## One killed as dacoits fire on villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

One person was killed and two others were injured with bullets when a gang of dacoits opened fire on the villagers at village Habirabari in Baluka upazila at midnight on Sunday.

Police said the dacoits attacked five houses at the village and started looting valuables.

As inmates of the houses tried to resist the gang members, they (dacoits) opened fire, leaving three persons, Ruhul Amin, Ashraf and Rafiq, injured.

Of them, Ruhul Amin succumbed to his injuries on way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Ashraf and Rafiq are now under going treatment at MMCH.



PHOTO: STAR

BUET teachers took out a procession from the campus yesterday and later submitted a memorandum to the prime minister demanding trial of the killers of Sadequunnahar Sony, a female student of the university.

## BUET students call indefinite strike, teachers protest killing

Culprits behind Saturday's shootout yet to be nabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) yesterday called an indefinite strike on the campus to press home their five-point demands.

Among the demands are expulsions of all criminals responsible for Saturday's shootout that left a female student of BUET killed and immediate resignation of the BUET vice-chancellor.

The announcement of the strike came at a press conference of general students at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Agitating students vowed that they would not attend

classes and push ahead with the strike until their demands are met.

Also, the students will gather at the Central Shaheed Minar at 9:30am today and bring out a procession.

The strike coincides with the nearly month-long closure of BUET, announced by its authorities on Sunday amid mounting tension arising from Saturday's gunfight. The move for closure came after agitating students vandalised and set fire to the rooms of JCD leader Mokammel Hayat Muki and his supporters at Rashid and Ahsannullah halls at BUET.

Sabequn Nahar Sony, a second

year student at the Department of Chemical Engineering, BUET, died in crossfire during a gunfight between two factions of the ruling BNP-backed Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) over capture of a BUET tender.

Joint Secretary of the suspended central committee of the JCD Benazir Tiku and Tagar led the Dhaka University-based gang, while JCD's central Assistant Organising Secretary Mokammel Hayat Muki led the BUET-based group in the

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## Preliminary probe Bad weather, pilot's inexperience blamed for Cessna crash

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Investigators have primarily blamed bad weather and inexperience of the pilot for the crash of training flight of Air Parabat Flying Academy Friday, sources said.

The investigation committee yesterday examined evidences gathered at the crash site and discussed possible reasons behind the incident.

"We are yet to determine the cause of the crash but according to our primary investigation bad weather and lack of the experience of the pilot was responsible for the crash," one source close to the investigation committee told The Daily Star.

An aviation expert said it has been confirmed at the crash site that the accident occurred due to bad weather and inexperience of the pilot, who got his solo license just a few days back.

"An inexperienced pilot should not have been allowed to fly solo in this season when the gusty wind can suddenly blow at a speed of over 40 nautical miles, the safety level," said the expert, who asked not to be named.

He said the inexperienced pilot became nervous about the gusty wind and could not land.

Another expert said the country's weather has become unpredictable, rather risky for flying small aircraft like Cessna in this season. "But there was no fault in the training procedures and the aircraft," he added.

The expert said the pilot was asked to land by the air traffic control tower

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## 29m in country have no access to safe drinking water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 29 million people in Bangladesh presently do not have access to safe drinking water as they drink water with arsenic in excess of the permissible level.

A workshop in the city yesterday revealed this. The discovery of widespread arsenic contamination in groundwater has dwarfed the commendable success that Bangladesh has achieved in the water supply sector. It has lowered the safe drinking water coverage to only 74 per cent from 95 per cent of the population.

However, people should not get terrified since deep tube-wells are least likely to be affected by arsenic in contrast to the shallow ones, said S.M.A. Muslim, chief engineer of the Department of Public Health and Engineering.

"We are even planning to seek technological assistance from Japan to ensure that deep level of underground water does not get affected by the arsenic-contaminated water of shallow level," he added.

The workshop was arranged by the Bangladesh chapter of an international organisation styled Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) to present its position paper.

The position paper prepared by members of the WSSCC Bangladesh aims to draw the government and other organisations into ensuring safe water supply and proper sanitation to the poor. Shafiqul Azam Ahmed, water and sanitation specialist of the World Bank, presented the paper.

The paper focused on sanitation coverage and stated that only about 40 per cent households in the country have any kinds of sanitary latrines. The

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## Oil spill from vessels posing threat to Sundarbans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Oil spill from cargo vessels plying in the coastal belt is posing a potential threat to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a World Heritage Site.

This was stated by experts at a workshop in the city yesterday.

The workshop on 'Oil Spill Impact and Resource Management

Programme', held at a hotel, was jointly organised by the Mongla Port Authority and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

They said that without proper management, monitoring and risk assessment, carrying of oil and chemical products through the Sundarbans Reserved Forests (SRF) is a serious threat to the ecosystem, which is leading to possible destruction of species and the habitat in the region.

The extensive mangrove areas of the Sundarbans are highly sensitive to pollution, which may cause erosion and major changes in the sediment. This may change navigational conditions and reduce the scope for rehabilitation of the area, they said.

Shipping Minister Lt Col (rd) Akbar Hossain, BP who inaugurated the workshop said facilities for dumping waste oil from cargo vessels will be developed in the ports after ratifying the international convention on Marine Pollution

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
June 11		6-46 pm
June 12	5-10 am	

Prayer Timings		
June 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-49	6-54
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation