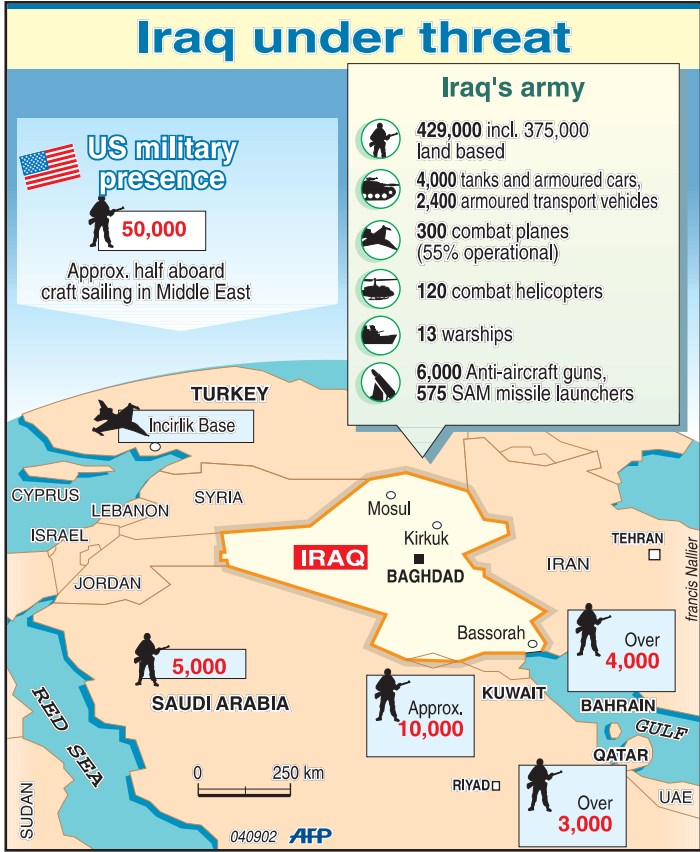


## US, British jets pound Iraqi air defence site

100 aircraft join single biggest operation after Gulf War



AFP, London

About 100 US and British aircraft took part in an attack on a major Iraqi air defence installation, in the biggest single operation over the country for four years, the Daily Telegraph reported yesterday.

The raid on Thursday appeared to be a prelude to possible special forces operations before any US-led war on Iraq, which Washington accuses of developing weapons of mass destruction, the British daily said.

The aim seemed to be the removal of air defences to allow easy access for special forces helicopters to fly into Iraq via Jordan or Saudi Arabia to hunt down Scud missiles before a possible war within the next few months, the Telegraph reported.

Twelve warplanes dropped precision guided bombs in the raid, but scores of other support aircraft also took part, the paper said, adding that it was the first time a target in western Iraq had been attacked during air patrols of the southern no-fly zone.

The US military said in a statement Thursday that US and British warplanes bombed "an air defence command and control facility at a military airfield 380 kilometers west and slightly south of Baghdad" in response to "recent Iraqi hostile acts".

Meanwhile, an Iraqi military spokesman said that US and British warplanes had bombed civilian installations southwest of Baghdad, without causing any casualties.

The fighter jets flew back to their bases in Kuwait after coming under Iraqi anti-aircraft missile fire, the spokesman added.

Iraq does not recognise the air exclusion zones over its north and south which Britain and the United States have enforced since the end of the 1991 Gulf War, following failed uprisings in those regions by the country's Shiite and Kurdish minorities.

The zones are not sanctioned by any UN resolution and Iraq says almost 1,500 Iraqis have been killed as a result of the flights since 1991.

Iraqi authorities withheld comment yesterday on the US-British said. Officials kept silent and the state press limited itself to carrying a

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PHOTO: STAR

Seventeenth President Iajuddin Ahmed (middle) flanked by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury poses for photographs after his swearing-in at the Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban yesterday.

## Iajuddin was hand-picked by Khaleda New president vows to protect Constitution

REZAUL KARIM

The selection of Prof. Iajuddin Ahmed for the presidency has surprised many including the ruling BNP's frontline leaders.

By no stretch of imagination could anyone anticipate before Tuesday night that the former Dhaka University professor would be picked to run for the office.

It was Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, also the BNP chairperson, who named Prof. Iajuddin Ahmed as the party's presidential nominee, ending more than two months' debate about who should become the country's 18th president, a highly placed source in the BNP said.

As the BNP finally decided to pick its candidate from outside the party fold, names of Prof. Moniruzzaman Miah and Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed, former vice-chancellors of Dhaka University, were talked about most.

Surprisingly though, Khaleda proposed Prof. Ahmed's name, and the conflicting groups of the BNP endorsed the proposal at a meeting of the Standing Committee, the

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor Iajuddin Ahmed was sworn-in as the 17th President of the country at a simple ceremony at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban yesterday evening.

Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury administered the oath to the new President at 7:40pm.

The Election Commission on Thursday declared Prof Iajuddin Ahmed elected President unopposed.

He was a nominee of the BNP-led four-party alliance government which took over after the national election on October 1 last year.

Prof Ahmed succeeded Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury who resigned on June 21 after a resolution of the BNP Parliamentary Party urged him to quit office.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Acting President and Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Jamiruddin Sircar, former presi-

dent Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, council of ministers, former chief advisor to caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman, former advisors to caretaker governments, MPs, diplomats, politicians, judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court, chiefs of the three services, high civil and military officials, journalists, national award winners

and the elite of the city.

There was no sitting arrangement for Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina.

None from opposition AL and left parties attended the ceremony.

Former Presidents Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Abdur Rahman Biswas were not seen.

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## Submarine cable Dhaka to join Paris meet next month

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will join the Paris meet on Submarine cable in October along with representatives of 12 other countries of the consortium formed in this regard to discuss its next phase of activities.

Talking to the news agency yesterday, Minister for Post and Telecommunications Barnister M Aminul Huq said the consortium members, who signed an agreement to that effect in Bali Indonesia Wednesday last, will discuss their next phase of actions.

"They will also discuss the overall activities of Submarine cable in the French capital," he said describing

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## A handful of students out to disrupt peace: BUET VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) yesterday said "a handful of students" are trying to disrupt academic atmosphere on the campus by creating untoward incidents in the name of so-called hunger strike.

Their activities are "illogical and irrational", Prof Mohammad Ali Murtaza told a press conference at the BUET Council Hall.

"We are concerned about their (students) health condition". The Vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Medical University has been requested to form a medical board to take care of the students, he said.

BUET teachers Dr. Shorab

Uddin Ahmed, Dr. AKM Anwarul Haq, Dr. Mohammad Jainal Abedin, Dr. Mohammad Abdul Halim, Dr. Nijamuddin Ahmed, Dr. Mohar Ali Bepari also spoke at the press conference.

They urged the students to call off their hunger strike and join classes. They also said the BUET Teachers Association have urged other university teachers, guardians of the students and people concerned to help the BUET authorities maintain academic atmosphere on the campus.

The VC said the president and the secretary of BUET Teachers' Association and other teachers met the students and requested them to call off their hunger strike and attend classes.

He said he along with a team of teachers met the students on Wednesday and assured them that their demands would be met. He met the students after his meeting with the education minister.

He said the charge sheet in Sabegun Nahar Sony murder case will be submitted shortly and it will be tried under the Speedy Trial Act.

A committee will be formed shortly to review the BUET Ordinance of 61.

They said disciplinary actions against most of the 23 students are yet to be enforced and their applications are awaiting consideration by the BUET Academic Council.

The 23 students were accused on the basis of inquiry committee

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## Charge sheet in Chhabi Rani assault case on Sept 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Charge sheet in Chhabi Rani Mondal assault case will be submitted to the court on September 22, said OC of Rampal thana.

Police arrested three out of 15 FIR-named accused while others are still at large. Movable property of the absconding accused have been attached on court order.

Chhabi Rani Mondal was abducted on August 21 and taken to Rampal BNP office. She was beaten up by BNP activists as mentioned in the FIR recorded with Rampal thana three days after the incident.

## Another boy killed after abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yet another incident of killing of a minor boy has taken place in the city.

Six-year-old Omar Sani was abducted and strangled by his 18-year-old neighbour Kkhokon on Thursday night to avenge refusal of a proposal to marry his sister.

The incident took place at Narda in Gulshan area. Rickshaw-van-puller Khokon picked up Sani from the lane near their house at Narda Sardar Bari at about 9:30 pm Thursday. He took the child to a nearby under-construction building, strangled him and dumped the body into the water reservoir of the building. Sani is the son of one Amir Ali.

Not finding him, Sani's family searched all probable places all the night. In the morning, one neighbor told them that he saw Khokon taking Sani from near their house.

Local people then called Khokon and started questioning him. At last he confessed killing Sani and dumping the body into the water reservoir.

People went to the spot and found the body. On information, Gulshan police recovered the body at about 5 pm yesterday.

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Omar Sani

## BMA polls Hadi-Zahid panel leading in all centres

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pro-BNP Hadi-Zahid panel contesting the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) election is leading in all 65 centres across the country except in Chandpur.

According to the latest information received from the districts yesterday, the Hadi-Zahid panel nominated by the Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), has unofficially won the elections in 63 districts where vote count has been completed.

In the central BMA office where more than 4700 votes were cast Thursday, the Hadi-Zahid panel was also leading by a huge margin.

None of the candidates from the rival pro-Awami League Ruhul-Kamrul panel could secure any post

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## Rejoinder

In a rejoinder to the report headlined "Wheat Scam: More Names" published on August 29 in The Daily Star, Senior Information Officer of the civil aviation ministry AK Saleh Ahmed said:

"It is not fact" that the civil aviation secretary "kept the journalists of leading national dailies waiting for three hours before eventually denying them access to his Secretariat office".

"The fact is that the said journalists waited on their own to meet the secretary even after they were repeatedly told that since the visitors did not have an appointment and because of excessive preoccupation it will not be possible for (the) secretary to meet them on the day."

"In spite of this, the visitors kept on ignoring the requests of the staff on duty.

"It is not a fact" that the secretary hinted at "any pressure on him from any quarter and that he refused to talk to the press".

"The visitors were repeatedly told that the secretary was unable to admit any visitors on the day."

## Attempt on Karzai's life 18 detained, Taliban blamed



Hamid Karzai

AFP, Kabul

Afghan security forces arrested 18 people yesterday in the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar following the foiled attempt to kill President Hamid Karzai, as the death toll from a huge car bomb in Kabul rose to 26.

Kandahar governor Gul Agha's spokesman said the attack on Karzai on Thursday, during which the would-be assassin was killed, was believed to have been carried out by supporters of the ousted Islamic fundamentalist regime.

"We think it is the work of the Taliban. We cannot say any more since a criminal investigation is taking place," spokesman Khalid Pashtun told the wire service.

He said that among the 18 taken into custody was commander Sayed Rasoul, who had been in charge of security at the entrance of Agha's former headquarters, where the attack took place. Agha moved out of the building around two months ago during reconstruction work.

"Rasoul with 17 of his men have been arrested and are in jail right now," Pashtun said.

The gunman, Abdul Rehman, who was shot dead by US Special Forces after firing at Karzai's motorcade, came from the neighbouring province of Helmand where sympathy for the Taliban remains strong, he said.

Officials said the Kabul car bomb

could be the work of the Taliban, their al-Qaida allies and followers of the renegade former Afghan prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

"Broadly speaking we believe it is the alliance Gulbuddin, Taliban and al-Qaida. It is a matter of time to find out the specifics," said Amanullah Saleh, a director of the National Directorate of Security (NDS).

Kabul police chief Basir Salangi told AFP there had been no arrests and the search for the owner of the car was continuing.

Karzai himself flew back to the capital on a US C-130 plane early yesterday, hours after a gunman pumped bullets into his motorcade,

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