

4 US soldiers killed in Baghdad attacks

6 Iraqis die in mosque blast



PHOTO: AFP

Youths kick a burnt-out military vehicle in Iraq yesterday. Two US soldiers were injured when their military vehicle plunged into a gully south of Baghdad, while bystanders set fire to a second vehicle (pictured) that came to its aid.

AFP, Baghdad

Four US soldiers were reportedly killed in Baghdad yesterday, with attacks on coalition forces showing no sign of letting up, as a series of unexplained blasts overnight left six Iraqis dead.

The US military was unable to confirm the reported rocket-propelled grenade attack in central Baghdad which witnesses said killed four soldiers and two wounded two.

US forces also faced claims that the explosions at a mosque in the flashpoint town of Fallujah west of the capital, were caused by its missiles. A coalition official was unable to confirm the cause, saying only that the military was still investigating the incident.

US troops in Fallujah again came under fire at dawn Tuesday, in the fifth consecutive day of anti-US strikes in the town, while a military vehicle was burned out by opportunistic attackers in Yusufiyeh, south of Baghdad.

The string of attacks followed the twin embarrassments on Monday of

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BNP leader gunned down, mother, trader hurt in Sutrapur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants gunned down a ward level Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader and injured his mother and a trader at Goalghat in Sutrapur yesterday.

Muktar Hossain, 33, the youth affairs secretary of ward 74, was shot by a 10-member gang when he was returning home from Baitul Noor Mosque after Asr prayers at 5:15pm.

The gang, wearing caps, chased and fired at him on the street. One of the bullets hit Amin Hossain, a trader who was also returning after his prayers, in his right hip.

However, Muktar managed to reach home. His mother Anwara tried to close the door but gunshots continued, one hitting her in right thigh.

Seven bullets hit Muktar's chest, shoulder and hand. Fatally injured Muktar was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

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300 prisoners on hunger strike at Jessore Central Jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

About 300 inmates at the Jessore Central Jail began hunger strike on Monday to press home their four-point demand.

The demands include permission for smoking, supply of improved diet and removal of the jailer Zahiruddin Babar.

The authorities have beefed up security in and outside the jail by deploying additional forces.

The jail authorities yesterday held a meeting with the deputy commissioner to discuss the problem arising out of the strike instigated allegedly by a group of outlaws now in the jail.

When contacted, the DC said that it was not possible to allow smoking inside the jail.

Promotion of deputy secretaries hangs in balance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Uncertainty hangs over promotion to joint secretary in the civil administration, although over 100 deputy secretaries became eligible for elevation a couple of years ago.

The Superior Selection Board (SSB) will discuss various administrative issues at a meeting today, but the issue of promotion has not been included in the agenda, said sources.

Flood situation dips in 17 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Flood situation in 17 districts deteriorated yesterday due to continued rains and onrush of water from the upstream, affecting several lakh people.

The districts are Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulavibazar, Habiganj, Comilla, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachhari, Rangamati, Feni, Noakhali, Chittagong, Bandarban, Gaibandha, Sherpur, Tangail, Netrokona and Jamalpur.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday allocated 1,300 tonnes of rice for the flood-hit people in those districts.

The Flood Forecasting Centre said the flash flood situation in the Meghna and the South Eastern Hill basins, especially in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulavibazar, Habiganj, Netrakona, Khagrachhari and Cox's Bazar might worsen. The rivers in these basins rose at almost all the points.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Ganges-Padma continued to rise at all points and the other rivers in the two basins at most of the points.

Water level at 49 of the 85 monitoring points on the rivers rose yesterday, fell at 16 points, remained steady at one point and crossed danger level at other points.

Our Netrokona correspondent reported that about two lakh people in seven upazila of the district were marooned as food waters submerged fresh areas yesterday.

Six out of seven unions of Durgapur upazila and as many unions of Kalmakanda upazila along with vast areas of Khaliaguri, Madan Mohanganj Atpara and Bahatta upazila have gone under five to six feet water.

About 500 thatched houses were washed away by rushing water.

Missing pistol not Niazi's

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

It is official now. The pistol that disappeared from the Indian National Museum here is not that of Pakistani General AKA Niazi.

Lt Gen T S Shergill, commandant of Indian Military Academy (IMA) in Dehra Dun, said the weapon Niazi surrendered to Lt Gen (ret'd) Jagjit Singh Aurora, who had led the Indian forces during Bangladesh's War of Independence, in Dhaka was a revolver which is safe in IMA museum.

Gen Shergill displayed to the media in Dehra Dun the revolver and a photograph of its surrender by Niazi to Aurora and said the weapon

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Blue kerosene introduced to curb adulteration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) yesterday introduced blue-coloured kerosene throughout the country in an effort to curb adulteration of the widely used fuel, BPC officials said.

Except for the BPC's three depots that do not supply kerosene -- one at Brahmanbaria and two others at Dhaka and Chittagong airports -- all 20 other BPC depots across the country have been supplied with the coloured fuel, said the officials.

A section of businessmen have

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 02		6-50 pm
July 03	5-15 am	

Prayer Timings		
July 02		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

AL's JS boycott likely to drag on

No dialogue in sight

REAZ AHMAD

The parliamentary stalemate due to the main opposition Awami League's (AL) indefinite boycott of the House is unlikely to end soon with no sign of a change in the AL stance.

The AL stayed out of parliament on June 12 when the national budget for the current fiscal was placed and also on June 30 when it was passed. Lawmakers of the party went to the House on nine working days and staged six walk-outs.

With no sign of a dialogue between the treasury bench and the opposition to end the impasse yet in sight, the AL has chalked out some organisational programmes coinciding with the resumption of the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) session on July 5 after a four-day respite.

The party that started its indefinite boycott of parliament on June 26 has decided to observe 'protest day' across the country on July 4 for 'not allowing' its lawmakers to speak in the House and 'investives' against party chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina. Hasina will begin a tour of

the northern districts on July 5.

The current budget session of the JS witnessed passage of the supplementary budget for fiscal 2002-03 on June 17, the budget for 2003-04 on June 30 and tabling of several important bills during 16 working days so far.

The House would first take up a number of bills for passage this time. The remaining parliamentary standing committees are likely to be formed in the last 10 working days of the current session that ends on July 15.

The bills waiting for passage include The Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2002, The Speaker and Deputy Speaker's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2002, The Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2002, The Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2003, Prevention of Women and Children Repression

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ETV equipment: HC asks govt to explain

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to show cause within two weeks why the equipment of ETV should not be returned to its owner.

The government seized ETV's satellite communication equipment including SNG following a Supreme Court verdict that declared illegal its licence for terrestrial transmission on August 29 last year.

The rule came upon a writ filed by Abdus Salam, Chairman of the

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Govt to return licensed arms to owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A government handout yesterday said the deputy commissioners (DC) have been asked to return licensed firearms and ammunition deposited during Nov 5-21 last year to their owners.

Specific guidelines to the DCs have been given to return the firearms, the handout added.

Out of total 1,89,000 licensed firearms, 36,000 were deposited following a government order in Novembers last year.



PHOTO: STAR

Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and activists stage a rally blocking the road in front of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque in violation of the law yesterday.