



Doctors of Marie Stopes mobile clinic take a look at a sick baby on his mother's left hip in front of the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial at Rayerbazar in the capital yesterday.

Iraq offers amnesty to insurgents for a month

Iraqi PM invites Sadr to run for elections, 4 more US soldiers, several Iraqis killed in fighting

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's amnesty provisions for people involved on the margins of the country's continued insurgency were signed into law yesterday, interim Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi told a Baghdad news conference.

Iraq's prime minister also invited renegade Shia Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr to run in the country's first democratic elections in decades, as sporadic clashes rumbled on between US troops and his militiamen yesterday.

"Today I have signed the amnesty law and this law is directed against individuals who have committed minor crimes and who have not yet been apprehended or prosecuted," Allawi said.

The one-month amnesty covers people who possess or who have

dealt in light arms, possess explosive devices or materials and those who have shielded individuals or groups who are planning or financing terrorists, he added.

The law, approved by Allawi's cabinet and due to have been announced last month, would "allow citizens to rejoin civil society... instead of wasting their lives pointlessly towards a lost cause," the prime minister said.

Extending an olive branch, after US troops and Iraqi security forces had pounded Sadr's Mehdi Army for two days in the holy city of Najaf and Baghdad, Iyad Allawi invited the fiery cleric to stand for election.

The prime minister's US-backed interim government is due to disband when Iraq holds polls scheduled for January 2005.

In the morning, US planes circled

over Najaf as gunfire, mortar and rocket blasts shook the deserted city centre before quiet returned by early afternoon.

An ultimatum for Sadr's militia to leave or face the consequences is set to expire at 6:00 pm (1400 GMT), police said.

Describing Najaf as "quite pitiful", Allawi dismissed most militiamen as less Sadr loyalist and more Saddam Hussein faithful, mixed with convicts released from jail by the former president ahead of the 2003 US-led invasion.

Pummelled in Sadr's spring uprising against foreign troops, terrified Najafis have begun fleeing their homes to escape the latest fighting.

The US military has said it has

BSF gives BDR fresh list of '195 ultra camps'

PTI, Shillong

The BSF authorities have handed over to its Bangladesh counterpart a fresh list of 195 camps of Indian insurgents in the neighbouring country with a request to dismantle them.

The list was handed over to Deputy Director General of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Brig Gen Md Ibrahim Khalil in the bi-annual meeting held between Inspector Generals of BSF and an eight-member BDR team held at Comilla from August 2 to 5.

Addressing a press conference in Shillong on Friday night, IG of BSF's Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland (AMM-N) Frontier, SC Srivastava said the list had exact locations and other details of the camps. Previously, a list of 192 camps of insurgents was given to them.

About the BDR's reaction, Srivastava said as usual Bangladesh

2 Palestinian ministers tender resignation

Teenager shot dead in Gaza

REUTERS, Ramallah

Two Palestinian cabinet ministers have tendered their resignations, political sources said yesterday, in a new blow to a government beset by militants demanding reform in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I have reached a point where I can do nothing amid all this ongoing chaos and unrest. Unfortunately, the situation is deteriorating by the day," Justice Minister Nahed Al-Reyes told Reuters, saying he tendered his resignation Wednesday and was awaiting confirmation from Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie.

Senior Palestinian political

sources said Planning Minister Nabil Qasis had also resigned after accepting an offer to become president of a West Bank university.

Qasis and Qurie did not immediately comment.

Palestinian areas have been rocked by upheaval in the past few weeks, including kidnappings, street protests and gun battles between militants and security forces -- the gravest internal challenge yet to President Yasser Arafat and Qurie.

The Palestinian leadership is under intense international pressure to clean up corruption and reform its security apparatus, which it accuses

Israel of destroying during four years of conflict.

AFP adds: A Palestinian teenager was shot dead by Israeli troops close to the Sufa border crossing in the southern Gaza Strip early Saturday, Palestinian hospital sources told AFP.

The youth was named as 16-year-old Ahmad al-Qiyq, a family member said.

An army spokesman said two unarmed Palestinians had been spotted near the security fence in Sufa in an area, which is off-limits to non-military personnel, so they opened fire, killing one.

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Two Ctg robbers, extortionist beaten dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Lynch mob beat two robbers and one extortionist to death in two separate incidents at Anwara and Raozan upazila of the district in the early hours yesterday.

Shortly after midnight, hundreds of villagers from Uskhain and its neighbourhood went on a manhunt for robbers at Uskhain under Paroikora union of Anwara. At around 1:30am the villagers equipped with torch and bamboo sticks caught five of a band of up to 12 robbers who were preparing for robbery.

They battered the captured so hard that two died on the spot while

three others were injured.

Identity of the dead could not yet be known.

Anwara police have sent one seriously injured robber, Abu Hossain, 25, to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH). The two others were undergoing treatment at a local health complex under police custody till filing of this report at 5.30pm yesterday.

Condition of Hossain was stated to be critical.

District Superintendent of Police Mahbubur Rahman visited the scene yesterday afternoon.

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Non-government teachers miss govt benefits for 2 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has not disbursed salary benefits among about 2.5 lakh non-government teachers for the last two months to their utter misery.

The non-government teachers did not get the benefits for the months of June and July. They get 95 percent salary benefits from the government exchequer.

"Many teachers in the flood-hit areas are living an inhuman life," Prof MA Bari, general secretary of Bangladesh College-University Teachers Association (BCUTA), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The government usually disburses funds for the non-government teachers by the first

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Private fish sector loses Tk 990cr in floods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The flooding has damaged fish resources of 1.66-lakh acre water bodies in the private sector worth Tk 990.78 crore, the rehabilitation of which depends on the government aid, sources in the Department of Fisheries said.

The floods have washed away about 120.44 crore fries and 63,493 tonnes of fish worth Tk 295.12 crore from ponds and canals at the private sector in 43 districts. The loss of water body infrastructures is yet to be measured.

The Chittagong division witnessed the highest loss of Tk 118.87 crore, Dhaka Tk 102.01 crore,

Rajshahi Tk 25.46 crore, Sylhet Tk 46.41 crore, Barisal Tk 2.30 crore and Khulna 0.7 crore.

Fisheries department officials said the washed-away fries will remain in the fresh water bodies and fear that unscrupulous fishermen will catch those. "This is the most crucial point the people must be aware of," said Md Shahidul Islam, deputy director of the department.

The department has assessed that Tk 138.05 crore needed for rehabilitation of the affected farmers. It will distribute fry, fertiliser, fish food, medicines among marginal farmers owning ponds or water bodies measuring 0.5 acre or less and will provide infrastructure support.

The department has also asked the government, international aid agencies and NGOs for a loan of Tk 191.44 crore for the farmers for breeding, hatching and repair of infrastructures.

The officials said the agriculture sector always gets top priority in the post-floods rehabilitation. But the fish sector experienced such a loss as government must consider it seriously, they added.

Fresh water fish may be affected by diseases as water has been seriously contaminated due to city's sewage and chemical ingredients, said Abul Kashem, chairman of a fish cooperatives union in the city's Mohammadpur area.

Pichchi' Hannan's daughter alleges murder by Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Daughter of 'Pichchi' Hannan yesterday alleged that Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members had shot her father dead following dictate of a local ruling party lawmaker.

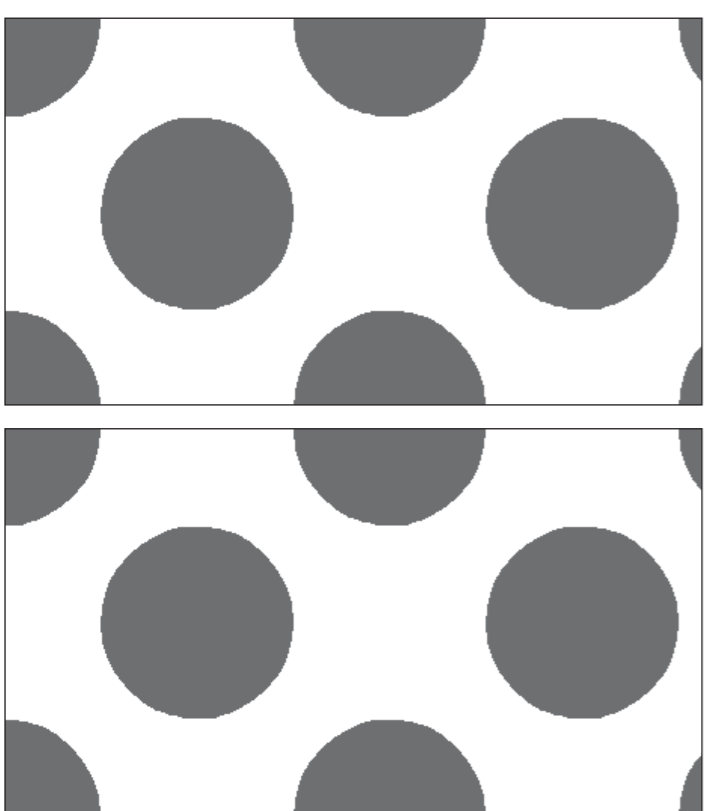
Hannan, one of the top 23 criminals on police list, allegedly died in crossfire between his associates and a contingent of Rab and Detective Branch (DB) in the early hours of Friday at Diabari in Savar.

"My father wasn't killed in crossfire, rather he was shot dead point blank by the Rab members,"

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Solema Khatun on board a boat waters a plant, which survived the wrath of floodwaters swamping vegetation at Nasirabad in Khilgaon under three feet water, yesterday.



Household goods of Ctg militant camp chief seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday confiscated all furniture, household goods and appliances found in the home of Mir Anis, cousin of a state minister and the alleged mastermind behind the Islamist militant training camp in a remote hilly area of Hathazari upazila busted on June 1.

The house is on Hathazari Women Madrasa campus, where Anis works as a teacher.

The expropriation follows a court order to attach all movable property of Anis and his two lieutenants -- Ahmad Hossain alias Kaderi Hujur and Habibullah.

Police said they would soon seize the movable property of the other two, who too are local madrasa

teachers and accused of running the clandestine arms training centre as Anis' accomplices.

Police sought the attachment order after their manhunt in the port city and adjacent districts failed to nab any of the three kingpins of local

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Prayer Timing		
August 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-47	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

