

## 2 top Sunni clerics killed in Baghdad

US, UK hostage deadline looms; 3 beheaded

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A deadline set by militants who have threatened to kill a British man and two Americans seized in Iraq is due to expire, and more than two dozen other hostages are also facing death unless rebel demands are met.

In Baghdad, gunmen assassinated two clerics from a powerful Sunni Muslim group opposed to the US presence in Iraq.

Muslim Scholars' Association member Sheikh Hazem Zeidi was shot dead at an isolated Sunni mosque in the Shia suburb of Sadr City on Sunday night while Sheikh Muhammad Jadu was gunned down on his way to noon prayers in the mixed al-Baya neighbourhood yesterday.

A militant group posted a video on the Internet purporting to show militants sawing off the heads of three Iraqi members of a Kurdish party for cooperating with US forces. Another group claimed to

have kidnapped 15 members of the Iraqi National Guard.

The Tawhid and Jihad group, led by Jordanian terror mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, has threatened to behead Americans Jack Hensley and Eugene Armstrong and Briton Kenneth Bigley on Monday unless Iraqi women are released from two US-controlled prisons here.

The threat came in a video released Saturday, which showed the three construction contractors blindfolded and said they would be killed in 48 hours, though no exact time for the deadline was given. The three construction contractors were snatched on Thursday from their Baghdad home.

Meanwhile, US warplanes struck in the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah, west of the capital, killing two people and wounding three. The US military said the missile strike hit Tawhid and Jihad militants who were setting up fortifications in the city.

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PHOTO: STAR

Police officers on way to producing Shaibal Saha Partha, middle, before the High Court yesterday. Police arrested Partha earlier this month on charges of his link to the August 21 blasts and issuing death threats to Sheikh Hasina.

## Registration must for English medium schools by month-end

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

In a bid to bring the private English medium schools under strict regulations, the government has asked them to register with education ministry by this month.

The ministry took the decision in the face of numerous complaints from guardians about high tuition fees and inadequate facilities in these mushrooming schools.

"We have already asked all these schools to get registered by this month," Education Minister M Osman Farruk told The Daily Star on Sunday.

However, there is no official statistics on the actual number of such schools offering courses from pre-schooling to O (Ordinary) and A (Advance) level.

There is no government rules for these schools as their students sit for 'O' and 'A' level examinations under the University of Cambridge and University of London.

Guardians allege in absence of rules most of the schools charge exorbitant tuition fees but they lack facilities, unified curriculum and

skilled teachers.

Admission fees at pre-school level range between Tk 5,000 and Tk 40,000 and almost all schools with good repute increase their 'yearly fees' every year.

Every guardian has to pay an amount ranging from Tk 8,000 to Tk 15,000 when a student is promoted to a higher class, and even when he or she fails to pass annual exams.

Monthly tuition fees in these schools range between Tk 800 and Tk 5,000 or above, the guardians allege. Most reputed schools keep increasing the tuition fees showing many reasons including 'rising cost of maintenance'.

A section of guardians of Scholastica, Maple Leaf International and Bangladesh International Tutorial (BIT) earlier publicly accused management of those schools for 'irrational hikes in fees and other exorbitant charges'.

Sources said guardians of some other schools are planning to go to court seeking justice as management

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## SMEs can start industrial revolution: PM

Taskforce submits report to Khaleda

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said an industrial revolution can begin in the country if all concerned work with priority to development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

She expressed the view while receiving a report prepared by the national taskforce on development of SMEs at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

The prime minister urged the private sector, including non-governmental organisation (NGOs)

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| Prayer Timing              |       |        |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|
| September 21               |       |        |
|                            | Azan  | Jamaat |
| Fajr                       | 4-40  | 5-15   |
| Zohr                       | 12-45 | 1-15   |
| Asr                        | 4-30  | 4-45   |
| Maghrib                    | 6-05  | 6-10   |
| Esha                       | 7-30  | 8-00   |
| Source: Islamic Foundation |       |        |