



1. A truck requisitioned by the police runs over the foot of Mirpur Awami League (AL) leader Mustafa on Mazar Road in Mirpur during the 14-party's countrywide blockade programme yesterday; 2. Opposition activists take a 14-party leader to hospital after he was injured in police baton-charge at Mohakhali; 3. A policeman grabs a crying child by the arm after she was separated from her parents during the clashes between police and opposition activists in Sonargaon in Narayanganj; 4. Sub-inspector Abul Bashar who died after being hit by brickbats during clashes with the opposition activists at Sonargaon; 5. Angry opposition activists on Mazar Road in Mirpur pelt brickbats towards the police; 6. Policemen beat up a man suspecting him to be a picket at Mohakhali in Dhaka; and 7. Pickets set ablaze a human haulier in Lalbagh in the capital.

25 NRBs to get CIP status

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has decided to declare 25 non-resident Bangladeshi (NRBs) commercially important persons (CIPs) for their outstanding record of sending remittance, investing money and importing Bangladeshi goods.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment prepared a list of the NRBs and sent it to the cabinet committee. The proposal is likely to be placed before the next cabinet meeting for final approval, sources said.

A draft on manpower export policy of the government is also likely to be placed before the next cabinet meeting.

The draft, also awaiting cabinet approval, has been prepared on the basis of discussions with various

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Israel bombs Palestinian prime minister's office

REUTERS, Gaza

An Israeli helicopter fired a missile into the empty office of Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh yesterday in an apparent signal the Hamas leader could be targeted unless militants released an abducted soldier.

The air strike was part of a military offensive in the Gaza Strip that has been coupled with statements from Israeli leaders that no one in the Hamas-led government should believe he was immune from attack.

"We will strike anyone who harms the citizens of Israel. No one will go unpunished," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told his cabinet in broadcast remarks, without mentioning Haniyeh by name.

Haniyeh was not in the office at

the time of the strike, witnesses said. He arrived quickly to survey the damage.

"This is the policy of the jungle and arrogance," Haniyeh told Reuters. "Nothing will affect our spirit and nothing will affect our steadfastness," Olmert said. "I reiterate -- no one will be exempt."

Israel last assassinated top Hamas member was killed in a second attack on an office used by forces loyal to the Islamic militant group, whose charter calls for Israel's destruction. A third strike hit a Hamas school, but there were no casualties.

Israel, which pulled out of the Gaza Strip last year, sent troops and tanks into the south of the territory on Wednesday after Palestinian gunmen, some from the armed wing of Hamas, seized Corporal Gilad Shalit in a cross-border raid a week

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ago.

"I have ordered the military and defence officials to use their power and wisdom to pursue these terrorists, and those who dispatch them, provide their ideology and sponsor them," Olmert said. "I reiterate -- no one will be exempt."

Israel last assassinated top

33 trawlers missing in Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 33 fishing trawlers with 426 crewmembers and fishermen are missing on the Bay of Bengal after they were caught in a sudden storm on Saturday.

Most of the missing trawlers sailed from Patharghata and Kalapara coasts of Barguna and Patuakhali on Thursday.

The local administration or the owners of the trawlers made no attempts to send a search and rescue team out to sea as turbulent weather prevails over the bay.

Local weather office declared Cautionary Signal No-3 and advised vessels to take shelter close to the shore. They asked fishermen not to go out to sea until the weather improved.

Meanwhile, pirates allegedly kept 180 fishermen and crewmembers of 15 trawlers hostage after the boats took shelter in the narrow canals of Sundarbans during the Saturday's storm.

Zaman Majhi, a crewmember of a trawler after escaping the clutches of the pirates, said the pirates wanted Tk 2 lakhs as ransom for each trawler and its crewmembers.

The police and the local administration are yet to launch a rescue operation due to adverse weather.

US may cut millions in aid to Nepal

AP, Kathmandu

The United States has warned it could cut off millions of dollars in annual aid to Nepal if communist rebels agree to the proposed interim government without disarming.

The Maoist rebels, who have waged a decade-long war to seize control of the Himalayan nation, declared a cease-fire and began peace talks earlier this year after weeks of street protests and a general strike forced King Gyanendra to relinquish absolute power.

They also announced they would join an interim government that will be formed with the seven main political parties that organised the protests against the king in April.

It remains unclear whether the Maoists will give up the weapons

they used to seize much of rural Nepal. The issue wasn't mentioned when the governing deal was announced, but government officials say the rebels agreed to resolve it before the interim administration is formed.

"If the Maoists continue to use violence after they enter the government our law says that we can't supply assistance to those who support a terrorist group. We have to consider them a terrorist group until they give up arms," US Ambassador to Nepal James F. Moriarty said.

Moriarty's remarks came after he met with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on Saturday.

The US gives Nepal \$45 million in annual aid for development, education and health services.

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Khulna Jubo League leader brutally killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police recovered body of Awami Jubo League leader Abu Zafar Shaikh, 40, at noon yesterday from bank of the river Atai under Terokheda upazila in Khulna.

His eyes were gouged out and his abdomen was severely stabbed.

Police said Abu Zafar was kidnapped by masked criminals from Lashkarpur bazar on way to his house at Nishipur village under the same upazila after watching world cup football match on Friday night.

The slain Jubo league leader, son of Alek Shaikh, was a teacher of Parhejgram Govt Primary School of Terokheda upazila.

Members of his family suspect extremists' involvement in the murder while police said the murder might have been the result of a land dispute.

Paban denied bail again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Aktar Hamid Paban, son of Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, for the fourth time after he was arrested on charge of carjacking on June 7.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shahique Anwar passed the order following the hearing.

Earlier, separate courts rejected Paban's bail petitions thrice saying that the charges brought against him were primarily proved. Moreover, Paban's accomplice Zahirul Islam Robin confessed to a magistrate that he and Paban were involved with an organised carjacking ring.

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Archaeological sites pillaged

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILLU, Bogra

A large number of ornamental terracotta pieces and other ancient antiques have been stolen from different archaeological sites, including declared world heritage Paharpur Monument in Naogaon district.

According to an Archaeology Department survey report, at least 5,000 archaeological sites in Rajshahi Division have lost their glory and original structures due to a lack of proper supervision and negligence of the government.

A senior police officer in Bogra said a group of raiders has been stealing terracotta plaques, statues, ancient coins and antiques—as old as more than 1,200 years—from different monuments and temples at the protected and unprotected archaeological sites.

These sites include Paharpur in Naogaon, Annik Temple at Putia in Rajshahi, Mahasthangarh and Magirbhan in Bogra.

The deputy commissioners concerned and the law enforcement agencies were informed about the treasure hunting groups.

A senior official of the Archaeology Department told The Daily Star that these stolen terracotta and other antique objects are openly sold at a market in the capital's Gulshan-2. He said the tags on these antiques even bear the historic sites' names they were collected from.

The existing Antiquities Act of 1968, however, strictly

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PHOTO: STAR

The palace of Balihar King in Naogaon barely stands as it faces ruination due to lack of maintenance.

Rich, powerful flout ban on tinted glass on autos

MONJUR MAHMUD

Use of tinted glass on luxurious private automobiles has become very common lately despite a ban on such usage.

Considering the growing demand, unscrupulous traders are importing automobiles fitted with tinted glasses and selling them at showrooms openly. Glasses are being tinted with special papers in

some cases to meet the demand, sources said.

Customs officials at ports and officials of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), who are supposed to prevent such practices, are issuing clearances and registrations for automobiles fitted with tinted glasses in exchange of bribes.

According to traffic police, tinted glass is generally used on vehicles

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Prayer Timing

July 3

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Japanese FM due July 24

UNB, Dhaka

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso will arrive in Dhaka on July 24 on a two-day official visit at the invitation of Foreign Minister M. Mosharraf Khan.

Taro Aso's visit to Dhaka bears special significance as he is an aspirant of the prime ministership of Japan. The election is likely to be held in September this year.

During his stay here, Taro Aso will make a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and hold official talks with his Bangladesh

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Taliban were detected first in the area and then the planes bombed them," police chief Mohammad Nabiullah Khan said. Among the dead was a local commander, he said.

The coalition did not immediately confirm the strikes.

The bombing followed an attack on a British base in Sangin late Saturday with small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire in which two British soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed, the British military said.

Four coalition soldiers were also wounded in the battle, in which the group of rebels was killed.

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