

Sporadic clashes

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obstructed the car and began throwing bricks at it. Windshields, windows, and sideview mirrors of the car were damaged, sources said adding that Barrister Nazmul Huda was in the car during the attack but not harmed.

The opposition coalition enforced the 6:00am to 6:00pm countryside hartal to protest the killings of seven people by law enforcers at Phulbari in Dinajpur on August 26. The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Port Resources also called for a half-day hartal yesterday to protest the killings.

At least twelve persons, including five journalists, were injured during a clash between police and picketers in front of Metro Shopping Mall near Russel Square in Dhanmondi. Police picked up three persons including Hafiz and Sumon, employees of Onnyo Mela and Agora, from the spot. The clash erupted at about 10:30am as police obstructed an Awami League procession led by Mohammad Nasim in front of the shopping mall prompting the picketers to throw bricks at the law enforcers. Earlier, a Jubo Mohila League procession also came under police baton charge in front of Prince Plaza near Road No 27 of Dhanmondi.

Police beat up the picketers indiscriminately. During the clash The Daily Star Photojournalist Amran Hossain, BTV Videographer Shah Noor Alam, ATN Videographer Mahmud, Channel 3 Videographer Akash and Staff Reporter Mithun, and opposition leaders MA Sattar Bhuiyan, Abul Bashar and Sabina Islam Tunin were injured.

An AL parliamentary party procession led by Chief Whip Abdu Shahid, and a Jubo League procession joined a rally at Russel Square while the clash at Road No 27 was on.

Addressing the rally, Nasim accused the government of the killings in Phulbari. He also said without implementation of the opposition proposed electoral reforms, they will not allow any caretaker government to takeover state power. Nasim threatened to enforce an indefinite hartal to compel the government to accept the reform proposals.

AL leaders Rahmat Ullah, Subed Ali Bhuiyan and Kazi Mostak Elen brought out a procession at the Mohakhali. But police obstructed the procession and charged batons to disperse it at about 8:30am. Police also charged batons on another procession on a lane near Titumir College.

The opposition activists in retaliation threw bricks at police. At least 10 persons including four policemen were injured. Police later chased the picketers away. The opposition activists damaged at least 10 to 12 motor vehicles during the clash. The picketers also damaged about 12 vehicles on Airport Road in the morning.

Later, AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Syed Zafar Sazzad, Rahmat Ali, among others, held a road side rally on Mohakhali-Gulshan road.

Dhaka City AL General Secretary Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya brought out a procession from Noor Hossain Square at about 7:00am but police obstructed it before it could get on Bangabandhu Avenue. Later they held a rally in front of Muktiyoddha Club.

Jubo League procession led by its Chairman Jahangir Mirza Nanak and General Secretary Kabir Azam also joined the rally there. AL leaders Obaidul Quader, Asazzaman Noor, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Nanak, Azam, Dipu Moni and Omar Faruk Chowdhury spoke at the rally.

AL leader Kamal Ahmed Majumder brought out a procession at Mirpur-10 intersection while Ilias Hossain Mollah and Kamal Master brought out a procession at Pallabi. Police charged batons on both the processions prompting the opposition activist to pelt them with bricks. At least 12 persons were injured while police picked up at least six.

BNP mulls

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standing committee member Oli Ahmad again said people should unite against those who are corrupt, haughty and plunderers to save the nation.

Oli also criticised the party chief and prime minister's speech at the executive body meeting, in which she said, "You are a hero when you are in BNP".

Reacting to her speech, Oli said, "I am a hero of the Liberation War... a freedom fighter... I will continue my struggle against terrorism and corruption".

Sources said a group of senior and mid-level BNP leaders were trying to resolve the matter and took initiative for talks between party chief Khaleda Zia and Oli. That is why the BNP standing committee did not take any decision against him at its August 22 meeting.

Mannan Bhuiyan told reporters on the day that it could not be confirmed what he (Oli) said. But on Tuesday, Oli defended what he had said through the media earlier.

Over the last two years, Oli criticised the government and strongly protested corruption and terrorism, saying some ministers, lawmakers and powerful party men were involved in these.

Oli, who was very close to late president Ziaur Rahman, contested the last general election from Chittagong-14 against Jamaat leader Shahjahan Chowdhury, violating the party decision and got defeated.

Khaleda did not take it easily and formed the cabinet excluding Oli, who was a minister in the previous BNP government.

All vital samples

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in the present situation.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said, "The government won't do anything in that area (Phulbari) against the interests of the locals. Two government representatives are at the scene and the problems would be resolved through discussions."

Talking to the press at his Secretariat office, he said Asia Energy Corporation has already left Phulbari and the government will stay in touch with them in the future. But no decision will be taken without taking opinions of the local people, he added.

Termining Phulbari killings regrettable, Bhuiyan said politicisation of the incident is even more regrettable.

Accusing the 14-party alliance of using the incident for political gains, he said "The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Port Resources called a half-day hartal but the opposition extended it to a daylong one. It proves who are using it for political gains."

Earlier on Tuesday, energy ministry adviser Mahmudur Rahman said the government did not take any decision to wind up Asia Energy's operation.

He said the energy ministry has ensured the home ministry to ensure top security to Asia Energy office and its staff at Phulbari. Mahmudur has advised the company officials to talk to the local people to resolve the problem.

"It is now clear that some political parties are involved in the violence at Phulbari," he said.

On Tuesday, Mahmudur cancelled a meeting with Asia Energy officials.

As the government so far did not hold a single meeting with the aggrieved local people, a meeting with Asia Energy might worsen the situation. So, the meeting was cancelled, sources said.

Confusion over

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minister said blaming the recent 'irresponsible statement' by opposition leader and AL chief Sheikh Hasina, where she 'instructed her party activists to retaliate against the police atrocities on them during hartals.'

"Did she realise then that such a statement can result in such a dangerous incident?" Babar said, adding that legal action would be taken against those responsible for the 'killing'.

After the minister left the hospital, doctors officially declared Narayan dead.

Talking to reporters later, Momenuzzaman said that Narayan was in suffering from heart problems and the injury, which he earlier termed as "noisy serious," triggered the cardiac arrest.

Saying that Narayan died of heart attack, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, meantime, demanded to form a neutral medical board to investigate the death.

Six to die

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The mother of the victim, Shamsun Nahar, filed a murder case the same day with the Kotwali Police Station accusing ten people.

Police issued charge sheet against the accused on May 31, 2005.

SPP Majibur Rahman Nantu represented the prosecution while Advocate Enayet Pir Khan represented the accused.

Launching

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Hassan told the news agency.

Meanwhile, Gono Forum President Dr Kamal had a luncheon meeting with top leaders of the 11-party alliance at his residence where he discussed about the proposed front.

Dr Kamal assured the 11-party leaders that the new front "will not make any contradiction" with the Awami League-led 14-party alliance.

Gonatantri Party President Nurul Islam said they discussed matters relating to the current anti-government agitation and opposition's electoral reform proposals.

Ahead of the next parliamentary election scheduled for January 2007, the two major Islamic political parties, Jamaat and IOJ, which do not believe in having women leaders and have been blasting the idea of women leadership for a long time, still remain in the four-party ruling alliance led by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Although, Jamaat is strongly opposing BNP's move to bring HM Ershad into the ruling alliance by labelling him as corrupt, many political analysts believe that Jamaat will not leave the alliance for the sake of its own existence.

IOJ however did not make any objection to BNP's move to bring Ershad-led Jatiya Party into the alliance.

STRENGTHS OF ISLAMIC PARTIES
Seventeen Islamic political parties contested separately in 1991 parliamentary election and bagged 14.87 percent of total votes cast at the polls but the number declined by about 10 percent in the parliamentary election held on June 12, 1996.

Through unofficial understandings with BNP in some constituencies, Jamaat-e-Islami won 18 seats and bagged 41,36,661 or 12.13 percent of total votes in 1991. But in 1996 it won only three seats and bagged 36, 53,013 or 8.61 percent of total votes, as BNP did not support Jamaat that time.

Deposits for candidacy of 225 out of 300 Jamaat-e-Islami candidates

Gruelling hartal duty

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added to quite a few such cases in the last couple of years.

ABM Sultan Ahmed, former officer-in-charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station, died of heart attack on February 3 last year while performing hartal duty at Patuatali in the capital.

Former OC of Motijheel Police Station Mohiuddin Ahmed died of cardiac arrest on May 18, 2004 while another policeman met similar death at Mirpur the same year.

Made fragile due to work under inhuman condition, police personnel sometimes fail to cope with the minimum hassle.

On duty policemen do not even get the minimum facilities and time for defecation or urination. Often they are provided with mouldy foods during duty.

As it takes a long time to serve the foods from man to man in police vans, the food often gets rotten, said a policeman.

Non-govt pry

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sit-in on September 17 if the government does not meet our only demand by September 15," said Mohammad Shamsul Alam, president of the association while addressing a press conference at its Tophkhana Road office.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, in 2001, pledged to fulfil our demand of job nationalisation if BNP-led four-party alliance formed the government, he added.

"Almost five years of the ruling alliance government has already gone by, but it has failed to make any decision on the matter as of now," he alleged.

He urged the government to implement its promise of nationalising the non-government primary teachers' jobs before the alliance government's tenure is over.

The association's Secretary General Mridanda Mohan Saha, Senior Vice President Shahidul Islam Khan, Vice President Swapn Kumar Roy, Organising Secretary Saiful Islam, Office Secretary MA Mannan, Acting Publication Secretary Anwar Hossain Afrad and Member AFM Mahubur Rahman were present at the conference among others.

IO plays down court

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reference case on Tuesday said the IO accused Shah Alam Babu in the charge sheet despite the absence of minimum evidence and witnesses against him in the investigation. The court directed the government and police authorities to take stern action against the IO.

The HC also ordered to strip judicial power of Judge Shamsul Alam Khan who is now the judge of the Chittagong Woman and Child Repression Control Tribunal-2.

Defending himself Rezaul, now officer-in-charge of Hazaribagh Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday, "I identified Shah Alam Babu as Sundar Babu correctly and he is responsible for the murder."

"I did not do anything wrong in the investigation. The person the court awarded death sentence as the main accused of Llaqat murder is Sundar Babu."

Rezaul, however, denied to make any direct comment on the HC verdict that found him guilty.

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8,000 govt

FROM PAGE 16
and forest rangers and forest guards under the Forest Department.

A meeting with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair took the decision to remove pay anomalies faced by the officials and employees of the government bodies. The decision will, however, require the prime minister's approval to become effective.

It will be materialised by the next month, Saifur Rahman told reporters after the meeting held at the Cabinet Division conference room.

As the finance minister raised the question of possible reaction in the public mind about increasing the salary scales of district election officers only a few months before the national election, the officials said officers of six other government agencies are getting the similar facilities of salary increase.

The meeting also decided to remove the salary anomalies between the technical and non-technical officers of Rural Electrification Board, Power Development Board, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board and Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Devoted

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musical instruments at stores around the Science Laboratory area, but cannot cope with the increasing demands and losing out to his competitors nowadays.

Only a son helps him irregularly with the musical instrument manufacturing and the family can hardly afford the daily essentials and components needed for the trade with its income.

The musical instruments Kalipada manufactures include Tabla (a pair of small drums played with the hands), Dhol (a barrel-shaped double-ended drum), Khol, Mridangam, Bango, Kango and Akkara.

Animal hide (usually of goat or cow), Neem wood are the main components of most of Kalipada's products.

Cowhide now costs Tk 2000 while goat hide is Tk 500 apiece. Ever increasing prices of these commodities are going beyond the reach of small business owners like Kalipada.

"We must keep our ancestors' profession alive at any cost. I hope someone of us will continue this profession," said Kalipada sitting inside his shabby teen-roof shop at Dhamrai.

"I had a dream of setting up a nice store displaying every kind of musical instrument for music lovers, but my financial limitation did not let the dream come true," lamented Kalipada.

Although a considerable number of families used to live by this occupation of making musical instruments once, Kalipada is the lone survivor in and around Dhamrai. The other families adopted the profession of shoe repairing long ago.

"If no one comes forward to save this profession, I will continue by myself as long as I live," said a defiant Kalipada.

Time for voter

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The EC also urged people to examine the updated electoral roll and lodge objections if they find any inconsistency, but it did not decide on taking any step to probe into the allegations of unusual rise in the number of voters with under-age people registering names.

The EC officials, however, said the district election officers will look into the matter if necessary.

Some field level election officials in the capital said they feared that some genuine voters' names might be deleted from the existing list due to the hurried move for completing the task of compiling the information collected in applications.

The updated voter list is yet to be kept open for public inspection at local election offices and city corporation ward offices in most of the areas in the capital.

The field level task for updating the existing voter roll by visiting door to door began on July 21 and ended on August 20, with many eligible voters remaining out of the list. By this time, a total of 1.63 crore people have applied for inclusion of their names while 23.74 lakh people applied for deletion of names from the list.

The EC has not taken any measures to check the authenticity of the applications received by the field-level EC staffs while visiting door to door.

Loan default
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will be decreased by next December.

Of the total amount of Tk 1,41,437 crore in outstanding loans in the banking system, the amount of classified loans was Tk 23,465 crore or 16.59 per cent on June 30, 2006, compared to 13.55 per cent or Tk 17,509 crore on December 31 last year, sources said.

Classified loans of nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) amounted to Tk 15,226 crore or 31.38 per cent of their outstanding loans in June '06, which was Tk 10,024 crore or 21.35 per cent in December 2005.

Defaulted loans of Private Commercial Banks (PCBs) amounted to Tk 4,285 crore or 5.08 per cent of their outstanding loans in June '06, which was Tk 3,836 crore or 5.62 per cent in December '05.

Classified loans of Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) amounted to Tk 3,889 crore or 32.70 per cent of their outstanding loans in June '06, which was Tk 3,836 crore or 34.87 per cent six months ago.

Default loans of FCB's came down to Tk 63 crore or .67 per cent of their outstanding loans in June this year which was at Tk 104 crore or 1.26 per cent in December last year.

the worst sufferers, said a police constable, who has to perform duty at the Mohammadpur residence of a judge.

"At around 12 midnight, we were ordered to get ready for Dhaka in half an hour. Reaching the capital in the morning we could just wash our face and have breakfast before starting the duty," a police constable from the reserve force in Bogra told The Daily Star during a hartal on April 19.

"This is not a life. I may have to stay in Dhaka for a long time, but I could not provide any money or buy essentials for my family in Bogra as I had to come in a short notice," said a visibly exhausted policeman whom this correspondent recently met in Old Dhaka.

He had to stay in the city for five days with around 30 other colleagues from Bogra as the opposition called another hartal four days later.

Many policemen had to lie in turns in Rajarbagh Police Lines barrack as there were not sufficient seats, several policemen said, adding that many others had to stay in the Rajarbagh Police Lines School, suspending classes for the students.

Meanwhile, four low ranking policemen committed suicide during the last six months.

Frustration resulting from heavy duty and poor salary has led to their suicide, said several policemen.

Indian minister

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Tinbigha Corridor under Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat, official sources said.

Rangpur Sector Commander of BDR Col Lutfur Rahman received the Indian minister on his arrival at the corridor at 10:30am.

Inspector General of BSF, North Bengal Frontier, deputy inspector general of BSF, Jalpaiguri Sector, and senior BSF officials accompanied the minister.

Later, the Indian minister attended a tea party hosted by BDR and exchanged views with the senior BDR and BSF officials.

He asked the BDR and BSF officials to raise the enclave and outstanding border issues in the upcoming border conference to be held in Kolkata in the third week of September.

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and submitted the charge sheet.

The media had earlier reported that the IO had accused Shah Alam Babu in place of Sundar Babu in the murder case.

Liaqat's wife Rokeya Begum had also testified that Shah Alam Babu was not the accused Sundar Babu.

But Rezaul told The Daily Star last night, "The incident took place seven years ago. The plaintiff may have had some kind of understanding with the accused during these seven years."

He said he will talk to the higher authority of the police after receiving the copy of the HC judgment and then will decide whether to appeal in the SC against the verdict.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports, Judge Shamsul Alam came to his office at the Chittagong Court Building as usual yesterday but refrained from attending the court.

He also refused to make any comment on the HC verdict.

Earlier, Shamsul Alam Khan was posted to Bagerhat as district and sessions judge on June 10. He joined the Chittagong Woman and Child Repression Control Tribunal-2 on Sunday.

Lanka troops killed

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deemed to be responsible for the incident," Henricsson said.

The locally employed workers of Action Against Hunger were not in the head "execution-style" according to witnesses who saw their bodies several days after the killing in Sri Lanka's northeastern town of Muttur where troops and Tigers were battling at the time.

Samaraweera, accompanying President Mahinda Rajapakse who arrived here Tuesday for talks with Premier Tony Blair, said the SLMM made its conclusions before the police probe and forensic examinations had been concluded.

"I am not calling him (Henricsson) a liar but I am calling it a very, very irresponsible statement," he told the BBC.

Asked if Colombo had faith in the truce monitors, Samaraweera said: "Just because the singer is bad it does not mean the music is consistently bad."

"We believe that the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission has a very important role to play in Sri Lanka especially at a time when the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) has escalated its levels of violence."

"This is the time when they should play a more independent and non-partisan role," the minister said.

The Tiger rebels, whose chief negotiator Anton Balasingham is resident in London, are yet to comment on the SLMM statement.

The independent monitors based their findings partly on interviews and confidential discussions with sources, they said in a statement.

"The views have not proved contradictory and the security forces of Sri Lanka are widely and consistently deemed to be responsible for the incident," the statement said.

The killings came amid a bloody new phase in the three-decade ethnic conflict that has left a February 2002 ceasefire in tatters.

Some 1,500 people have died since December when fighting in the north and northeast between the military and rebels who are fighting for a separate homeland for the Tamil minority began escalating.

In Wednesday's findings, the monitors blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for a bomb attack against a packed bus in June that killed at least 64 passengers and nearly 100 others.

The SLMM said it could not accept the LTTE's claims of innocence.

"...being the only element with the motive, capability and capacity to carry out the attack, the LTTE must bear the responsibility for the killing of civilians," the SLMM said in a statement.

"Consequently, the attack on the civilian bus in Kebitigollewa (in the north-central province) on the 15th of June 2006 is ruled as a gross violation of the ceasefire agreement by the LTTE."

The killings of the aid workers occurred amid heavy fighting between government forces and the LTTE in the northeastern coastal town of Muttur.

Govt agrees

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government announcement.

Meanwhile, no official of the Asia Energy could be contacted for comments last night.

The negotiation meeting between the government and the demonstrators protesting Asia Energy's operation at Phulbari coalmine site began at the office of Parbatipur upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) at 7:15pm yesterday.

The national committee demands include banning coal mining in Phulbari, withdrawal of Asia Energy from the coalmine site, stoppage of the open-pit method for extracting coal, compensation to the families of victims of August 26 BDR firing and medical expenses for the injured, withdrawal of all cases filed against the protesters, and punishment to those responsible for Saturday's incident.

Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizarun Rahman Minu, Deputy Minister for Food and Disaster Management Asadul Habib Dulu, Deputy Commissioner of Dinajpur Tahsinur Rahman, Police Superintendent Delwar Hossain Miah, UNOs of Phulbari and Parbatipur, and Dinajpur district BNP president and secretary attended the meeting on the government's side.

The 40-member national committee team was led by Dinajpur unit convener of the committee Syed Mosadddek Hossain, its Phulbari unit leaders and some locals. National committee member secretary Anu Muhammed, leader Zunaid Saki and Workers Party of Bangladesh leader Haider Akbar Khan Rono later joined the meeting.

The government asked for holding the meeting at the Dinajpur Circuit House but the demonstrators refused the proposal saying the meeting should be held in one of the four upazilas--Phulbari, Birampur, Nawabganj and Parbatipur--where the coalmine site is situated.

Earlier, another meeting was also held on Tuesday but with no result.

Series of bombings