AL men, cops fight on hartal

FROM PAGE 1 they would not take part any election under Justice KM Hasan, the likely chief of caretaker government, and MA Aziz as Chief Election

Led by Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, the AL brought out a procession from

opposite the Jatiya Press Club at about 6:15am and staged a sit-in in front of Pir Yeamany Market. Bangladesh Awami Jubo League

rally in front of the Hockey Stadium. Chaired by Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak, the rally was also addressed by Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Nur MP. Mirza Azam

Addressing the rally, the opposition leaders vowed to resist any election in the country before implementation of the electoral reforms. Without participation of AL no election would either be held or accepted

another rally in front of Muktijoddha

brought out a procession from Motifheel. The police intercepted the procession and picked up five activists before chasing them away.

A microbus was set afire at Fakirapool in the morning. After two home-made bombs went off near Golapshah Mazar in Gulistan, police raided adjacent Hotel Ramna and arrested eight opposition activists as suspected bomb throwers. Demanding immediate release of the arrested activists, the Jubo League brought out a procession on the Bangabandhu Avenue in the

Riot police scuffled with a rally led by AL leader and former lawmaker Dr HM Iqbal from 10:50am to 12:20pm at Nabisco intersection before forcing them to backtrack

Police charged baton and dis-persed the rally When Farazi Azmal Hossain, a senior reporter of the daily Ittefaq, was injured in police action, journalists in the area got

Regrouped, opposition activists led by Iqbal staged a sit-in demonstration there.

A group of agitating hartal sup-porters broke glasses of some vehi-cles plying on the Tongi Diversion Road as they were chased by the

Unidentified people hurled two homemade bombs at a police van under the Mohakhali Flyover at around 9:45am. Nobody was, however, injured.

Police also charged baton to disperse a rally led by AL leaders Maj-Gen (rtd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan and advocate Shahara Khatun near Government Titumir College at about 9:00am. Police rounded up

Police clubbed and dispersed a procession at around 9:30am when

opposition activists tried to bring out procession at Mirpur Section 11. Police picked up one hartal sup-

porter from the spot. Earlier police chased and dispersed opposition activists when they tried to bring out a procession near Mirpur-10 roundabout. Police picked up at least eight activists from

As pickets vandalised window-panes of a bus near Technical crossng at Sheorapara, a passenger was

Police charged baton on an oppo-sition procession at about 9:00am in Shyampur leaving at least six people

Lalbagh, AL leader Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin brought out a procession that police dispersed by baton charge.

Five people were injured when an opposition procession in Nawabpur came under police attack at

Noor Hossain, 50, was critically injured when pro-hartal supporters stoned a Mirpur-bound bus from

The opposition combine also brought out processions at Sayedabad bus terminal, Motijheel, Khilgaon, Sabujbagh, and other parts of the city to support the hartal.

Police picked up Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Organising Secretary Salehin Reza, Affairs Secretary Abdullah-al-Mamun and Joint Secretary Jasim at Shahbagh intersection as they were marching towards DU campus with a

Ignoring heavy rain in the mornng, several hundred activists of BCLled Chhatra Sangram Parishad brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus in support of the hartal,

Police halted the procession in front of the Fine Arts Institute where arishadhelda rally HASINA'S STATEMENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina condemned the arrests and truncheon-charge on the opposition activists by police during the hartal hours yesterday and demanded immediate release of the arrested workers. In a statement, Hasina demanded immediate withdrawal of false cases filed against them. COUNTRYWIDE HARTAL

Hartal supporters attacked a Panchagarh bound train in Dinajpur resterday and beat up the train's driver Rabiur Hossain and lineman lahangir Alam. Rabiur was sent to Parbatipur Railway Hospital for treatment as his condition was deteriorating, reports our Dinajpur

Swechchha Shebok League activists threw brickbats at the train near Dinajpur Zilla School around 10:30am, witnesses said. Later police rushed to the spot and brought the

situation under control. The hartal hours passed off peacefully in Khulna metropolitan city and elsewhere in the district, our staff correspondent from Khulna reports. AL and its allies brought out int procession in the city around

11:00amin support of the hartal. Khan Ba Patkal Sangram Parishad (PSP) meeting.

also brought out a procession at Khalispur to drum up support for the hartal and to protest the killing of

The PSP will enforce a daylong hartal in the Khulna-Jessore industrial belt today and will lay siege to roads and railway lines from dawnto-dusk tomorrow in a bid to realise their eight-point demand.

ute-mill worker Noor Mohammad

At least 15 people were injured when pro-hartal demonstrators ransacked five buses in Patuakhali during hartal hours, our correspondentin Patuakhali reports.

Pickets also set up barricades on the Patuakhali-Kuakata and Patuakhali-Barisal highways. Patuakhali police arrested five AL

activists near Patuakhali-Kuakata Hartal supporters damaged a

truck at Palbari area in Jessore yester-day, our Jessore correspondent

Pro-hartal demonstrators vandalised two auto-rickshaws and a motorcycle in Faridpur yesterday, our Faridpur correspondent reports. Our Rajshahi University corre-

spondent reports that activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) prevented a number of pro-Jamaat teachers from taking classes and conducting examinations in the university yesterday. The BCL also brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus in support of the

A group of anti-hartal activists stabbed Subhasis Podder Liton, president of Bogra BCL district unit, at Chalopara area in Bogra during hartal hours yesterday, our staff correspondent in Bograreports.
Critically injured Liton was

admitted to Bogra Mohammed Ali

Sources said Liton was attacked by BNP and Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal activists around 10:00am when he was picketing for the hartal. BNP activists, however, denied

their involvement in the attack and alleged that BCL men attacked BNP leader Abdul Kayum at Shatmatha in theafternoon.

Bogra police said five activists of AL and its front organisation were 14-PARTYMEETING

The 14-party held an emergency meeting last night at AL's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue with AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed in the chair. The meeting condemned the police attack on Mohammad Nasim and other 14party activists during the countrywide hartal yesterday. The meeting shifted the Agargaon

gathering point to Mirpur-10 for tomorrow's Prime Minister's Office (PMO) siege programme. The other three points are Bangla Motor, Russell Square and Mohakhali intersection.

The opposition combine sits today to discuss the final prepara-tions before the siege tomorrow.

AL acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Bimal Biswas, Nurul Islam, Mainuddin Khan Badal were present at the

Acquitted of 3 cases

The same court will also hear the gold smuggling case filed against the deposed president on

The trial of the plot allotment case began in 1998. The court completed its hearing on August 13 this year and fixed August 27 for delivering the judgment.

The court framed charges against Ershad and acquitted the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) chairman Rahamat Ullah on March 9, 1992 as no conclusive evidence was found

Ershad was acquitted in three graft cases last month amid the speculations about his joining the ruling BNP-led alliance ahead of the next parliamentary election. PLOTALLOTMENT CASE

Mohammad Sajjad Hossain, an official of the now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac), filed the case against Ershad with the Motijheel Police Station on April 22, 1991.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case pressed charges against the deposed president and Rahamat Ullah on December 9 the same year.

The then president Ershad directed authorities concerned to allot plots in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Uttara residential areas to 49 people during 1988-1990. violating the government and Rajuk provisions, said the prosecution.

The court has so far recorded statements of only four prosecution witnesses although the trial began on April 23, 1998.

The court could not complete arguments of the case as the prosecution and the defence had sought time on different excuses since GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

On August 27, the same court adjourned the hearing of the gold smuggling case against Ershad time petition from the prosecution. A team of customs officials held

four people, including two foreign nationals, at Zia International Airport on July 17, 1990 when they were attempting to smuggle around 3.6 kg gold worth about Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh, the prosecution said.

A smuggling case was filed against the four -- Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmar Chaker of England, the then manager of the airport Major (rtd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and an airport security guard Abu Taher, with the Cantonment Police Station the same day.

During the investigation, the IO found evidence of Ershad's involvement in the smuggling and his name was included in the charge sheet.

Rudiger, Chalmar Chaker, Ashraf and Taher were convicted and sent to prison on different terms on May 14, 1992.

The trial against Ershad did not start due to a stay order from the

7 hurt in N'ganj

FROM PAGE 16 arrested six criminals -- Kabil, Swapan, Uzzal Hossain, Shah Alam, Afzal Hossain and Mohammad Ali from the spot. But the other abduc tors fled the scene with Amir Hossain.

Of the arrested, Kabil and Swapan suffered bullet wounds during the gunfight and were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. One of the injured Rab men was

sent to Combined Military Hospital,

Rab recovered a foreign revolver and two bullet caps from the scene.

Driver held

vesterday afternoon

On Wednesday afternoon, armed muggers snatched Tk 21 lakh of KDS Apparels at the city's Oxygen intersection. Accounts Officer Anjuman Ara and another staff of KDS Apparels were carrying the money on a microbus while driver Masum was on the steering. The factory authorities filed a

case with Bayezid Bostami Police Station the same evening and police took Masum to the police station for questioning. He was shown arrested that night and placed on a four-day remand the following day.

Masum-committed sweide at around 12.00 on Friday night by hanging himself from the ceiling of the lock-up, police said, adding that Masum had been working as a driver of the factory for the last five

tion about the mugging and the criminals behind it. But he suddenly committed suicide, forcing a halt to our investigation for the time being," M Maruf Hossain. assistant commissioner (Panchlaish Zone) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police told reporters at the forensic lab of Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the driver's body was brought for an

The police official dismissed the allegation of custodial murder.

Accusing police of torturing Masum to death in remand, General Secretary of Chittagong Light Motor Vehicle Drivers and Workers Union M Anwar Hossain said, "Masum was well when he was arrested. He can't take his own. life. Why should he do that?" He demanded a fair probe into

the death. The union leaders and workers yesterday staged a demon

Electoral reforms

logue on the reform agenda, raising fears of political confrontations ahead of the parliamentary elec-tion scheduled for January next

the opposition. Such a proposal will not be made on behalf of the government," Mannan Bhuiyan said on Wednesday.

Initially, the AL had raised the reform issue at various discussions but government high-ups in March last year rejected it.

AL that had been boycotting parliament to table the proposals in parliament, shunning street agitation to realise those. Ending a long boycott, the main

opposition AL however returned to the House, and AL chief Sheikh Hasina placed a set of reform proposals on February 12 this year.

Reacting to this, the prime minister on February 28 blasted the AL in parliament for the proposals and also for the delay in placing

the ruling and opposition parties to reach a consensus on the reform But the BNP took 20 days to initiate formation of the committee, and in the last six months there

was no significant development in this regard other than exchange of letters between the BNP and the Meanwhile, ignoring the opposition demand for reforms in the EC to ensure constitution of it on consensus, the government unilat-

CEC MA Aziz has repeatedly made it clear that the present EC will conduct the next election. But the opposition combine remainsrigid on its stance that it will not participate in polls under the EC he heads.

On the other hand, the PM has launched a fresh campaign against the opposition's reform proposals, and declared that the chief adviser of the next interim government will be that person who is mandated by the constitution.

that former chief justice KM Hasan will be the chief advisor. But the reform proposals demand appointment of CEC on consensus and the opposition resolutely said it would not accept KM Hasan as chief of the caretaker government. WHATTHEPMISSAYING

'The demand is irrational," the PM told parliament on March 15 last year when the AL-led combine was raising the reform agenda at dis-

She urged the AL to join parliament session and place the propos-

'They (AL) could have placed the proposals much before if they wanted the reforms ... What they want is to foil the election by creating anarchy in the name of the reforms agenda." The BNP chief has now been

repeatedly rejecting the reform

The opposition is destroying public property by creating anar-chy over the illogical demand for reforms," she said at a public rally in Jhenidah on Wednesday.

Earlier, at a rally in Lalmonirhat on August 5, the prime minister alleged the AL wants to foil the election using the reforms issue.

She has been repeatedly saying the next election will be held under the existing system and Justice Hasan will head the caretaket

formally announced the reform proposals on July 15 last year, Mannan Bhuiyan said at a press conference the proposals aimed at hindering the next election.

"If the opposition parties are

sincere about their demands, they

should come to parliament and place those," he said. On August 2 this year at a rally at Muktangon, the BNP secretary general said the opposition has proposed the reforms perceiving

On Wednesday at a press briefing, the LGRD minister however said still there is scope for dialogue on the reform agenda. But in line with the prime minis-

ter's contention on chief adviser of the caretaker government, he said, What is the need for thinking about an option if Justice KM Hasan is available as chief of the interim government?"

Some other senior ministers are also castigating the opposition for its reform proposals.

EC admits

work is proved against any organi-sation, the EC will ban them for a minimum of three years.

Asked about fund misuse by some NGOs in the name of election observation during the union parishad elections in 2003, he said, We are trying to finalise a policy on election observation.

"There has been no policy so far in this regard and we could not take any action against these organisa-

The EC secretary said they are planning to give those who have not registered their names in the updated voter roll a chance. He, however, said the EC will finalise the matter. An eligible voter can include

his/hername in the voter list even one day before the election, he added, urging voters left out of the updated list to contact with the upazila election offices for registration. Meanwhile, the EC Secretariat is now busy with the process of pub-

lishing the updated voter list. The procurement committee will si tomorrow and then the EC will begin the tender process.
"We will float the tender within

this month," the EC secretary said. He refused to accept the increase in voters' number as "unusual", saying the increase in 2000 was 32 per cent.

The latest updating of the existing voter list was conducted from August 28 to September 5 and the number of voters on the updated list stood at a surprising 9.30 crore as it registered 17 lakh more voters than on the nullified draft of the fresh voter list.

Afghan governor

FROM PAGE 16 Kandaharand Helmand.

94 militants were killed in Kandahar province's Panjwayi and neighbouring Zhari districts late Saturday and early Sunday and were separate to more than 40 Taliban who died in fighting in the same areas earlier Saturday, Nato spokesman Maj. Scott Lundysaid.

The killings were part of a Nato-led Operation called Operation Medusa, which began Sept. 2 and has killed at least 420 insurgents, according to the alliance. Purported Taliban spokesmen have disputed the high death

Ruling lawmakers

FROM PAGE 16 State Minister for Water Resources Gautam Chakraborty assured the lawmakers that he will try his best to fulfil the assurances in the remaining time of the government. BNP lawmaker Shafi Ahmed

Chowdhury alleged that the Water Development Board has built an embankment instead of digging a canal in his constituency. "At least, 80 per cent of the allocated money for the project has been embez-

State Minister Gautam said he is aware of the allegation and will initiate steps to investigate it.

Ruling BNP lawmakers Kazi Golam Morshed, Selim Reza Habib, Rasheda Begum Heera and Jamaate-Islami lawmaker Delwar Hossain Saidee also alleged that the state minister assured of implementing different projects in their constituencies but has not fulfilled them.

Huji commander

FROM PAGE 1 injured on April 14, 2001.

In the forwarding report placed before the court CID Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said Hannan might be involved in the blasts and he needs to be intensively interrogated to find out vital clues and where-abouts of the culprits responsible

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam granted the petition for showing Hannan arrested in the case and placed him on an eight-day remand.

Hannan was arrested at Madhya Badda in Dhaka on October 1 last year after several years of abscond ing. Later, he was shown arrested in different cases filed with different police stations in connection with the serial bomb blasts across the country last year.

Hannan was finally sent to the Dhaka Central Jail on January 23

after 112 days of being in remand. In the Ramna Batamul blast case, police have so far arrested 12 people but all of them were granted bail from the High Court at differ-

Of them, Moulan'a Akbar Hussain gave a confessional statement to a metropolitan magistrate on June 14, 2001 where he disclosed the names of others involved in the blasts. But later on June 28 the same year retracted his statement saving that he suffered inhuman torture during remand and was forced to give the state-

RMG workers FROM PAGE 1

demands of the garment workers after an intense labour unrest, it According to the deal, the gar-

ment owners were supposed to provide appointment letters, identity cards, withdraw cases lodged against the leaders of the workers' organisations, make weekly holiday effective and fulfil other demands within one month but these were still to be implemented, they mentioned.

The owners are now advocating for extending the time limit for fixing minimum wages for the workers ignoring the agreement,

Andolan, Jatiya Garment Sramik Karmachari Jote, signed the state-

Indo-Pak leaders

FROM PAGE 16 attend the gathering of the 116-nation Non Aligned Movement (NAM), which represents more than half the planet's

people but struggles to maintain its relevance in a post-ColdWarworld. Washington is expected to keep a close eye on the summit, which brings together its fiercest foes but also several

of its allies and its main oil suppliers. Among the prominent leaders slated to attend is Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has defied UN demands that he halt ura-

nium enrichment, the process used to make nuclear reactor fuel but also atomic bomb material. Ahmadinejad's delegation will seek "to draw solidarity from the movement for its legitimate right to develop nuclear

eign affairs minister Abelardo Moreno. The NAM backed Iran in the standoff during a two-day ministerial meeting in Malaysia in May, stressing the right of all nations to develop nuclear technology for research and energy production. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, another key figure in the troubled Middle

NDI meets

with Jamaat recently at an event organised by the Local Consultative Group, Anwar said asking, "Why shouldn't they feel

MEET WITH BUSINESS LEADERS The same day the NDI delegation exchanged views with the top business leaders on the current political situation and the upcom-

ing general election. At the meeting, the business leaders blamed the underdevelopment of the country on persistent political confrontation

non-profit organisation working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide, lauded the business community for its move to have a dialogue between the ruling and opposition alliances, business representatives told reporters after the meet at Radisson Water A six-member NDI team is now

The visiting members of NDL a

in the country as part of its plan to assess the preparedness and atmo-sphere in the lead-up to the next parliamentary election Had a sound political environ-

ment prevailed in the country, the growth rate would have been 10 percent instead of the present 6 percent, said International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) President Mahbubur Rahman.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Mir Nasir and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) leader Annisul Huq among others were present at the meeting.

Khaleda

Without mentioning the name Khaleda criticised a political party, saying: "A party either can take part or not in the election but has no right to say it won't allow to hold election.

'They [opposition] want to snatch the voting right of people as they would not be able to win the election," she said.

"BNP and the 4-party alliance would again go to parliament with two-thirds majority in a free and fair election," she told the meeting. Communications Minister

Nazmul Huda, Mayor of Dhaka Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Sarwari Rahman MP, PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman, Jubo Dal President Barkatullah Bulu and JCD President Rezaul Bari Helal

also addressed the meeting.

The meeting was presided over by local MP Nasiruddin Ahmed

Pintu. Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated the newly built 200seat Hazrat Ayesha (R) student hostel at Eden College, 100-seat Hazrat Fatema (R) student hostel and Shahid Ziaur Rahman auditorium at Government Badrunnessa summit, which gets underway on Monday with meetings of senior officials and concludes on September 16 after a two-daysummit.

"The NAM can play a future role in bringing peace, stability, security to the Middle East region," Syrian Information Minister Mohsed Bilal said in Cuba, adding it could also help

"cool off the hotheads in Washington." Rice research

FROM PAGE 1 of hybrid rice using the technique is

profitable in many ways.

First of all, he said, it can be harvested in the shortest possible time. "No rice other than ratoon rice can be harvested in 75 to 80 days. It takes 90 to 120 to produce a yield of hybrid rice cultivated from seeds," he added. He claimed that cultivation of hybrid rice from ratoons may curtail production cost by 50 percent and the farmers may

use the savings to purchase seeds and to prepare seedbeds. RDRS carried out the research to find out a way for alleviating monga (near famine situation) in the north-ern region, he said. He explained that now the farmers may harvest hybrid rice in September also and may cultivate robi crops during October and November, creating an opportunity for the agricultural day labourers to stay employed through the monga season.

ruling and opposition parties agree on

Though the speaker maintains

The Bac meeting glossed over the notices for discussion after adjourning the scheduled businesses of the House, sources said.

Jamiruddin Sircar said he would look into the notices if any submitted by theALmembers.

issues of public concern that include reform proposals When asked about the AL's reform proposals, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday told the media that

In response to the opposition pro-posals, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on February 28 proposed forming a committee with representatives from both the ruling and opposition alliances to

discuss the reforms issue. Attaching conditions to the forma-

If the opposition withdraws its conditions, discussion can take place tomorrow headded The AL lawmakers will join the

session this evening. Before that, the AL

The Bac meeting held without the AL session that began yesterday will con-

could be extended if necessary. Jamiruddin Sircar presided over the meeting attended among others by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman,

Later in his inaugural address to the JS sitting, the speaker claimed that he

has been discharging his responsibili-Referring to the existing provisions for formation of the caretaker govern-ment, he told the House that an interim government will be formed and a free and fair election will be held within 90 days after dissolution of the current

He lauded the government's performanceinlast five years.

Iran, EU see light

the EU prefer a face-saving com-promise that might lie in getting Tehran to curb enrichment after the start of a process to implement

Iran's August 22 reply to it, which Western leaders criticised as obfus-In Tehran, the Foreign Ministry repeated on Sunday that Iran would accept no preconditions for

negotiations and again dismissed the idea that it would agree to shelve enrichment. "Suspension is an issue that is in the past. We cannot return to the past. We want talks without any

conference. But an EU diplomat, asking not to be named due to the topic's sensitivity, said the critical issue of how to sequence an enrichment halt and negotiations was dis-

Tensions surged after Iran ignored an August 31 deadline, approved in a Security Council resolution sponsored by the United States, three major EU allies and Russia and China, to stop enrichment work before talks to carry out the incentives.

In the talks, Solana wanted

Larijani to clarify Iran's dense and nuanced 21-page reply to the offer from six world powers of commer-cial and other inducements to halt its nuclear fuel work.

Specifically, Solana sought to

harden up hints in the response that Tehran could curb the program via negotiations.

The United States has given no

indication of willingness to com-promise on the issue of starting talks with Iran before it suspends enrichment. But several EU diplo-mats told Reuters that the French and Germans might be willing to consider such a deal. Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told Irna

news agency that Tehran's proposal for foreign, including Western, investment in its nuclear fuel drive proved it was peaceful.

Sharapova wins FROM PAGE 16

dumped a forehand into the net. The tall 19-year-old first bent down to the court with her hands covering her face before springing up and jumping for joy.

The third seed, playing in her

first Grand Slam final since her Wimbledon triumph, scored the decisive break in the seventh game of the second set after two groundstroke errors by Henin-Hardenne, who had won four of five previous matches against the Russian.

Sharapova, playing her first US Open final, was dominant from the service line. She did not face a single break

Henin-Hardenne, who reached all four 2006 Grand Slam finals but registered victory in only the

BANGABANDHU AVENUE

and Jubo Mahila League together brought out a procession and held a

in the country, they said. Bangladesh Awami Swechchhasebok League also brought out a procession and held

Club near Bangabandhu Avenue. AL leader Asaduzzaman Nur MP

locked in a scuffle with the police.

several activists from there.

Crack down on Proshika evening Proshika sources gave a break down of 87 arrestees. Twenty nine of them were arrested from different places under Manikganj police sta-tion, one was arrested from Singair, three from Raipura, three from Faridgani, two from Bandarban, three from Brahmanbaria, two from Narayanganj Sadar, two from areas under Narayanganj Bandar police station, four from Bajitpur, three from

Hossainpur, two from Sripur, five from Bhairab, four from Comilla, one from Tongi, three from Nagarkanda We have been collecting the numbers of arrestees from across the country," said a Proshika official.

The chief of Proshika is now in

Delhi fortreatment. One of the deputy

directors of the organisation, Abdur

Rab told The Daily Star last night, "So

far we know that more than a hundred

of our officials have been arrested. We

Jessore, one from Bagharpara, seven

from Pakundia, two from Nagarpur,

four from Doulatpur, five from

are not clear why police are arresting our staff. We are trying to know the It would be wrong, if police arrested them in connection with the opposition's political programmes. Because Proshika has no link with those," said Rab. The government launched a countrywide crackdown on Proshika once before in 2004 also. Law enforcers arrested many officials of the organisation on suspicion of their anti-government activities', espe-

lowing AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil's declaration that by April 30, 2004 the ruling four-party alliance governmentwould be toppled. At that time the government arrested many officials of Proshika including its chief Dr Qazi Faruque

Ahmed and filed 20 cases against him

including a sedition case

cially linking them with the main opposition Awami League (AL) fol-

Law enforcers at that time also raided several Proshika offices including its head office at Mirpur in the RAISHAHI Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reported that 15 Proshika

staff have been arrested there includ-ing nine from Debiganj in Panchagarh.

Area Coordinators Mizanur Rahman

The arrestees include Associate

and Anwar Hossain in Panchagarh, and Office Caretakers Solaiman in Bogra and Belal in Panchagarh. Held development workers are -Moshiur Rahman, Anwar Hossain and Sirajul Islam in Natore, Moslem Uddin in Bagmara of Rajshahi, Ruhul Amin in Gomostapur of Chapainawabganj, Nitai, Labiu, Khalil, Biplob, Tapos, and

Abdul Gaffar in Panchagarh. Some of the Proshika offices that were raided are at Bagmara, Puthia and Godagari in Rajshahi, and at Natore, Bogra Sadar, and Debiganj in

Police were seen yesterday keeping watchful eyes on Proshika offices in Rajshahi region. "We're really panicked," said Saiduzzaman Shipon, Proshika's Rajshahi zone coordinator. "Policemen were looking for us," he said adding that none of the staff

police however remained tight-lipped. But several superintendents of police (SP) seeking anonymity confirmed that the government had issued a directive against Proshika staff. There was a written order on Thursday for detecting and arresting

persons engaged in anti-state activi-ties", said an SP adding that the gov-

ernment high ups later in another verbal order redefined the 'anti-state' activities as 'anti-government'.

Another SP said, "I have direct orders for arresting Proshika staff for their alleged activities against the Corroborating them, three more northern SPs informed The Daily Star

that the government is enraged by

Proshika's role in educating the rural population about their electoral rights and the value of their votes. Besides, Proshika's staff are linked with the recent AL announcement of a countrywide movement to topple the government, an SP said The alliance government has kept Proshika on its toes by blocking funds from donors, arresting its workers, raiding its offices and threatening it

with cancellation of registration since 2004, "said a senior official of the NGO. SKL Muhammad Lalon, Rajshahi chapter chief of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (Adab) condemned the crackdown. "It is a constitutional right to criticise a government's anti-people actions. Arresting such people for anti-state activities is illegal and

politically motivated," he said. Our Jessore correspondent reported that five officers of the NGO were arrested by Jessore police on Saturday night from different places of the town The arrested include Divisional Coordinator of Proshika Aftabur Rahman, and Officers Fakrul Hossain, Iqbal Hossain, Abdus Satter and

Second Officer of Kotwali Police Station Sub Inspector Sanaul Haque said there was no case against them. Police arrested them on orders from the higher authorities, he added. A case was lodged against them after the arrests, accusing them of hijacking and hooliganism. They were

KISHOREGANI Our Kishoregani correspondent reported that police arrested at least 25 Proshika employees from four upazilas in the district yesterday. Six were arrested from the Bhoirab upazila area office of Proshika, five

sent to a magistrate court which sent

them to detention rejecting their bail

came to the offices yesterday. Senior officials of Rajshahi range involvement with politics and because they have plans to join a 'conspiracy meeting' in Dhaka on September 12.

> the district however refused to comment on the arrests. CHANDPUR Our Chandpur correspondent reported that Faridganj police arrested six Proshika staff Saturday

Accountant Abdul Mannan, Computer Operator Rajiv Ghose, and Development Workers Aiit Chandra sarker, Hemayet Hossain and The arrestees were sent to jail after

Our Narayanganj correspondent reported that police arrested Mizanur Rahman and Ujjal Chandra Dey of Proshika yesterday night from Nabiganj area of Bandar upazila Golam Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Bandar police station said the

Proshika men were arrested in con-

SM Mizanur Rahman in the ban order said: "There have been apprehensions about disruption of security of the Prime Minister's Office as some political parties have planned to march from different spots towards the PM office." The restricted areas are: from Mohakhali crossing to Parjatan cross-ing via Shaheed Jahangir Gate and Public Service Commission (PSC)

office, Bijoy Sarani to Urojahaj cross-

ing, Agargaon crossing on Rokeya Sarani to Shishu Mela, Shisu Mela to

Dhanmondi Road-27 (old) via Mirpur

crossing via Sundarban Hotel, Bangla Motor crossing to Moghbazar crossing and Moghbazar crossing to Tongi Diversion Road to Mohakhali crossing via Satrasta crossing and Nabisco

were arrested from the Hussainpur upazila office, seven were arrested from the Pakundia upazila office and three were arrested from the Kuliarchar upazila office. Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge of

A case was filed against the arrested Proshika staff, Abdur Rashid The superintendent of police of

Hussainpur police station, said they arrested the Proshika staff for their

midnight from the organisation's office at Faridganj Sadar. Police sources said they were arrested on charges of anti-government activities The arrested staff are -- Divisiona Coordinator Mahmudul Huq,

they had been produced before a court Police said they could not arrest many more because the targets had gone home on the occasion of Shab-NARAYANGANI

nection with a case filed in Rupganj police station. The arrestees were produced before a magistrate court. Meantime, DMP Commissioner

Road, including Mohammadia Super Market, Tallabagh to Square Hospital on Panthapath via Sukrabad. Among the areas are also Square Hospital to Chalet Crossing to Free School Street and Bangla Motor

"We were quizzing Masum as a suspect of the case to get informa- stration protesting the 'killing'

the opposition combine also sticks to its position that it will not join any dialogue if they are on the Such rigid stance of both the sides has stalled the move for dia-

The business community took initiatives for a dialogue between the BNP secretary general and the AL general secretary but the BNP leader outright rejected that. "The proposal will have to come from

At the same time, they urged the

She however proposed to form a committee with representation of

erally appointed the chief election commissioner (CEC) in May last in January this year and another

cussions. als in the House. When the AL did it, she said,

proposals at public meetings.

WHAT BHUTYAN SAYS On the day the AL- led combine

its bleak future.

Replying to a query, he however said speeches at public meetings and things said at discussions on issues are not the same.

the organisations alleged.
A total of 15 garment workers' organisations including the Garment Sramik Oikya Forum Bangladesh Garment Sramik Mukti

AL demand

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that the opposition notices for discussion were not placed at the meeting the documents show that the Al lawmakers had submitted as many as 81 notices calling for discussion on issues including reforms, price hike of essentials, power crisis. Phulbari

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid yesterday told The Daily Star that they will try to speak out on

the matter will not be discussed in the House. First, it should be settled outside the House, he added.

tion of the committee, ALisin fact trying to avoid discussion on the reform proposals, Moudud observed.

Parliamentary Party will meet to set its strategyin parliament. tinue till September 27. The speaker said the current 14-workday time frame

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuivan, Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud

the benefits package.
It was the second day of meetings, following talks on Saturday that focused on the package and

precondition," spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told a weekly news

point after her opening serve of the match in beating 24-year-old