



Activists of 14-party opposition combine gather at Russell Square in Dhaka yesterday during its countrywide blockade of highways, railways and river routes, left, while Chhatra League activists block rail lines at AK Khan Gate in Chittagong during the blockade programme, right.



PHOTO: STAR

### BSC afloat officers defer agitation programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The afloat officers of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) deferred their agitation programme till September 28 after getting assurance from the BSC authorities.

Earlier, the officers on voyages in all the 12 BSC ships threatened to resign en masse on September 22 if their demand for 55 per cent rise in salary is not met.

They deferred the programme as BSC authorities asked them to wait for a few more days so that they can meet their demand, said the leaders of Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers Association here last evening.

Assurance to meet demand came once again when the BSC afloat officers started collecting the resignation letters from all the marine officers of BSC ships, they said.

Sources said though 30 per cent rise in salaries of the BSC shore officials came into effect on July 1, the promised 55 per cent rise in the salaries of the afloat officials has not become effective yet.

The salary of BSC marine officers is at best one fourth of those serving in foreign vessels that prompts them to quit national job, they said.

It also forces BSC to give contractual appointment to old and inefficient officials in higher salaries.



PHOTO: STAR  
Visiting Sri Lankan parliamentarian Dr Jayalath Jayawardena calls on opposition leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her, Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday. Issues of bilateral relations and regional peace and security came up during the meeting.

### CMP makes list of 321 terrorists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong police are preparing list of terrorists to bring them to book before the next general election, sources said.

Initially, they have prepared a list of 321 terrorists from six police stations. Of them, 94 belongs to Fatikchhari, 76 to Raozan, 45 to Hathazari, 42 to Mirersarai, 36 to Rangunia and 28 to Sitakunda.

The list was finalised after gathering information from sources at

union levels, police said.

Most of the terrorists have direct or indirect link with different political parties including ruling BNP opposition Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami, sources said.

The list will be placed at a meeting of the district law and order committee on Saturday.

The list of remaining eight thanas would be prepared soon.

These are Boalkhali, Patiya, Anwara, Chandanais, Satkania, Lohagara, Banskhali and Sandwip.

## 'Identify cops involved in repression of women during PMO siege'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Samajik Protirodh Committee, a platform of some rights organisations, yesterday urged the government to identify the members of the law enforcement agencies involved in repression of women during the Prime Minister's Office siege programme earlier this month.

At a press conference at the National Press Club in the city, the speakers said repression on women has been going on unabated through state patronisation and it is becoming a violent medium in the politics of Bangladesh.

While reading out a written speech, Rekha Chowdhury of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad said the atrocity of police on women political activists during the siege programme was quite disgraceful.

On the other hand, a few newspapers published the pictures of the incident in an indecent way that is also deplorable, she added.

The speakers said the repression on women by the law enforcers during political programmes has been creating a bad impression about the country abroad and the role of ruling parties and police administration in this regard is quite unacceptable.

"For the last one month, a total of five hundred women activists were injured by the police and they not only beat them physically, but also harass them verbally and through indecent gestures," said General Secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Ayesha Khanam, adding that it is a matter of regret that neither the prime minister nor the State Minister for Home Affairs apologised for the disgraceful occurrence.

If the victims of police harassment ask for legal aid, Mahila Parishad will come forward to assist them, she said.

Nasimun Ara Huq Minu of Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra said the activities of police revealed the nature of the government whether it is democratic or autocratic.

She demanded proper investigation into the incident whether the police were involved in the atrocities.

Representatives of other rights organisations including Mahbuba Begum Niru of BOWSHI, Advocate Tobarok Hossain of Sammilita Samajik Andolon, Prof Momotaz Begum of Mahila Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Laila Anzuman Banu of Prip Trust, Rawshan Ara Jahan of Ain O Salish Kendra and Nazma Akhter of Awaz Foundation were also present.

## Int'l Day of Peace today

BSS, Dhaka

The International Day of Peace will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world today to remember the victims of wars and to build a safe, peaceful and more just world.

The 57th session (2002) of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) had decided that from now on the International Day of Peace on September 21 will be "A day of global ceasefire and non-violence".

The day will be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among nations and people and achieving the broadest possible awareness of peace among global community.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in a message on the eve of the day reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to the principles of peace, tolerance and harmony.

She said each year on the day, the international community pauses to reflect on the progress made in the pursuit of global peace and stability.

For peace to be durable it must be based on the basic tenets enshrined in the preamble and

purposes of the UN Charter which embrace human rights, justice and respect for international law, promotion of social progress and better standard of living in larger freedom, she added.

"The gap between the rich and poor among and between nations continues to widen. Globalisation has brought both benefits and downside effects that have had an uneven impact especially on the poor," Khaleda Zia said.

She said drugs, organised crime, new diseases, environmental degradation and international terrorism recognise no boundaries and have invaded all societies and no country can tackle them in isolation.

To address these problems, the Prime Minister said, Bangladesh looks forward to actively contribute in every way possible to fulfil these ends through united efforts.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a message on the occasion said, "I call on all people everywhere to observe one minute of silence today in the name of peace. Let us remember the victims of war. And let each of us pledge to do more, wherever we can make a difference, to bring about lasting peace."



PHOTO: STAR  
Commuters wait for transport during office hours at Khilkhet bus stand in Dhaka yesterday morning. The number of vehicles was few due to 14-party opposition combine's blockade of highways, railways and river routes while intermittent rain added to their miseries.

## Gaza youths have little to celebrate at Ramadan

REUTERS, Gaza

Ramadan is bringing little cheer to the Palestinian youths of Gaza this year.

In years past, Ramadan meant ice-cream, toys and game-playing for youngsters after a day of fasting and worship. Shops were filled with dates, sweets and holiday food.

Such luxuries are now distant

memories for most Palestinians in the territory. Coloured Ramadan lanterns are no longer stocked by shops who know people cannot afford them.

Western aid sanctions imposed after the Islamic militant group Hamas came to power in a January election have deepened economic hardship among the area's 1.4 million people, already hit hard by

six years of fighting with Israel. The holiday will be a time of reflection in Gaza where confrontation with Israel has become a rite of passage for many youngsters.

Naser al-Rizi was 16 with hopes of becoming a physical education teacher, when the Palestinian uprising began in 2000.

Joining a crowd throwing rocks at Israeli troops guarding a Jewish settlement, he was shot in the back and lost the use of his legs.

Rizi says he has no regrets. "Even today, I hope I could recover, I hope or I dream, name it whatever you like, in order to go back and confront the Israeli forces and die as a martyr," said Rizi, who has resumed his high school studies and wants to become a science teacher.

Rizi said the scenes of violence often have a magnetic appeal for young people in Gaza which lacks places of entertainment. "When there is an Israeli raid or when somebody is killed the whole situation gets grim, and children who are supposed to be studying or playing find themselves face to face with the Israeli soldiers," the wheelchair-bound young man said.

Israeli troops and settlers quit the Gaza Strip in 2005, after 38 years of occupation, but the army launched a ground offensive in June after Palestinian militants

abducted a soldier in a cross-border raid.

At least 210 Palestinians, about half of them civilians, have been killed during the offensive, which Israel says is also designed to stop militants firing makeshift rockets into the Jewish state. Hamdi Shaqoura of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights said the dead included 50 children.

MARTYRDOM "I really hope to die as a martyr in Ramadan -- to meet God," said Mohammad, a member of the militant al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades belonging to President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement.

Mohammad was a 15-year-old stone-thrower when the uprising began. He has now become the kind of fighter he long wished to be.

"I used to look at the masked armed Shabab (young men), and hoped I would join them one day," he told Reuters, clutching an AK-47 assault rifle.

Militant groups say they discourage children under the age of 18 from taking part in armed attacks against Israelis.

But some suicide bombings have been carried out by youngsters and Israel says militants use children to smuggle explosives past checkpoints and monitor troop movements.

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