

Uncertainty grips nation as political violence spreads across country

BDR called out, Sec 144 in B'baria

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Amid uncertainty in the political arena, activists of the two major parties—BNP and Awami League—poured on streets in most of district towns in a show of strength. They brought out processions, clashed and damaged each other's offices, leaving scores injured, our correspondents reported.

In Brahmanbaria, BDR was called out and Section 144 clamped in the town for an indefinite period following the killing of district BNP vice-president in a bomb attack on Friday.

Brahmanbaria

A tense situation is prevailing in Brahmanbaria town following the murder of district BNP vice-president advocate Sheikh Muhammad Habibullah, our correspondent reported.

Yesterday, following after his namaj-e-janaza at Paura Mukta Mncah after Juhar prayer, BNP at a rally gave a three-day ultimatum to the administration to arrest the killers and also declared RAM Wahidul Mukhtadir Rabiul, former private secretary to Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina, 'unwanted' in the district, blaming him for the killing.

Habibullah was also secretary of Brahmanbaria Bar Council and secretary of Brahmanbaria Public Library.

The post-janaza rally was addressed by among others, Red Crescent Society Chairman Haroon-Al-Rashid MP and other BNP leaders.

After the rally, BNP brought out a mourning procession in the town carrying the body of Habibullah.

The town wore a deserted look yesterday as most of the shops and markets remained closed and vehicles off the roads fearing further violence.

Three others were injured during the clashes when some youths hurled several bombs on a BNP procession at Kachari Pukurpar after Khaleda Zia's address to nation Friday evening. They are district Juba Dal president Md Emdadul Hasan, Chhatra Dal activist Biddiyut Shah and Md Yeasin Mahmud.

Habibullah's death triggered violence by BNP activists in the town, who damaged shops, a diagnostic centre and the chamber of advocate Mahabubul Alam Khukan, president of Brahmanbaria Juba League.

They also damaged vehicles and attacked policemen on streets.

At about 9 pm Friday, District Magistrate Md. Ali Akbar imposed Section 144 in the town to stave off further violence between the two parties.

Section 144 would be in force till further notice, Additional District Magistrate Banamali Bhaumik said yesterday.

Three platoons of BDR and riots police were deployed in the different areas of the town to control the situation, OC Md. Belal Uddin Tarafdar said.

Police arrested five persons for interrogation in connection with Habibullah's murder. No case was filed till writing this report, police said.

Tangail

Activists of 14-party alliance yesterday vandalised BNP offices in Dhanbari and Basail upazila headquarters in the district while 20 people were injured in

chase and counter-chase were followed with BNP activists in Madhupur upazila yesterday, police and witnesses said.

Earlier, BNP and AL activists vandalised each other's party offices in Main Road area in Tangail town Friday evening.

No heavy vehicle plied Dhaka-Jamuna Bridge highway yesterday due to barricades put up by 14-party activists on different points. All shops and markets in the town remained closed.

Rival activists of BNP and Awami League brought out processions in the town carrying sticks and held rallies.

Clashes erupted when the rivals faced each other at Niralar More intersection in the town, leaving at least 100 people including 10 policemen injured. The clashes spread to Victoria Road, Main Road, and Kalibari Road areas in the town.

Police charged batons and lobbed at least 30 tear shells to control quell the violence.

A large number of policemen were deployed in the town as tension mounted after the clashes.

Khulna

Nine people were injured in clashes between BNP and Awami League at Dekbunglow square under Khulna thana. The clashes continued for about twenty minutes. The injured could not be identified immediately but Awami League said that three of its leaders are among the injured.

Police lobbed seven tear gas shells to quell the violence.

Awami League leaders claimed that the clashes erupted after BNP activists attacked their rally at Picture Palace intersection.

But city BNP convenor Ali Asgar Lobi refuted the allegation, blaming Awami League for the incident.

Satkhira

Activists and supporters of Awami League led 14-party alliance brought out a big procession, barricaded the Sadar Hospital road in the town and held a rally there to press electoral reforms and appointment of an 'acceptable' person as chief of the caretaker government.

Speakers at the rally vowed to resist the BNP-Jamaat politics in the district and to resist their program in the town today.

Earlier, 14-party activists attacked Jamaat lawmaker's office in the town and damaged and ransacked it. They also burnt a banner of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of the Jamaat, at Sadar Hospital road.

Demonstrators also pelted stones and damaged windowpanes of the office of Islami Insurance at Palashpole in the town.

At Shyamnagar, the 14-party activists torched a Jamaat office.

Moulvibazar

Leaders and workers of Awami League led 14-party alliance brought out processions in Moulvibazar town, barricaded the Dhaka-Sylhet highway and held a public meeting at Kusumbagh square.

Presence of BNP activists on town streets was seen very thin.

BNP also held a public meeting at Chowmuhana square. No untoward incident was reported from any area till filing of this report in the evening.

Nilphamari

BNP and its front organisations

abandoned their earlier announced programme to bring out a procession in the town yesterday protesting what they had called anarchy created by Awami League. BNP leaders said they postponed the program to avoid confrontation.

BNP office was found deserted and few party leaders and workers were seen in public.

On the other hand, Awami League brought out a procession in the town, barricaded roads and held a rally.

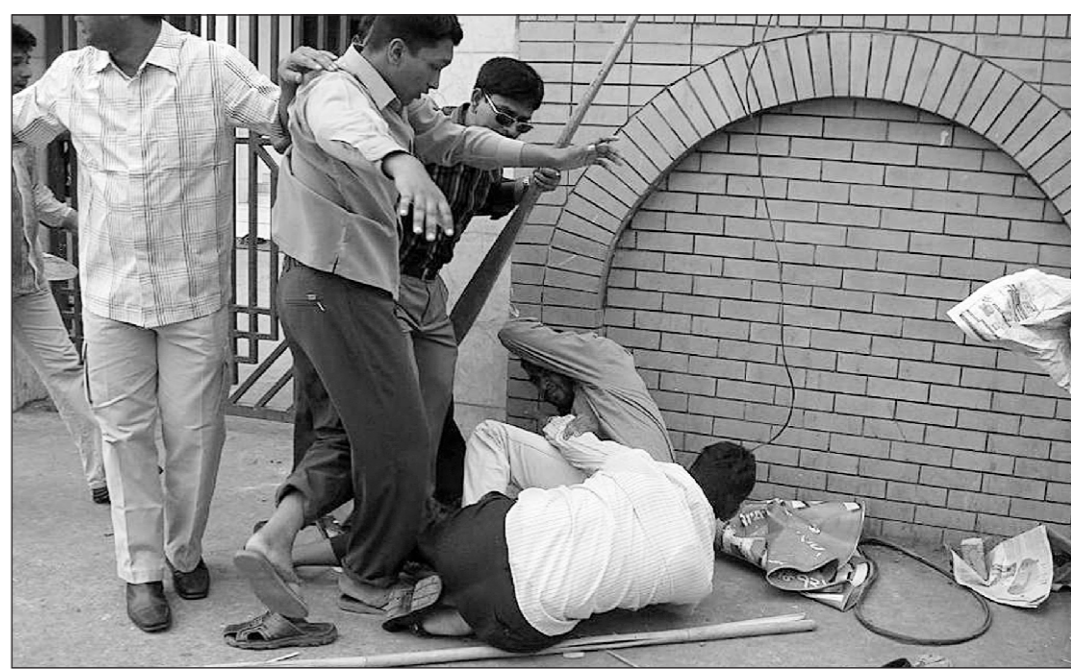
Shops and business establishments remained closed yesterday out of panic.

Police have been deployed in front of BNP offices at the district town and in upazila headquarters, police sources said.

Kishoreganj

Residence of former upazila BNP secretary Rafiqul Islam and offices of two BNP nomination seekers were ransacked by Awami League activists in Hussainpur upazila yesterday evening.

Angry AL activists after a rally at Pilot High School compound attacked and ransacked offices BNP nomination seekers Mirza Khokon (brother of Mirza Abbas) and Abdus Salam.



Activists of Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League, student fronts of BNP and Awami League, locked in a clash on the Sadar Road in Barisal city (top) and Chhatra League activists beating Sylhet city Islami Chhatra Shibir president Nurul Islam at Court Point yesterday.

Khulna BNP factions hold separate rallies

STAR REPORT

Two factions of Khulna BNP held two separate rallies in the city yesterday protesting what they called the countrywide anarchy let loose by 14-party alliance.

The faction led by lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi held its rally at Royal Hotel square under the banner of four-party alliance. Lobi, convenor of Khulna city BNP, presided. It was addressed by, among others, city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, district BNP president Prof Majidul Islam, Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) leader Moulana Faruqi, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Ruhul Quddus and Chhatra Dal leader Nazmul Huda Sagor.

On the other hand, the faction led by lawmaker Nurul Islam held its rally at Helalata intersection, also under the banner of four-party alliance. Nurul Islam presided over the rally.

It was addressed by, among others, former secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju, IOJ leaders Nasiruddin and Selim Mohammad and district BNP secretary Shafiqul Alam Mona.

Speakers of both rallies strongly condemned AL-led 14-party alliance for 'resorting to vandalism across the country'.

SUST reopens Nov 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) will reopen on November 1 and classes will begin from November 5.

Newly appointed Vice-chancellor Prof Aminul Islam, who was a physics teacher in Rajshahi University, reached Sylhet yesterday evening.

He replaces Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed, who had to resign in face of students' demonstration following killing of a student on May 14 in police firing but managed a comeback on July 5 under protection of police and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dalk (JCD), BNP's student front and of Isami Chhatra Shibir, student front of Jamaat-e-Islami. Since then, opposition backed teachers and student organisations have been demanding his withdrawal.

The university was closed amid violence. It was reopened on August 9 after three months amid an indefinite strike call by opposition-backed student organisations.

Classes were not held. It was

closed again on October 20 for Eid.

SUST Registrar Jamil Ahmed Chowdhury told the Daily Star

yesterday that university offices will resume normal activities on November 1 and academic activities will start from November 5. Things will be normalised and academic activities will begin in full swing from November 5, he hoped.

On October 20, agitating teachers locked the VC's office demanding his withdrawal by November 5. SUST employees also locked the Registrar office protesting non-payment of salary and Eid bonus before Eid vacation.

Professor Musleh Uddin Ahmed's resignation was accepted on 22 October, sources said. He will return to his previous position in public administration department in Dhaka University, they said.

Outgoing VC Prof Ahmed while talking to the Daily Star Tuesday said, "I resigned last week considering to help bring back normalcy on the campus".

Vow to resist 'renegade' Moni Swapan in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Rangamati district BNP and its front organisations yesterday declared renegade party leader and former deputy minister for CHT affairs Moni Swapan Dewan "unwanted" in Rangamati and declared to resist his political activities in the district.

Dewan joined the newly floated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by BNP founder-members Prof. Barduddozza Chowdhury and Col. (Rtd) Oli Ahmed.

The party activists brought out a procession in the town, chanted slogans against Dewan and burnt his effigy.

At an emergency meeting, the district BNP also expelled Moni Swapan from the party.

Speakers at a rally prior to the procession vowed to resist Moni Swapan's political activities in Rangamati.

BDR, BSF trade fire in Panchagarh

Indian shot dead in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday noon traded gunshots in Majhipara border of Tetulia upazila in Panchagarh district, BDR and local people said.

Villagers said, members of 10, BSF Battalion fired at least 10 gun shots targeting several Bangladeshi villagers at about 1.30 pm. At once, BDR troops retaliated firing at least 15 gun shots. But, no casualty was reported.

BDR sent a letter to BSF protesting the incident and urging them to hold a flag meeting. But, BSF did not respond to the call and reinforced forces increasing border patrol.

BDR forces were alerted, BDR sources said. On contact, Lt Col Md Farid of 29, Rifles Battalion admitted the fact saying, BDR and BSF traded gunshots over tea plantation near Zero Line.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: BSF yesterday morning gunned down an Indian national apprehending him a Bangladeshi national at Tarali village under Swarupnagar thana in 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, India. The spot is situated opposite Keragachhi, a border village in Kalaroa upazila, Satkhira.

The victim is Amanullah, 19, son of Reza Malik of Nityanandakati village who died on the spot.

Earlier, BSF wounded critically a Bangladesh boy while he was collecting grass for his cattle at Mirgarh, a border village in Sadar upazila, Panchagarh on Wednesday.

The injured is Md Japan Ali, 18. Villagers rescued him from the spot and rushed him to Panchagarh hospital from where he was shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH), family and BDR sources said.

BDR sent a protest letter to BSF.

RU 'CONTROVERSIAL' RECRUITMENT

Jobs of 222 regularised during Eid vacation

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University Syndicate at an extraordinary emergency meeting has regularised jobs of 222 class III and class IV employees out of the 546 employees recruited controversially in 2004.

The Syndicate meeting was held on the night of October 22 during Eid vacation, meeting sources said.

The meeting also approved appointment of nine teachers and officials.

The Syndicate meeting took the

decisions ignoring a walkout by two of its members—Prof Abdus Sobhan and Prof Saiful Islam. The two Syndicate members submitted a note of dissent to Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain saying those were 'illegal and violation of Rajshahi University Act' and left the meeting, sources said.

Prof Abdus Sobhan is also convenor of Pragatisheel Shikkhak Samaj, a body of pro Awami League teachers.

The sources said most of the 11 agenda of the meeting were relating

to staff recruitment.

Talking to this correspondent later, RU Syndicate member Prof Abdus Sobhan said such an extraordinary syndicate meeting was unprecedented in the university's history.

RU VC Prof Altaf Hossain however claimed that the recruitment was made as per university rules and procedures. Asked about calling an extraordinary meeting during Eid vacation, the VC said, "It can be called if the VC likes".

7X3



People returning to the capital had to walk long distances on the Dhaka-Mawa highway yesterday as there was no transport due to barricades put up by 14-party activists at many points.

12X2