

Normalcy crawls back to cities, towns

District administrations hold meetings with political leaders

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Normalcy crawled back to some cities and towns yesterday after two days of political violence.

But clashes took place in some areas including Rajshahi city where at least 100 people were injured when Islami Chhatra Shibir activists attacked a rally of 14-party alliance.

Road-rail barricade continued till yesterday in some districts though the Awami League-led 14-party alliance withdrew the programme following positive political developments in the capital, our correspondents reported.

Section 144 clamped to stave off violence was still in force in some areas. Rival parties brought out processions in some district towns as a show of strength but avoided clash.

Barisal city witnessed a calm day yesterday after two days' clashes between Awami League and BNP activists that left a BNP activist killed and over 40 people injured, our correspondent reported.

The rival party activists also ransacked each other's party offices, houses and business enterprises at many points in the city during the violence.

Section 144, imposed in the city centre and surrounding areas, remained in force till yesterday. Patrol on streets by Rab, APBN and police continued. Deputy Commissioner of Barisal Metropolitan Police Skaikh Abdur Rahim told our

correspondent that Section 144 will continue in certain areas of the city till normalcy returns.

The roadblock program called by the opposition alliance continued in highways and adjacent areas. This correspondent saw the Barisal-Dhaka highway barricaded at Amtala intersection in the city yesterday evening. A small number of transports however plied some city streets.

Vehicles did not ply highways and inter-district routes till yesterday evening. Transport owners said they will ply vehicles from morning today.

Launches and other river transports started moving. But Most of them were over-loaded with passengers.

Banks and other financial institutions, most markets and shops reopened.

However prices of the essentials rose as supplies were disrupted due to countrywide road blockade.

Presence of people in offices and courts were less than normal as communication is yet to return to normalcy.

Classes and examinations in educational institutions did not resume yesterday.

In Rangpur, calm prevailed in the town while a Jamaat office was torched in Pargacha yesterday afternoon.

Local Jamaat leaders claimed that the party office was burnt by 14-party activists, an allegation denied by their leaders. Police was yet to identify

the culprits.

Rangpur Police Superintendent Hasanul Haider held a meeting with representatives of all political parties to maintain law and order.

Meeting sources said the political leaders said they would try to check violence during political programmes and help the administration maintain peace.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent reported that a normal situation was prevailing in the district after two days' unrest which left over 50 people injured, including three journalists.

Shops reopened and people were seen on streets, shopping centres and kitchen markets in large numbers.

Transport company owners said they will ply their vehicles from night (Monday night).

Mymensingh Police Superintendent Chhibgat Ullah held a meeting with leaders of all political parties seeking their cooperation to maintain peace and order.

District BNP president AKM Mosharrif Hossain, secretary Monjurul Haque Monju, Awami League president Motiur Rahman and secretary Abdul Matin Sarker and front ranking leaders of other parties attended the meeting.

In Brahmanbaria, an uneasy calm prevailed in the town while BNP held a mourning meeting at a community centre in the town and brought out a procession in

the afternoon to protest the killing of its district vice-president advocate Sheikh Md. Habibullah in a bomb attack on a party procession Friday night. But there was no violence in the town.

Markers and shops started reopening after three day's shutdown following clashes between BNP and Awami League.

Tension prevailed in the political circle as Juba League worker Md. Haroon Mia and Chhatra League activists Md. Iqbal, injured in a clash in

Bancharampur upazila, were sent to Dhaka for better treatment.

At the meeting, BNP decided to hold a protest meeting on November 6 at Poura Mukta Mancha here.

Brahmanbaria Bar Association also brought out a mourning procession in the court complex to mourn the death of district BNP vice-president.

According to police sources, three platoons of BDR and five platoons of police headed by two magistrates were deployed in the town.

During clashes on Friday and Saturday, at least 16 houses and four shops were damaged.

Sec 144 in six Barisal areas

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Section 144, clamped in some areas of Barisal divisional city and six upazila headquarters following political violence was in force till yesterday.

Besides the city, Section 144 was imposed at Banaripara upazila town on Sunday night, at Swarupkati town in Pirojpur district and in Baufal, Kalapara and Galachipa upazila towns in Patuakhali districts on Saturday after clashes between activists of the 4-party alliance and the 14-party alliance.

Authorities there said the restriction will continue till situation in the areas returns to normalcy.

Khagrachhari AL memo for caretaker chief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Khagrachhari Awami League yesterday submitted a memorandum to the President and Chief Advisor of caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed through the Deputy Commissioner to press its five-point demand.

The demands include removal of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Chairman, Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman and chairman of internal refugee taskforce, cancellation of the 'fake' voter list and recovery of illegal arms from criminals and terrorists to hold a free and fair election.

Leaders and activists of Awami League and its front organisations went to the office of Deputy Commissioner Golum Mowla chanting slogans and handed over the memorandum to him.

In the memo, they alleged that the chairmen of the bodies were appointed illegally by the 4-party alliance government and they will try to influence the coming election.

Rajshahi journalist arrested, tortured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A journalist of Bagmara in Rajshahi was tortured for several hours by members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) after his arrest on suspicion to be an outlaw from his house at night on Saturday.

Focus Bangla journalist Shafiqul Islam was sent to jail yesterday under Section 54 after inhuman torture. Shafiq who also worked for Janakantha earlier, narrated his plight yesterday after he was produced before a magistrate court. He said the Rab members gave electric shock on his body and tortured for eight hours hanging him upside down at their office.

While torturing, they named Prothom Alo staff reporter Anu Mostafa, The Daily Star reporter Anwar Ali, Sangbad reporter Zahangir Alam Aakash and Janakantha photojournalist Selim Zahangir as their next target, he said.

Shafiq confessed before Rab to his involvement in the police murder of Chowbaria.

Later, he was handed over to Bagmara police Sunday night.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi Journalists' Union brought out a protest procession in Rajshahi city before holding a rally at Shaheb Bazar. RUJ president Hasan Millat chaired the rally.

Speakers criticised Rab for harassing journalists without specific charges. The lamented saying Rab did not arrest Rajshahi University Shibir president Mahbul Alam Salehi, a killer of Prof S Taher Ahmed.

They said the law enforcers still show favouritism towards BNP-Jamaat activists despite change in the 4-



PHOTO: STAR
FOCUS BANGLA journalist Shafiqul Islam being taken to a Rajshahi court yesterday.

party Alliance government.

Former RUJ president Mustafizur Rahman Khan Alam, secretary Zahangir Alam Aakash, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists executive member Anu Mostafa, journalists Mahtab Chowdhury, Anwar Ali, Zabid Apu, and Sammito Sangskritik Jote secretary Dr Sayed Shafiqul Alam addressed the rally.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leader and Chittagong city Mayor Mohiuddin Ahmed (left) and BNP leader Abdullah al Noman addressing public meetings at Lal Dighi Maidan and Kazir Dewri in the port city yesterday.

BNP RIFT WIDENS AS MONI JOINS LDP

SQ Chowdhury eyes Rangamati constituency

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

Rift in Rangamati district BNP has widened with a party stalwart from Chittagong joining several contenders for alliance ticket from the hill district in coming election.

They have already started campaign, displaying posters, meeting people and holding party workers' meeting.

Salauddin Qauer Chowdhury, former parliamentary affairs advisor to the prime minister will seek nomination from Ranbgamati, party sources claimed. His posters have appeared at different areas of the district.

They claimed that the rift widened as Khaleda Zia did not declare any party candidate from this constituency during her visit to CHT last month though, at a public meeting in Khagrachhari, she announced the name of Wadud Bhuiyan as alliance candidate from there.

They said joining of former deputy

minister for CHT affairs Moni Swapan Dewan to newly formed Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) contributed to widening of the rift in the 4-party alliance in Rangamati. BNP may face a crisis in finding a 'competent' candidate, political circles observed.

Sources close to Moni Swapan said he left BNP as the party ignored him during last five years.

As per provisions of the CHT peace accord, Moni was supposed to be full minister for CHT affairs, but the government made him deputy minister. This aggrieved him, they claimed.

Party high-ups neglected Moni Swapan as he raised his voice for full implementation of the accord. Future of BNP in Rangamati has now become uncertain after Moni's joining the LDP, they claimed.

"We eagerly waited for Khaleda Zia's announcement regarding party nominee from Rangamati. But we were frustrated", a senior BNP leader said seeking anonymity.

Appearance of Salauddin

Quader's posters under the banner of Samo Odhikar Andolan (SOA) has surprised many of us, he said. Samo Odhikar Andolan is a platform of Bangali settlers formed by Wadud Bhuiyan after the 4-party alliance came to power in 2001 election.

The political scenario will be complicated if Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury, vies for nomination from Rangamati, BNP leaders said.

District BNP president Md Nazim Uddin, claiming himself to be the most competent candidate and a dedicated leader, is seeking nomination.

There are other contenders in BNP. Talking to this correspondent, party's district secretary M Zahir Ahmed said, "I am holding the post of secretary for 18 years. My contribution is greater than any other leader. I will seek nomination and I think party high-ups will consider".

Asked about Salahuddin K Chowdhury, Zahir said, "I don't

want to make any comment about other aspirants because it is completely their desire and party's decision".

Nazimuddin Ahmed's son district JCD president Mamunur Rashid Mamun also expressed his desire to vie for nomination. "I will seek nomination. Young leaders should come forward to lead the party. Party high-ups will take the right decision", Mamun added.

Moni Swapan Dewan could not be contacted over cell phone despite repeated attempts.

Nazimuddin and Parijat Kusum Chakma were defeated by Awami League candidates in 1991 and 1996 general elections respectively. But AL candidate Dipankar Talukder lost to four-party alliance candidate Moni Swapan Dewan in 2001 election.

PSTU vacation extended till Nov 8

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Eid vacation of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) has been extended till November 8, university sources said.

The decision was taken at a meeting held at the residence of vice-chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Abdul Latif Masum on Monday. The VC chaired the meeting.

The university will now reopen on November 9 instead of November 4.

No export, import thru' Hili land port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hili Land Port has come to a standstill due to stoppage in import and export activities following political unrest in the port area, C & F Agents Association sources said.

Hundreds of trucks were stranded on both sides of the Indo-Bangla border, they said.

Jamaat-e-Islami cadres reportedly forced businessmen to stop trade through the port while BNP and Awami League (AL) activists locked in several clashes in the port area.

The district administration had to impose Section 144 in the area which remained in force till Sunday midnight.

On contact, Hili Land Port assistant customs commissioner Abu Nur Rashed said the port activities were stopped since October 28 although they kept open the office round the clock.

Immigration activities were also stopped as no immigrant entered or left through Hili check post in last three days, check post sources said.

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Mamunur Rashid



Nazimuddin



Zahir Ahmed



SQ Chowdhury