

AL vows to establish true democracy

By Staff Correspondent

Central leaders of the Awami League at a public meeting Saturday vowed to continue their movement to establish 'true democracy' to oust what they called the 'neo-autocracy' launched by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The Awami League had been compelled to begin the movement with the observance of Saturday's half-day hartal due to 'autocratic' and 'undemocratic' conduct by the ruling party even after the fall of the autocracy in the country, the AL leaders told the meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city following the country-wide dawn-to-noon hartal.

The hartal was called by Awami League to protest the 'attempt' on the AL chief Sheikh Hasina, terrorism and vote-rigging during Wednesday's by-elections in the capital.

The AL leaders called upon the ruling party to shun the path of 'violence' and follow democratic norms so that the people's faith in democracy does not erode. Otherwise, they warned, they would be compelled to launch a democratic movement to unseat the BNP government from power in a democratic way.

Organised by the city AL, the meeting was addressed by AL president members Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Abdul Mannan, and Quamruzzaman, General Secretary Sajeda Choudhury, Joint Secretaries Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil, Organising Secretary Tofael Ahmed, Publicity Secretary Md Nasim, Matia Choudhury, Mofazzil Hossain Choudhury Maya and others. City Unit chief Mozaffar Hossain Patu was in the chair.

Sajeda Choudhury MP, addressing the meeting, said that people, through successfully observing the hartal expressed their 'no-confidence' in the BNP government and protested the 'attempt' on Sheikh Hasina.

The BNP had unveiled its autocratic character to the people by letting loose terrorism, rigging votes during the by-elections and other anti-people steps in its six-month rule, she alleged.

Sajeda blamed the BNP of being contradictory in its words and deeds. The party (BNP) was committed to restoring democracy in the country. But it started following the same path that the fallen regime of Ershad had adopted after assuming power, she remarked.

Congratulating the people for observing the hartal in the city and elsewhere in the

country, Sajeda called to carry forward the fresh movement under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina to put democracy on a firm footing, bring about people's emancipation and ensure rule of law in the country. AL won't leave the streets until its movement becomes successful, she said.

Abdul Mannan said that the BNP government which got a unique opportunity to uphold democratic norms had frustrated the nation on September 11 by resorting to terrorism and other undemocratic acts in violation of the code of conduct of the polls.

Under the rule of the BNP, the nation witnessed no steps to improve the lot of the commonman, rather repression on them increased, he added.

The by-election was BNP's popularity test, but it totally failed to gain popularity.

The BNP chief and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia did not condemn the armed attack on Sheikh Hasina, nor did she order action against the attacker, he regretted adding Khaleda's acts proved her involvement in the incident.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz warned that Khaleda Zia would have the same fate as Ershad if she did not stop repression and terrorism let loose by her party and administration.

Amir Hossain Amu said that the people observing the hartal across the country rejected the BNP government. The autocratic steps by the ruling BNP were pushing the country towards a civil war, he added.

Amu cautioned that his party would be forced to resort to action against 'autocratic acts' and repression on AL activists if the ruling party did not shun the path of violence. 'AL has the strength to topple the government within six months', he commented.

Abdul Jalil expressed the determination of the AL to overthrow the 'neo-autocracy' in the country.

Tofael Ahmed said that Ershad was given ten years' RI for possessing illegal arms, but the armed attacker of Hasina was released after being handed over to the police.

Tofael Ahmed MP pointed out that ex-President Ershad was given ten years' RI by the present government. But the government's Prime Minister led armed youths during the by-elections and violated the election code.

Alleging widespread violence and vote-rigging in the by-elections Tofael said that people did not trust autocracy to experience the same again.



A bonfire at Hatirpool Bazar in the city during the hartal hours Saturday. — Star photo

Violence marks hartal

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While BDR patrolled the streets of Dhaka.

During the hartal hours, all transports were off the streets in the capital city. Only some rickshaws were seen plying. A few of the state-owned BRTC buses plying from Mirpur to Mohammedpur under police escort. Inter-city bus services from Gabtali, Sayedabad and Mohakhali terminals did not operate.

Shops, supermarkets, business establishments, courts and educational institutions remained closed while banks and financial institutions kept their shutters down during the hartal.

Attendance in the government and private offices was thin till noon as office-goers had to walk to reach their destinations.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and other Ministers attended

passengers of the bus were injured and later given first aid at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A motor bike was set ablaze by hartal supporters at the Science Laboratory gate at around 9 am and a baby taxi was also damaged at the same place.

Rickshaws and some other vehicles came under attack of the agitators in other parts of the city including Maghbazar, Kamalapur, Jatrabari, Nilkhet, Nawabpur and Azimpur. Picketers also burnt tyres at Bijoy Sarani and other places in the city.

Supporters of AL and BNP clashed at Begunbari and Suritola in which two AL activists were injured.

Railway communications were disrupted at some places in the country due to hartal. Railway sources said that all the trains excluding six have

including the Adamjee Jute Mills and government and non-government offices remained open during the hartal, but attendance was thin.

The district Awami League held two rallies — one at the Diamond Hall Square and the other in front of the AL office.

AL leaders Prof Nazma Rahman, Shah Mizanur Rahman, Shahed Rahman, Advocate Asaduzzaman, Mujibul Islam, Chhatra League leader Shamim Osman and Abu Hossain Mohammad Shahid Badal and others addressed the rallies.

The speakers thanked the people for observing the hartal and demanded immediate arrest of the attacker of AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds: At least twenty persons were injured in sporadic clashes and chase and counter-chases during Saturday's half-day hartal in the Port City.

Witnesses said clashes took place between Awami League, supporters and anti-hartal forces at Hallishahar, Agrabad, Station Road, Bipani Bitan crossing and Jamal Khan areas.

Among the injured, ten persons were rushed to hospital and clinics.

Rallies were held by Awami League at different places in the city during hartal. Excluding a few rickshaws, all transports stayed off the roads and highways.

Most of the shops and markets remained closed. Attendance was thin in offices and business places.

Functioning of the Chittagong Port was partially disrupted while the production in most of the mills and factories in the industrial belt was hampered.

Our BAU correspondent reports from Mymensingh: The six-hour hartal called by the Awami League was observed peacefully in Mymensingh. All vehicles were off the roads while shops, offices and educational institutions remained closed during hartal hours. Processions were brought out by pro-hartal forces.

Our Ishurdi correspondent adds: Hartal was observed peacefully in Ishurdi. All vehicles were off the roads and educational institutions remained totally closed while attendance in the offices was thin.

Our correspondents from Chuadanga, Gopalganj, Rangpur, Jhenidah and Gazipur also reported that the hartal was observed in those places.

In Jhenidah, a Juba League worker was injured when some young men hit him with an iron rod as he asked a shopkeeper to close his shop at Kanchan Nagar in the town during the hartal hours Saturday, witnesses said.

BSS reports from Khulna: A half-day strike called by Awami League was observed as part of the country-wide programme.

During the strike period vehicular traffic went off the roads and long distance road and river communications remained suspended half-day Saturday. Attendances were thin in government and semi-government offices while transactions in financial institutions also remained suspended.



A boy hospitalised with injuries he received during the hartal hours Saturday. — Star photo

their secretariat offices yesterday.

Explosions of crackers were heard in the city in the morning from different areas and two persons sustained injuries from the blasts.

Police resorted to lathicharge on pro-hartal demonstrators at Farm Gate around 9 am and five people including two Chhatra League leaders were arrested from that spot.

The student leaders are — B M Mojmamol and Montajuddin Mehd, both joint secretaries, BCL central committee.

Two rounds of teargas shells were lobbed on pro-hartal demonstrators at Karwan Bazar.

Another procession of pro-hartal activists was dispersed by police at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram at around 10-30 am. Four rounds of teargas shells were lobbed on the demonstrators who were also lathicharged by police.

There were some chases and counter-chases between police and demonstrators at Gulistan and Bangabandhu Avenue in the morning. Police resorted to lathicharge on the agitators and arrested some AL activists from these places.

A government staff bus coming towards the Secretariat, came under attack by the pro-hartal agitators. Four government employees, who were among the

run on their respective routes without any interruption.

The inter-city 'Teesta' train, 251 up train (Mymensingh-Bahadurabad), 212 down train (Bahadurabad-Dhaka), 254 down train (Jagannathganj-Mymensingh), 492 passenger train (Bonarpura-Shantahar) and 21 up train (Shantahar-Lalmohar) were held up at different points for certain time varying from half an hour to two and half hours during the hartal period, the sources said.

Biman flights and riverine carriers to and from Dhaka operated normally.

Central leaders of the Awami League claimed total success of the hartal all over the country. They alleged that 52 persons were injured during hartal while about 150 people were taken into custody in the city.

According to our correspondent, the half-day hartal was observed partially in Narayanjanj. Motor vehicles were off the roads, but rickshaws plied.

Besides, water transports also operated as usual. Plying of rickshaws was resisted by the picketers but plied following police intervention.

Train communications between Dhaka and Narayanjanj were disrupted after some picketers attacked the 8 o'clock train that started from Narayanjanj railway station.

All the mills and factories

JCD calls hartal a conspiracy, urges 'yes' votes

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of ruling BNP, Friday said the hartal called by Awami League was designed to thwart the referendum and obstruct the democratic process by destabilising the democratically elected government.

The JCD leaders at a rally in front of the National Press Club termed the hartal as a 'conspiracy' and called upon the people to foil this through massive casting of 'yes' votes in favour of parliamentary system.

The rally was arranged by the JCD's city unit to protest what it called attempt to manhandle its convener Meer Shawkot Ali MP during by-elections in the city and also to campaign for 'yes' votes. Presided over by JCD city unit President Abul Khair Bhuiyan, the rally was addressed among others by DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman and GS Khairul Kabir Khokon, RUCSU VP Rizvi Ahmed, DU Senate member Fazlul Hoq Milon and Moniruzzaman Monir, Kamaruzzaman Raton, Ilias Ali, Abdul Malek, Mosharrar Hossain Thakur and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

Amanullah Aman said being rejected in the February 27 polls, the Awami League, taking the Jatiya Party along, was now trying to destabilise the BNP government by implicating it in incidents fabricated by it. People have voted the BNP to power and they will resist any conspiracy against it to nurture the fledgling democracy, he observed.

He said that the incident at Green Road on Wednesday was pre-planned by Awami League and its terrorist supporters opened fire on Jubo Dal leader Abdul Wahed and manhandled Meer Shawkot Ali MP.

How the cartridge of a bullet was found in front of

Acid thrown into cop's house: 3 injured

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Sept 14: Miscreants threw acid into the residence of a police officer this morning injuring three of his inmates. The police officer, Ashrafuzzaman an ASI is now in charge of Trishal police station.

Two of his sons, both college students and his son-in-law were injured in the acid attack.

Khaleda accepts invitation to Colombo summit

The visiting Sri Lankan Foreign Minister J E Harold Herat, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her residence Saturday evening and handed over an invitation from President R Premadasa to attend the sixth SAARC summit in Colombo in early November, reports BSS.

Begum Zia thanked Herat for the letter and gladly accepted the invitation to attend the summit. She said she was looking forward to be in Colombo for the summit.

The Prime Minister reiterated Bangladesh's firm commitment to the SAARC and said Bangladesh was eager to work closely with other SAARC member countries for the continued progress and strengthening of the group in future.

Indo-Pak talks on Kashmir postponed

ISLAMABAD, Sept 14: India and Pakistan have postponed talks aimed at easing border tension in disputed Kashmir state, a Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman said today reports Reuter.

Ershad's trial now to resume Sept 18

By Staff Correspondent

The Special Judge Court trying deposed President Ershad could not be resumed on Saturday due to hartal called by the Awami League.

The court which was adjourned on September 14 was scheduled to resume yesterday at 10.00 am. However, Judge Mohammad Ali Khan of the Special Judge Court informed the caretaker of the venue of the court adjacent to the Central Jail that the trial of Ershad will now resume on September 18.

Ershad is now being tried for amassing wealth from beyond known sources of income.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Aminul Haque who is the chief prosecution lawyer of this case is likely to return today from Japan. Aminul Haque went to Japan to attend a seminar on legal affairs.

Hasina thanks people for making hartal a success

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) Sheikh Hasina congratulated the people for observing a half-day hartal Saturday all over the country at the call of her party, reports BSS.

In a press statement, she condemned the alleged attack on the political workers of her party at different places in the capital during the hartal period.

She demanded immediate release of party leaders and workers who, she said, were arrested during the hartal and observed that in democracy call for hartal and its observing were a democratic right.

Sheikh Hasina dismissed as being imaginary the allegation of the ruling party that hartal was a conspiracy against referendum. In this connection, she wanted to know why the government was silent about the self-declared killers of Bangabandhu who had been making objectionable statements against referendum.

She said after the fall of autocrat Ershad the nation expected that a fair democratic political process would return to the country. But unfortunately the present government was ignoring the democratic rules and principles one after another, she said.

DUAAC reviews campus situation

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University Academic Atmosphere Council (DUAAC) at a meeting here Saturday decided to form a monitoring committee comprising the Proctor, Provosts and student leaders to monitor campus situation.

The meeting also decided to form hall units of the monitoring committee to oversee the situation and check entry of outsiders. The monitoring committee will meet daily during the first week after the university reopens on September 17. After the first week, regular scheduled meetings will continue.

The meeting urged the law enforcing agency to take action against the campus terrorists. Vice-Chancellor Prof Moniruzzaman Miah presided over the meeting.

While addressing the meeting he said the university authority would maintain neutrality and utmost efforts would be taken to maintain campus peace.

Investigators question Gorbachev

MOSCOW, Sept 14: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev spent two hours today giving detailed testimony as part of the criminal investigation into last month's failed coup against him, Tass news agency said, reports Reuter.

The brief report said the President was questioned by soviet and Russian investigators jointly responsible for the inquiry into the self-proclaimed State Emergency Committee which announced it had taken power on August 19.

It gave no details of Gorbachev's testimony.

The Russian Prosecutor's Office said on Wednesday that 10 of the 14 people arrested on suspicion of leading the coup had pleaded not guilty to treason charges. One had admitted all the charges and three had given partial admissions.

If convicted, the conspirators could face the firing squad.

Those arrested included former chairman of the Soviet parliament, Anatoly Lukyanov, Gorbachev's old law student friend, Russian officials have said he was the brain behind the August 19 coup.

3 killed, 30 hurt in Rangpur road accident

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Sept 14: At least three people died and 30 others were injured in a road accident on the Rangpur-Bogra highway at Baldipukur.

The accident took place when two buses tried to overtake each other.

Two died on the spot and the other in the hospital. Among the 30 injured, 15 were admitted to the Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, the bus which fell into flood waters beside the same highway at Baitraganj on Thursday was recovered by the fire service personnel today. But no body could be recovered from the bus or adjoining areas.

The Midnight File

Azerbaijan CP dissolves itself

BAKU (Soviet Union), Sept 14: The Communist Party in the southern republic of Azerbaijan, which recently declared independence from Moscow, voted today to dissolve itself, an adviser to the President said. The communists, disgraced across the country for complicity in last month's failed hard-line putsch, approved the measure almost unanimously at a special party congress said Vafa Goulizade, Adviser to Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutalibov, reports Reuter.

China sets up ties with Lithuania

BEIJING, Sept 14: China established diplomatic ties with the newly-independent baltic state of Lithuania today national radio said. Earlier this week Beijing set up relations with the two other baltic states, Latvia and Estonia, reports Reuter.

S. Korea to give USSR loan

SEOUL, Sept 14: South Korea will give the Soviet Union a 500 million Dollar cash loan this month and carry out the rest of a 3 billion dollar aid package as planned, a senior Foreign Ministry official said Saturday. The aid will be extended to the Soviet central government, Assistant Foreign Minister Chang Man-Soo said after returning from a 10-day visit to the Soviet Union, reports AP.

Four die in jail fire

FORSYTH, Sept 14: At least four people died and about two dozen were injured in a fire early Saturday at a county jail, a fire investigator said. The cause of the fire at the Taney County Jail was not determined immediately, reports AP.

US to give \$14 m to Baltic states

TALLINN (Estonia), Sept 14: US Secretary of State James Baker said on Saturday Washington would give the three newly-independent Baltic states about 14 million dollars by the end of September from funds to support emerging democracies. Baker, on a one-day tour of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, said the United States wanted to support sovereign Estonia in its efforts to establish a vibrant free-market economy, reports Reuter.

New cabinet

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Deputy Speaker Sheikh Russak Ali will be elevated to the post of Speaker while a new face may be inducted as Deputy Speaker.

Incumbent Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman who has emerged as the one of the most trusted persons of Khaleda Zia may be the next choice of the BNP.

The BNP which will have to appease different social forces may also take into consideration the other factors including the intention of the 'extra political quarters'.

In this case the name of Mustafizur Rahman as President of the country may come up prominently. But Mustafizur himself will prefer to remain Foreign Minister rather than become a titular President, it is learnt.

On the other hand, Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury who first intended to become Foreign Minister has started lobbying to be President unless he is made Foreign Minister.

The possibility of Mirza Golam Hafiz's becoming President is being ruled out by a quarter. Mirza Golam Hafiz expected to be President has already been given hints that he will have to continue as Law Minister.

Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar, who hails from Panchagarh-1, the same constituency of Mirza Hafiz, was given nomination from Dhaka in the recently concluded by-election because there was no possibility of vacancy of the Panchagarh seat. However, Mirza Hafiz still intends to be President.

Besides, the non-MPs in the BNP have also shown a great reason that the BNP should choose a President from among the party leaders who are not MPs, so that there should not be any necessity to hold another by-election in a vacated seat.

Among the non-MPs, the names of Justice Moqsumul Hakim and former Chief Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury are also being considered.

According to an Election Commission source, the Chief Election Commissioner will convene parliament session to elect President within 15 days of the publication of the gazette notification of the result of the referendum.

Meanwhile, the BNP leaders last night sat in a meeting to prepare a list of the members of the new cabinet. According to insiders, some new faces may be inducted in the cabinet, which will be comparatively larger than the existing one.

Among the new faces the prospects of Lt Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain, Lt K Siddiqy and Fazlur Rahman Patil are bright.

Abdul Matin Chowdhury who was named State Minister, last time but did not take oath may be inducted this time as a full minister.

State Minister Tariqul Islam, who is not an MP but has devoted to party activities may be elevated to a full minister.

However, the fates of some of the existing ministers and state ministers seem to be shrouded.

Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan may be dropped from the cabinet. Shipping Minister Keramat Ali, suffering from illness, may also be dropped.

Among the State Ministers Osman Gani Khan, in-charge of the Establishment Ministry and Abdul Mannan, in-charge of a Civil Aviation Ministry may not be included in the new cabinet.

Insiders of the BNP told this correspondent that the Cabinet Division, Establishment and Home Ministry will be retained by the Prime Minister. However, there may be a change in the allocation of portfolios.

Diarrhoea

From Page 1 Col. 5

flowing 42 centimetres above danger level at Aricha and 3,000 in Kalganga 53 centimetres above red mark at Taraghat, WDB sources said.

In Kishoreganj about 30,000 people in four upazilas have been marooned and standing crops in half a lakh acres of land washed away.

The flood, coupled with massive erosion by the surging Meghna, aggravated the situation amid incessant rains and downflow of water from upper riparian.

The Meghna was flowing 11 cm above danger mark at Bhatrab Bazar this morning, while its tributaries like Dhany, Ghoraura and Arialkhan also recorded sharp rise. Water Development Board officials here said.

The worst-affected upazilas are Kotiadi, Karimganj, Tarail, Baitpur, Kultarchar, Bhatrab and Nilkhi.

The overall flood situation in Faridpur district has deteriorated further affecting 75,000 families of five upazilas of the district.

About 12,000 families were marooned in 34 unions of Sadar, Charbhadrassan, Sadarpur, Bhanga and Madhukhal upazilas.

According to Deputy Commissioner of the district, vegetable prices have increased by Taka 3 to 4 and rice price by Taka 2 to 3 per kg in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj. Hilsa fish and poultry have become cheaper.

about 4,000 people were marooned at Charbhadrassan, 3,000 in Sadar, 3,000 in Sadarpur and 1,000 in Bhanga and 1,000 in Madhukhal upazilas.

The district officials, meanwhile, distributed 30 metric tons of wheat, 25 metric tons of rice and 7 metric tons of ata among the flood victims.

In Magura flood water has engulfed about 2200 acres of land and damaged standing crops in 8 unions of three upazilas of the district.

The Gorai and the Madhumati rivers swelled further and were now flowing 11 centimetres above red-mark.

The flood situation in Chapainawabganj deteriorated further as the Mahananda rose by another centimetre. The Ganges however fell by 7 cms.

The district administration are sending messages to the NGO bureau in Dhaka about emergency relief materials including food for vulnerable groups and temporary shelter materials like CI-sheet, for those rendered homeless.