

66 injured as BCL, police clash in Pabna

PABNA, Nov 10: At least 66 people including 11 policemen were injured, 21 of them seriously, in a series of clashes here today, reports UNB.

The incident started when a procession of pro-Awami League Chhatra League (H-A) from Edward College came under bomb attack and subsequent clashes with a rival group leaving 15 injured.

Chhatra League later held a rally at Indira Pally in support of an indefinite hartal called by the business community today to protest Saturday's ransacking of 30 shops in the town allegedly by a procession of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal.

Speakers at the rally demanded immediate arrest of the alleged terrorist Aszur Rahman.

A clash between police and students after the rally left 35 BCL activists and 11 policemen injured.

The seriously injured Ripon (22), Shahjahan Ali (26), General Secretary of Pabna Edward College Kamrul Islam Mintu (27), Shah Alam (16), Shaiful Islam (22), Hares Uddin (22), Motaleb Hossain (32), Abdus Sobhan (15) and Rumi (14) were rushed to the Sadar Hospital.

At least five people were in-

jured in yet another clash at Kalyanpur area this evening between activists of JCD and BCL including one passer by.

Police arrested Secretary of the district Chhatra League (H-A) Mosharrif Hossain, Ato and Rana Saturday night from their respective residences.

District Jamaat-e-Islami also brought out a procession in the afternoon led by Maulana Abdus Sobhan MP chanting slogans in protest of increasing terrorism.

Meanwhile, a meeting was held between Deputy Commissioner, business community and political parties but no fruitful decision could be reached for withdrawal of the hartal which began at 11 am today.

Earlier, about 5,000 businessmen brought out a procession in the town to protest the damage caused by the JCD procession Saturday.

They submitted a memorandum to the district administration.

They also held a rally at the DC office premises which was addressed by district Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vice President Idris Ali Biswas and General Secretary of the district Drug Businessmen Association and Video Owners Association A Kafi Sarkar.



Acting Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Abbas Ali Khan addressing a rally at the northern gate of Baitul Mukarram on Sunday.



The Five-Party Alliance held a rally in observance of November 10 at the 'Zero-Point'.

Chalker lauds work in coastal areas

LONDON, Nov 10: British Minister for Overseas Development, Ms Lynda Chalker has lauded the post-cyclone rehabilitation programme being carried out in the coastal areas of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Ms Chalker was making a statement in the House of Commons after her recent visit to the cyclone battered areas of Bangladesh including Cox's Bazar, Chittagang and some off-shore islands where the damage caused by the April 29 cyclone was maximum.

"The psychological effects of the disaster will take years to heal, but the physical work of rehabilitation exceeded our expectations," Ms Chalker said.

She said schools were being reconstructed, new houses completed and fishing boats built and most important of all, the main rice crop, planted after the cyclone, was by all accounts a very good one. "The resilience of the people of Bangladesh is heartening," she said.

Ms Chalker said the progress she had seen in the rehabilitation work would not have been possible without great efforts by the govern-

ment of Bangladesh, local and overseas non-government organisations and the donor community.

Ms Chalker said the British aid was being utilised properly in the rehabilitation work. "I believe that there is more that we can and should do."

She said the donor community should press ahead with the construction of multi-purpose buildings suitable for use as cyclone shelters in Bangladesh.

She said her country was ready to assist the Bangladesh Red Crescent, to upgrade its communications facilities.

The discussion in the House of Commons turned lively when opposition members raised questions about how Britain was cooperating with Bangladesh to pay off its huge burden of foreign debts.

In their statements, different opposition members including Sir David Stien of Labour Party said Bangladesh now needed assistance but the response of the British government was not adequate to its need.

One Labour Party member wanted to know whether the British government was discussing the exemption of debt to Bangladesh.

Chamber leaders

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the overall economic situation stressed the need for immediate government steps to help retrieve the situation. It suggested for undertaking massive public works programme while noting that very little had so far been done to activate the economy through appropriate public investment programmes.

According to the MCCI, generation of business community's confidence in the government and its policies is very crucial. "The business community's confidence has been affected as a result of cumulative actions of the government. The government, in our view, has taken, quite unnecessarily, some decisions in recent months which have shaken the confidence of the business community. We strongly urge that business confidence be restored as the first step towards improvement of the overall economic declaration. Meaningful communication between the government and the business community should be given top priority," it said.

The MCCI said, the entire balance of payments adjustment strategy hinges on the ability of the economy to notch up a better performance. It, however, stated that there is a wide-spread feeling that the government has surrendered, without any resistance, many of its sovereign rights to the donors. "Conditions which cannot be fulfilled should not be accepted. It will neither satisfy the donors nor help the economy. On the other hand, conditions which are accepted and can be implemented should be taken seriously. Some conditions can be fulfilled without modification but many others need to be indigenised for successful implementation. The donors should not have any objection because

it will not be possible to look forward to more relaxed import regime unless the economy improves," it pointed out.

The chamber body which represents the most organised trade and industry in the country mentioned about the situation in neighbouring countries. About India in particular, it noted that New Delhi was implementing the donors' conditionalities as its 'own economic philosophy and not taken them as unpalatable pills forced down the throat'.

Meanwhile, all sections of trade and industry have stressed the need for immediate moves to help improve the law and order situation which "has direct impact on the behaviour of the people".

Students pledge to protect democracy

By DU Correspondent

Vastous student organisations observed November 10 Sunday with pledges to protect democracy earned through sacrifices.

After laying wreaths at the Noor Hossain Square (Zero Point) the student bodies in separate rallies also called for political parties' cooperation to safeguard democracy.

Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) held a rally at the Noor Hossain Square which was addressed by DUCSU Vice President Amanullah Aman, General Secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon and Fazul Huq Milon.

Chhatra League (S-A) rally, held at the Bangabandhu Avenue was addressed by Ashim Kumar Ukil, Golam Mostafa Suzan and Quamr-uz-Zaman Ansari.

Institutionalisation

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Abdus Salam Khokon, Syed Delwar Hossain, and Abdul Mannan Khan of the National Labour Federation, Advocate Ruhul Amin Shelly of Bangladesh Juba Shakti and SM Mamunur Rashid of Bangladesh Chhatra Shakti.

While delivering his presidential speech Salahuddin Kader Choudhury MP said that the democratic movement against autocracy was geared up and reached its logical end through sacrifices by the struggling people like Noor Hossain in the past decades. Their sacrifice could be made meaningful only when democratic values were established in every sphere of social life, he commented. Other speakers said Noor by laying down his life had laid the foundation of democracy.

The National Republican Party President Dr Zahir Khan while addressing a discussion meeting on the occasion said that the goals which Noor Hossain, Fatah, Babul and other embraced martyrdom were yet to be achieved.

The people were frustrated by various crisis in the hour of transition to democracy, he added.

Held at the party central office, the meeting was also addressed by the Republican Party Secretary General Alauddin and other leaders including Nazmul Haq, SM Omar, S Ahmed, Shahadat Ali Sumin and Rokeya Parveen.

Other parties that also observed the day through holding of discussion meetings and laying of wreaths at the Shaheed Noor Hossain Square included Samatantrik Chhatra Front, Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote, Bangladesh Jana Parishad, National Awami Party (Bhasani), and Jatitya Janata Party.

When contacted, Dhanmondi police could not provide any information regarding his arrest. However the officer on duty said that Mahbubur Rahman was probably arrested by the Special Branch.

Moazzem

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Dhanmondi residence, his family sources said.

When contacted, Dhanmondi police could not provide any information regarding his arrest. However the officer on duty said that Mahbubur Rahman was probably arrested by the Special Branch.

At around midnight November 6, police gheraoed his residence and took him into custody. He was reportedly arrested under the Special Powers Act.

According to concerned sources, the government has not yet registered any case against him. However the sources said that there were some allegations against Mahbubur Rahman, one of which was regarding the murder of one of his maid servants.

His family sources said that Mahbubur Rahman was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail immediately after his arrest and was later sent to Mymenstingh jail on Saturday.

Meanwhile, President of the Jatitya Sramik Party Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and the party General Secretary M A Gafur have condemned the arrest of Shah Moazzem and Nurun Nabi Chand. But the press release did not mention anything about the arrest of Mahbubur Rahman.

SAARC heading for more trouble

COLOMBO, Nov 10: The crisis in seven-nation South Asian grouping was headed for more trouble as the collapse of its summit here triggered fresh bilateral finger-pointing, Asian diplomats and officials said today, reports AFP.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit due to take place last week was aborted at the last minute following the sudden withdrawal of the King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

The Foreign Office here said SAARC leaders would discuss the possibility of staging a one-day business like meet as soon as possible, while Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called for the meeting before the end of the year.

However, diplomats here believe that an early summit would depend largely on India's attitude towards Colombo, which has privately accused New Delhi of sabotaging Thursday's summit by insisting on Bhutan King's presence.

"New Delhi cannot be happy about the attacks in the government-owned press in Colombo. Because of this, New Delhi might want to keep Colombo guessing on the new summit dates," an Asian diplomat here said.

However, Indian papers have also blamed New Delhi for the summit failure attributing it to bilateral tensions and mistrust between the two Indian Ocean neighbours, point echoed by the Sri Lankan opposition.

Pakistan Premier Nawaz Sharif, who turned his intended summit visit into a

BNP seeks help

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people's basic rights would also be fulfilled. Implementation of the 19-point programme of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman could only ensure people's welfare, he mentioned.

Earlier, Rafiqul Islam Mia conducted a special 'munajat' seeking 'maghiera' for the departed souls of Shaheed Noor Hossain and others.

Communications Minister Oil Ahmed, said the people voted BNP to run the government because they have confidence on it. BNP would not belie its commitments, he said.

But "some known quarters" were making false and misleading statements against the government to discredit it and confuse the nation, he alleged, "please, do not spread falsehood. You are accountable to Allah," he said.

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia pointed out that the government wanted to ensure independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press and establishment of a violence-free society. We have already fulfilled many of our pledges. Inshallah, we will fulfil these also, he said.

BNP Vice-Chairman and Social Welfare and Women Affairs Minister Tariqul Islam said responsible behaviour was a pre-requisite to democracy.

Ershad trial BNP centre for rehabilitation of 'rajakars': Defence witness

Defence witness A B M Shahjahan in the corruption case against former President Ershad Sunday told the court that he declined to join BNP which was "a centre for rehabilitation of rajakars", reports UNB.

A Minister in Ershad cabinet, Shahjahan, however, shrank when the prosecution enquired if he knew Maulana Abdul Mannan who joined Jatitya Party and was inducted in Ershad cabinet.

"Yes, he (Maulana Mannan) is the only man with stigma of rajakar taken in our party," said Shahjahan, Joint Secretary General of Jatitya Party.

Deposing before the court Shahjahan said he began politics from student life in 1960s as a member of Chhatra League, joined Mujib Bahini during Liberation War, JSD in 1973 and later Jatitya Party.

All through a good student, he won the Masters degree in Applied Chemistry from Rajshahi University in 1969.

Replying to a prosecution query Shahjahan said late President Ziaur Rahman and sitting minister Brig (Rtd) Hannan Shah had offered him to join BNP, but he declined for he felt it was a rehabilitation centre for rajakars who collaborated with the occupation force during the Liberation War.

Shahjahan filed in February a suit claiming the money found in the official residence of deposed President Ershad as Jatitya Party money deposited with the party chairman (Ershad).

Ershad faces trial in special judge court for amassing wealth including a cash of Taka 1,90,81,565 beyond known sources of income which may earn him a maximum seven years imprisonment. He has already been sentenced to 10 years in jail and faces three more corruption cases.

The cross-examination of Shahjahan will resume today (Monday).

Earlier, deposing before the court the defence witness said he had joined JSD in May 1973 as the then government (Awami League) resorted to oppression and later assumed the position of General Secretary of JSD (Siraj). He was elected MP in 1986 on Jatitya Party ticket.

Shahjahan claimed himself a real freedom fighter and Brig Tozammel Hossain of the occupation forces had surrendered to him along with 527 troops. He said he was attracted by the bold, honest and dedicated leadership of Ershad and joined Jatitya Party.

Crackdown

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"The biggest input in development and democracy are good governance and enforcement of law and order," the Finance Minister said.

Genuine import is falling because of huge inroad of contraband items, Rahman said.

The issue of illegal sales of imported fabrics by garment manufacturers and its counterproductive effects on textile industry took nearly half of the three-hour deliberation.

Referring to the mushroom growth of garment factories, numbering more than 900, Rahman cautioned that the trend would lead to overgrowth and virtual extinction of the potential sector.

Home Minister Matin Chowdhury also expressed his dissatisfaction over law and order situation.

"Smuggling business virtually has taken over genuine business activities in Chittagang," he said.

He asked the Navy to be more active against smugglers as well as pirates. "Pirates threaten our frozen food sector as fishermen are now scared of them," he said.

Political influence was cited by many officials as a snag on way to dealing with crime and criminals.

About the measures being taken to curb smuggling, Home Secretary Lutfulhah Majid told the meeting that smugglers were being listed in each district. A battalion of BDR is also being deployed in the port city of Chittagang, he said.

BDR Director General Maj Gen Abdul Latif suggested strong vigilance on transit routes and shopping centres besides the entry points at the borders. He also recommended that auction of seized contraband items be stopped.

Shah Abdul Hannan, member of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) supported the BDR chief's view and also suggested air surveillance to check smuggling.

The government is planning to equip the Navy and other anti-smuggling agencies with adequate and effective logistics, said the Finance Minister.

The Midnight File

China denies nuclear cooperation with Iraq

BEIJING, Nov 10: China on Sunday denied aiding Iraq's nuclear development and finger at Western companies. "China neither has any nuclear cooperation with Iraq nor transfers to it any nuclear materials, nuclear technology or nuclear equipment," an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman said, reports AP.

Ishaq backs Sharif

ISLAMABAD, Nov 10: Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has backed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who rejected today an opposition demand that he step down to ensure an impartial probe into a major financial scandal. The government is "comfortably in the saddle and enjoying a majority" in parliament, Ishaq Khan told reporters. "There is no uncertainty in the country," he said at the Pakistan Navy's change of command ceremony here, reports AFP.

Australian troops in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Nov 10: Forty Australian troops arrived here today in the first UN military contingent to land in Cambodia to monitor the peace process here. The men, all communications specialists, were welcomed at Poehontong Airport by Ataul Karim, Head of the United Nations Advance Mission for Cambodia (UNAMIC), and the Commander of their unit, Lieutenant-Colonel Russell Stuart, reports AFP.

Chile won't expel South Koreans

SEOUL, Nov 10: Chile has withdrawn its decision to expel 160 South Koreans, a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Seoul said today. "The Chilean government has agreed to grant residency visas to all the 160 after negotiations with a special envoy of our government," the spokesman said, reports Reuter.

Probe all killings

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Hossain and at least three others were killed in an anti-government demonstration in the city.

"Whether they be members of the police, BDR or any armed miscreants in the guise of political activists, all the killers must be tried for the sake of democratic rule", Hasina said adding "All those killers were associates of the autocratic rulers".

The Opposition leader blasted the ruling party saying that the associates of autocracy were still active and collaborating with the present government.

The democratically elected government was not punishing the collaborators to cling to power, she said.

"Without trying the collaborators, it would be very difficult to establish rule of law and institutionalise democracy in the country", Hasina viewed.

The AL leader termed Noor Hossain a living poster carrying the slogans 'Down with autocracy' and 'Set democracy free' on his body but regretted that autocracy was yet to go fully and democracy established.

"Establishment of democracy with a view to bring economic emancipation of the common masses, for which Noor Hossain and other laid down their lives, was not achieved even after fall of autocracy", Hasina alleged.

"Democracy was free only for a few days after autocracy that took root since the killing of Bangabandhu said."

The country was liberated following a 23-year struggle, Hasina said and added that after liberation people got democracy for a brief period but it was again confined to a particular quarter and people's rights were snatched by the Zia-Ershad autocratic rules and reiterating an allegation she said Noor Hossain's sacrifice was aimed at bringing an end to such illegal capture of power through killings.

Under Hasina's chairmanship, the meeting was also addressed by the AL General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Publicity Secretary

SAARC summit

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visit Colombo concerned more a policy matter than his being preoccupied with the by-election.

Though the SAARC summit was postponed at the insistence of India, the concerned quarters are still skeptical about holding a successful summit in Colombo in December this year.

A number of Indian newspapers put the blame for the collapse of the summit squarely on New Delhi. Some newspapers, as quoted by the largest circulated English daily of Sri Lanka, the Daily News, also speculated on the possibility that India had wrecked the summit by instigating the Bhutanese King to stay away. The charge was however later denied.

The Hindu, a dominant newspaper of India, described the Summit's collapse as "Almost a death blow to an organisation that was ailing".

"However, the absence of Bhutan's King could not have been the most compelling reason to cancel the summit", The Hindu said, describing the King's absence as a procedural problem surmountable by the presence of a royal representative in his place. It also accused New Delhi of doing nothing to keep the summit

alive. The Times of India said that the cancellation was a "direct and an inevitable result of the frictions that have developed in Indo-Sri Lanka ties". New Delhi also felt that Premadasa would urge the SAARC members to isolate India at the summit, the paper said.

The Sri Lankan daily carried a Reuter report on Friday from New Delhi which said a senior Indian official, who had asked not to be identified, said on Thursday that the problems between Bhutan and Nepal had caused the collapse of the summit.

In his November 1 letter to Premadasa, the Bhutanese King described the problem as a terrorist problem. He said, "I would like inform you that owing to the current disturbed situation in southern Bhutan and the threat by terrorists to carry out acts of sabotage and subversion during the period of the SAARC summit, my presence in the country is absolutely essential."

The Indian official's statement and the King's letter indicate that it is an insurgency problem being encouraged from across the border. Observers in Colombo tend to view the problem as a reflection of the latest geo-political situation in the subcontinent. Related story on page 5