

Hartal observed in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Nov 21: An eight-hour hartal from 6 am was observed here today at the call of CUCSU and All-Party Students Unity in protest against the reported attack on the residence of the Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University recently by a section of students, reports BSS.

All vehicles, excepting cycle rickshaws, were off the road and shops and banks remained closed during hartal.

All scheduled trains moved in time, railway sources said.

Chittagong port did not deliver, nor receive any cargo. Metropolitan police sources said that there was no untoward incident in the city except a few cases of brick-battling and obstruction to vehicles.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir, university branch, in a press release said it held meeting and demonstration on the campus in protest against postponement of the final honours examination scheduled to be held today and in support of its demand for resignation of the Vice-Chancellor.

It said the reported attack on the residence of the Vice-Chancellor was a fabricated story to malign the image of Chhatra Shibir.

A group of candidates for final honours examination also held demonstration in the city in protest against the postponement of their examination.

In a separate statement, Chittagong University Tea-

chers Association President Yusuf Sharif Ahmad Khan demanded immediate removal of what he called the controversial Vice-Chancellor of the Chittagong University in order to restore a congenial academic atmosphere in the campus.

The Vice-Chancellor had resorted to different tactics to cling to his post harming the interest of the students, the association president alleged.

UZ parishads

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The association leaders at the press conference, termed the government decision as politically motivated and aimed at malign the upazila administration partisan.

They said the decision to dissolve the elected local bodies totally contradicts the government claim of democratisation of the administration at all levels.

The government was contemplating replacing people's representatives at the upazila level with nominated people of the ruling party, they observed.

Addressing the press conference, the association acting convener Ahsanullah accused the democratically-elected government of taking undemocratic steps following the path of fallen autocracy.

The decision to dissolve the elected upazila parishads was an example of the present government's belief that all done by the past regime was very bad, he remarked.

Though introduced by the autocratic government, the upazila system was a fruitful step towards democratisation of the administration at the upazila level and any conspiracy against it would rather help strengthen the bureaucracy, Ahsanullah viewed.

If Ershad is accused of ousting an elected government, then why won't the BNP government be similarly accused of overthrowing the elected upazila parishad, Ahsanullah asked. Also present at the press conference were Emdadul Haq, Sarwar Alam Khan, Abdul Halim, Maj (ret'd) Jasimuddin, ABM Abdus Sattar and Kudrat-e-Elahi.

Mostafiz arrives in Myanmar

RYANGON, Nov 21: Bangladesh Minister for Foreign Affairs Mostafizur Rahman arrived here this afternoon to pay an official visit to Myanmar at the invitation of Myanmar Minister for Foreign Affairs U Ohn Gyaw, reports Xinhua.

During his three-day official visit here, the Bangladesh Minister will discuss with his Myanmar counterpart the relations between the two countries and the matters of common concern.

Check smuggling

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ernment's firm stand to curb smuggling in the country.

Presided over by FBCCI President Alhaj Md. Akhter Hossain, the Home Secretary Lutfullahi Majid and the Inspector General of Police Enamul Haq were also present at the discussion meeting.

Noting that the country's trade and industry sectors were facing destruction because of smuggling, the Home Ministers said that the democratically elected BNP government is pledge-bound to curb smuggling.

The Minister assured the chamber leaders that harassment of innocent businessmen during the anti-smuggling drives would be avoided at all cost.

"Only those people involved in smuggling will face problems and I want to assure the genuine businessmen that I will take suggestions from them and will work with them," he said.

Referring to the fast deteriorating law and order situation in the country, the FBCCI president said that the public and the business community are being held hostage by extortionists and terrorists.

He called upon the government to take stern measures against these criminal elements and said that care should be taken so that no undue political pressure was placed on the law enforcement officials to protect them.

Chamber and business leaders said that administrative corruption needs to be curbed and inter-departmental cooperation among different government agencies enhanced in order to make the anti-smuggling drive successful.

They also called for the inclusion of Chamber members in the district anti-smuggling committees formed by the government.

They urged the government to undertake long-term measures along with short-term ones to curb smuggling in the country.

As part of the long-term measures against smuggling, the speakers suggested that the prices of locally produced items should be made competitive with those in neighbouring countries. They said that steps should also be taken to produce items that have import restrictions on them inside the country.

Relaxation of import re-

strictions and re-evaluation of customs duty was also suggested by the speakers.

Chamber and business leaders Abul Ahsan, MA Wahad, Abdur Razzaque Khan, Mustafizur Rahman, MA Munim, SM Afzal Hossain, Ali Ahmed, Manjoor Ahmed, Syed Shamsul Alam, Abu Alam Chowdhury, A Ghafoor, KA Hassam, Faizul Haq Khan and Taher Sobhan were among those who took part in the discussions.

Acknowledging the importance of the exchange of views with the business leaders, the Home Minister agreed to be present at the continuing session of the discussion meeting on Saturday.

UNB adds: Jessore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President MA Razzak put forward suggestions about anti-smuggling drive which include information gathering on the Dhaka-based smugglers syndicate, publication of names of the identified smugglers in all districts.

Rajshahi Chamber President Mustafizur Rahman demanded inclusion of trade representatives in the anti-smuggling committee.

A member of the Sylhet Chamber, Md Momin, said some officials' underhand dealing with the smugglers helped smuggling flourish in the country.

Senior Vice-President of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sharif Afzal also forwarded anti-smuggling suggestions including formation of smuggler identification committee in all districts, amendment of criminal act, readjustment of labour policy and sale of smuggled goods through Parjatan's sales centres.

All Ahmed of Chittagong Chamber called for taking up long-term measures before launching such anti-smuggling push.

Secretary General of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association A Gafur said if the government could ensure strict checking at Nagarbari and Dawlatdia ferri ghats, smuggling would come down about 50 per cent.

Khulna Chamber of Commerce representative KA Ahsan said "do not play a foul game in the name of economy." His remarks sparked instant protest from Abdul Hannan Howlader, MP, who demanded an explanation.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visiting a stall at the Military Hardware Display at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on Thursday. — ISPR photo

Khaleda asks PDB, DESA to minimise system loss

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Thursday night directed the Power Development Board and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) to minimise the system loss and increase collection of pending bills from the consumers, reports BSS.

Presiding over a high-level

Teachers

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fund, due promotions and recruitment to vacant posts.

Among others, Federation Chairman Sheikh Amanullah, Secretary General Principal AKM Shahidullah and Prof Kazi Faruq Ahmed addressed the rally.

The association leaders later submitted a memorandum containing their demands to the Education Secretary at his secretariat office.

They also went in a procession and submitted the memorandum to the DC and the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education.

Among other programmes to press their demands which began on November 3, they will submit memoranda to the President, the Prime Minister and the Education Minister.

The federation will also stage sit-in demonstration in front of the secretariat on January 5 and token strikes in the educational institutions throughout the country before capping the agitation with the planned non-stop strike.

The teachers also paraded different city thoroughfares in a procession.



Lawyers brought out a procession in the city on Thursday demanding separation of judiciary from administration and abolition of upazila courts. — Star photo

Transport workers threaten strike

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation on Wednesday reiterated that it would begin an indefinite countrywide transport strike from December 1 if the owners failed to issue appointment letters to the over five lakh transport workers by November 30.

Addressing a Press conference in the city, the Federation General Secretary Abdur Rashid regretted that a tripartite agreement signed by the Communications Minister, representatives of two owners' associations and the Federation to provide appointment letters to all deserving transport workers by October 31 had not yet materialised.

The owners, instead of issuing appointment letters in the government-prescribed forms offered those in their self-designed forms with a view to cheating the workers.

Besides, the November 30 ultimatum for the indefinite strike given to the concerned authorities all over the country on October 16 was also being ignored, he alleged.

He said that according to the 1989 Motor Vehicle Act,

Chiefs of three services meet Khaleda, Biswas

The chiefs of the three services Thursday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the Supreme Command Headquarters on the occasion of Armed Forces Day, reports UNB.

Army Chief of Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, Naval Chief of Staff Rear Admiral M Mohaiminul Islam (SM) NCC and Air Chief of Staff Air Vice Marshall Altaf Hossain Chowdhury NDU PSC spent some time with the Prime Minister, who is also in charge of Ministry of Defence.

The chiefs of the three services also called on the President and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban.

The meeting was held to review performance and other issues of the power sector at the International Conference Centre, the Prime Minister called for restoring discipline in the sector so that system loss could be reduced significantly.

"We have to bring about improvement in the sector through hard work, honesty and sincerity," she said.

The Prime Minister said, another meeting to further review the situation, will be held in the middle of January next.

Begum Zia said that her government would extend all cooperation in restoring discipline in the sector. She said good work would be duly rewarded.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman participating in the discussion suggested some measures for improving the conditions in the sector.

Earlier, Energy Minister Dr. Khandkar Mosharraf Hossain gave a resume of the problems and prospects of the power sector.

The meeting was told that 4,000 illegal power connections were snapped by mobile courts recently.

Secretaries of concerned ministries and senior officials were also present in the meeting.

The Prime Minister met serving and retired Armed Forces officers and other guests on the occasion and exchanged greetings with them.

Earlier on their arrival, the Prime Minister and other distinguished guests were received by Army Chief Lt Gen Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, Naval Chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and Air Chief Air Vice Marshall Altaf Hossain Chowdhury.

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Zia's canal digging plan resumes today

The historic canal digging and re-excavation programme initiated in 1979 by sheahed President Ziaur Rahman aimed at developing a dry-season irrigation network to double country's food production resumes today (Friday) after remaining suspended for about a decade, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will formally launch the widely acclaimed programme by inaugurating the digging and re-excavation work of the DND-Titas canal at Sanir Akhra near Demra, about 25 kilometres off here.

Ministers, MPs, political leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations will participate in the inaugural function.

An elaborate programme has been drawn up to dig and re-excavate canals, derelict ponds, swamps and dried-up rivers all over the country during the current dry season on voluntary basis.

A high-level coordination cell is being formed to coordinate, implement and supervise the canal digging programme. The cell will directly work under the supervision of the Prime Minister's office.

President Zia had formally inaugurated the Kasadhaha-Ichhamati canal at Manikganj on December 1, 1979 to mark the launching of the first phase of the green revolution. The 11-mile Kasadhaha-Ichhamati project had benefited the cultivators' families in the area.

JCD workers clash with police: 4 hurt

By DU Correspondent

At least four persons were injured in a clash between police and Jatayatbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) workers Thursday noon at the Eden College compound.

The clash ensued when police obstructed the JCD workers from entering the girls' college.

An introduction of a panel of JCD Eden College unit was being held for the students union election of the college. JCD workers from various colleges in the city, tried to enter the College compound to listen to the concert scheduled after the projection meeting.

Police resorted to lathi charge after the JCD workers tried to enter the college despite requests by the police.

The JCD workers then pelted stones at the police. A series of chases took place in front of the college.

Two JCD activists were injured in the police lathi charge while two Eden College students were injured by the stones pelted by the JCD activists.

The clash that continued for about half an hour disrupted the movement of vehicles through the road adjacent to the college.

JCD, BCL (A-A) clash at Rajendra College: 12 hurt

By DU Correspondent

At least 12 students were injured and the office of Chhatra League was ransacked in clashes between two rival groups of students of Rajendra University College here this morning, reports UNB.

Six of the injured students including district President of Chhatra League (A-A) Habibur Rahman Habib were admitted in Faridpur General Hospital.

The other admitted students were identified as Chhatra League college unit president Animesh Roy (24) and four activists of Jatayatbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Naycem (20), Mizan (18), Galib (18) and Tito (18).

The clash was a sequel to Wednesday's clash between two activists of Chhatra League and Jatayatbadi Chhatra Dal.

Today's clash took place when the activists of JCD brought out a procession on the campus which was allegedly attacked by the members of Chhatra League.

Boycott condemned

BSS adds: One hundred and thirteen lawyers in a joint statement in Dhaka Thursday strongly condemned the boycotting of the courts by a section of lawyers and act of hooliganism by outsiders within the court premises. They called upon the lawyers who had boycotted the courts to give up such undemocratic programme.

The signatories to the statement said the president of Dhaka Anjibi Samity at the general meeting Wednesday had decided to boycott the court Thursday defying the opinion of most of the lawyers present there.

The signatories said the lawyers who had abstained from attending the courts with the help of outsiders had tried to forcibly pick up a lawyer named Habibur Rahman on gun point. But, they said, the ill-motive of the group had been resisted.

20 injured

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Parishad convened the rally to protest Wednesday's police action on the garment workers at Science Laboratory crossing. Both the groups chased and counter-chased and exchanged bricks during the clash.

Police resorted to lathi charge to disperse the clashing workers. Later the Comtrade workers joined the rally in front of National Press Club condemning Wednesday's police action.

Presided over by Selim Reza the rally was addressed, among others, by Tanvir Straj, Alam Reza, Bahran Sultan, Abul Hossain and Hani Mukta. The leaders demanded immediate fulfillment of 5-point demands of the garments workers which include pay rise and re-opening of laid-off factories including Comtrade Garments.

The Midnight File

Volcano begins spewing ash

JAKARTA, Nov 21: A volcano in North Sulawesi began spewing ash Thursday after 32 years of inactivity, the official Antara news agency reported. It said seismographs also had been recording increased activity at Mount Mahawu in the past month. Antara did not say whether there were any casualties or damage when the 1,331-meter (3,574-foot) volcano last erupted, says AP.

UN signs accord on refugee repatriation

GENEVA, Nov 21: The United Nations signed an accord Thursday allowing it to supervise the repatriation of up to 350,000 Cambodian refugees from camps along the Thai border. Signing were Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of Cambodia's Supreme National Council, Thai Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin and a representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR's Geneva headquarters said, reports AP.

Israeli opposition approves Palestinian rights

TEL AVIV, Nov 21: Israel's opposition Labour Party for the first time recognised the rights of the Palestinian people today. The decision was adopted at a party congress that also called for territorial compromise in occupied Arab land, including the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights but excluding east Jerusalem, and a one-year freeze on Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, reports AFP.

Thatcher challenges Major

LONDON, Nov 21: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has challenged her successor John Major over the question of European union, and called for a referendum before Britain signed the treaty to give up the pound sterling and join a single Euro-currency at next month's Maastricht summit of 12 European Community leaders, reports FTI.

Political parties

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as something sophisticated, which needs better skill to deal with. Since, he said, Dhaka University campus sprawls over a large area having many outlets the terrorists can often sneak out to safety before the law enforcing personnel arrive. That's why, according to him, police often fail to catch the terrorists following a shootout.

Describing the campus violence as a major national problem Chowdhury said it would have to be tackled both politically and administratively. He said he had already talked to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and leaders of the 5-party alliance and Jamaat-e-Islami about the campus violence.

"I proposed to Sheikh Hasina for issuing a joint statement with the government to denounce campus violence. Sheikh Hasina, said she had support to our anti-violence efforts, but felt that no purpose would be served by such a joint statement," the Home Minister said.

The campus violence according to him should be seen from a partisan angle. This is a national problem. Political parties of all shades of opinion will have to combine forces to end this problem. He said the special parliamentary committee on campus, set up during the last session, had made some progress. But he could not specify the achievements of the committee that comprises members from the treasury and opposition benches.

The conversation covered overall law and order, the problem of extortionists, hi-

jacking, anti-smuggling drive and the allegations of corruption within the police.

The minister acknowledged that like other sections of society, corruption was also there in police force.

"I don't deny that there is corruption in police force. So it exists in other fields, including the judiciary. We are trying our best...but it can not be wiped out overnight," he said.

He claims the episodes of hijacking in the capital city have declined mainly because of the campaign against the maastans. Several hundred maastans have already been rounded up and the police are now active against the extortionists who have created a sense of insecurity among the traders in particular.

He felt that the task of maintaining law and order in the capital is quite uphill. "You see, this is a city of 70 lakh people and we have only 12,000 police men which means one policeman for 600 people. The ratio for a city like Dhaka should have been one police for 200 people."

Defending the efficiency of police in dealing with the criminals the minister said not all of those arrested can be kept behind the bar for long. Many get released through writ petitions and other legal measures.

He said the police force should be improved qualitatively through training. The police commission report that was finalised by the previous government will be reviewed for making both quantitative and qualitative changes in the country's 80,000-member police force, he added.

Armed Forces Day

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three services were present during the wreath laying by the respective chief of staff.

President and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Abdur Rahman Biswas Thursday morning laid wreaths at the "Shikha Anirban".

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated a grand display of military hardware at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. After inauguration, the Prime Minister went round different stalls where equipment, arms, ammunition, vehicles, aircraft and vessels used by the army, navy and airforce were put on display.

Ministers, chiefs of staff of the three services, diplomats and other high civil and military officials were also present on the occasion.

The gala exhibition remained open for the members of the public till 5 pm. It will also remain open for public viewing from 8 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5 pm today (Friday) and from 8 am to 5 pm on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Meanwhile, a number of naval ships remained open for the members of the public in Chittagong, Khulna, Sadarghat in Dhaka, Paglaghat at Narayanganj and Barisal.

Hasina

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examinations smoothly. The Awami League chief complained that the ruling party is not taking any effective step to stop campus violence which was destroying the education system in the country.

Democracy, the main objective of the anti-autocracy movement, has not yet been achieved, she observed. The Awami League is pledge bound to continue ceaseless movement for establishing genuine democracy, rule of law and improving the economic condition of the common people.

Deputy Opposition Leader Abdus Samad Azad also addressed the students.

An Awami League press release said more than 100 student activists of the pro-BNP Chhatra Dal led by Assistant General Secretary Mahub Elahi of Borhanuddin College Student Union and Dhaka City College Chhatra Dal President Mohammad Nadim joined the Chhatra League.

Businessmen

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if all sections of the society, including the traders cooperate with the government to make the anti-smuggling campaign a success, the Home Minister said.