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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Hasina visits injured Nasim**

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina visited injured Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim at the PG Hospital yesterday evening. Hasina also visited the Dhaka Medical College Hospital to see the condition of other leaders and workers wounded in clashes with police during the Dhaka 'siege programme' yesterday, reports UNB.

**2 inter-city trains to run today**

Bangladesh Railway has decided to run two inter-city trains on its weekly off-day today in view of the road transport strike, railway sources said yesterday. The trains are Chittagong bound 'Mahanager Purabi' from Dhaka and Dhaka bound 'Turna-Nishitha' from Chittagong. The trains will run as per their present time schedule, reports BSS.

**Gunshots heard on DU campus**

At least four gunshots were fired on the Dhaka University campus at 12 noon yesterday. Campus sources said, the shots were heard from the direction of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall and Ziaur Rahman Hall while a Awami League procession was passing through the nearby road, reports UNB.

**2 shops gutted in Moulvibazar**

MOULVIBAZAR, Sept 10: Two shops were gutted and another one damaged partly in a fire at Paschim Bazar of Moulvibazar town at 7 pm today. Fire Service sources said. The extent of damage is estimated at about Tk Seven lakhs. The fire originated from the turban shop of Lebas Miah at the Bazar and soon after, the fire spread to nearby shops, local people said, reports UNB.



Baton wielding policemen prevent activists and leaders of the Awami League from breaking a road barricade near the Matshya Bhaban in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Over 200 injured, 131 arrested Violence marks 'Dhaka siege' programme

Star Report

Violent clashes between the police and the agitators in the city yesterday marked the 'Dhaka Siege' programme announced by the opposition parties in support of their demand for national elections under a caretaker government.

Over two hundred people including opposition leaders, workers, newsmen and police personnel were injured in the clashes when opposition activists tried to enforce the 'siege' violating government restrictions.

Opposition Chief Whip and Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim, former AL MP Ferdous Zaman Mukul and Jatiya Party (JP) leader Col (ret'd) Abdul Malek were among the injured. Nasim and Ferdous were admitted to the PG Hospital with serious injuries.

Photographer Shahadat Hossain of a daily suffered bullet wounds in his collar bone while police constable Sha-

hidul Islam was hit by a bullet in his stomach.

Police arrested 131 persons from Motijheel and Ramna areas in connection with the violence and filed specific cases against them.

Awami League and Jatiya Party called the 'siege' separately to press home the demand for holding of national polls under a caretaker government. Jamaat-e-Islami held a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram in the afternoon supporting the demand.

The AL had planned to concentrate its 'siege' activities on the roads approaching the Secretariat and hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club while JP's plan was to lay siege in Purana Paltan and Motijheel areas.

Police put up barricades on all the roads leading towards the Secretariat and thousands of police and BDR personnel were deployed around it. Holding of rallies and proces-

sions near the Secretariat were earlier banned by Dhaka Metropolitan Police for 24 hours beginning Friday night.

Major clashes between the agitators and the police took place in Purana Paltan, Bijoy Nagar, Bangabandhu Avenue, Gulistan, Star Gate of Ramna Park and the adjoining areas.

Police lobbed about 100 tear gas shells and fired rubber bullets on anti-government demonstrators who came in processions and tried to break the barbed-wire barricades. Home-made bombs, crackers and brickbats were also thrown at the positions of the law enforcing agency personnel.

Chase and counter-chase between police and agitators coupled with continuous firing and explosions kept the whole area highly tense for nearly three hours. Tear gas smoke filled the area for a long time.

The leaders and activists of

## Struggle will continue, says Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Sheikh Hasina has called a series of hartals including a dawn-to-dusk shutdown Tuesday to force the government to resign and pave the way for general elections under a caretaker government.

Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) Chief, gave call at a news conference after

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Hasina addressing press conference. — Star photo

## Govt itself enforced 'siege': JP

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party leaders said yesterday that the government action in a bid to foil the 'Dhaka siege' reflected its 'weakness and loss of credibility and legitimacy.'

Addressing a press conference at the party office, they said that it was the government which enforced the 'siege' by blocking all the major roads in the city yesterday.

Acting chief of the JP Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Moudud Ahmed and Kazi Zafar Ahmed spoke at the press conference. Monirul Huq Chowdhury, Syed Tareq, Mahabubul Huq Dolon and Ruhul Amin Hawlader were also present.

Mizan Chowdhury announced a three-day hartal programme from today to

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## Hartals today, tomorrow and the day after

By Staff Correspondent

Three major Opposition parties have called hartals today, tomorrow and the day after.

They gave the hartal calls to protest, what they said, police actions during yesterday's Dhaka siege programme and to force the ruling party to accept the demand for a caretaker government.

According to the programme announced separately by the Awami League, the Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat-e-Islami — a half-day (6am-2pm) hartal would be observed in Dhaka today, another half-day (6am-2pm) hartal in five divisional cities, including Dhaka, on Monday and a day-long countrywide hartal on Tuesday.

AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina announced the three-day consecutive hartal programmes at a crowded press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon.

An identical programme

was announced by Jamaat secretary general Matjur Rahman Nizami at a post-siege rally near the Baitul Mukarram mosque. The Jatiya Party's acting chief, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury announced a similar programme at a separate press conference at the Moghbazar party office in the evening.

Meanwhile, Jamaat will hold its post-hartal rally today at 4pm at north gate of Baitul Mukarram.

Opposition sources said, the hartal programme was finalised after telephonic conversation among the three party leaders.

The sources said, the hartal programme might be extended if the police action continues and violence breaks out during the three-day programme.

"The opposition parties are united to face the repressive measures unleashed by the ruling party," one Opposition leader said.

## Opposition call ignored: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said yesterday the people had ignored the Opposition call to lay a siege to the capital as part of their anti-government agitation.

"The people did not respond to their call. We saw how many people participated in the so-called Dhaka siege programme," BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder told The Daily Star.

"It was as if a hartal, not a siege, which multiplied public sufferings," he added.

He said, the people had voted for the Opposition MPs so that they could help solve their problems through discussion in Parliament but instead they took to the streets.

He alleged that the Opposition programmes are aimed at creating 'chaos and confusion' to hamper development and foreign investment.

About the hartal programmes called by the Opposition, Salam Talukder said "It is their programme. The people will judge whether it is good or bad for the coun-

try."

He said, the ruling party still kept open its door for a dialogue to resolve the political impasse.

About the allegation of police excesses, the BNP Secretary General said police have done an excellent job. They showed utmost restraint and responded only to protect the lives and property of the people."

Salam Talukder said the government would take necessary steps to maintain peace despite the Opposition hartal call.

**Press Note**

### 125 arrested, 11 cops injured

Police yesterday arrested 125 persons from different areas of the city for their involvement in various unlawful and violent activities, reports BSS.

Eleven police personnel were injured in clashes with aggressive people when they

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## Oil exploration in Ctg region Loan accord with 2 foreign firms likely next month

By Sharier Khan

A loan agreement with two foreign companies is likely to be initiated in the second week of next month for exploration of gas and oil in Chittagong region and development of Samutang gas field, sources said.

The government has already held negotiations in this regard with the Cairn Plc of Scotland and the Holland Sea Search.

The two companies, jointly proposed a development plan for the Samutang gas field, located in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

As per their proposal, a 25 km pipeline will be laid from the Samutang field to supply gas to the Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company (KAFCO) — which

will need some 61.5 million cubic feet per day from December.

The companies also proposed to supply gas to the national grid from Samutang through Chittagong-Bakhrabad gas line. This would help meet the growing demand for gas in the immediate future.

Samutang, having an estimated gas reserve of around one trillion cft, is one of the six gas fields in which the government decided to allow private investment a few months ago.

The two companies, which were permitted to explore the coast of the Bay of Bengal near Cox's Bazar and Sandwip had earlier submitted their pro-

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## PM reviews situation

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday held a meeting with some of her cabinet colleagues to review the situation after the opposition's 'Dhaka Siege' programme.

"We are convinced the people ignored the opposition call for a siege of Dhaka," one minister who attended the meeting told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

The two and a half hour meeting at the PM's Tejgaon office was attended by BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Irrigation Minister Majid-ul-Huq, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam, Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain and Communications Minister Oli Ahmed.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury was not present at the meeting.

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## 100 injured as soccer fans clash in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 10: Some 100 people were injured in violence at the Chittagong Stadium this morning.

Ten of them were admitted to hospitals and private clinics. Police and witnesses said, hundreds of soccer fans, went on the rampage damaging vehicles and the stadium office.

The trouble began when the Shakura Ideal High School team of Boalkhali thana beat the Kadalpur High School team of Raozan thana by 3-0 goals.

The clash which started at the stadium gallery soon spread to the surrounding areas. The panic-stricken spectators ran for safety. The traffic movement in front of the stadium came to a halt for sometime.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Police said none was arrested.

## Govt accepts political defeat: Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general Matjur Rahman Nizami said yesterday the government had accepted a "political defeat" by resorting to repressive measures against the opposition parties who observed a 'Dhaka siege' programme on the day.

"In its attempt to foil the Opposition programme, the government has sieged the whole country by obstructing people from participating in rallies and agitations," he said, adding "It's a denial of their democratic rights."

Addressing a public meeting at near the Baitul Mukarram mosque after the 'Dhaka Siege' programme of the Awami League and the Jatiya Party, Nizami alleged that the government had chosen the path of oppression to foil the Opposition's current agitation for holding general elections under a caretaker administration. The government would have to face the

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## Transport strike aimed at foiling 'Dhaka siege'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samikha Federation in a statement yesterday condemned the strike call by the BNP-backed transport owners association saying it was aimed at foiling the 'Dhaka siege' programme.

The statement issued by its president Manzurul Ahsan Khan and general secretary Bhusan Ghosh alleged that hoodlums belonging to the owners' association attacked several vehicles, transport workers and passengers in Joydevpur, Narayanganj, Narshingdi and at other places.

The workers' leaders said the federation does not support the siege programme called by the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami. But the way the ruling party is dealing with the matter is affecting the workers, the country and the BNP itself, they said.

They called upon the transport owners, workers and the passengers to resist the 'evil forces' unitedly.

## Agri-exports fall by 82 pc in 5 years

Star Report

Despite excellent prospects for increasing export of agricultural products, the country's current paltry export level of fruits and vegetables declined by staggering 82 per cent between 1987-92.

According to a recent report, Bangladesh is unable to tap the potential due to the absence of a long term, well-coordinated national plan to develop a sustained agricultural diversification programme.

"Bangladesh has considerable potential to increase the production of conventional and non-conventional fruits, vegetables as well as aquatic resources," says the report based on a survey conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). "Export of fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, spices and condiments, and rice from Bangladesh constitute key areas in agriculture

which will not only bring about desired changes in diversification of the production base but also in the export programme."

The survey report on "Export Possibility of Agricultural Products in Bangladesh" contains details about existing production levels, problems in marketing and distribution, export market prospects, and suggests initiating a long term national plan geared towards a production cum export oriented programme.

Completed recently the final report was handed over to Agriculture Minister Major General (Ret'd) Majedul Huq last week.

With agricultural exports accounting for only 0.8 per cent of the country's total exports, Bangladesh, along with Cambodia and Nepal, are among the few developing

countries in Asia where agri-exports lag far behind agri-imports.

Citing Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) statistics, the JICA report notes that per capita agri-exports of Bangladesh stands at a paltry 2.97 US dollars compared to 7.22 dollars in Vietnam, 13.55 dollars in China, 12.33 dollars in Pakistan, 40 dollars in Sri Lanka, 31 dollars in the Philippines and 122 dollars in Thailand.

The country's existing limited export of fruits and vegetables declined from 17.9 million dollars in 1987 to only 3.3 million dollars in 1992. Inadequate production of quality fruits and vegetables, coupled with high production costs and airfreight charges and lack of air cargo space and the failure of timely supply to export market had a discoura-

ging impact on the entire export performance, the report says.

During the 1987-92 period the growth of agri-exports stood at 25 per cent in India, 133 per cent in Indonesia, 79 per cent in Malaysia, 380 per cent in Myanmar, 21 per cent in Sri Lanka, 61 per cent in Thailand and 71 per cent even in Saudi Arabia.

The JICA survey also carried out a market survey of Dubai and Singapore to assess the possibilities of agri-exports. The report identifies immediate prospects in exporting potatoes, tomatoes, pineapples, bananas, mangos, litchis and perhaps orchids in the future.

It also points out that the local exporters can also tap the markets in countries where there are a sizeable number of

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## BSC plans to procure ten more vessels

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 10: The Bangladesh Shipping Corporation will procure ten more vessels, including a mother tanker, by the year 2000 as part of the plan to expand its services.

Talking to newsmen here today, the Managing Director of BSC, SAM Iqbal said, these vessels would cost around 100 million US dollars.

The BSC will procure one mother tanker, six feeder vessels and three multipurpose ships, he said.

To expand the services, the BSC is now conducting a fleet planning study which is expected to be completed by December this year.

The BSC has already started sending ships to CIS countries, Karachi and Bander Abbas the MD said adding efforts were

now underway to open new routes to Gulf states.

By November this year the BSC would open a route to South Africa to carry jute goods and fertilisers. "We are also trying to introduce two more vessels on the Mongla-Colombo route for continuing the existing feeder service between Chittagong and Singapore," the managing director said.

With the introduction of the feeder service by BSC, foreign shipping companies can no longer enjoy monopoly on trade in the Bay of Bengal, the managing director said.

He hoped, the BSC's commercial viability would tremendously increase in near future if it could expand its network.

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