

Bombay bombings: 26 freed for lack of evidence

BOMBAY, Apr 10: Twenty-six people charged in connection with the March 12, 1993 Bombay bombings which left more than 300 people dead were freed today for lack of evidence, reports AFP.

Judge Jai Narayan Patel, who is presiding over the largest trial in Indian history, ordered the release of the 26 and the dropping of all charges against them.

"There is not sufficient proof or evidence against them," the judge said after the prosecution completed the initial presentation of its case in the trial which began on July 14 of last year.

A total of 198 people have been charged in connection with the March 12, 1993 bombings of the Bombay stock exchange Air India headquarters, luxury hotels and other landmark's in India's financial and commercial capital.

At least 317 people were killed and more than 1,000 injured in the serial blasts which occurred on what has been dubbed "black Friday."

Thirty-eight of the 198

Desai dead

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seven days of mourning in respect for the strictly orthodox Hindu who held strong beliefs on how to live a healthy life and on the evils of alcohol.

Desai, who apart from being prime minister from 1977-79 also served as Indian finance, and commerce and industry ministers, became ill shortly after celebrating his 99th birthday on February 28 in Bombay where he was visited by Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

The beginning of the 100th year of one of the last surviving followers of India's apostle of non-violence Mahatma Gandhi was marked with the sound of drums and the chanting of traditional Hindu ritual hymns at his austere Bombay home.

A serene and composed Desai had then said: "Gandhism is still relevant to today's world, and not just India alone. It means fearlessness, humanity, love for all. These things concern everyone."

Desai's son, Kanu Desai, and his grandchildren were at his bed-side when he died.

3 JCD leaders shot, 17 others hurt in Pabna bazar clash

PABNA, Apr 10: Some 20 people were injured, three of them with bullet, as miscreants stormed a bazar committee office in the town and looted Tk 70,000 today, witnesses and police said, reports UNB.

They said 10-15 miscreants armed with cut-rifles, pipeguns and pistols created panic in the Hazirhat area.

District JCD Vice President Sheikh Aslam, 30, Publicity Secretary Abdul Alim, 25, and activist Shibly, 22, were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

Tongi model elections

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and distribution of ID cards could be removed if the cards were prepared when the data was collected, sources said.

A number of ID card holders were not allowed to cast notes since some others had already cast votes for them. This meant that more than one card were issued against each of these voters.

Rahima Begum, a housewife and Sina Akhtar, a student of Ward No-1 — mother and daughter — have the same number (2538) in their ID cards. Only the daughter was allowed to cast vote.

Selim, Saleha Begum, Shahnaj, Khodeja Begum, Anwar, Abdus Sattar and many others of Ward No-7 also could not cast their votes despite having ID cards.

Asked about the matter of Selim, presiding officer of Anjuman Madrasa centre Ali Akkas, who just completed his degree course, said another card holder having the same number (2778) cast the vote.

At Dattapara Primary School centre under Ward-6, some 400 votes were cast by 10:15 am. The electioneering was completely peaceful and their were no allegations of mistakes in the ID cards of voters, claimed presiding officer Hamid Molla, a student of Jagannath College.

Haji Mohammad Hossain, an elderly man, who was present at the centre along with four others of his age, said, "I feel proud to be in such a committee."

Rokeya Begum (card no 0984), 30, when asked, said, she felt happy about the new system. "We want this system to continue," she added.

Another elderly man, Abdu Rashid Hawlader, who was on duty at the Church centre in Ward No-7 said, "I could not cast my vote last year because someone had cast it before I went to the centre. But those days have gone."

Some voters alleged that voters' signatures or thumb

people charged in the case are absconding, including the alleged mastermind of the bombing plot, Dawood Ibrahim, the Dubai-based don of Bombay's Muslim underworld.

Prosecutors have charged that Ibrahim organised the bombings to avenge the December 1992 razing of the Babri Mosque by Hindu extremists and the deaths of hundreds of Muslims in communal clashes sparked by the razing of the shrine.

Four killed in separate mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent
Four persons were killed and one received bullet injuries in separate incidents in the city and in Gazipur and Narayanganj Sunday night and yesterday.

Mokhiesuzzaman Bappi, 22, an M A final year student of Dhaka College, succumbed to his injuries at the Orthopaedic Hospital in the city yesterday morning.

Bappi, son of Eman Ali, an employee of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), was injured on Saturday when a truck hit his by-cycle from behind at Gazipur.

Arif Mia, a rickshaw puller died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) Sunday night. Arif became seriously ill after some unidentified persons forced him to drink juice mixed with poison. The miscreants took away his rickshaw.

Abdur Rashid, 20, a pedestrian, hit by a speeding truck at Tejgaon on Saturday, succumbed to his injuries at the DMCH.

Rashid Mia, 50, of Patantala of Siddirganj thana in Narayanganj, was electrocuted yesterday.

Anwar, 16, sustained bullet wounds in his left eye and neck during a gun fight between two rival groups at Godnail under Siddirganj thana yesterday afternoon. He was admitted to the DMCH. Details of the clash was not available immediately.

PM reviews

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afternoon at the Tejgaon office of the Prime Minister, was attended by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Food Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Irrigation Minister M Majid Ul Haq and Communications Minister Olf Ahmed.

Later, in the evening, Begum Zia chaired the weekly cabinet meeting at the Bangabhaban.

A proposal submitted before the cabinet to formulate new rules for pension for the non-government teachers was withdrawn for further scrutiny, meeting sources said.

impressions were not recorded when ballot papers were distributed. When asked, Mamtazuddin Ahmed, District Election Commissioner of Moulavibazar, said, it came to his notice at 11 am as these boys (presiding and polling officers) were working for the first time and they could not do everything properly.

Ayesha Akhtar Dalia, a degree student, was appointed presiding officer of Amjad Ali Girls School centre. She said everything went so smoothly at her centre.

But, she said, one woman could not be given ballot paper as her name was not found in the voters' list though she showed an ID card.

At Shaheed Smriti School centre, six people could not cast their votes as the information printed in their cards was not correct.

At the Tongi Hospital, votes were taken at makeshift tents. The voting was peaceful at this centre, said Advocate Abul Hossain, a member of the Murabbi committee.

Talking to this correspondent at Tongi thana, Dr Nazim Uddin Ahmed said "I have filed a written complaint with the EC about violation of rules by 9 candidate. Otherwise the elections are free and fair."

State Minister for Science and Technology Prof MA Mannan who was present at that time, told this correspondent that everyone wanted the Tongi model polls to be free and fair.

Different organisations and individuals undertook monitoring of Tongi polls. They included Study and Research Group (SRG), Bangladesh Centre for Development Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) and Coordination Council of Human Rights Bangladesh (CCHRB). Some foreign observers also oversaw the polls.

A spokesman for the SRG team said the elections were by and large free and fair though there was minor mismanagement.



The city's New Market area during hartal hours yesterday.

— Star photo

BNP reaping profits out of fertiliser, food crises: AL

By Staff Correspondent
Awami League leaders said yesterday that the ruling BNP was reaping profits out of the fertiliser and food crises to bolster party funds for the next general elections.

They were addressing a post-hartal rally held in front of the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city in the afternoon.

The rally, organised by the city chapter of the party, was presided over by city AL vice-president Reazuddin Ahmed. It was addressed by AL president member Amir Hussain Amu, central leader Siddiqur Rauf, city AL secretary Moazzal Hussain Chowdhury Maya, joint secretaries Adv. Quamrul Islam, Akhterul Alam, Chhatra League general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna and other city unit leaders. AL publicity secretary Mozaffar Hussain Paltu was also present.

Amu congratulated the people for making the April 9 and 10 hartals successful and extended the party's support to the 48-hour strike called by the SKOP beginning this morning.

The AL leaders also urged the people to make the April 10 grand rally of peasants at the city's Eamthapath a success.

Countrywide hartal

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opened fire when they (the police) chased them. They were nabbed from near a petrol pump at the west side of Asad Gate.

Dhanmondi police picked up one Ibrahim, 26, from Sobhanbagh area where Abdul Aziz, a constable of the Special Armed Force (SAF), was seriously injured in a clash between pro-hartal activists and police. He was admitted to the Rajarbagh Police Hospital.

There was also a chase and counter-chase between riot police and pro-hartal activists after some crackers were exploded at Bangabandhu Avenue at around 10:30 pm. Crackers were also exploded in Motijheel commercial area at around 12:30 pm.

Inter-district bus services to and from Sayedabad, Gabtoli and Mahakhali were affected. According to Sadarghat terminal sources, launch services were normal. Airport sources said, Biman's four domestic flights, out of eleven, were cancelled while Railway sources say, train communication was quite normal.

The AL, JP and Jamaat brought out processions from various parts of the capital and held brief rallies at different points during the hartal hours.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong says: The hartal passed off almost peacefully in the port city though normal life was badly affected. However, there was no incident of violence.

Production in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone and in other industrial areas of the port city suffered due to poor attendance of workers.

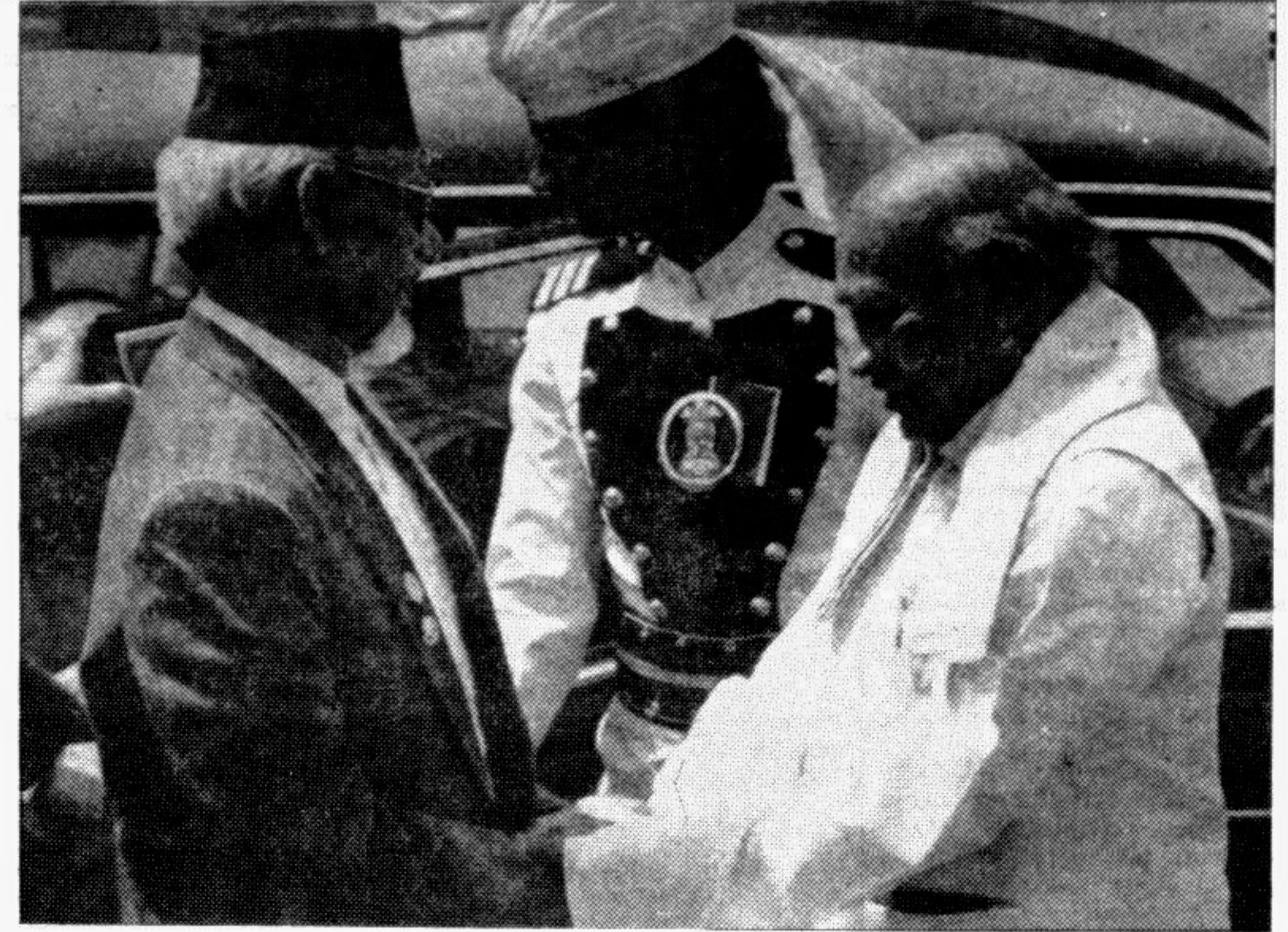
Cargo handling inside the port jetties and delivery of goods to and from the Chittagong Port was disrupted. The cargo-carrying vessels anchored at jetties remained stranded.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent adds: The hartal passed off peacefully in this river port town. Except rickshaws, no vehicle plied on the roads.

Production at the Adamjee Jute Mills, the Lakshminarayan Cotton Mills and the Chittaranjan Cotton Mills was normal but other mills and industries remained closed.

Because of pourashava polls in Tongi and a tornado that hit Munshiganj on Saturday, these two places were excluded from the hartal.

The opposition parties enforced a similar day-long strike in five divisional headquarters including the capital, on Sunday.



Nepalese Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari (L) being greeted by his Indian counterpart PV Narasimha Rao at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday.

— AFP photo

Adhikari

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years." Adhikari said after a ceremonial reception at the imposing British-built Presidential Palace.

"When I sit with Prime Minister Rao, I would like to review almost all the aspects of our relations in the light of the changes in the world as well as the changes in South Asia," he said.

Rao, apparently alluding to current economic changes in both countries, said India was prepared to take several new measures to improve ties with Nepal but did not say what these steps were.

"I think everything is changing, but the point is India and Nepal are neighbours and that is not going to change," he said while Adhikari smiled approvingly.

"So we'll have to sit together and we'll have to discuss whatever is needed. We even want to come closer in many of our relations, many aspects of our relations," Rao said.

DU student

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siders pounced on one Mahbubur Rahman and seriously beat him up.

The gang then disappeared from the scene only to return after half an hour along with at least a dozen others.

The gang went on the rampage and damaged everything in their path.

The assaulted student needed first aid.

Students of the Institute, in a statement, demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Manzur murder case

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The principal suspect in the case concerning Maj Gen Abul Manzur's alleged murder, Maj (ret'd) Emdadul Haq had earlier submitted a 'retract petition' seeking to withdraw his confessional statement before a magistrate.

Legal experts said that following submission of a 'retract petition', the court would only examine whether the statement was given voluntarily or not. If the trial court was satisfied after proper inquiry that the statement was given voluntarily, the court would reject a retract petition, they added.

Relatives of Gen Latif and Col Rahman left for Chittagong yesterday to assist their lawyers. A relative of Maj Emdad also left for Chittagong yesterday.

The three former army officials arrested in connection with the case are unlikely to be produced before the CMM's court, Chittagong, today because of the 48-hour country-wide strike called by the SKOP, police and court sources said.

A jail official in Dhaka said yesterday that they did not yet get any order to produce Gen Latif in the court of the CMM, Chittagong.

Gen Latif is being detained in the Dhaka Central jail, Col Shamsur Rahman in Tangail jail and Emdadul Haq in Comilla jail.

A court official in Chittagong said that the paper works would be done and a new date for hearing would be fixed.

Among the three, only Maj Emdad arrested on March 17,

was produced in the court on March 28. Gen Latif and Col Rahman were arrested on March 12.

One source, however, hinted that Maj Emdad might be taken to the court from Comilla jail. Official confirmation could not be had.

Meanwhile, CID officials continued their probe in to the unexplained death of Gen Manzur in army custody in Chittagong cantonment on June 1, 1981, following an abortive coup in which president Ziaur Rahman was assassinated on the night of May 30.

The investigating officer of the case had earlier told The Daily Star that it was difficult to say at this stage who would be the accused in the case.

Another source said that the case might be shifted to a court in Dhaka before the final hearing started.

4 JCD activists beaten up

Four activists of the Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were allegedly beaten up by the supporters of pro-Awami League Chhatra League on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Babu, resident of Mujib Hall, Bablu of Zia Hall, Roni of Islamic History Department and Belayet Hossain of Mohsin Hall. They were given first aid at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses said a group of youths first attacked Babu near TSC at about 6:30 pm and then beat his friends Bablu, Roni and Belayet as they tried to rescue him.

The Economist says

Opposition's agitation running out of steam

The opposition's campaign in Bangladesh to get the government to step down seems to be running out of steam, the prestigious London-based financial weekly, The Economist, said, reports BSS.

In a report published in its April 7 issue, The Economist said that the much advertised 'siege of Dhaka' on March 28 by the Opposition was a failure.

The weekly which dealt with the problems of distribution of fertiliser said: This man-made mess is particularly galling given that Bangladesh's economy has at last been doing pretty well.

Saifur Rahman, described as a tough-minded Finance Minister, has pushed through some difficult economic reforms and maintained a pretty tight hold on budget deficit, The Economist said.

It said, the growth has been running at over 4 per cent for four years, and inflation is the lowest in South Asia, despite a recent upwards blip caused by the rice price rise. Exports have been rising by around 20 per cent a year.

About the fertiliser crisis, the weekly said: The origin of the fertiliser problem lies in the huge disparity between subsidised Bangladeshi price and world market prices.

It said the Bangladesh government recently dropped the already low price of urea to 93 dollar a ton, while the international price has risen and now stands at 233 dollar a ton. The bigger the differential, the more of the output from Bangladesh's state-owned fertiliser factories slips out of the country, much of it across the border to India.

The weekly said: The government has been exporting too much fertiliser through official channels as well as a poor rice crop last autumn has pushed up the price of rice from 8-10 Taka to 14-16 Taka a kilo. So farmers planted more rice than usual this spring.

Fertiliser demand is therefore up by 20-25 per cent. Traders say they foresaw this rise, yet the export continued enthusiastically. Nobody knows whether to accuse officials of incompetence or corruption.

There are accusations of hoarding, too. The government recently handed over fertiliser distribution to the private sector, and some say that favoured people have colluded with officials to corner the market and restrict supplies. Opponents of the government's economic reforms have leapt on these claims as evidence of the sort of disaster that can result from privatisation.

The weekly said: The rice crop due to be harvested at the end of April needs fertiliser right now. But farmers cannot get their hands on the stuff. In some parts of the country, bags of urea which normally sell for Taka 240 are said to be fetching Taka 1,000.

It said: On March 29, the Bangladesh government called the army in to lend it hand.

The government needed the army's help to sort out a bungle, which is threatening the country's rice harvest. For the couple of weeks, there have been demonstrations all over the country in protest of a fertiliser shortage.

Storm kills 12

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Monday morning.
At least 25 persons were injured and more than 400 houses razed to the ground by the tornado which lasted only a few minutes.

When contacted, the TNO of Borhanuddin informed this correspondent that relief materials and some money have already been sent to the affected areas.

Crop worth about 10 lakh Taka has been destroyed by the tornado, first hand reports said.

UNB adds: So far, 40 bodies of tornado victims have been buried while more than 3,000 people were wounded during Saturday's catastrophic storm.

Additional SP of Munshiganj A K M Mozammel Hossain told UNB by telephone at 10 am Monday.

Some 25 to 30 seriously injured persons were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while a few others were admitted to local hospitals, he said.

The death toll might rise with the recovery of more bodies, the ASP added.

Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam Monday morning visited the affected areas in four thanas — Louhajang, Strajdikhan, Srinagar and Sadar — where some 3,500 tin-shed and thatched houses were damaged, either fully or partially.

The Midnight File

Member of Ahmedi sect stoned to death in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Apr 10: A mob of angry Muslims stoned to death a member of the minority Ahmedi sect and dragged his dead body through the village, news reports said today. Ahmedis claim to be a sect of Islam, but mainstream Muslims in Pakistan consider them infidels. Rasheed Ahmed had gone to a courthouse Sunday in Shahqadar village, about 45 kilometers (21 miles) from Peshawar, with bail money to win the release of a new convert to the Ahmedi religion, reports AP.

UN peacekeeper killed in Zagreb

ZAGREB, Apr 10: A Polish UN peacekeeper was killed today in a shooting incident involving the Croatian army near ceasefire lines with rebel minority Serbs, the United Nations said. A spokesman for the UN confidence restoration operation in Croatia (NCRO) said it was not clear if the Polish soldier was deliberately targeted or hit by stray gunfire, reports Reuters.

AL candidate elected

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morning.
Ahmed polled 12,163 votes. Out of 72,000 registered voters, 55,795 cast their ballots. Of them, 1,397 votes were cancelled.

Four candidates vied for the chairman's post, while 87 candidates were in the race for the 21 posts of commissioner in the seven wards of the municipality, a city suburb.

The results of the commissioner elections were not received at the time of going to press.

Polling was held in 72 centres where youths of the localities functioned as presiding and polling officers. They were also involved in data collection for preparing the voters' list.

Only voters with identity (ID) cards were eligible to exercise their franchise. Some voters collected their ID cards from the EC even yesterday.

SKOP strike

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Implementation of accords signed with the authorities. The eight-point demand of the SKOP includes cancellation of the government's privatization programme, reopening of closed industrial units and implementation of the wage commission award.

Organisers claimed lakhs of workers and employees of different sectors would join the strike programme.

Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation, backed by the CPB, has also called a 48-hour strike in the transport sector, coinciding with that of SKOP.

The transport workers are demanding appointment letters and payment of wages and benefits according to law.

Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation and Sammilita Garments Sramik Karmachari league will observe a 48-hour strike extending support to SKOP programme.

Organisers of the programmes held rallies and brought out torch processions in the city yesterday to drum up support for their respective programmes.

Sena's hunt

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chief of a body of Muslim clerics, said members of his faith were being persecuted because of their religion.

"Why don't they deport several thousand (Hindu) Nepalis and Sri Lankan Tamils living in Bombay," he said. "Only Muslims are being picked up as second class citizens."

The Sena has been blamed of anti-Muslim riots in Bombay following the December 6, 1992 razing of the Babri Mosque by Hindu zealots in northern India.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman will call on the Kuwaiti Premier.

Al-Sabah is expected to have a lunch meeting with the members of Bangladesh Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI).

Ambassadors from other Arab countries here are likely to make a joint call on him.

Chiefs of the three defence services are also expected to call on the Crown Prince of Kuwait.

He is scheduled to address a press conference before winding up the visit.

ঢাকা ওয়াসা জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা ওয়াসা বিভিন্ন পানি সরবরাহ কেন্দ্রে হতে মহানগরীতে স্থাপিত উহার সরবরাহ লাইনে গ্রাউন্ড লেভেলে নির্দিষ্ট সময়সূচী মোতাবেক পানি সরবরাহ করছে। সম্প্রতি কোন কোন এলাকায় জনসাধারণ সর্বক্ষণ সরাসরি ট্যাপে পানি সরবরাহের জন্য বিভিন্ন আঞ্চলিক অফিসে/পানি সরবরাহ কেন্দ্রে দাবী জানাচ্ছে যা মোটেই যুক্তিসঙ্গত নহে। এ ব্যাপারে তদন্তে দেখা গেছে যে, অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে বাধিত বাধিত ভূ-গর্ভস্থ জলাধার নেই তাদেরই পানির সমস্যা বেশী হচ্ছে।

উপরেইক অবস্থায় বাড়িতে প্রয়োজনীয় পানি সংরক্ষণের জন্য প্রতিটি হোটেলে নির্দিষ্ট মাপের ভূ-গর্ভস্থ জলাধার নির্মাণসহ বহুতল ভবনগুলোতে গ্রাউন্ড লেভেলে উর্ধ্বে পানি উত্তোলনের নিজস্ব ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট গৃহকসাধারণকে সবিশেষ অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে। জলাধার নির্মাণের নির্দিষ্ট জলাধারের প্রয়োজনীয় মেজারমেন্ট ও অন্যান্য তথ্যের জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট আঞ্চলিক অফিসসমূহের নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর সাথে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

ওয়াসা-৩১৩১৪৪/৯৫
ঢাকা ওয়াসা