

Shopkeepers 'circulate' their own currencies!

By Rafiq Hasan and Govinda Shil, back from Dinajpur

Shopkeepers in Thakurgaon have made alternative arrangements due to a severe crisis of 'taka two' and 'taka one' notes.

At least 50 shopkeepers, owners of hotels and restaurants have been using their self-made 'Tk 1 and Tk 2 notes' for the last six months, local people said.

While visiting the area, The Daily Star team found that restaurant owners and shopkeepers were transacting business using these 'notes'—pieces of paper carrying individual seals and signatures.

Many local people alleged that taking advantage of the non-availability of Tk 1 and Tk 2 notes, some public sector banks were unofficially charging 'commissions' for giving the notes.

The manager of a local hotel said I know this is illegal but I have no option but to make and issue Tk 1 and Tk 2 notes. He further said he had informed many government officials and those of banks about the situation but to no effect as yet.

Local consumers said that having such 'personal notes' made it obligatory for them to spend those at certain

shops, and benefiting their owners. "So, the makers of the notes are sure of their early use," said Abdur Rouf, a student.

Some of the shopkeepers have already withdrawn their 'alternative notes'. "I have withdrawn my Tk one and Tk two notes because I was not satisfied from legal points of view," said the owner of a big store. "These notes were being copied frequently by young boys," he added.

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JN hall incident GF may form people's inquiry commission

By DU Correspondent

A delegation of the Gano Forum, led by its president Dr Kamal Hossain, yesterday visited Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University and exchanged views with the provost, house tutors and members of hall students, union about the police attack on the students.

Dr Kamal assured them that he would try to form a people's inquiry commission for quick investigation into the incident.

Police attacked the students of the Jagannath Hall on January 31 and beat them up mercilessly. About 200 students were injured in the attack.

Dr Kamal Hossain stressed the need for uniting all secular and pro-liberation forces for establishing the rule of law in the country.

Khulna AL blames JCD for 'terrorism'

KHULNA, Feb 10: Local leaders of the Awami League and its front organisations here today accused the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) of unleashing terrorism in the city, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference, they alleged that the student front of the ruling party had attacked the homes of local BCL leaders Sheikh Mohammad Zahangir, Taslim Ahmed and Saiful Islam and tortured Juba league leaders Shaheed Iqbal Bither and Babbar.

They also alleged that the BNP terrorists, who had killed about 50 opposition leaders and workers in last five years, were moving scot free at the very nose of the law enforcers.

Russian envoy to Vatican quits

MOSCOW, Feb 10: Russia's ambassador to the Vatican has offered to resign after describing President Boris Yeltsin as power-hungry, a news report said today, reports AP.

Vyacheslav Kostikov, a former presidential spokesman, has written a letter of resignation, the Interfax news agency said.

Deaths of 11 protestors in police firing

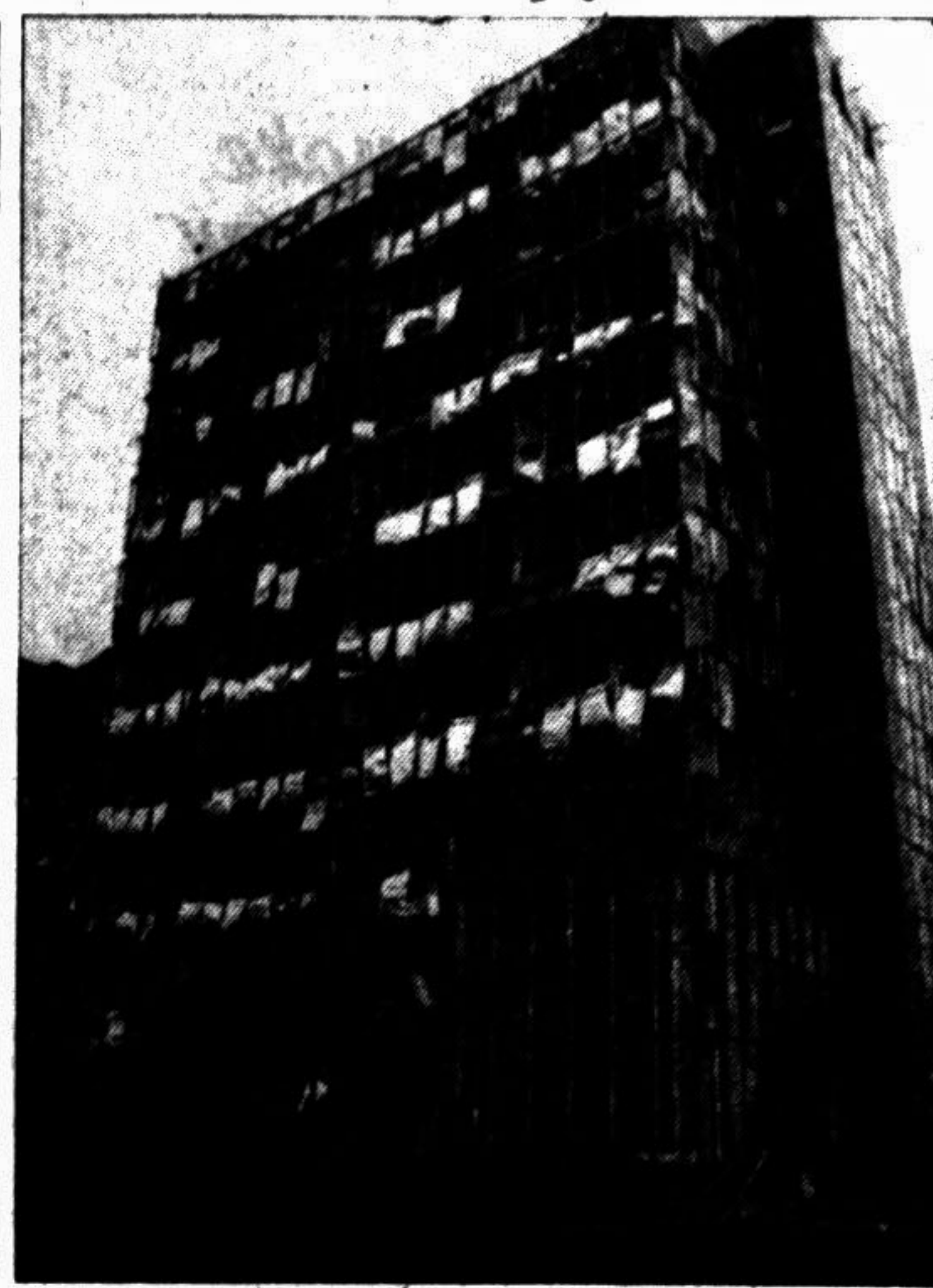
Court orders UP govt to pay \$28000 to each family

NEW DELHI, Feb 10: An Indian court has accused a state government of violating human rights and ordered it to pay some 28,000 dollars each to the families of 11 protestors shot dead by the police two years ago, reports AFP.

The Allahabad High Court, in a verdict late Friday, also ordered the northern state of Uttar Pradesh to give an equal amount of money to women who had been raped by police men, newspapers here reported.

The court, located in the Uttar Pradesh city of Allahabad, also announced compensation of 50,000 rupees (1,420 dollars) to 250,000 rupees (7,140 dollars) for those injured in the police action on October 2, 1994.

Thousands of men and women on their way to New



An office building is left devastated yesterday after a powerful bomb exploded in an underground parking in east London. — AFP/UNB photo

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Thousands of men and women on their way to New

5 more expelled from BNP

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday expelled five district and thana level leaders with immediate effect on charges of disobeying party decision and engaging in activities contrary to the party discipline, a party press release said last night, reports BSS.

The expelled persons are: Khurshid Alam, vice-president of Luxmipur District committee, Shafiqul Islam Shaikh, president of Sonatala Thana committee, Syed Ahmed Majumder, member of Chhoddagram thana committee, Kalimuddin Milon, member of Chhatak thana committee, and Glasuddin, member Bhairab Thana committee.

FEMA won't monitor polls

The Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) announced yesterday that it would not proceed to monitor the February 15 elections, says a press release.

However, it will continue to gather information from across the country and report on the election process.

FEMA revised its earlier plan at its National Committee meeting held yesterday.

FEMA reiterated its extreme disappointment that the government and the opposition have been unable to resolve the political crisis. It feared for the safety of its volunteers and expressed concern that election day will be marred by disruption of polling, violence and attempts by some parties and candidates to manipulate election results.

Clinton signs Defence Bill

WASHINGTON, Feb 10: President Bill Clinton signed a major defence bill into law today, despite objections to a measure that requires the armed forces to dismiss US service members infected with the AIDS virus, reports AFP.

Clinton, calling the AIDS provision 'blatantly discriminatory and highly punitive', said he had taken steps to assure any ejected soldiers would be financially and medically cared for. He also said his administration would not defend the provision in the face of expected court challenges.

Pre-polls violence continues

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Meanwhile, three BCL leaders were arrested in Sitakund in connection with yesterday's killing of JCD leader Altaf Hossain.

Our Correspondent reported from Khulna that a bomb was hurled on the residence of Mayor Shaikh Tayyab Rahman and several others on the residence of BNP candidate A U Ahmed at around 9 am yesterday.

While none was injured at the Mayor's residence, the driver of a U Ahmed was injured in the attack, allegedly made by anti-election activists.

Our Staff Correspondent reported from Sylhet that a meeting and after party of BNP nominee Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury was followed by anti-polls activists at Dakshinbazar in Barlekha thana in Moulvibazar district yesterday. They also damaged a microbus of the candidate.

The Opposition activists also followed a polls projection meeting of Ebadur Rahman at Shahbazar bazar.

The thana Election Commission office at Barlekha was set ablaze Saturday night. Some important documents and files were burnt.

BNP nominee from Sunamganj-5 Abdul Majid Master was manhandled at Shetapara village in Chhatra thana Friday afternoon.

At Nabiganj thana, a meeting of BNP nominee Sheikh Sujat Miah was foiled at Imambari Bazar in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, NDA candidate Foizul Islam Babul from Sylhet-3 withdrew his candidature yesterday at a press conference, saying that the ensuing election would not solve the present crisis.

In Habiganj, some crackers were hurled on the residence of BNP candidate Advocate Atique Ullah at Anandapur on Friday night. Ullah is contesting from Habiganj-3 constituency.

Atique Ullah's wife was reportedly injured in the attack made allegedly by Chhatra League activists.

In another incident, agitated BCL activists of Nabiganj thana ransacked the campaign office of Jatiyatabadi Awami League candidate Sheikh Azizul Haq in Habiganj-1 constituency and set ablaze election banners Friday night.

The BCL activists also foiled a meeting of BNP candidate Sheikh Sujat at Khagura Bazar.

Our Staff Correspondent reported from Barisal that at least 20 persons were injured, seven of them seriously, in an hour-long clash and cracker blasts at around 11 am yesterday at the Mouladi Degree College.

The clashes began when an anti-polls procession of BCL came to the college and blasted crackers and attacked an on-going workshop on election training for officers.

Later, JCD activists resisted the attack in which 20 persons were injured. Seriously injured Sohail, Alamgir, Mukul, Rashid, Golam Mostafa, Idris and Ruman were admitted to Muladi Thana Health Complex. Police was deployed in the campus to avert further clash.

In Barisal town, BCL activists went on a rampage at about 7 pm and damaged two vehicles. In Hizi, anti-polls activists blasted cocktails at an election meeting of former BNP MP Mosharraf Hossain Manju in the afternoon.

In Barguna at least 12 persons were injured in three separate clashes.

A car and a motor cycle were damaged and later set ablaze at Chhatrakhal bazar when a BNP election campaign meeting was arranged.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reported: Opposition activists foiled a workshop on election at Gobindaganj Thana Parishad premises yesterday.

The activists ransacked the auditorium, threw away loud speakers into a nearby pond and snatched away election booklets from there. They also set ablaze a motor cycle of BNP candidate Abdul Mannan Mondal, contesting from Gaibandha-4 constituency.

The Midnight File

2 killed in Grozny during demonstration

MOSCOW, Feb 10: At least two people — a woman and a child — were killed today by gunfire during a pro-independence demonstration in the central square of the Chechen capital Grozny, witnesses on the scene told AFP.

Ban defied: 100 hurt

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branch at Shukrabad and a branch of Uttara Bank at Kalabagan were gutted partially when opposition processionists allegedly set fire using home-made petrol bombs.

Besides scores of vehicles and some shops at Alhaj Super Market at Sobhanbagh and a clinic building at the Panthapath intersection were damaged.

Managing Director of Uttara Bank M Aminuzzaman, while visiting the gutted branch at Kalabagan told newsmen that the Branch Manager's room, furniture and cash counters on the ground floor of the two-storey office were burnt. The processionists' bid to loot the valuables and cash, however, failed as they could not break through the collapsible gates, he added.

A police official said petrol bombs were hurled inside the bank branch through smashed window panes.

Manager of the gutted Janata Bank branch at Shukrabad Abdus Salam Khan said, the bank staff jumped out from the first floor of the two-storey office when processionists threw petrol bombs inside. He, however, could not confirm the extent of damage.

Jatiya Party marchers heading for the PM's residence turned violent when intercepted by police at Farmgate.

At least 30 people were injured in clashes between police and JP activists there while some 20 others were hurt while running helter skelter to escape tear gas and rubber bullets.

Panic gripped the Airport Road, Green Road and Panthapath areas thick smoke spread all around. Shopkeepers hurriedly closed shutters and passersby ran for shelter. The demonstrators then set fire to a truck loaded with potato, three autorickshaws and a tempo, besides ransacking a number of rickshaws at Green Road.

While fleeing in the face of strong police action, ransacked the nearby makeshift (flea) shops and damaged a Chinese restaurant and a sweetmeat shop.

They also damaged neon signs of a number of organisations on both sides of the Green Road.

Earlier, at its rally, JP expressed its firm resolve to resist the ensuing elections.

AL president Sheikh Hasina, in a statement last night, said "the government is now playing with fire."

The attack on the pre-scheduled peaceful AL rally by those in power without any provocation left at least 150 workers of the opposition parties and other people, she alleged.

Earlier, addressing the rally at Russel Square, AL presidium member Tofael Ahmed called upon the people to form resistance squads to foil the one-party elections.

Acting Chairman of the JP, addressing the party rally from a truck at the Panthapath said holding of polls under this government will not be allowed.

Matiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General of Jamaat, told his party's pre-rally at Moghbazar crossing that the people had already built up resistance against the 'one-party farcical' elections.

Later, unidentified groups set fire to hurled crackers at four other pumps late evening. The pumps which were partially affected were one in Mohakhali, two in Motijheel, and another near Joy Kali Mandir in the old part of the city, according to the Fire Department.

A petrol bomb explosion in the Stadium area at around 9 pm left nine people injured while sporadic clashes between police and anti-election activists continued in the evening till the filing of this report at 1:30 pm.

An auto-rickshaw driver, Awlad Hossain, was beaten up and his vehicle was damaged at around 7 pm at Panthapath. Another two persons — Abdul Khalek (35) and Abdur Rouf (40) — were injured when cocktails were hurled at a tempo in Gulistan area. Rickshawpuller Suruj (37) was hit by a stray bullet in the same area.

The activists of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League (BCL) set fire to three vehicles and damaged at least 10 others in the Dhaka University area yesterday evening.

Radio, TV now

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from different parts of the country we will have to fax or telephone those offices and then they would air them," an EC official said.

It was also learnt that unlike previous years, the results would only be announced until midnight, then the process would be taken up next morning. In the past election results were announced non-stop giving minute-to-minute developments.

Meanwhile, almost all procedures regarding holding the parliamentary elections scheduled for next Thursday, has been completed.

"We have sent nearly all the necessary materials to the 21,106 polling centres of the country," said the official.

The official added that for the 4,74,248 voters in the country (after deduction from the original 5.6 crore voters due to candidates elected unopposed from 48 constituencies) the preparation and distribution process of ballot papers are also nearing completion.

"Over 4.7 crore ballot papers have been printed and we have sent ballot papers to every district except for eight to ten places but we intend to complete the process shortly," the official said.

In the 252 constituencies, the official added, there were 98,710 booths in the 21,106 polling centres. Every centre will be manned by 13 people.

Frozen food firm

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sue through arbitration with the International Chamber of Commerce.

In defence, Aqua Foods had pointed out that its cargo had undergone pre-shipment inspection by Lloyds and so the quality of its items conform to the agreements with the importers.

But the EPB, taking a tough stance on the issue, had rejected Aqua Food's explanation on the ground that pre-shipment inspection covers only ten per cent of the goods. Moreover, since frozen shrimps are preserved in ice blocks, these are not checked by melting the ice, leaving scope for fraud.

The USA is the biggest importer of Bangladesh frozen foods taking 30.43 per cent of the export. The country exported frozen foods worth 99.32 million dollars to the US in 1994-95 which is 16.32 per cent higher than the previous year.

The complaints which have lodged the importers of frozen foods, and also influential members of the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) of USA which can take up the matter with the government there, said a source in the EPB.

The two gangs have been at loggerheads for the past one week.

In another clash between them on Tuesday last, a college student was critically injured. He died the next day at the DMCH.

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PM warns 'anarchists'

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could change that in the future," she added.

The Prime Minister was addressing a public meeting held amidst tight security at the Rajshahi Madrassah ground this afternoon in the final round of her electioneering tour.

Begum Zia said her party, if voted to power again, will wage a movement against terrorists, killers of democracy and conspirators against the independence and for production and development of the country.

She warned that those who are trying to foil the coming elections and causing people's sufferings through terrorism, anarchy and hartal would be severely dealt with.

"Everything has a limit," the Prime Minister said, adding that the government would take strict measures if good sense does not prevail upon the opposition parties.

"Those who are betraying with the nation and creating violence and anarchy all over the country will be punished. We will teach them a lesson after the February 15 election," she said.

Cautioning the people about 'evil designs of three vested political parties,' she urged them to resist those parties unitedly by participating in the election. "The three parties have been united to kill democracy and destroy the country."

Begum Zia said one of those parties had killed democracy, banned all parties and established one-party rule after the independence and enchain the nation under slavery.

Another party, she said, imposed a nine-year autocratic rule after unseating an elected government in 1982. The third party which opposed the Liberation War does not believe in the existence of the country, she said.

These three evil forces have been united in the name of establishing the right of franchise and democracy. In reality, they have become active to destroy the two," she added.

She urged the people to vote for the 'sheaf of paddy' —

the election symbol of BNP — for continuation of the current trend of development, safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty and continuation of the Constitution and democracy.

Blasts at rally

From Page 1

Opposition activists were admitted to private clinics to avoid arrest. Opposition leaders later said.

Police arrested 12 persons from different spots in the city.

A BNP procession towards the PM's meeting from a city suburb reportedly came under attack by the activists of Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami at Bindopur near Rajshahi University.

Earlier, as the Prime Minister's motorcade from the airport passed through the cordoned Greater Road towards the circuit house, Left Democratic Front activists demonstrated with black flags in the Saheb Bazar area.

Another group of Opposition activists tried to go near the PM's motorcade when it was passing through the TD Mor at about 12-45 pm, about 200 yards from the meeting venue. BNP activists resisted them and a clash ensued. The rival groups exploded hand bombs.

Since morning, the Opposition activists blasted scores of handbombs and brought out several processions in the city ignoring police, BDR and Army patrol. Stray clashes took place in different parts of the city with the law enforcing agencies.

Rajshahi has been in the grip of widespread violence for the last three days centring the Prime Minister's visit as the mainstream opposition mounted protests and called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the district today.

Complete hartal was observed in the city at the call of the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Begum Zia carried here by Biman at 12-30 pm and went straight to the mazar of Hazrat Shah Makhdum (R) at Dargahpara in the city.

workers brought out a procession to welcome the PM's visit while the Opposition activists of the AL, Jatiya Party and the Jamaat were staging black flag demonstrations to protest Begum Zia's electioneering tour.

Opposition parties have also called hartal from 2 pm to 10 pm at Tangail district headquarters tomorrow to protest the PM's visit in the district. She is scheduled to address a election rally at Tangail during her return to the capital tomorrow.

According to police and witnesses, a group of militant anti-polls activists stormed the local election office and set fire to three sacks containing ID cards and other official papers and furniture of the office at around 8:30 pm. They also set fire to the municipal office and a restaurant at the Station Bazar shortly afterwards.

Meanwhile, the election rally of a BNP candidate was attacked and two shops were damaged at Belkuchi thana while a Progreso candidate in the polls, Gulzar Hossain, was beaten up in the same area. The election camp of Gulzar was also burnt.

Freedom Party candidate from Ullapara, Abul Kashem, has today announced his withdrawal from the election race.

The clash between the activists of BNP and the opposition parties took place at around 7:30 pm at Suhrawardy Road. The BNP

Hartal at Sirajganj

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University College, the venue for her public meeting, scheduled to be held at 2 pm tomorrow.

Begum Zia reached Sirajganj Circuit House at 10:30 pm amid sporadic cracker blasts at different parts of the town.

The PM reportedly diverted her route on her way from Rajshahi to Sirajganj to avoid a black flag demonstration by the Opposition activists at Natore. The demonstrators also damaged vehicles at the Kanaikhal bus stand and exploded crackers in Natore.

Prior to her arrival here, at least 15 persons were injured in clashes between the activists of the ruling BNP and the mainstream opposition parties boycotting the February 15 polls.

The anti-polls activists also set fire to the district election commission office, the pourasava office, a restaurant and ransacked several election camps in and outside the town while the local Awami League office was also attacked by the pro-election political activists. The town was also rocked by a series of explosions during the day.

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World cricketing gala opens today

From Page 1

Time, 6:30 pm: The Flower Stadium will be shown from the sky. There will be no other light in the stadium except one very bright white floodlight. The official rainbow colours of Wills will be seen.

6:30: The West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu will enter the ground with his escort, former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen. When the two will enter the ground, there will be twelve 'Googlee's, the official mascot, on the large circular dais. The 'theme song' of the Wills World Cup will be played.

6:31: All the twelve teams in coloured attire will enter the ground. Their entry will be projected on the giant screen.

6:32: The names of all 168 players will be read out. While announcing the names a spotlight will be focussed on each one's face. The twelve captains will appear on the stage one by one to receive the mascot 'Googlee'.

6:43: Jyoti Basu will declare the Wills World Cup open.

6:44: Basu and Sushmita Sen along with the players will leave the dais amidst glittering lights.

The start of the Cultural Show.

6:45: For thirty seconds the stadium will be at a standstill.

6:46: The laser will project the images of the great cricketing heroes of the last twenty years.

6:49: First laser show. A bat, a ball and a prism of light will gradually move to the flower at the centre of the stadium.

6:50: The whole stadium will be lit up. The laser ball will approach towards the middle of the flower. There will be a sudden fountain of light.

6:51: The flower will blossom. Three hundred dancers will enthrall the spectators.

6:54: A new design will emerge from the national flags of the twelve participating countries.

6:55: The whole stadium will