

JCD-BCL gunfights in Ctg: 20 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 11: At least 30 persons were injured in sporadic incidents of gunfights and bomb blasts in the port city marking the third consecutive day today of Opposition called non-cooperation, hospital sources and witnesses said.

Three of the injured including a rickshawpuller were admitted into Chittagong Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds.

The rest were rushed to private clinics for treatment.

A gunfight amid bomb blasts and chase and counter-chase between rival activists of Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League raged through the Momin Road and Jambal Khan area for about two hours from 11 am. Among others a rickshawpuller and five pedestrians were injured during the clashes, witnesses said.

At Sher Shah colony area of Nasirabad, an hour long gun-battle between the activists of Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League took place at around 3 pm, leaving about 20 persons injured, witnesses said.

Of them Abul Hossain and Ruhul Amin were rushed to CMCH with serious bullet wounds, they said.

Another gunbattle occurred at Alankar Cinema crossing at Pabartoli area which continued from 4 pm to 5 pm.

Both the clashing groups took position in two sides of the crossing and traded gunshots amid bomb blasts, police and witnesses said. At least five people were injured during the clash.

Later, police and BDR rushed to the spot dispersing the clashing groups. Police and BDR cordoned off the entire area for some time.

Besides, bombs were blasted since morning at Fakirhat area near Chittagong port, Agrabad, Chowmuhan crossing, New Market area, Tiger Pass Lalkhan Bazar, Cheragi Pahar and Chawkbazar areas, witnesses said.

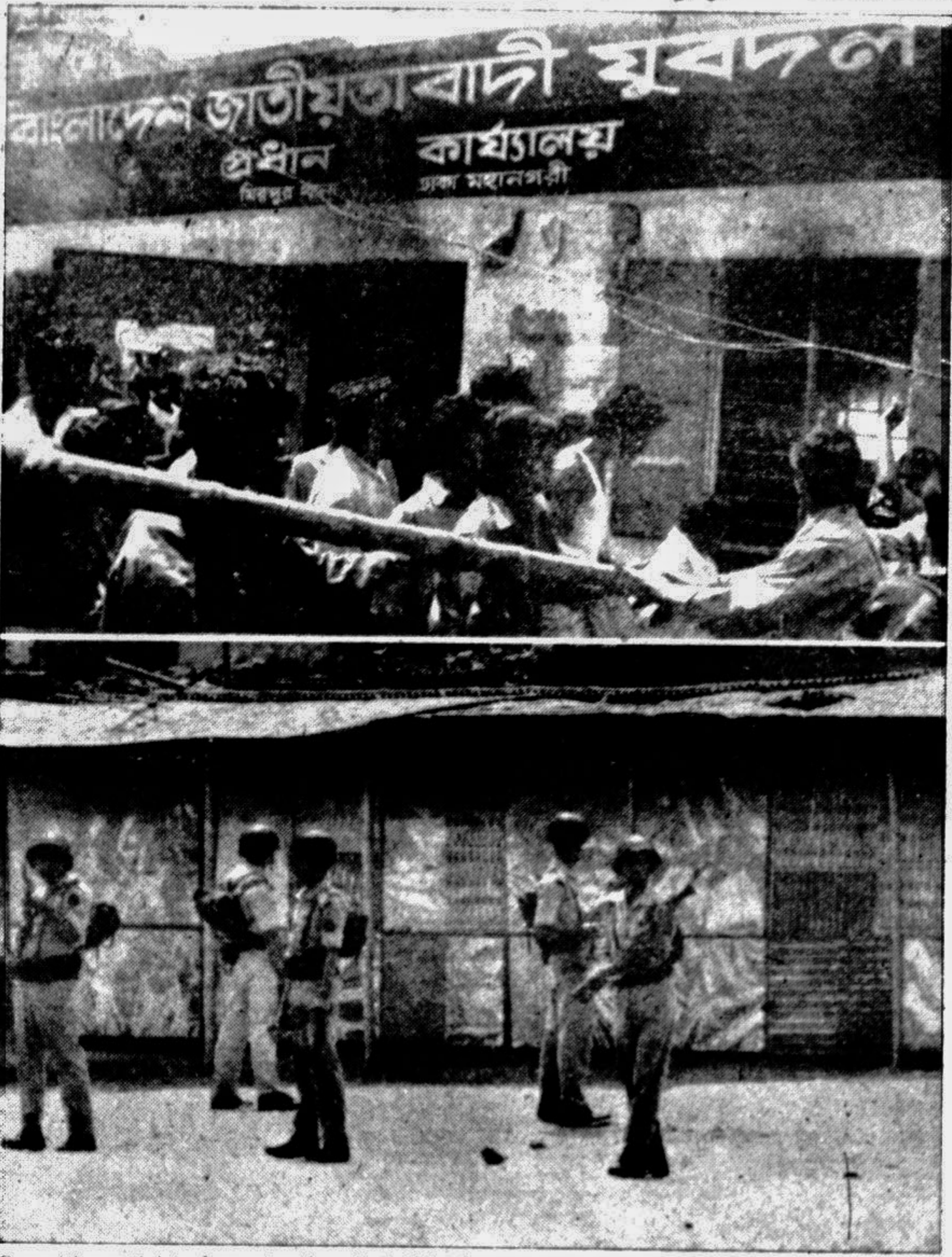
Truck loads of police and BDR were seen deployed in many points of the city.

Last night a clash erupted between the activists of Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League at Joy Nagar area of Chawkbazar where some people were reportedly injured, local sources said.

Meanwhile, Chittagong port remained totally inoperative for the third consecutive day today as cargo handling and delivery of goods came to a halt aggravating the congestion situation, port sources said.

Port officials fear that if such a stalemate continues here foreign ship operators would be reluctant to call at the port while entire port operations would plunge into uncertainty.

On the other hand, life was paralysed in the port city as shops and markets remained closed. All business centres were shut. Banks, offices and trading houses could not operate. Motorised vehicles also stayed off the roads and highways.



Opposition activists damaging the office of the Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal at Mirpur in the city after setting it on fire (Top) and BDR patrolling the area after the incident (Bottom). — Star photo

Windies, Aussies

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Dion Nash, returning for his second spell, had Mark Waugh caught at long-off by Adam Carore with his first delivery to leave Australia needing 74 off 66 balls.

But the experienced Steve Waugh (59 not out) and Stuart Law (42 not out) saw their team home without trouble to cap an impressive display belittling Australia's status as pre-tournament favourites.

Waugh's brilliant century, following his knocks of 130 against Kenya and 126 against India, made him the tournament's highest run-getter with 472 in five matches. Indian vice-captain Sachin Tendulkar is second with an aggregate of 458 from six games.

It also put Waugh a century away from equalling Geoff Marsh's Australian record of nine one-day centuries.

New Zealand's gamble to give the new ball to off-spinner Dipak Patel, which paid off handsomely during the last World Cup at home, struck gold once again when Mark Taylor was caught behind for 10 in his third over.

Shane Warne, who came in at number four to set the pace, smashed 24 off 12 balls, which included two sixes and as many dropped catches, before being trampled leg before in Nathan Astle's first over.

That brought the Waugh brothers together to seal New Zealand's fate, after Germon and his men had raised visions of an upset by a superb batting display.

Harris and Germon smashed 168 off 162 balls for the fourth wicket. — New Zealand's best ever partnership in the World Cup — after Australia had the Kiwis reeling at 44 for three by the ninth over.

All-rounder Harris, better known for his right-arm seam bowling than his left-handed batting, hit 13 boundaries and four sixes in his highest score in one-day internationals.

Germon, who promoted himself to number three in the previous match against Pakistan and made a career-best 41, was deprived of his own maiden century by a brilliant diving catch at long-off by Damien Fleming.

Harris was caught in the deep with six balls remaining in the innings. Shane Thomson was run out of the final ball to leave Australia a tough target of 5.7 runs an over.

Having already hit nine boundaries and a six from 96 deliveries, Germon skied another big blow which Fleming held low to his left after misjudging the curve of the falling ball.

Both batsmen revelled in good batting conditions before a full house of 45,000, taking advantage of unusually wayward bowling by Australia in the first half of the innings.

But the Australians did well to restrict New Zealand to 74 runs in the last 15 overs after they were perfectly placed for a bigger score at 212 for three after 35.

The final score fell 23 short of New Zealand's highest in the World Cup — 309 for five against East Africa in 1975 off 60 overs — but few expected it after the disastrous start.

Scorecard on Page 10



Mark Waugh... m-o-m

Pandemonium in court during Roh's trial

SEOUL, Mar 11: Jailed ex-president Chun Doo-hwan's three sons took up the cudgels for their father and assailed his opponents inside the court where Chun and his coup-colleague Roh Tae-woo stood trial today, reports AFP.

Witnesses said the melee started when Chun, who was president from 1980 to 1988, stood up at the end of the opening session at the Seoul district criminal court to shake hands with and greet Roh, his successor as president.

Pandemonium broke out when an angry Kang Min-jo, father of a student clubbed to death during a street demonstration in 1991, tried to rush toward the two ex-presidents, screaming "you, murderers."

Chun Doo-hwan, Roh Tae-woo, you sons of bitches. You should behave like accused. You are traitors in history. How can you behave like stars," Kang shouted.

Chun's three sons, led by the robust second son, Jae-yong, and aides grabbed Kang by the collar and punched him, prompting court guards to intervene.

Some of the audience sided with Kang and screamed: "Kill the murderers."

Outside the courthouse, Kang told reporters he was angered by what he called "the shameful" behaviour of Chun and Roh.

Kang admitted to a nearby hospital, said he would sue Chun's second son for causing injuries that require three weeks of treatment.

Earlier today, some 200 protesters, including relatives of victims of the 1980 Kwangju massacre of civilians by martial law troops loyal to Chun, staged noisy protests outside the court before the trial opened.

They hurled eggs and scuffled with riot police, as prison buses carrying Chun and Roh drove through the court's heavily-guarded gates.

Sirajganj

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Azad, for the seven thanas of the district did not raise his quota for the current month from Chittagong Urea Fertiliser factory.

One hundred metric tons of urea have been allocated in favour of the dealer.

Meanwhile, hundreds of farmers came to the district headquarters today to get urea and in search of the dealer. But they returned back their home without fertiliser.

3 killed, 100 hurt on 3rd day

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was killed on the third day of the Opposition's non-cooperation programme yesterday in a clash between opposition and ruling party activists at Shahrastra Thana of the district.

Mohammad Iqbal Hossain, 20, a student of Meher College and a leader of the BNP student wing, Chhatra Dal, was fatally stabbed when BNP activists resisted opposition pickets from attacking shops at Shahrastra Bazar around 2 pm today. He died on the way to Chandpur Sadar Hospital, witnesses said.

Following the incident, angry Chhatra Dal members brought out a protest rally and damaged 2 buses at Shahrastra bus stand.

A tense situation is prevailing in the town and authorities have called in extra police units from Chandpur.

Meanwhile, a case has been filed with the Shahrastra Thana. None was arrested till the writing of this report.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet reports: About 25 persons were injured in a clash between opposition and BNP activists at the district headquarters of Habiganj yesterday.

Of the injured, two Opposition activists were admitted into the Sadar hospital.

In Sunamganj district headquarters, the BNP, Jubadai and JCD brought out a procession protesting the non-cooperation movement called by the Opposition. They also held a rally.

In Sylhet town, the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat brought out separate processions and held rallies.

UNB adds from Barisal: At least 40 people, including three policemen, were injured in a series of clashes between the supporters of ruling BNP and Opposition in Muladi thana yesterday.

The clash erupted at 10 in the morning when some Opposition activists went to disrupt the classes at Muladi Government Primary School.

Witnesses said the feuding groups exploded at least 30 homemade bombs during their three-hour long clash. Police fired some 25 gunshots to disperse them.

Later, the Opposition activists ransacked the local BNP office and set the house of Juba Dal leader Al-Amin on fire.

Meanwhile, some Opposition activists hurled several crackers at the official residence of Bakerganj Thana Nirbah Officer in the district.

The thana Ansar and Public Health office also came under bomb attack by the Opposition activists. None was injured in the attack.

BNP's 'yes' to polls

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ment.

The earlier accepted their (Opposition) demand for non-party government to supervise the future general elections. Today we also accepted their demand for polls in May," Begum Zia said while replying to a volley of questions on the outcome of her party's talks with the President.

Our discussions were fruitful and I'm happy with the talks in which we expressed our views," Begum Zia said in an apparently relaxed mood.

Jatrabari, at 12 noon, Badmazan, 50, at Lalbagh at 6:30 am, Parvez, 6, at Shahdagar at 8:30 am, Delwar Hossain, 26, at Mirpur-14 at 4 pm, Liton, 17, at Khejurbagh, Keraniganj at 4:30 pm, Tofael, 35, at Islambagh, Chowdhurypara, at 8:30 am and Wahid Miah, 28, at Pakepara, Mirpur at 8:30 am, hospital sources said.

An autorickshaw of The Daily Star and its driver Mohammad Osman came under attack near Baitul Mokarram by unidentified youths at around 4 pm. The youths damaged its windscreen and beat up its driver.

Road and rail communications across the country remained snapped for yet another day.

An express train which left Dhaka for Mymensingh was stopped at Garaganj and then had to return to Dhaka because of an Opposition blockade.

All international flights to and from Zia International Airport operated normally, but three domestic Biman flights were cancelled.

Earlier, the PM entered the Bangladesh in a motorcade at 4:25 pm. Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman and

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman were also in the motorcade. Twelve other BNP leaders — Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Mirza Golam Hafez, Majid-ul-Haque, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Rafiqul Islam Mia, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Oli Ahmed, M Shamsul Islam, Khandakar Delwar Hossain and Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiqui had reached Bangladesh together at about 4:10 pm.

The talks continued till 5:35 pm.

At the outset, prayer was offered for those who died and suffered miseries during the anti-election movement as well as for early solution of the political problems and for peace, progress and prosperity of the country. Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian conducted the munajat.

BNP joint-secretary general and Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also told newsmen, who had been waiting outside the Bangladesh, that his party had no objection to the holding of next general elections in May under a non-party government, as demanded by the Opposition.

"Now a bill on the non-party government would be passed in the parliament as soon as its structure is decided in the dialogue," he said.

UNB adds: Earlier, set out from her residence for Itanabhaban at 4 pm, thousands of party leaders, workers and people lined up along the road from Bijoy Sarani to the Bangladesh gate and greeted her.

"Khaleda Zia Ahead... We are with You" — they chanted. Begum Zia waived back.

Hawala scandal: Court summons 8 more politicians

NEW DELHI, Mar 11: An Indian court summoned another eight politicians today to appear on charges related to the "Hawala" political corruption scandal, bringing to 25 the number facing trial, reports Reuters.

The eight, including opposition leaders N D Tiwari and Sharad Yadav and former ministers R K Dhawan, Jaffer Sharief and Natwar Singh, have already been charged with taking money from an illegal foreign exchange or 'Hawala' dealer in the 18 million dollars bribes-for-favours scandal.

The court granted bail to Tiwari, the president of a breakaway faction of the ruling Congress Party, and to another former minister charged in the case, Arvind Netam.

The scandal, which has claimed seven ministers in the government of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao since it broke in January, brought another parliamentary adjournment on Monday in the upper house, the Rajya Sabha.

The house was adjourned in uproar as members of the ruling party and opposition legislators tried to shout each other down on whether to allow a full debate and vote on the issue.

The affair has dominated the current session of parliament, the last before general elections due by July. A debate in the lower house, the Lok Sabha, has still to be concluded.

Pakistan rejects India's offer as propaganda ploy

ISLAMABAD, Mar 11: Pakistan today dismissed India's offer of bilateral talks as a propaganda ploy, saying a dialogue depended on New Delhi's agreeing in advance to substantive discussion over the Kashmir dispute, reports AFP.

Foreign Minister Asif Ahmed Ali said in a statement here it was "logical" to commence a dialogue without an agreement on the agenda.

He was commenting on a reported statement by his Indian counterpart, Pranab Mukherjee, in the Indian parliament that the talks offer had been communicated to Pakistan at various levels.

The offer "has been made only to score propaganda points and does not reflect a genuine desire for a dialogue," Ali said.

Pakistan was ready for "properly structured" talks that would "substantively" tackle the "core issue," the foreign minister said.

One gets life term for killing wife

MANIKGANJ, Mar 11: The District and Sessions Judge today sentenced one person to life term in jail for killing his wife at a village in Harirampur thana last year, reports UNB.

Court sources said the Judge, Md Baharul Islam, also fined the accused, Hazrat Ali, 40 Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer one year more rigorous imprisonment.

According to prosecution, Ali, son of Late Chand Mollah of North Gorai village, beat his sixth wife Rifa, 25, to death on April 15, 1995. His neighbours handed him over to police soon after the murder and filed a case with Harirampur thana.

The Judge after examining 13 witnesses and evidences pronounced the judgement today.

Villagers said Ali's five other wives earlier deserted him due to his inhuman torture.

Cargo handling at Ctg Port interrupted

Cargo handling activities at Mongla Maritime Port went on normally yesterday, an official said, reports BSS.

Two hundred stevedores and 34 handling dock labourers had performed the cargo handling activities at the port. Attendance of officials and employees at Mongla and Benapole ports was normal.

The handout said activities at Chittagong Port were interrupted yesterday as the stevedore agents did not book the labourers at the port.

Hundreds of labourers brought out procession at the port demanding wage, port sources said. Attendance of officials and employees of Chittagong Port was also normal, the handout added.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Shipping Shajahan Siraj called upon the stevedores agents to immediately resume their activities in the interest of the national economy.

In a statement, he said, Mongla Port is functioning normally, passenger launch and ferry services were operating smoothly and attendance of officials of all the ports was normal.

He said activities at Chittagong Port was only being hampered due to non-functioning of stevedore's agents.

Shajahan Siraj said as a result thousands of labourers at the port are becoming unemployed and the country is losing huge amount of money.

Siraj also called upon the opposition political parties to cooperate in running the port, activities normally for economic development of the country.

The Midnight File

Iraq-UN talks resume

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 11: Iraq and the United Nations resumed talks here today which could lead to Baghdad resuming oil exports for the first time in more than five years to help its sanctions-hit people, reports AFP.

63 more killed in Lankan fighting

COLOMBO, Mar 11: Tamil Tiger guerrillas ambushed and killed 23 elite commandos today after helicopter gun ships destroyed two rebel bases, killing at least 40 militants in eastern Sri Lanka, officials said, reports AFP.

Hundreds of gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fought a fierce hand-to-hand gun battle with the police Special Task Force (STF) commandos at Vellavel in the district of Batticaloa, the sources said.

"We now have a report confirming the deaths of 23 STF men," a defence source in Batticaloa, 300 kilometres east of here said by telephone. "Reinforcements and aircraft have been sent to the area."

The ambush came within hours of MI 24 helicopter gun ships pounding two key LTTE hideouts at Vakara, further to the north of the town of Batticaloa, officials said.

The pilots have confirmed direct hits on one sea Tiger base and another jungle base," the official said, adding that at least 40 rebels were killed at the sites.

9 fishermen missing

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 11: Nine fishermen were reportedly missing after pirates swooped on a fishing trawler and threw the fishermen in the deep sea near Sonadia Island on Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police said the pirates, numbering about 20-25, boarded the trawler, PB "Roni", beat the fishermen, and threw all 12 of them in the sea.

Three of them were rescued by another fishing trawler in the area.

The survivors informed the Moheeshkhali police this morning that the pirates took away the engine of their boat and fish worth about Tk 50,000.

Attack on N'ganj Opposition rallies: 25 hurt

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Mar 11: At least 25 people were injured, eight of them seriously, when two separate opposition rallies were allegedly attacked by ruling party activists in the town today.

In the first incident, an Awami League rally came under attack by BNP activists at the town's Hajiganj area around 4 pm.

At least 23 AL activists were injured, six of them critically as the BNP supporters hurled bombs and cocktails at the rally.

The seriously injured Liton, 22, Bachchu, 27, Ismat, 25, Selim, 22, Mannan, 25 and Shaikh, 27 — have been admitted to local clinics.

Earlier, two Jatiya Party activists, Nurul Islam, 17, and Arif, 21, were critically wounded as a JP rally came under bomb attack in the Kiltarup area of the town around 10 am. They have been hospitalised.

Local JP leaders have blamed ruling party activists for the attack.

Meanwhile, opposition activists attacked and damaged an office room at the Fatullah Rail Station around ten am. No one was hurt.

Pickets also burnt railway sleepers at the station.

Hasina

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"illegal" parliament.

The Prime Minister, talking to reporters after a meeting with the President yesterday afternoon, rejected the opposition proposal to cancel the February 15 election.

The opposition leader said there was no election on February 15. "People rejected that farcical election and did not cast their votes — a fact reported by foreign and local newsmen, and voiced by observers, political parties and people from all walks of life."

She said as many as 87 people were killed and thousands others wounded across the country in incidents related with the so-called election.

"Cancellation of this farcical election and a fresh election to the 6th parliament under a neutral non-party caretaker government within 90 days is the demand of all."

Hasina regretted that Begum Zia's precondition of summoning the 'illegal' parliament has created 'impediment' to the solution of the present crisis, thereby foiling the President's current initiative.

"Begum Zia will be held responsible for any situation arising from setting precondition causing impediment towards a solution," she cautioned.

The Awami League chief maintained that Begum Zia lost her parliamentary membership by taking oath in violation of Article 71 of the Constitution, and said she had requested the President to take action in this respect.

"Moreover, the BNP government has failed to complete election in all the 300 constituencies within the stipulated time, which is another violation of Article 65 of the Constitution."

Hasina said people has not forgotten that after assuming power, Begum Zia did not fulfill her commitment regarding the independence of judiciary, indemnity ordinance, abolition of radio television, 10-point demand of students and the 5-point demand of SKOP, which were incorporated in the joint declaration of the three alliances.

Extortionists

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criminally.

The attackers looted away goods and valuables breaking doors and windows and then set afire to factories and shops. A number of people were injured during the clashes.

Fire Brigade battled for about twelve hours to extinguish the fire, according to witnesses.

Local people said the clashes took place as a sequel to conflict between the mastans and traders over payment of tolls.

A large contingent of police have been deployed in the area.

Sixth JS

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"farcical" polls could not be accepted and that the President could seek a Supreme Court reference for a solution.

He, however, said that a solution to the crisis was possible if the leaders of all the political parties seriously and sincerely took into consideration the existing realities in the country.

Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party claimed that the elections were not held within the 90-day constitutional limit and so formation of the sixth parliament could not arise.

The President may now seek a reference from the Supreme Court on the issue, he added.

EC failed

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Referring to one incident, an EC official said that one senior official of the secretariate even took the initiative to brief the foreign journalists.

The foreign journalists were briefed by this official in a room downstairs while the CEC kept waiting in his room upstairs with his briefing notes, the official said.