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Female members of the Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal attacking a rickshaw near the Jatiya Press Club during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

Hartal again if surcharge not withdrawn: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP leaders said that the spontaneous observance of yesterday's countrywide hartal demonstrates that the people have rejected the budget showing 'no confidence' in the present government. Addressing a post-hartal rally in city, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the party was forced to call the half-day hartal as the government refused to revise new taxes including the 2.5 per cent surcharge introduced in the new budget. 'Withdraw the increased taxes immediately... don't push us to calling another hartal,' he said. The BNP leader warned of a tougher programme if the government does not waive the imposed surcharge and release the BNP activists arrested during yesterday 'peaceful' hartal. Bhuiyan said the Awami League had enforced hartals on 170 days during the five-year rule of BNP and compelled the people to observe strikes through destructive acts. 'But, we did not compel them to observe our hartal. The people observed it spontaneously,' he told the rally, adding that not a single car was damaged or a bomb exploded during the hartal hours. BNP Vice Chairman Tariqul Islam said the people rejected the new budget of Awami League government by observing the hartal peacefully and spontaneously. He said a united movement would have to be launched against the government to protest its 'anti-people' activities, 'misrule' and 'autocratic' attitude. 'The people have shown no confidence in the government by observing the hartal. They do not want to see this government in power any longer,' said Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui. Organised by the city unit of the party in front of its central office, the rally was presided by city BNP convenor Sadeq Hossain Khoka MP. It was also addressed, among others, by Abul Hasnat, Mirza Abbas, Ashraf Hossain, Haris Chowdhury, Goyeshwar Roy, Dr Moyeen Khan MP, Amanullah Aman MP, Khurshid Jahan Huq MP and Nazimuddin Alam MP. BNP standing committee members Dr Khandaker Mosharaf Hossain and Moudud Ahmed were present.

8-hr hartal

said that four hundred to five hundred supporters of BNP attempted to attack Awami League office in Barisal at 11:50 am and police dispersed the attackers resorting to baton charge and lobbing tear gas shells. Six out of 11 policemen, injured in the incident, were hospitalised. Thirteen persons were arrested and a case was registered. A news agency report said that 15 people including two journalists were roughed up in Sirajganj when some unruly pickets attacked a group of people on the New Dhaka Road taking them to be anti-hartal elements. Allegedly led by a JCD leader, they also damaged a motorbike and a few rickshaws. In the city some post-hartal activists suffered minor injuries when police resorted to baton charge on them near the Matshya Bhaban close to Ramna Park, Jagannath College and at Fakirpool. Two bus passengers were also hurt as pickets hurled bombs and threw stones on a BRIC double-decker at Shahabagh. Besides, some three-wheelers carrying journalists also came under attack at places. All modes of transport except rickshaws, rickshaw vans and bicycles went off the roads in the capital while shops and many private offices kept their shutters down during the hartal hours. Educational institutions remained closed. Office-goers either took rickshaws or walked.

100-bed kidney instt next year: Salauddin

Health and Family Welfare Minister Salauddin Yusuf told the Jatiya Sangsad that a 100-bed national institute of kidney disease and nephrology will be set up by the middle of next year, reports BSS. After the establishment of the institute, kidney patients would get more medicare for this cost induced disease, he said in a statement responding to a resolution moved by Alamgir Haider Khan (BNP-Chandpur). The minister said the IPGMR has a ward with 25 to 30 beds for the kidney patients and another 50-bed ward would be set up in the annex of the hospital.

Damaged ATP

According to an airport official, it may take a few more days to rescue the plane as the insurance company is required to complete its survey before towing the ATP aircraft to the hanger for repair. The plane bound for Chittagong from Dhaka with 49 passengers on board met with the accident while landing in heavy downpour that made the runway almost invisible, officials here said. They said the aircraft got dumped into kneedeep mud and water some 80 feet off the runway with its front portion damaged. All passengers were rescued unhurt by the airport personnel by opening the emergency door. The passengers later left for their destinations. Meanwhile, two enquiry committees have been formed by Bangladesh Biman and its Civil Aviation Authority. A four-member committee of Biman, headed by Chief of Flight Safety Captain Pasha Chowdhury, has been asked to submit a preliminary report within four days. The CAAB team is headed by Biman Managing Director Air Commodore Rafiqul Islam.

SEC chairman

usually rocked the investors confidence in the capital market by what they said harassing them with legal tangles. The critics were vocal in recent months demanding his removal saying that when the SEC probe was followed by filing charges against 32 people, including his own son-in-law, he should have also resigned. The resignation would not have any impact on the market, said Ahmed Iqbal Hasan, a member of the Dhaka Stock Exchange. Those who are facing further investigation would be happy, he said.

Rohingya killed in mine blast at 'no man's land'

From Our Correspondent COX'S BAZAR, July 3: A Rohingya Muslim was killed today in a mine explosion at 'no man's land' near Nalkhongchhari on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. The victim was identified as Abul Kalam. The explosion took place when he was coming to Bangladesh from Myanmar. A cow also died in the explosion.

JP presidium

From page 1 chairman and co-chairman of the new party. Shamim Al Mamun was elected the secretary general of the party. The presidium members include Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Mostafa Jamal Haider, Matinuddin Bhuiyan, Syed Didar Bakht, Syed Haider Ali, Riazuul Haq Chowdhury, Azmal Huda Mithu, Ismail Hossain Bengal, Nurul Amin Khan Pathan, Nurul Islam Milon, Anwar Ahmed, advocate M A Bari, Shafulul Islam Khoka, Ramjan Ali, Badruddoza Gama, advocate Shahidul Alam Sayeed and Humayun Kabir. Shamim Al Mamun will act as Member Secretary.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Uncertainty looms on formation of JS bodies

Uncertainty still looms on the formation of parliamentary standing committees as the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP are yet to make any headway towards setting the modality, reports UNB. Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah yesterday sent another letter to Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain with a request to send names of BNP members to be inducted in the standing committees on different ministries. In his letter Hasnat stressed the need for constituting the committees according to the amended rules of procedure during the current budget session. The Chief Whip requested his opposition counterpart to nominate BNP members in a day or two and sought all cooperation in constituting the committees and making parliament meaningful. Jatiya Party has already sent list of its members to the Chief Whip for the standing committees. But the formation of the committees is being delayed as the BNP is insisting on proportional representation on those committees.

PM may visit Indonesia in Nov

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to visit Indonesia in November, according to official sources, reports UNB. Details of the planned visit are being worked out by the two governments.

Shahabuddin, Hasina greet Clinton

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted President William Jefferson Clinton on the occasion of the 221st Independence Day of the United States of America to be observed today, reports UNB. In a message to the US President, the Bangladesh President hoped that the existing bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries will be further strengthened in the years to come.

JS snippets

Alamgir Haider Khan was speaking on his demand for setting up a hospital for kidney patients in the country. Interrupting Khan, he smilingly said, 'You may conclude now for the members who have already understood the essence of your speech.' As the BNP MP was continuing his speech brushing aside the Chair's suggestion, the Speaker then commented in a lighter vein causing laughter in the House. 'You're depriving us of the namaj (prayer)... you're committing a sin.' The House enjoyed some lighter moments when BNP deputy Shamsul Alam Pramanik, in an extraordinary speed of reading, mentioned all the problems of his constituency and drew the attention of all the concerned ministers during the two-minute time he was allowed to read his call attention notice. Attracted by his performance, the BNP lawmakers thumped their desks while others laughed aloud to encourage Pramanik. Usually, one local issue is dealt with in a call attention notice.

Roundtable in Tokyo

From page 1 owned Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Factory and a power plant were kept closed, whereas the supply was ensured to KAFCO. He said 'our own plants suffered because we never stopped the supply to KAFCO to keep our commitment to foreign investors.' He also said the work on the AB gas pipeline has been now completed and this will meet whatever requirement KAFCO needed. Finance Minister S A M S Kibria assured the Japanese investors of all cooperation and urged them to invest in electronics, textile and labour intensive industries, noting that Bangladesh offered good package of benefits and cheapest labour was available anywhere in the country.

CHT council

From page 1 When contacted, Bandarban Local Government Council Chairman Mong Kaya Ching Chowdhury told the news agency that they would not take any such decision that might hamper the ongoing peace process in the hill tracts. The tenure of three local government councils had been extended by promulgating Ordinance in the past. But this time the process is not applicable as parliament session goes on. Some quarters observe that people's confidence in these local government councils on the basis of their representation might be shattered with the formation of interim councils.

PM: Incentives

From page 1 significantly to attract more investment in Bangladesh. 'We hope, our bilateral relation in terms of commerce and investment will be further strengthened in future under the dynamic leadership of this committee.' The Prime Minister said her government has enacted Private Export Processing Zones Act to encourage foreign investment. 'We are happy to learn that the Japanese investors have already constituted working group with a view to investing in the private EPZ in Bangladesh and expressed willingness to invest in foreign countries,' she said. She said personal interactions and exchange of views among the front-ranking personalities in the field of Commerce and Industries from both the countries will yield fruitful policies and pragmatic programmes. The Prime Minister expressed her confidence that 'the assimilation of your thought and ideas will find newer fields of cooperation for economic development of Bangladesh.' 'Let us be committed to contribute our efforts to further strengthen the friendly relation between Bangladesh and Japan in the days come.'

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PM tells OECF chief No bottlenecks in investment process

TOKYO, July 3: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here today that political stability, now prevailing in Bangladesh, had brightened the possibilities of foreign investment in the country, reports BSS. She was talking to Akira Nishigaki, President of Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan, when he called on her at the hotel suite. Sheikh Hasina said, 'Our only concern is to improve the lot of the common man.' She told the OECF President that there was no bottlenecks in the investment process in Bangladesh. Nishigaki assured the Prime Minister, 'The OECF will try to help you implement your wishes. It will try to respond according to the priority of Bangladesh.'

PM tells OECF chief No bottlenecks in investment process

Earlier, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Kimio Fujita also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite. Fujita apprised Sheikh Hasina of the functions of JICA which include imparting training at home and abroad. Sheikh Hasina told the JICA President that she had discussed some development projects including the Rupsha road-cum-bridge and the Padma bridge during her meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister. Sheikh Hasina also spoke of the urgency of assistance for improvement of the weather forecast centre in Bangladesh.

FBUTA

From page 1 University), treasurer — Mrs Monira Hossain (Open University) and members — Prof ATM Zakiul Hossain, Prof I M Aminur Rashid and Dr Hossain Mansur of Dhaka University, Dr Aminul Haque, Prof Abdur Rouf and Prof Sheikh Sekundar Ali of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir and Prof Tajul Islam of Jahangirnagar University, Prof M Abbas Ali and Aminul Haque Beg of Rajshahi University, Prof Alauddin and Prof Hamida Banu of Chittagong University, Prof Aminul Islam, Prof Rafiqul Islam Bhuiyan and Prof Mainuddin of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Dr Jaimul Abedin and Ahmed Nadim Saadee of Shahjalal University, Sarwar Hossain and Yakub Ali of Islamic University and Dr Abu Hena Mohammad Faruq and Golam Mawla of Bangladesh Open University.

Khaleda

From page 1 rials, machinery and spares. The expansion of VAT net and imposition of new taxes have seriously hit national industrial production. The government hatched a deep-rooted conspiracy to make the economy a dependent one and destroyed people's efforts towards self-reliance through this budget,' she said. The BNP Chairperson said people of all spheres of life would be seriously affected by this budget, and this is why 'everybody has rejected it.' She said not only the opposition lawmakers but also the members of ruling party demanded withdrawal of surcharge and extended tax, but the government didn't pay heed to it. Begum Zia observed withdrawal of tax on some items was nothing but an eyewash and alleged that the government passed this budget by dint of its majority. The Leader of the Opposition complained that police and activists of the ruling party made attacks on opposition activists during the hartal in a number of places across the country. Besides, police arrested many leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisation and filed unspecified 'false' cases. She strongly condemned the attacks and demanded immediate release of all leaders and workers, and withdrawal of cases. Begum Zia also called upon all patriotic political parties, professional groups, organisations and people to be united to protect independence, sovereignty, democracy, economy and life and property of the people.

Shantu Larma

From page 1 wing of the PCJSS, demanded accounts of the group's funds. After an altercation they pulled out their guns. But elder tribal leaders shielded Shantu Larma saving him from the Shantibahini gunmen. After the incident his security has been beefed up, the sources said. The elder brother of Shantu Larma and founder chairman of the PCJSS Manabendra Narayan Larma, a former MP, was also assassinated by a dissident faction of the Shantibahini led by Prity Kumar Chakma in 1983 in Tripura. However, the sources added that Shantu Larma has firmly indicated that he would be available for the signing ceremony of the agreement with the government to restore peace on July 14.

BCI-Shokokai

From page 1 in the meeting. The meeting discussed various aspects of mutual cooperation. Sharif Afzal Hossain explained the investment scenario of Bangladesh and urged the Japanese entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh. Abdul Awal Mintoo, President, Bangladesh Association of Banks, Khurshid Alam, Councillor, Dhaka Stock Exchange and Subir Kumar Bhattacharyya, Minister of the Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo participated in the discussion. Later, Sharif M Afzal Hossain and Satoshi Ida signed the agreement, on behalf of their organisations.

7 killed, 13 injured in road accidents

Seven people were killed and 13 others injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday and the day before, reports UNB. One person was killed and five others were injured when a bus and a car collided head-on in front of the Open University, on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Gazipur yesterday. Police said the accident occurred at 3 pm as the Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Kalkor rammied the private car on its way to Jamalpur. Car passenger, Mofiduzzaman, 38, of 77/1 Fakirerpol in Dhaka died on the spot while the unidentified driver was rushed to Gazipur Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Four passengers of the bus also received injuries in the collision. The body was sent to the Gazipur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Report from Rajshahi says: Two people were killed and four others injured in separate accidents in Boalia and Mohonpur thanas of the district yesterday. Witnesses said an unidentified man aged about 65 died on the spot when a truck knocked him down in front of Polytechnic Institute in the city's Boalia thana at about 7 am.

Semutang

From page 1 quite adequate. Sources close to Cairn, however, said emergency equipment were being brought from Singapore to rectify the mechanical problem of the rig. The history of Semutang gasfield shows that accidents similar to that at Magurchara may occur if Cairn is not careful and Petrobangla does not monitor its site, the sources said.

Biman postpones 2 flights to Calcutta

Bangladesh Biman has cancelled one of its flights to Calcutta and postponed two others due to a general strike in the capital of Indian state of West Bengal today, reports UNB. A Biman press release said due to a 'bandh' in Calcutta, authorities have cancelled its flight BG-091 and postponed its flight BG-093 until 9 am Saturday. Biman's Calcutta flight BG-697 of Friday scheduled to operate from Chittagong has also been delayed and will depart at 1:40 pm today.

Fake certificates, stamps seized in Ctg: 10 arrested

CHITTAGONG, July 3: Police arrested 10 people from the city and seized huge fake certificates and stamps from their shops on Wednesday night, reports UNB. Acting on a tip-off, special branch of Chittagong Metropolitan police raided three shops at Enayet Bazar and Hajirgali and recovered forged education certificates, stamps and police clearance certificates. JS probe body

JS probe body

From page 1 tribute copies of the list among the members had it been all true,' Shamsul Islam said and termed the minister's action conspiratorial, politically-motivated and a ploy to undermine the past BNP government. In reply, Tofael Ahmed claimed the French company was given the contract for installing digital telephone line violating the precondition of financing by the company. None of the four other companies that qualified in the international tender was given the work, he said adding Alcatel was given the contract and it was supplied with local currency from the Bangladesh Bank causing liquidity crisis in the central bank. The minister then proposed a Sangsad committee headed by the Speaker and consisting of members from both the sides to investigate into the matter. 'I'm ready to supply you (Shamsul Islam) all necessary documents if the committee is even formed under your leadership,' Tofael announced amid desk-thumping by the ruling party members. Deputy Leader of the Opposition A G M Badruddoza Chowdhury then rose to say, 'We happily agree to the minister's proposal to form a parliamentary probe committee.'

Arsenic

From page 1 contamination of drains, ponds and other bodies of water,' he warned. Another blunder to be avoided, the expert continued, is to simply sink the tubewells deeper to tap fresh water from a lower level. This could serve to contaminate the pure water below. The head of a leading NGO working in the affected areas said district committees should be formed to provide feedback to the National Steering Committee on Arsenic. Data banks for clinical as well as technical aspects should be created to handle the entire situation more carefully, he suggested. He suggested the government should control the mushrooming of clinics and laboratories to test arsenic poisoning. 'This may run the risk of misguiding the people as well as the government,' he said.