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## Hartal: 100 hurt in clashes

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away. Later, the BNP activists made several attempts to hold a rally there, but police repeatedly chased them away. At one stage, police lobbed tear gas shells at the BNP gathering and Habib, who was on duty there, was hit.

The government announced price hike of petroleum products by upto 61 per cent on Tuesday last and BNP called the hartal protesting this. Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote, Jatiya Party (M-Z) and Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) supported the hartal. Plain clothes police picked up BNP leader Anwar Zahid and JAGPA chief Shafiqul Alam Pradhan on Saturday night.

The hartal paralysed normal life across the country. All modes of public and private transports, barring a small number of rickshaws were off the roads. Shops and business establishments, banks and educational institutions remained closed, while attendance in the government offices was thin during the hartal hours. There was no transaction in the foreign exchange market and no trading took place on the floors of Dhaka and Chittagong Stock Exchanges.

Over 6000 police and BDR personnel, in riot gear, were deployed on the streets of the city. Helmeted police patrolled the city areas as groups of BNP activists paraded the streets shouting anti-government slogans.

Former home minister and BNP leader Abdul Matin Chowdhury and his party colleagues were injured during a clash between hartal supporters and ruling Awami League activists near AL office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city at about 9:00 am. The former minister was admitted to a private clinic.

In the morning, groups of BNP activists were seen bringing out processions that chanted anti-government slogans, in almost all areas of the city. According to BNP sources, the party activists picked at more than 70 points in the city.

Supporters of the hartal were seen checking the identity of journalists on duty. They also damaged some rickshaws at certain places.

Police lathicharged a big procession of BNP's student front, Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, in front of the Shishu Park in the city, leaving at least 20 injured. Police also lobbed tear gas shells on the procession and picked up some JCD activists from the spot.

A news agency report said 43 activists of BNP were arrested from different parts of the city during hartal hours. Of the arrested, 31 were accused of various charges including violent acts and disrupting public life and rest of them were arrested on suspicion.

A press release issued by the police headquarters, however, said 40 people were arrested and eight cases were registered. Police lobbed 37 rounds of tear gas shells and fired three rounds of rubber bullets. Eleven persons including five policemen received treatment at the DMCH, it added.

**Kidnappers free businessman**

CHITTAGONG, Aug 24: A kidnapped businessman was freed and returned to his residence on Saturday night after six hours, police said, reports BSS.

Abdus Salam, who returned from Middle East a few days ago, was kidnapped by a gang of armed terrorists from Bahar singular under Chandaon thana at 6 pm on Saturday.

The victim returned to his residence at around 12 midnight Saturday night, the source said.

**Indo-Bangla border conference begins today**

A four-day border conference between Bangladesh and India begins in Calcutta today, reports UNB.

Deputy Director General of BDR Brig Mohammad Abdur Rab will lead an eight-member Bangladesh delegation at the conference.

**Autorickshaw**

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rejected the government's 'illegal decision' to raise the petroleum prices by observing the hartal spontaneously.

Rejecting the Energy Minister's statement that common people would not be affected due to the refined fuel prices, they said the commoners were suffering due to the increased transport cost and price hike of essentials as a result of high fuel price.

The autorickshaw drivers said they will have to spend Tk 60 more daily as fuel cost due to the price hike of petrol.

**Editor : Mahfuz Anam**

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Critically injured photo journalist Habibur Rahman Habib of Dainik Bangla being taken to hospital yesterday. He was hit by a tear gas shell while on duty during hartal hours.

— Star photo

According to Railway sources, train communication in Rajshahi, Chittagong, Sylhet, Dinajpur, and Noakhali was disrupted. Keys of signal cabin at Shantaher junction were taken away by pickets in the morning, disrupting train communication between Bogra and Rajshahi. Windshield of a train engine and window panes of passenger bogeys were broken as pickets brickbattled Chittagong bound trains — Mananagar and Prabhati — and Noakhali bound train Upakul.

Fights to and from Zia International Airport were normal. Journeys and steamers sailed to and from Sadarghat terminal in the city with less passengers than usual.

Jatiya Party, Jamaat and IOJ held separate rallies in the city.

UNB from Sirajganj reports, at least 25 people were injured in separate clashes in Belkuchi and Chowhali thanas of the district during the hartal hours.

Another report from Kuriyan adds: The dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in Rajshahi district peacefully, barring a clash at Charchhat thana headquarters that left at least nine people injured.

Police said the clash at Charchhat Bazar occurred when the BNP-backed pickets resisted a move by the anti-hartal Awami League supporters to ply tempo and autorickshaws in the area at about 2:30 pm.

A report from Comilla says, sporadic clashes between AL and BNP activists left 10 people injured during the hartal hours.

Another report from Kuriyan adds, pro-hartal activists clashed with their rivals leaving seven people, including a police officer, injured.

Police and witnesses said activists of BNP and Awami League clashed and clashed with each other in Ulipur area during the hartal hours.

Another clash took place be-

## Appellate Division office hours

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The office hour of the Appellate Division of Bangladesh Supreme Court has been rescheduled for its annual vacation from August 31-October 31, reports UNB.

The office will remain open without leisure from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm daily except on Friday-Saturday and other government holidays, according to an official handout.

Another handout said Appellate Division Judge Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury will hear urgent cases on September 2, 9, 16 and 23 (every Tuesday) from 10 am-11 am at the court chamber.

Justice Abdur Rouf will hear the cases on September 30 and October 7 and 14 (every Tuesday) from 10 am-11 am at the court chamber.

**Murder of young man in Lalmatia: Two arrested**

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested two persons yesterday in connection with the murder of Mustafa on Saturday at Lalmatia under Mohammandpur thana in the city.

During a raid in Mohammandpur area, police held the two identified as Yusuf, 35, and Swapan, 18.

Mustafa, 18, was stabbed to death by some assailants near a market Saturday night. Police suspected the young man was killed following a previous clash between two groups in Lalmatia.

Police were interrogating the arrested men. Mustafa's father filed a case with Mohammadpur thana in this regard.

## Rocket launcher

From Page 1

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Security measures for the VVIPs were also tightened after the recovery of the rocket launcher.

The recovered rocket launcher is usually used by international terrorist groups. Taliban guerrillas also used such launcher in recent time.

After the recovery, the rocket launcher was examined by experts of DGFI (Directorate General of Forces Intelligence) and NSI (National Security Intelligence).

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The government is planning to construct a barrage over the river Padma for the optimum use of the water of Ganges fol-

The Daily Star

## BNP out to disrupt stability: Zillur

wants to get back power by any means," he said.

Criticising BNP for calling hartals on lame excuses, Zillur, also the LGRD Minister, said the government was compelled to raise the prices of petroleum in keeping with international market.

Despite the enhanced prices of petroleum products, he told UNB, the government will still have to funnel crores of taka in subsidy to this sector.

"The prices were raised not to protect the interest of an individual, nor a party, rather to protect the interest of the country," he said.

The LGRD Minister observed the oil price hike would not affect the general people as diesel and kerosene prices were increased nominally.

## India forces US to cancel patent on turmeric

NEW DELHI, Aug 24: India has got the United States government to cancel a patent given to two scientists to use turmeric for healing wounds, saying it has been practised in the country for centuries, newspapers reported Sunday.

The Indian government argued that anything that is prior knowledge cannot be patented.

Turmeric, a dried root of a plant that is related to the ginger, is used as a flavoring agent by millions of Indians. It is also used extensively in the country to cure everything from sore throats to intestinal disorders.

The protests grew after American companies had earlier patented the use of neem as pesticide. Neem has been used for centuries in India in agriculture and in medicine.

Voluntary groups in India have been campaigning against foreign companies that profit by making medicines out of plants growing in India, saying the country's biological wealth is being plundered.

He said Saturday that it is an emotive issue in developing countries which see multinational companies patenting drugs used for centuries by the people.

Last year, two researchers at the University of Mississippi at Jackson, received a patent for applying turmeric powder to heal wounds, used in India for thousands of years, according to Mashelkar.

His office provided scientific papers to show that the use of the spice for medical purposes had been documented centuries

**Transport strike on Dhaka-Sylhet highway continues**

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 24: The transport strike on Dhaka-Sylhet highway continued for the sixth day today.

Plying of bus, minibus, luxury coach and trucks remained suspended since the sudden strike by the transport owners and workers associations was announced on August 19.

The strike was called to protest against the toll collection by an organised group at the Khowai bridge area on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway, said an office-bearer of Transport Owners' Association.

District officials of Habiganj called a meeting of transport owners, workers and local leaders tomorrow to discuss the problem.

**Rajuk**

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The lifts in the building remained inoperative as operators did not turn up. On the first floor, only one employee was seen at the Estate wing. The building plan approval and the land wings had only three people engaged in personal work. The Rajuk Secretary was however, present at his office.

The BNP terrorists gunned down Mohammad Mustafa, vice-president of Amirabad Union Judo League, on June 12 at Ahmedpur votive centre under Sonagazi thana of the district during the last general elections.

Others who allegedly fell prey to BNP terrorism in the district included Mohammad Hossain Hazari, General Secretary of District Judo League who was killed on June 8 at Feni Sadar thana, Abu Ahmed Nabi, president of local chapter of Bangabandhu Parishad who was murdered on December 2, Matu Bhuiyan, leader of Matu Bhuiyan Union Awami League, who was killed on December 22, Baker Ahmed, a Juba League leader of Sonagazi thana who was killed on February 28, and Nurul Alam, vice-president of Sonagazi Union Judo League who was killed in a bomb attack on December 4 when he was returning home.

A few visitors, who arrived at the building during the hartal, were seen walking away later.

## ADB to send team

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"He specially appreciated the reform schemes and the difficult decisions taken by the government to adjust with the market economy," he said. He mentioned the measures like adjustment of fuel and fertiliser prices.

The government's firm steps towards privatisation and banking sector reform also earned appreciation from the ADB president, the minister pointed out.

Progress of the ongoing ADB-funded projects was also discussed and "it is expected that the ADB assistance would reach 400 million US dollars this year," Kibria told newsmen.

After discussion on the Ganges barrage project, he said, the Bank president expressed his readiness to send a mission to Bangladesh for the technical and economical feasibility study of the project.

The government is planning to construct a barrage over the river Padma for the optimum use of the water of Ganges fol-



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## Americans in KSA urged to be on guard against terrorist attacks

RIYADH, Aug 24: The US embassy in Riyadh has issued a warning to the 40,000 Americans living in Saudi Arabia to be on their guard for new terrorist attacks, reports AFP.

"The American embassy wishes to remind Americans in Saudi Arabia that it continues to receive reports indicating possible surveillance or probes of US military and government facilities suggesting that the planning for terrorist actions against US interests in Saudi Arabia continues unabated," the embassy said in a recorded telephone message.

"We urge Americans to maintain the highest level of vigilance and alert. We strongly encourage them to exercise caution, to reduce travel within the kingdom and report any suspect

activity," it said.

It also advised US nationals to be aware of letters or parcels from unknown senders.

Americans in Saudi Arabia have been targeted by two bomb attacks since 1