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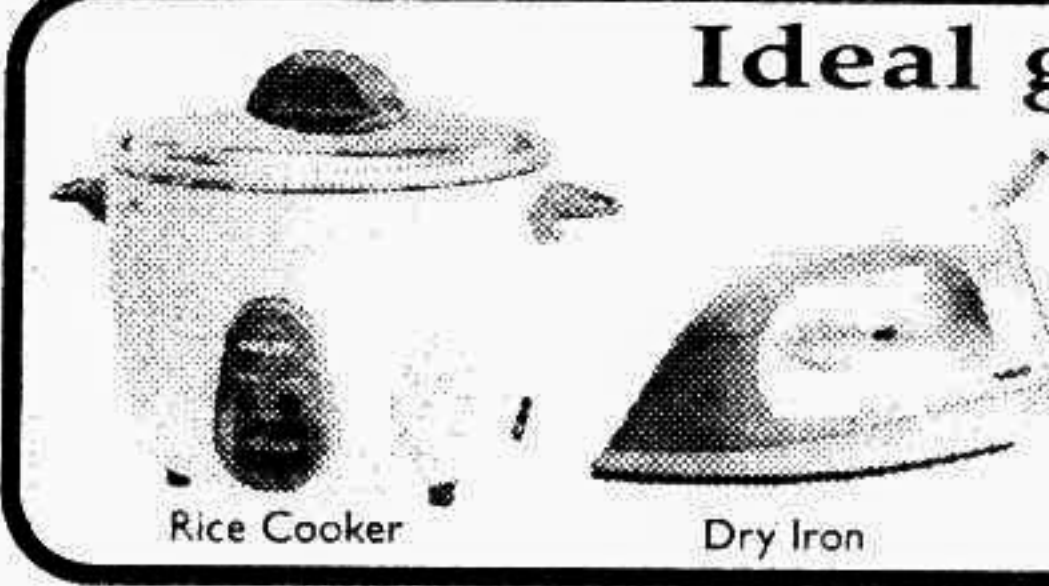
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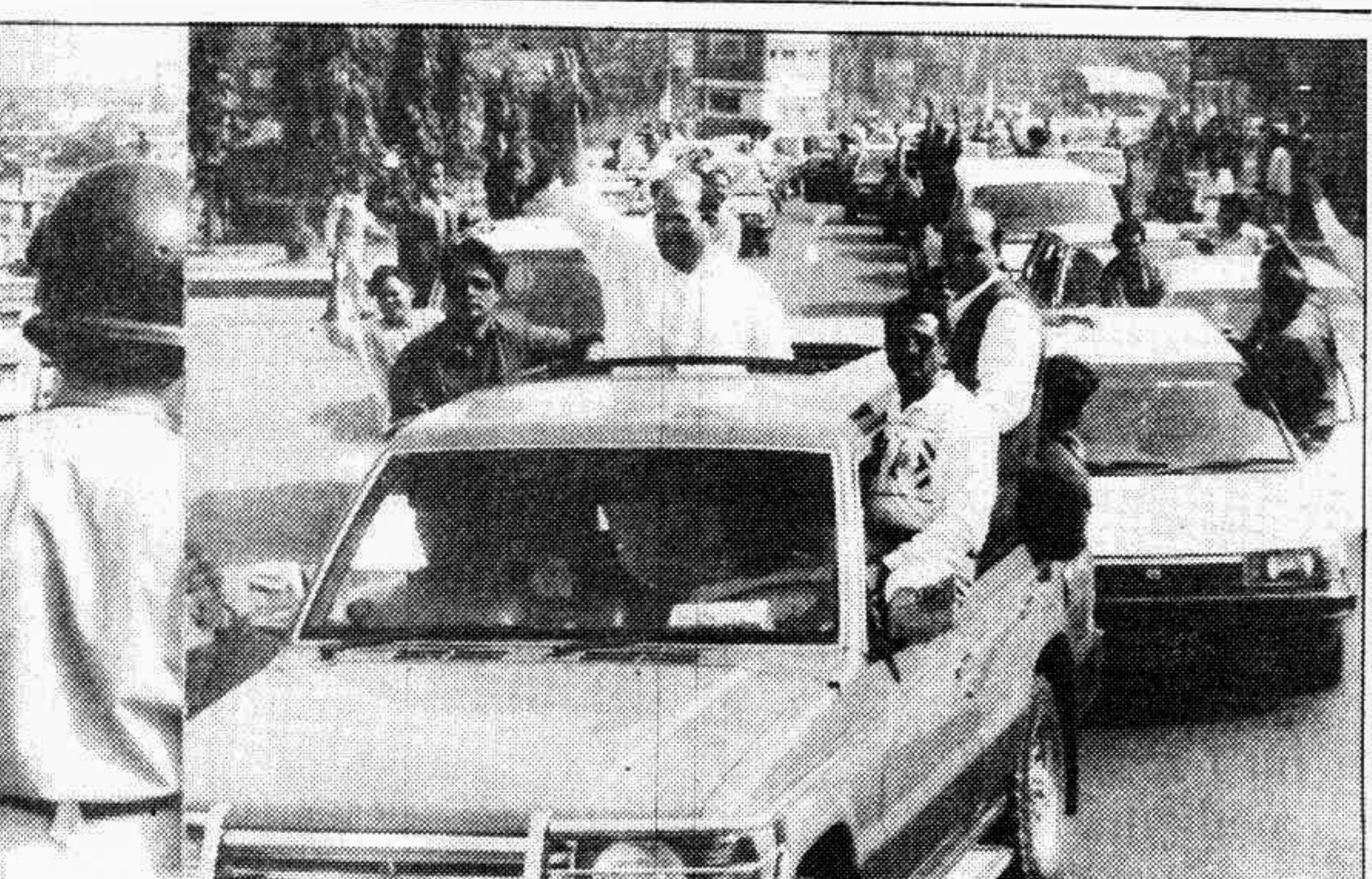
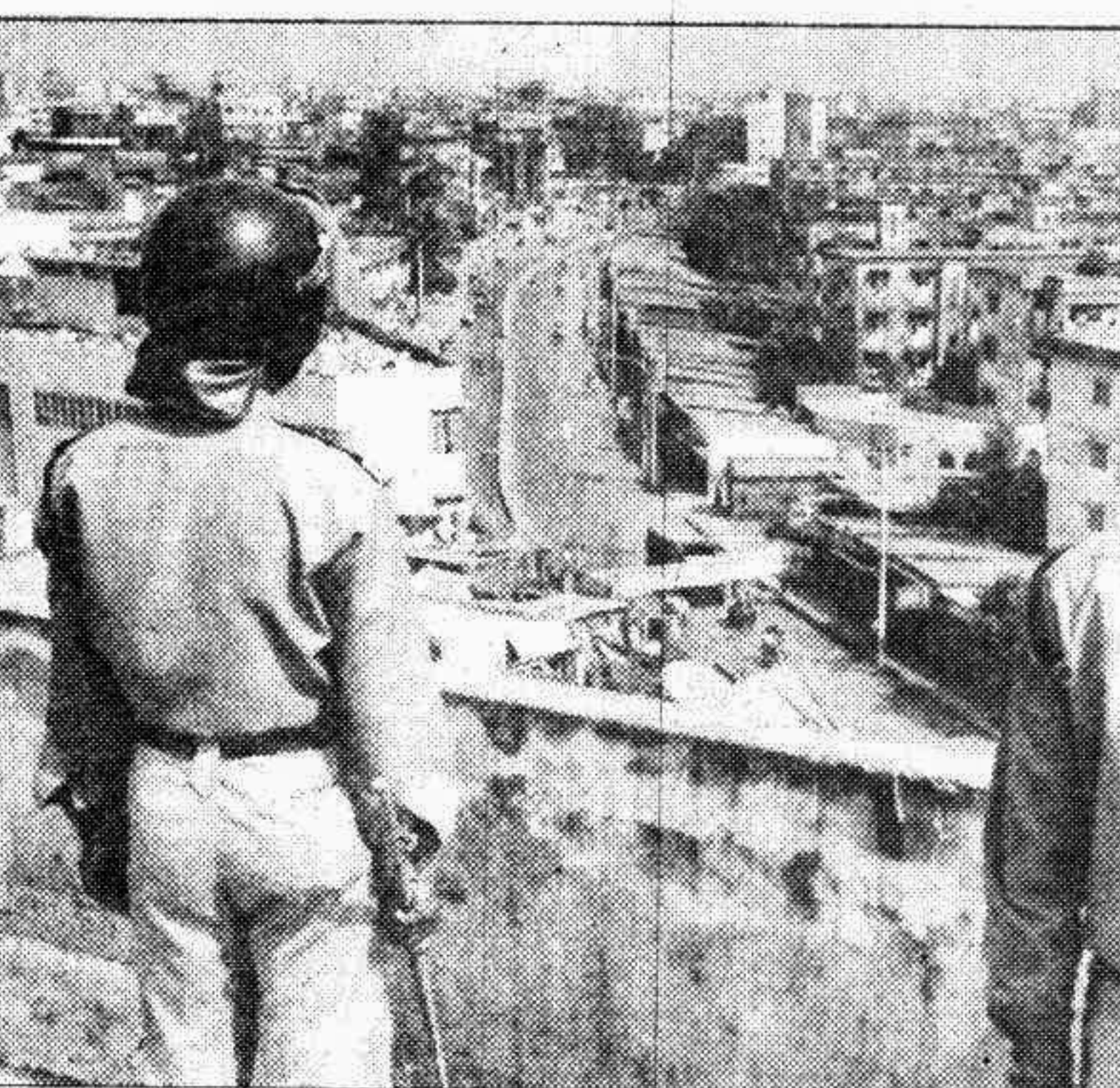
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PHILIPS



All for hartal: (Left) Police take on pickets at Purana Paltan. (Middle) Two cops stand on guard on the rooftop of the Shahjahanpur residence of Mosaddek Hossain Falu, an aide to BNP chairperson, which had allegedly been used by pro-hartal pickets in the past. (Right) Ruling party MP Rahmatullah leads an anti-hartal car rally (picture taken at Shahbagh) in the city. — Star photo

People won't accept farcical municipal polls: Khaleda

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia has again asked the government to create congenial atmosphere for municipal elections by accepting their four-point demand, reports UNB.

She blasted the ruling Awami League for unleashing attacks on opposition activists with their 'armed terrorists' to foil the hartal. Many opposition activists were injured and arrested in Dhaka, Jessore, Khulna, Bandarban and other parts of the country. A Jatiya Party worker was killed in Jessore by Awami terrorists, she said.

Bomb blast kills one in city

A young man was killed in a bomb blast in the city's Nawabpur area in the early hours of yesterday, reports UNB.

Medical sources said Mohammad Ali, 30, son of Sheikh Sajo of 57, Nawabpur was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was rushed with severe bomb injuries at 2:30 am.

Police quoting his family sources said Ali received bomb injuries while he was returning home at midnight.

Another source, however, said a bomb went off while he was making patrol bombs.

DU classes resume today

Classes of the Dhaka University will resume today after a 15-day Eid-ul-Fitr and winter vacation.

Offices and the library of the university will also open today. Most of the resident students have started coming back to their respective dormitories after celebrating Eid with their near and dear ones at homes.

Shun negative politics

From Page 1 and there is no word of parliamentary system in their constitution."

She said the President tried to bring the opposition to Parliament yesterday (Monday) and waited for an hour but BNP did not pay any heed to the President's call.

About the four-point demand of the BNP-led opposition, the Prime Minister said the government has nothing to do with these demands.

"We cannot ask the Chief Election Commissioner to resign as he is holding a constitutional post and we have no right to recall the Election Commission also," she said.

She said the process is going on to issue voters' ID card. A project is going to be taken up as these cards can be used for multiple purpose, she added.

About the demand for the release of opposition activists, Hasina said her government did not arrest anyone on political ground, it arrested the terrorists and criminals.

Hasina said BNP has submitted a list of those arrested, but most of them were arrested during the rule of BNP on various criminal charges. "The present government has only arrested the anti-social elements."

"The judiciary is totally independent now and the law is taking its own course. If any body is found innocent, the court will free him. The government has nothing to do with it," she contended.

Hasina said democracy was restored after a long and arduous movement, but a conspiracy is on to foil the process and destroy democracy.

The parties which captured power through illegal means used arms and terrorism to capture and consolidate power and gave arms to youths for political gains, she said.

"The Awami League has a strong organisational structure up to the grassroots level. We have policy, idealism and vision. Our politics is not dependent on terrorism or arms," she said.

She said her government ordered stern action against the terrorists irrespective of their political colour.

The premier claimed that the Awami League government has allowed the Election Commission to work freely and the by-elections held under this government were totally free and fair.

She said the people had cast their votes in a peaceful atmosphere during the rule of present government. They will continue to enjoy the same in future also.

About the issue of newsmen, Hasina urged the journalists to be objective and accurate in writing their news.

21 massacred in Bihar

JEHANABAD (Bihar), Jan 26: In the worst massacre in recent years, at least 21 people belonging to scheduled caste were shot dead, some of them in sleep by outlawed Ranvier Sena, a private militia of landlords, in Jehanabad district of Bihar, a top police official said today, reports PTI.

Six children and five women were among the victims of the carnage perpetrated by heavily armed Sena activists who stormed five houses at Shankaribigha village under Mehandia police station around 2300 hours yesterday and sprayed bullets. Bihar director general of police K A Jacob told PTI.

Nominations

From Page 1 municipality, 53 for nine ward commissioners and nine for women commissioners.

In Khulna: Three candidates submitted nominations for chairman post of Paikgachha municipality, 36 for nine ward commissioners and nine for women's reserved seats.

Names of the chairman candidates, Mahbubur Rahman (AL), Krishnapada Mondol (AL) and Sahadat Hossain Bachhu (BNP).

In Lalmonirhat: Five chairman candidates, 40 ward commissioner and 11 reserved women commissioner candidates filed nomination papers.

Of the chairman candidates, Lutfur Rahman of Jatiya Party submitted nomination paper even after campaigning for hartal Monday night.

In Sherpur: Three candidates, including one belonging to Jatiya Party, submitted nominations for the chairman post in the local municipality, 56 for commissioners and 17 for women commissioners.

Asgar Ali of JP, Advd Abdus Samad of AL and Abdus Salam are vying for chairmanship.

Three chairman candidates, all from AL, submitted nomination papers in Nalitabari municipality, 31 for ward commissioners and 10 for women commissioners.

In Moulvibazar: 149 candidates submitted nominations for three municipalities nine for chairman, 100 for ward commissioners and 26 for women commissioners.

Four chairman, 36 commissioner, 15 women commissioner candidates submitted nominations in Moulvibazar municipality while four chairman, 34 ward commissioner and seven women commissioner in Kulara municipality and three chairman, 38 commissioner and eight women commissioner candidates in Sreemongol municipality.

Among the chairman candidates in Srimongol, Mohsin Mia Modhu belongs to BNP and Abdul Mosobbir to Jatiya Party.

In Jessore: Three chairman candidates, 50 male commissioner and 10 female commissioner submitted nomination papers in Jessore municipality, two chairmen, 22 member and four female member in Monirampur municipality and two chairmen, 20 member and eight female member candidates in Abhoyganj municipality.

In Matlab municipality of Chandpur District: Ten candidates submitted nomination for chairman, 10 for women reserved posts and 62 for commissioners.

Five candidates presented their papers for chairman of Chhonga char municipality, while eight for female commissioners and 58 for ward commissioners. The candidates for chairman, female commissioner and ward commissioner in Katua municipality are two, one and 12 respectively.

In Haziganj municipality: Two vied for chairman, four for women posts and 20 for male commissioners.

In Joypurhat: Twentyone candidates submitted nominations in two municipalities, of which eight for chairman, 85 for ward commissioners and 29 for female commissioners.

In Chapainawabganj: 150 nomination papers were submitted in two municipalities of the frontier district.

Of them, eight nomination papers were filed for the post of chairman, 71 for 15 commissioners, 23 for five women posts in Chapainawabganj municipality, two for chairman, 48 for nine commissioners and 12 for women posts in Rohonpur municipality.

In Jhenidah: 13 candidates submitted nominations for chairman, 171 for commissioners and 50 for female commissioners in four municipalities which are Jhenidah, Mohehpur, Kotchandpur and Kaliganj.

In Gaibandha: 17 nomination papers for chairman, 24 for women commissioner and 106 male commissioner were submitted in Gaibandha and Gobindaganj municipalities. Incomplete

3 more held

From Page 1 The five were identified as Ahmed Sadik Ahmed, Sajeed, Bakhtiar Hossain, Abdur Noor and Maulana Md. Abul Kalam.

Ahmed Sadik hailed from Port Elizabeth in South Africa and Sajeed from Sadekabad in Pakistan, the sources said.

Police yesterday produced all the eight before the CMM's court and sought ten days' remand for further interrogation. The court, however, granted five days' remand.

The sources said that some documents regarding the plot to kill Samsur Rahman were recovered while arresting Sahabuddin, Salim and Nazrul.

Among the three, Nazrul took Taleban training in Afghanistan and had been in Pakistan for some time. Pakistani currency and Taleban book, translated in Bengali, were recovered from his possession, they added.

While arresting the five at Uttara, police recovered some foreign currency and important documents that prove their link with Harkut-Uz-Jihad.

JIC has been searching for the leaders and organizers of the Harkut-Uz-Jihad and verifying the statements given by the nine persons arrested earlier, the sources said.

JIC investigation so far revealed that members of Harkut-Uz-Jihad, including some foreign citizens, started organisational activities in different parts of the country from around 10th of this month.

2 killed, 300 hurt during hartal

From Page 1

Commissioner Abu Hena. In the capital, police took into custody some 180 people from different parts of the city during the first 12 hours of the hartal period, said police.

Some 50 were injured in Dhaka, 10 of them cops admitted to Police Hospital.

Sixteen others including two policemen were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The other injured left hospital after first aid.

In Dhaka city, the hartal hours were marked by sporadic bomb blasts, chase and counter-chase by pro- and anti-hartal activists and police action against troublemakers.

Processions led by some ruling party lawmakers paraded the city streets throughout the day denouncing the hartal and had encounters with pro-hartal opponents at several points.

A militant anti-hartal procession chased away a BNP procession led by party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan when it reached Topkhana Road at 11:45.

The anti-hartal group, under the banner of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Punarbashan Society, wielding sticks searched for the pro-hartal activists as they ran away in fear.

Indiscriminate cracker blasts forced law-enforcers into action. They mainly used tear-gas canisters.

Earlier, police reacted with batons on another BNP procession near Jatiya Press Club premises at around 11 am when a home-made bomb fell right in midst of the melee narrowly missing the shoulder of a cop.

The processionists including BNP MPs Sadeq Hussain Khoka, Amanullah Aman, Nazimuddin Alam and its student front leader Habibun Nabi Sohel could not escape the police wrath. BNP claimed Aman had to be admitted to a city hospital.

A young woman called Liza, claimed to be a Jatiya Party activist, had injuries in her head in a sniper attack on Topkhana Road. She was rushed to DMCH.

Other major trouble spots of the day included Nayabazar, Paltan and Bijoynagar areas where hartal callers -- BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat and Jagga -- brought out processions and blasted crackers.

Azim, an eight-year-old boy, lost his two hands when a bomb exploded in his hands at West Tejkuhi Bazar in the morning. One unidentified man handed him that bomb moments before the blast.

Mohammed Ali, 35, a rickshawpuller, received burn injuries as pickets poured petrol on his rickshaw and set it on fire at Paridias Road in the old part of the city.

One Abdur Rahman lost the wrist of his right hand when the bomb he tried to throw exploded. The incident occurred at North South Road.

Police chased a procession of women activists of BNP which was parading the streets near the party's Dhaka city office at Nawab Yusuf Market in Old City.

Several crackers were thrown at police vans when five policemen were injured. Three of the women activists also received injuries while trying to escape police retaliation.

The pro-hartal processionists retreated when an anti-hartal procession led by Haji Selim, a ruling party lawmaker, appeared in the scene.

Another ruling party MP, Rahmatullah of Gulshan, led a procession of cars and motor-bikes down the main city thoroughfares. At least 30 young riders escorted the lawmaker, who was visibly enjoying the hartal-hour ride standing on a sun-roof jeep.

All modes of vehicles except rickshaws and a few tempos went off the road in Dhaka. However, anti-hartal activists tried to run a number of buses without any passengers on board.

A number of state-run BRTC double-deckers were also seen plying the city streets but without any passengers.

Inter-city road communication came to a halt. However, Biman operated all scheduled domestic and international flights during hartal hours.

Railway officials claimed train services throughout the country were normal, except two minor incidents in Mymensingh.

A Dhaka-bound train from Bahadurabad was stranded at Islampur Bazar, a point between Mymensingh and Bahadurabad, for 35 minutes. Another train was stranded at Aaulianagar, between Tongi and Mymensingh, since pickets put up barricades on the track.

Schools remained closed while shops and businesses kept their shutters down. Presence in government and semi-government offices was very thin. Transactions in banks were also much less than normal.

Unlike previous occasions, vehicles carrying newsmen escaped the wrath of hartal activists yesterday.

Gazipur A BNP office in Tongi College Gate area in Gazipur was ransacked by anti-hartal activists around 10 in the morning.

In a separate incident, Tongi municipal chairman Azmatullah Khan came under bomb attack when driving through the Cherag Ali Sur Taranga Road in the morning. He, however, escaped unhurt.

Pabna Pro-hartal activists stormed EC to invite

From Page 1 ble enough to hold the municipal polls without co-operation of the political parties," said Abu Hena.

Replying to a question, Abu Hena said that he already had some informal discussions with the parties but the opposition parties 'boycotting' the polls did not respond positively. "Still, I am optimistic that they would respond positively, following the formal invitation."

When reminded that the mainstream opposition parties were demanding his resignation, Abu Hena said: "If it helps the nation go forward, I would like to repeat, I am ready to resign any moment. But I would only request the people concerned to substantiate the allegations of my bias for or against any political party."

Asked whether there was any legal scope for him to revise the schedule, he said the EC is legally obliged to hold municipal elections before March 19.

Whatever the case may be, there is no scope to announce a fresh date for submitting nomination papers.

Asked why did the EC extended the time for submitting nomination papers from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Abu Hena said: "The EC's responsibilities include co-operating with those interested to contest the elections."

While in power, BNP didn't attack opposition activists and never tried to obstruct their programmes although AL enforced 173 hartals, he claimed.

Mannan Bhuiyan claimed that the countrywide hartal was a complete success and people of all walks of life spontaneously observed it. He also congratulated the people for observing the hartal.

He said the opposition had the plan to further extend the hartal to protest government's atrocities but abandoned the plan considering the Bishwa Jtama.

Bhuiyan announced that the opposition parties will hold anti-election rally in the pourashava areas on February 8 and at district headquarters on February 15. Besides, the Liaison Committee at district and thana levels have been instructed to pursue the persons who have submitted nominations to withdraw. Leaders at the division level will continue mass contact at district and thana levels.

He said the current movement will turn into one-point movement if the 4-point demands are not met immediately.

Chittagong In the port city, 25 people were injured, five with bullets, in clashes between police and pro-hartal activists.

The Laidighi area turned into a battlefield when pickets tried to march towards the Returning Officer's office at the Collectorate. They also set fire to the offices of Higher Secondary Education Directorate in Jamalkhan area.

BNP called a half-day hartal in the city today to protest the police action.

Bandarban At least 20 people were injured, five critically, in an hour-long clash in the hill town between pro and anti-hartal elements. The clash ensued when pro-hartal activists allegedly attacked a procession of a municipal candidate.

Narayanganj Our correspondent reported that the hartal was observed peacefully in the river port town. However, Adamjee Jute Mills and other mills and factories were in operation.

Natore At least 15 people were injured in sporadic clashes in the district yesterday, reported our correspondent. An Awami League procession towards the election office was attacked by BNP activists near Madrassah Crossing around noon.

Sylhet Our staff correspondent from Sylhet reported that the hartal was observed almost peacefully in Sylhet division except some minor incidents in Habiganj district town.

The pro-hartal activists ransacked Habiganj municipal building during hartal hours. They also pelted stones at the Water Development Board and Roads and Highways offices.

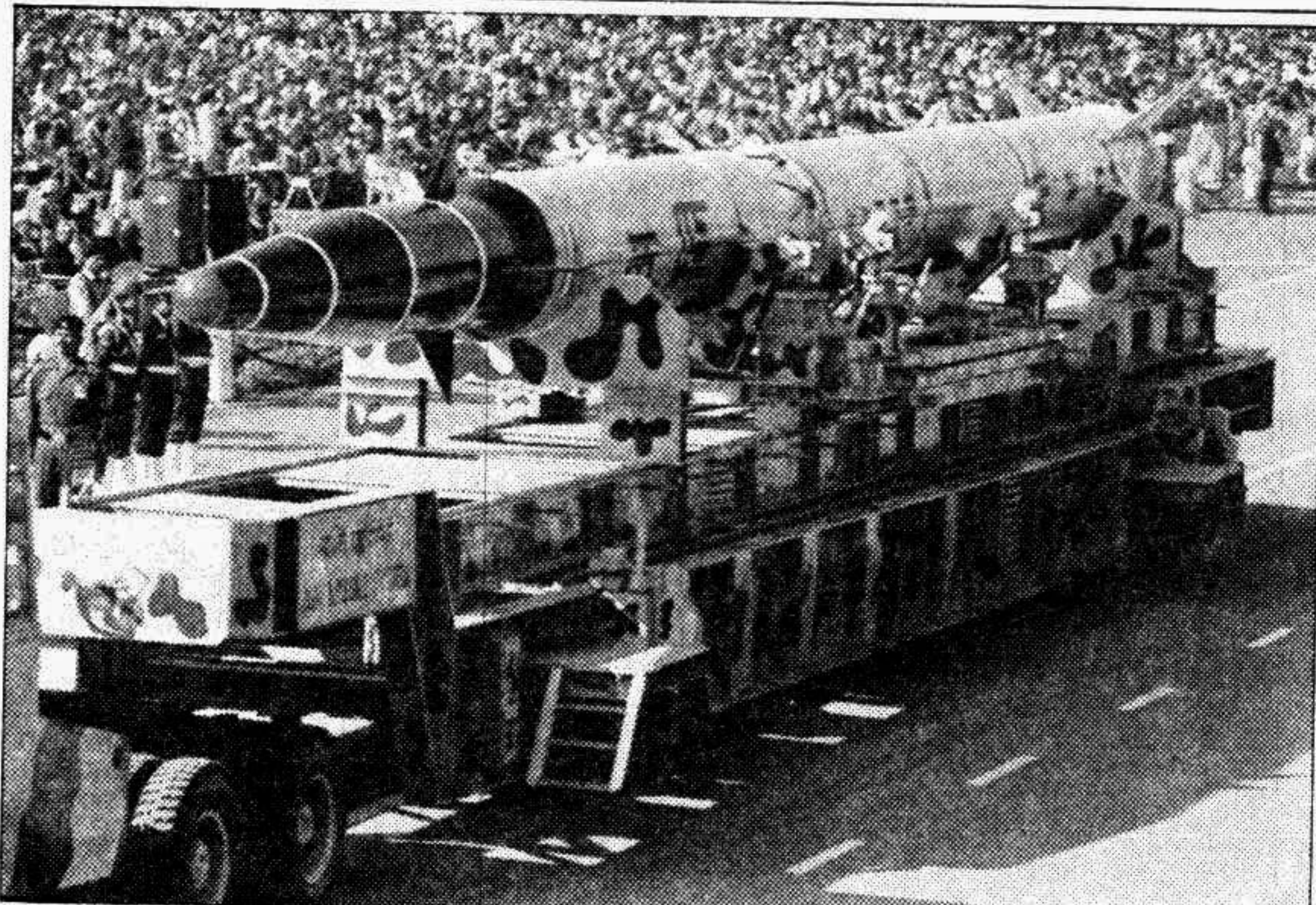
Polls officials From Page 1 sive measures on opposition activists and its 'terrorists' come on the street in a bigger way yesterday to resist the opposition after the Prime Minister called upon them to 'free their respective areas from hartal.' This is for the first time in the history of Bangladesh that a head of government instructed her party men to 'obstruct and resist opposition programme', he said.

Inspired by the Prime Minister's call, AL 'terrorists' launched a series of armed attacks under police protection in Dhaka, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal, Sirajganj, Bandarban, Patuakhali, Chandpur and some other areas, injuring an unspecified number of opposition activists, he claimed.

While in power, BNP didn't attack opposition activists and never tried to obstruct their programmes although AL enforced 173 hartals, he claimed.

Mannan Bhuiyan claimed that the countrywide hartal was a complete success and people of all walks of life spontaneously observed it. He also congratulated the people for observing the hartal.

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NEW DELHI, India: An Agni intermediate range ballistic missile is towed past the presidential dais during India's annual Republic Day parade 26 January. India celebrated its first Republic Day as a declared nuclear power, with a parade of military muscle, that included the unveiling of the new generation ballistic missile. —AFP photo

Violence, strike overshadow Indian Republic Day

NEW DELHI, Jan 26: Religious, caste and separatist violence overshadowed India's Republic Day celebrations today creating a mood of soul-searching on a day of pride, report Reuters, AFP.

"A dark R-day dawn," the Daily Pioneer proclaimed over a picture of the grieving wife and daughter of an Australian Christian missionary who was burnt alive with his two sons by a mob of Hindu zealots at the weekend.

President K R Narayanan was all smiles as he stepped into his car after an elaborate parade on Raj Path, the tree-lined avenue that cuts a broad swathe through the heart of New Delhi.

But just hours earlier, in an annual address to the nation, he had made an impassioned plea for religious tolerance.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), leader of the coalition government, is under fire for its links with groups accused of fomenting violence against India's tiny Christian community.

Violence erupted in the insurgency-torn northeast of the country ahead of Republic Day, as it has done for many years. Police said guerrillas of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) blew up an oil pipeline and heavily armed militants also killed two paramilitary soldiers in an ambush.

ULFA, fighting for self-rule in Assam state, was one of seven separatist groups in the region to call for a boycott of Republic Day celebrations and a 17-hour general strike.

Around 50,000 security forces were deployed at the weekend to pre-empt any Republic Day violence.

A joint statement by separatist groups had asked the local population to observe republic day as 'Indian occupation day.'

In response, the governments of all seven states issued a 'communique ordering state employees to attend official ceremonies, warning that absentees would be viewed "as aiding and abetting a war against the state."

In the troubled northern state of Kashmir, also wracked by a separatist drive, official Republic Day celebrations passed off without a hitch, amid tight security and a general strike called by Muslim rebel and political groups.

Police removed a landmine from a road in the Kashmiri capital Srinagar, near the venue of the official celebrations, which were attended by a handful of police and paramilitary officers.

Kashmiris boycotted all functions and stayed indoors.

Security blanketed central New Delhi for the Republic Day show of military might.

Over 10,000 security personnel lined the route of the parade and its chief guest, Nepal's king Birendra, looked on with Indian leaders from a bullet-proof stand.

Tanks and armoured cars rolled by fighter jets roared through a wintry blue sky and helicopters hovered overhead, showering crowd of thousands with rose petals.

The highlight of the military showcase was the full range of locally developed missiles, including the ballistic missile Agni, a sleek 30 metres with a bright red nose.

The government, which carried out nuclear tests last year, says it is committed to developing the 2,500-km range Agni. Western experts say it could carry nuclear warheads.

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