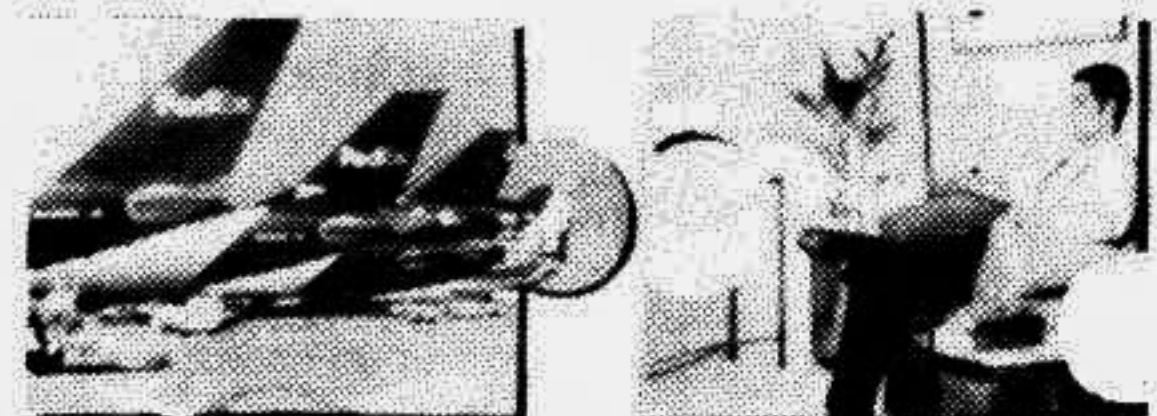


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## Taliban rule out Bin Laden's extradition

KABUL, Feb 10: Afghanistan's Taliban militia today ruled out extradition of Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden, saying such a request was illogical, reports Reuters.

The United States has accused Bin Laden of masterminding the bomb attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania last August that killed 263 people.

It has offered a reward of 5 million dollars for information leading to his arrest and conviction.

This is not rational to say that Osama should be expelled, extradited or handed over. Any move on these lines against Osama will cause a lot of resentment and a chaotic situation among the Afghans and the whole Muslim world," Taliban spokesman Mullah Abdul Haye Mutmaen told Reuters.

Mutmaen was speaking by telephone from the southern Afghan town of Kandahar after the Taliban leadership there considered a letter sent by the United States.

The letter was handed over

to Taliban envoy Mullah Abdul Jalil during a meeting with Deputy US Secretary of State Karl Rindorf in Pakistan last week.

Neither side has disclosed the contents of the letter, but the Pakistan-based news service Afghan Islamic Press said on Saturday that Washington had proposed the Taliban either hand over Bin Laden to the United States or to Saudi Arabia, or expel him.

"No Muslim or Afghan would accept the handing over of Osama. We guarantee we will control his political and military activities," Mutmaen said.

## Only 12 days

From Page 1

closed business, offices and production for three days at a stretch ending today. When the coming Friday and Saturday are added, the country will have seen an effective shutdown for five days at a stretch.

The Opposition has also reportedly kept another four days of hartal on its anvil. This would see a national shutdown for 96 hours beginning February 22. Hence, in reality the nation would be closed for business and any worthwhile production for a complete week, since the proposed 96 hour hartal would be preceded by the normal two day weekly closure and the Ekushey February holiday.

In fact since the spell of Eid holidays starting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of last month, few working days were available before political programmes started another spree of disrupted working days.

## Boat sinks in Indonesia: 280 missing

JAKARTA, Feb 10: At least people are missing after an Indonesian boat carrying more than 300 people sank off Borneo on Saturday, a port official said today, reports AFP.

The official said a passing cargo ship rescued 19 people but at least 280 people were still missing. It was not clear whether all were feared dead or whether some swam ashore.

## Opposition 'not aware'

From Page 1

demned police action and armed attacks allegedly by Awami League activists on the opposition men in Dhaka and other parts of the country on the second day of the three-day shutdown.

The BNP secretary general claimed that at least 500 opposition workers were injured in attacks at the capital, Savar, Chittagong, Chuadanga, Bhola, Joypurhat and some other places. BNP offices were ransacked and torched at Bhola and Pabna, he alleged.

Among the injured the injured Bhuiyan said, Savar BNP MP Dr. Dewaraj Mohammad Salahuddin sustained a bullet injury in one of his hands.

He thanked the people for "observing the hartal despite attacks by the AL goons and the police".

Bhuiyan said their present agitation is aimed towards holding a free and fair election. For this end they have raised some simple demands including resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner, Mohammad Abu Hena, introduction of voters' ID cards and the establishment of a congenial political atmosphere.

"Hena is not so indispensable that his removal will throw the country into a deadlock," he countered.

About the voters' ID cards, he said the project on the matter was progressing and "we want it to be expedited".

## Delay in decisions

From Page 1

"Clearly, Bangladesh presents great opportunities for potential investors, but given the regional economic downturn in Asia and low real energy prices, competition and internal budget constraints will necessarily force companies to concentrate their efforts in the most investor-friendly countries, where investment money can be put to work quickly and profitably.

Calvin Humphrey pointed out, "we think there is scope for streamlining the project approval process, developing greater consistency and transparency in regulatory policy, and improving the legal and regulatory frameworks that will allow Bangladesh to attract the... it needs for its future economic growth."

But this must be done expeditiously because of the intense international competition for foreign investment and Bangladesh's need to attract a growing share of these resources. International investors seek returns that justify the risks involved—and since time is money, delays increase greater costs to a project and greater risk that approvals would not be granted.

"It is important that Bangladesh and the international energy companies work together to speed project approval and implementation, thus reducing the cost of doing

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor: City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motiheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 866772-4, Commercial: 866771, Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net



Janaza of Sajal was held at Dhanmondi Eidgah yesterday.

— Star photo

## Sajal buried

Sajal Chowdhury, said to be an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of BNP, was buried at Azimpur graveyard after janaza at Dhanmondi Eidgah after Zohr prayers yesterday, reports UNB.

Sajal, 22, a degree examinee from the city's Doctor Maleka Science College, was shot during a clash between pickets and anti-hartal activists at Science Laboratory Tuesday morning. He succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital the same day.

A large number of people, including BNP leaders Dr R A Gani, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, M Shamsul Islam MP, Abdullah Al Noman, Lt Gen (ret'd) Mir Shaukat Ali, Haris Chowdhury, Ehsanul Kabir, local ward commissioners Abdul Khair Bablu and Abdul Latif, attended the funeral.

Meanwhile, BNP sources said, police picked up two leaders of JCD's Dhanmondi thana unit — Habibur Rahman and Babu — from the procession carrying the body near Shankar bus stand at about 12:30 pm.

Local leaders at the janaza demanded that the spot where the student was gunned down be named 'Sajal Chhatra [square]'.

## Newly married woman stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A newly married woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her brother-in-law at their Aga Khan Lane residence in the city yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Alsana Akter, 18, daughter of Samiruddin of 78, Aga Khan Lane under Kotwali thana.

Police and hospital sources quoting relatives said Alsana had an affair with Billal Hossain, a businessman from Jaydevpur. Billal and Alsana later got married, but the guardian didn't accept it. Later it was settled at the initiative of both the families and the marriage ceremony was scheduled for tomorrow.

Hospital sources quoting the victim's mother said her son-in-law Yashin was against this marriage. Yashin stabbed Asma when she was washing dishes in the bathroom.

## D-8 summit opens Mar 1

From Page 1

take a three-hour retreat from the summit on the river Meghna aboard the refurbished luxury vessel M V Masud. They are also scheduled to adopt Dhaka Declaration enshrining the pledges of the participating nations before the summit ends.

All the leaders are expected to lead large contingents of foreign ministers and other high officials. A large number of international media people will also fly into the capital to cover the important event.

The D-8 groups eight OIC countries—Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Turkey and Bangladesh. Combined, these states have a population of nearly 900 million and command around nine per cent of the global GDP.

Although the OIC comprises 56 countries, the eight nations which initiated the D-8 have nearly half the population of the OIC states.

The membership of D-8 is diverse and stretches from the shores of the Atlantic, across three continents up to East Asia, making it a unique organisation in terms of composition and potential.

Ahead of the summit, a 'Commissioners meeting' of senior officials will be held in Dhaka on February 25 and 26 followed by a conference of the foreign ministers of the group members on Feb 27.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the conference at the newly-constructed Sheraton Conference Centre at 3 pm on March 1. The inauguration ceremony is to be followed by two official business sessions the following day. The day's programmes also in-

## Path of confrontation

From Page 1

hinted that future programmes would be even more aggressive. Terming hartals as the "most innocent weapons" against the government, Bhuiyan told newsmen on Tuesday evening that the government should not take the risk of witnessing the deadly ones.

Another threat, coming from Khaleda Zia, also gives adequate hint about the opposition's future course of action. The leader of the opposition in parliament, now commanding 136 legislators of the 330-member House, has recently threatened the government with *en masse* resignation from Jatiya Sangsad.

If it so happens, the opposition believes, the political legitimacy of the government of Sheikh Hasina will be in question. Because parliament is the source of power of a government in a parliamentary democracy. Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League has practically refused to respond to the Chief Election Commissioner's recent call to forge a negotiation with the opposition across the table.

The reason behind the government's reluctance to open a dialogue is, most of the ruling party policy-makers believe that the opposition-planned movement would eventually fall apart.

"BNP, or the opposition for that matter, does not have enough organisational strength

## Oil tanker

From Page 1

tives of the BOTOA. But no enhancement of the rent of oil tanker has been made during the last two years, the statement said.

"Bangladeshi petroleum market has been squeezed recently due to increase of petroleum products price in the country despite global lower price. As the petroleum sale fell, the oil transportation was also dropped suddenly," the statement said.

The statement issued by T.M Giasuddin Ahmed, President of the BOTOA urged the government to realise its demand to facilitate the government and private sector joint enterprise and to applaud the sector for boosting the country's economy, the press release said.

## BGMEA polls deferred

Election to the apex body of apparel industry, BGMEA, scheduled for February 25, has been deferred to March 4, reports UNB.

The change was unavoidable. We will hold it on March 4," BGMEA President Mostafa Golam Qudus said yesterday.

Political unrest and series of possible hartals later this month forced the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association to shift the polling date, according to a BGMEA executive.

Two panels — one led by the incumbent president and the other by Anisur Rahman Sinha — are contesting the vital posts, including that of president.

Bangladesh.

Leaders at the launching had agreed to undertake several priority projects in 10 thrust areas after carrying out detailed feasibility studies.

Bangladesh is heading the work group on rural development and micro-credit. The grouping has already finalised some concrete proposals. Several model projects in the fields of rural uplift, cooperatives, rural infrastructure and credit disbursement among those generally considered not credit-worthy are learnt to have been proposed, diplomatic sources said.

The proposals for the projects and other recommendations have been prepared in consultation with leading NGOs and different ministries engaged in rural development, the sources added.

The recommendations made by Bangladesh as regards rural development and microcredit may be taken up as model projects for common implementation or replication once these are approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers and the summit leaders, they said.

The D-8 is also encouraging establishment of joint business councils among the chambers of commerce and industry and other trade bodies of the member states. The grouping would launch a shipping line, and devise methods to sell agricultural products such as cotton, jute and tea among member countries. It would also try to work out methods for building backward linkages for ready-made garments in the post Multi-fibre Agreement (MFA) context among other economic subjects of common concern.

## Of police, guns & phantoms

From Page 1

streets bearing testimony to the battle. Earlier one group of youths carrying some of these broken bottles came to notice. One of them had angrily asked the police officer at the entrance of the Abbot Das Lane why did not he moved deep inside the lane and nabbed the "miscreants".

"You know your enemy better. Not me. Why don't you provide their names and addresses? We would certainly catch them," the officer retorted. The youths retreated towards Hatkhola.

Back inside one of the alleys, someone whispered at the police officer's ears, beckoning him to probe a flat on RK Mission Road. The officer martialled his forces but stayed off after seeing some panicked women and children, a lady still carrying a plate of rice and chasing her naughty son to eat the late lunch.

"You know he [police officer] is my relation. So I spoke to him," a jeans-clad pot bellied man in his thirties told these reporters apologetically as the police officer brushed him aside and led his men away down the alleyways unhappy at the poor intelligence about the miscreants.

As the police marched away, they split and another group went the other way around, but failed to nab any of the trouble makers who were quite visible for sometime but disappeared whenever policemen moved ahead.

Finally at the end of the KM Das Lane, the police officer said, "They are urchins who are paid Tk 50 to hurl a bomb, Tk 500 to throw it at policemen and Tk 2000 to kill one of them. These urchins don't understand what they are doing. They do it only for money."

Why didn't the policemen nab the others who brandished

their broken bottles and even talked to you rudely?

"Well, you have seen what I have told them," the officer said.

Is it legal for someone to roam around menacingly with broken bottles on the streets in front of you? There had been no answer to the query as the officer left the area.

## Haji Selim at Suritola

At 4:45pm, at Suritola, policemen in several vehicles escorted the head and tail of a 200-strong anti-hartal procession, led by diminutive Lalbagh MP Haji Selim.

Although his foot soldiers, most of them in lungis, did not brandish any guns like they did on previous occasions, a hefty young man failed to hide his handgun in his right pocket of the white pique shirt. The black butt was too visible.

Sometime later, the man was seen walking cautiously with his right hand in the pocket as the marchers walked down a shuttered North-South Road, each of its alleyways guarded by police.

Only two hours ago, rival groups of pro- and anti-hartal elements had fought running battles with guns and bombs, leaving one Abdul Halim with a bullet in his neck. Two others, Swapan and Bayejid, received bomb injuries.

A few rickshaws moved on the other side of the street and some trailed the procession. Some curious passers-by watched the rag tag band, led by bikers, riding three on each motorcycle.

But policemen at Paltan crossing did not allow them to proceed towards Bijoynagar, diverting it towards Press Club. Even though these bikers reconnoitred the police barricade at the entrance of Paltan mosque where a Jamaat-e-Islami rally was in progress.

Earlier, police had barred all groups including BNP to pass through the cordon towards Paltan, the scene of Tuesday's trouble involving BNP leader Sadek Hossain Khoka, police and Awami League activists.

The AL activists were camping at Muktangan throughout the day yesterday from where they staged several marches down the city centre denouncing the hartal.

Police playing wise to prevent trouble took position all around the Paltan and Bijoynagar and Kakrail areas after a Jatiya party procession led by Kazi Zafar Ahmed was chased by anti-hartal elements. Several bombs exploded during the chase.

That was the end of any demonstrations beyond the police barricade.

## Opposition rallies

BNP staged their rally at Kakrail crossing with police guarding it from three directions. BNP leaders Khoka and former home minister Abdul Matin Choudhury addressed it. Former ministers Dr Mosharraf Hossain and Lutfar Rahman

## Flag meeting

From Page 1

fired from both sides. The trouble erupted on February 6 when about 50 khassia people from India intruded into the Bangladesh territory near the border pillar No 1283 at Sripur and started working in two plots of land under the cover of BSF.

On getting information, a group of BDR men from the Sripur border outpost reached the area and asked the Indians to go back, but they ignored.

After about two and half an hour, BSF opened fire and the BDR also replied. One Bangladeshi farmer who was working at a nearby field received bullet injuries.

BSF lodged protest with the BDR. BDR also asked the people of the nearby villages to stay away for safety.

## Hartal: 3 more killed

From Page 1

minor girl was injured in a bomb explosion at Paltan crossing in the early morning.

Road transports in the capital and to and from the city remained inoperative while trains ran as scheduled barring one which was obstructed near Lalmonirhat by pro-hartal elements.

Two out of eight domestic flights of Biman were cancelled due to lack of passengers but all international flights of different airlines to and from Dhaka operated on schedule, said aviation sources.

## Chittagong

In Chittagong, the second day of hartal passed off amidst sporadic incidents of violence leaving at least 20 injured. Four youths were critically injured while making bombs at Sher Shah Colony yesterday afternoon, reports our staff correspondent from Chittagong.

Pickets attacked the Chittagong Customs House several times since yesterday morning forcing the authorities to deploy army troops to deter further attack. UNB said.

## Other districts

In Bhola, at least 50 people including two policemen were

Khan were seen at the rally.

At 12:52pm, a senior police official told Lutfar Rahman Khan MP to clear the area in 30 minutes. The rally ended at 1:20pm.

Later in the afternoon, all the four parties of the opposition alliance staged demonstrations in the area but did not make any attempts to rush through the last barricade at Paltan mosque entrance.

A BNP demonstration in the evening was diverted towards Shantinagar, where a bomb exploded to scatter it. One group left towards Rajarbagh and marched back to the party office via Motiheel with Khoka, Mirza Abbas and Matin Choudhury at the helm.

As dusk enveloped the Paltan area, extra riot police had slowly beat their retreat. Rickshaws, unable to use the North-South Road till then, moved with their passengers.

But there were few passengers at that hour. Rickshaws, more in number than Tuesday, vied with each other for few passengers. Even the auto-tempos which huddled with their engines running at Malibagh crossing wasted their fuel for more than what they were prepared for the day.

Some streets, as usual, were without lights, raising heartbeats for some who had to negotiate long destinations, trudging down deserted, shuttered streets on the second day of the 60-hour hartal.

As the shutdown enters the third day today, red banners hung at several markets on Inner Circular Road announced that markets would remain open on Friday.

## Khaleda

From Page 1

the opposition outside the race and cleared the way for vote dacity in the national election.

Begum Zia criticised the government for "letting loose the ruling party terrorists and police on BNP's peaceful processions" in Dhaka, Savar, Chittagong, Bhola and Alamdanga. BNP MP Dr Dewan Mohammad Salahuddin at Savar and Joint Convener of Olama Party Maulana Abdul Malek were injured seriously, she said.

The BNP leader said Awami League wants to consolidate its power by reintroducing the one-party rule by stifling the voice of its opponents.

The opposition was forced to announce the 60-hour hartal to protect people's voting rights and democracy, she said.

## Ekushey

From Page 1

Obaidul Quader visited the Academy Tuesday and asked the authorities to keep the fair open. He also visited yesterday afternoon and urged the authorities to continue the fair despite the hartal.

"You are fully secure while I am with you at the Academy," the minister told the authors and booksellers while visiting their stalls. "I will guard you from any untoward incidents."

He said that the Ekushey book fair should be out of the purview of political programmes as it has a special dignity and sanctity. "We should bear enmity towards the fair and sporting activities," he added.

Quader further told the Academy authorities that no one would dare to attack the fair.

Meanwhile, a cultural function was held at the Central Shaheed Minar in the evening as part of the 12-day Ekushey programme arranged by the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote.

## Erratum

Due to oversight, the date-line on the back page of yesterday's Daily Star was mistakenly printed as Saturday, February 6, 1999 instead of Wednesday, February 10, 1999. The error is regretted.

injured in clashes between pro- and anti-hartal activists. Office of local daily *Banglar Kantha* was ransacked allegedly by BNP activists, reports our staff correspondent from Barisal.

Twenty people were injured in clashes between anti- and pro-hartal activists in Natore during hartal hours yesterday. Of them 10 were hospitalised, reports our correspondent.

In Naogaon, 10 people were injured in similar clashes. Nine others were injured in Seraganj, where police arrested three persons on charges of violence.

Five people were injured in Pabna, where pickets set fire to a number of shops and a municipal candidate's campaign booth.

Four including two policemen were injured as BNP activists allegedly hurled bombs at an anti-hartal procession. In northern district of Kurigram, a Jamaat leader and an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal were injured when anti-hartal activists armed with sharp weapons allegedly attacked a joint procession of opposition parties.

Reports from Kushtia, Narayanganj, Rajshahi and some other parts of the country said hartal passed off by and large peacefully yesterday.