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BNP men asked to have patience even in the face of provocation

BNP yesterday urged its leaders and workers to have patience even in the face of any provocation and make today's sit-in in front of the Secretariat a success, reports UNB.

The precautions came at a joint meeting of different units of the city BNP at the party central office on the eve of today's programme of the BNP-led opposition alliance protesting government's decision to give transit facilities to India.

Addressing the meeting BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan condemned government ban on processions and rallies at different points surrounding the Secretariat.

"We repeatedly said the sit-in programme would be a peaceful one. But the government, being afraid of such programme, has started a misleading propaganda against it."

Presidents and secretaries of the different units of the party were present in the meeting.

The secretary general asked all party members to be present at the HBFC point before 9 in the morning to stage the protest.

JCD-BCL gunfight in Chouddagram: 50 injured, 50 vehicles damaged

COMILLA, Sept 11: Fifty people were injured and 50 vehicles damaged during a gunfight between BNP backed JCD and ruling party student front BCL in Chouddagram thana here today, reports UNB.

Of the injured, 16 were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Comilla Hospital in critical condition.

Witnesses said the two groups exchanged fire near Chouddagram Government College here at about 12.45 pm. Police also got involved in the clash when they came to bring the situation under control.

The two groups damaged 50 vehicles on the highway and blocked traffic at Chouddagram bazar, Amjader bazar, Cheora, Nankara and Barimara on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway.

Local people said police arrested a number of JCD workers from the spot.

Army to stay out of streets today

The army personnel will not control traffic in the city today as the opposition parties will stage sit-in in front of the Secretariat, reports UNB.

"They will not stay on the street as the opposition agitators may create problem," said a senior official of the Home Ministry requesting anonymity.

The army was called out on September 6 to assist the traffic police in the city.

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Wye River accord modified

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Prayer Timings

September 12

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:20	5:00
Zuma	12:15	1:20
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:20	6:23
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Tight security, ban around Sectt

Opposition to stage sit-in today

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition political parties will stage a sit-in today around the Secretariat amid tight security measures by the government.

The BNP-led opposition alliance is staging the sit-in to protest the government decision to provide corridor facility to India in the name of transshipment. The programme was announced on August 2.

The BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) have taken all-out preparations for arranging huge gatherings in the sit-in, described by the parties as the biggest ever street protest in 38 months since the Awami League assumed power.

The government has taken adequate security measures to maintain law and order.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police banned gathering, rally and procession within about one kilometre area around the Secretariat from midnight last night. The ban will be in force till midnight tonight.

The government will deploy 3,357 security personnel including Armed Police, 12 platoons of BDR and plainclothes detective police in and around the Secretariat. Hundreds of security personnel will also be deployed at different entry points.

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'Tougher' action programme likely today

By Rezaul Karim

The BNP-led opposition alliance has decided to announce 'tougher action programmes' from today's sit-in demonstration around the Secretariat.

As part of the programmes, "a hartal for at least 48 to 72 hours is likely to be called from the sit-in. It will possibly begin on Tuesday," said an alliance leader seeking anonymity.

The liaison committee of the four-party alliance — BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) at a meeting yesterday took the decision for tougher programmes.

"Two hartals have already become due to protest the so-called public security act and the home minister's adverse comment on the Judiciary. We could not call the hartals due to our preparations for the sit-in and now we have decided to call those from tomorrow's programme," said a leader representing BNP in the liaison body.

Held at the Jamaat central office with Matiur Rahman Nizami in the chair, the committee meeting reviewed the overall political situation, final preparations for today's sit-in and possible action programmes.

"The programmes will be finalised at the sit-in spot after seeing the government's attitude," said a liaison body member.

The liaison committee, however, prepared draft programmes after discussion with policy makers of the component parties. "We will not hesitate to announce any sort of action programmes if the government obstructs and tries to foil our peaceful demonstration," he said.

"We will be in touch with each other and announce identical programmes," said Jatiya leader in the liaison body. The Jamaat leader said the government's attitude seems to be that it would create trouble and obstruct opposition activists on their way to their respective destinations. "We don't know what would be the situation if the peaceful programme is obstructed."

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Rajshahi BNP activists won't join sit-in

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Sept 11: Rajshahi city and district units of BNP have dropped their plan for sending party activists to Dhaka to join the Secretariat siege programme tomorrow.

BNP high command this morning asked the local leaders not to send party activists to Dhaka, BNP sources said. "We have been asked to remain stand-by at the party office here so that we can go for action in the city in case of any resistance from government to the siege programme," said a local leader.

The party high command asked the organising secretary of the district unit and Rajshahi city Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu to keep the party activists on alert in Rajshahi and send a few leaders to Dhaka.

Local BNP sources said that they had planned to send about 3000 party activists to Dhaka to join the siege programme.

The party will organise a rally and bring out a procession in the city tomorrow.

Firearms, ammunition & explosives seized

Four arrested while making bombs

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered a large quantity of firearms, ammunition, explosives, sharp weapons and bomb making materials from an eleven storey under-construction building at Hazi Hamid Ali Lane in the old part of the city and arrested four persons while making bombs there yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the building and arrested Sahidul, Rony and Nasir, all aged between 22 and 25 and Nazem, 35, from the seventh floor of the building. The arms and explosives were recovered from two rooms and a bathroom on the floor, police said.

The recovered arms include five guns, three revolvers, 58 bullets, 28 cocktills, about one hundred petrol bombs, 20 chocolate bombs, four mechetes and about 15 kilograms of bomb making materials.

Police suspected that the

arms and explosives were kept there and the bombs were being made for use during today's sit-in by the opposition political parties.

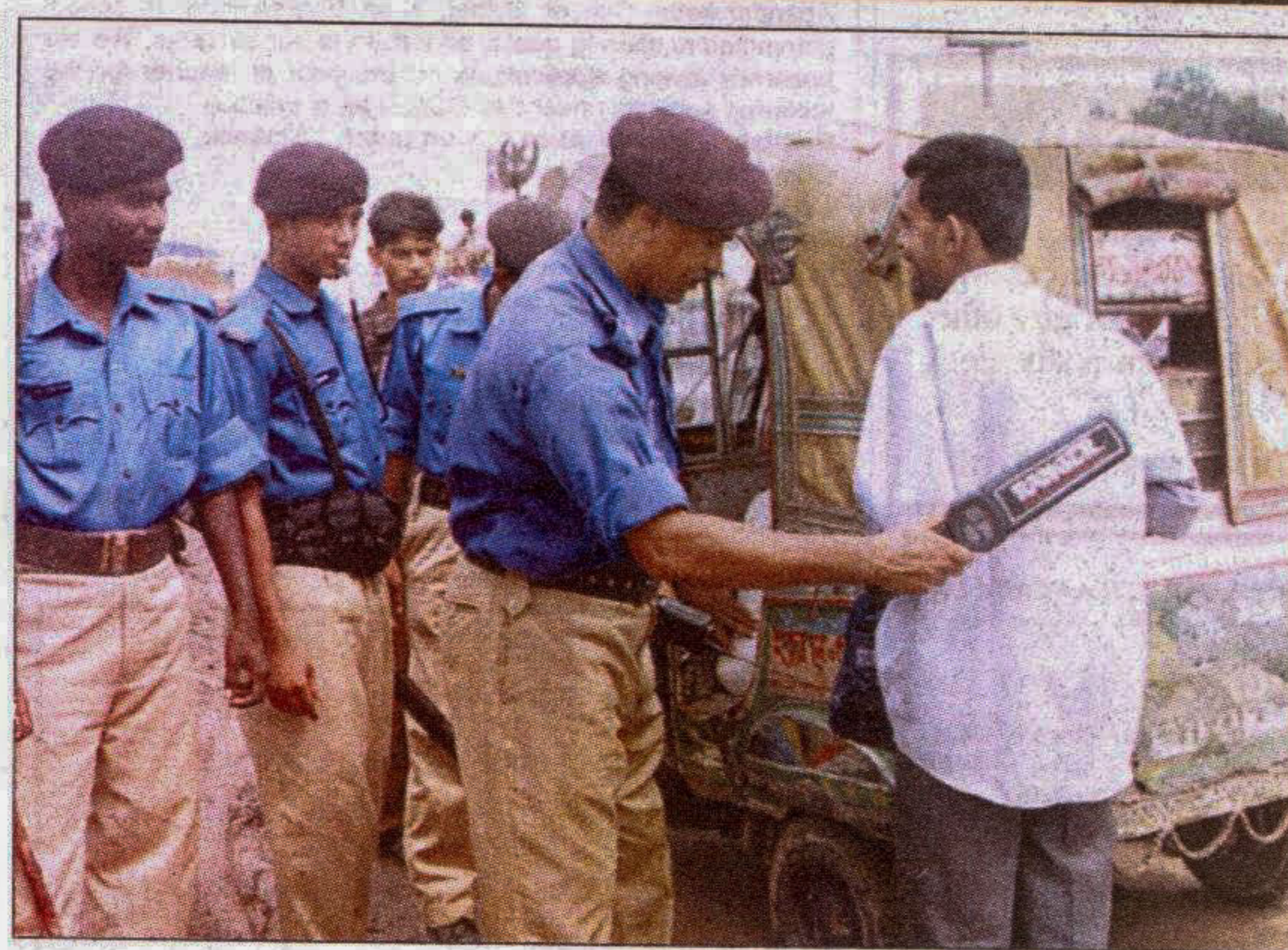
Iqbal Bahar, Deputy Commissioner of DMP's South Zone told The Daily Star last night, "Our investigation so far confirmed that those bombs were being made to create anarchy during tomorrow's (today's) programme of the opposition."

He however could not say to which opposition party the arrested four belonged. They were being interrogated, police said last night.

In another operation, a team of Demra police recovered two guns and a revolver with 26 bullets from a house at Nurpur in South Dhania in the early hours of yesterday. Two persons were arrested in this connection.



Police recovered a large quantity of arms, ammunition and bomb making materials from old city yesterday. —Star photo



Police checking incoming passengers at Gabtoli terminal on the eve of Opposition programme in the city. —Star photo

She only smiled

She only flashed a smile but didn't make any comment about the Prime Minister's invitation to a tea inside the Secretariat, reports UNB.

This was how Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia reacted when a group of newsmen at 29 Minto Road last night asked whether she would accept Sheikh Hasina's invitation.

The Prime Minister at a public meeting in the city recently extended the invitation to her political adversary for talks over a cup of tea at the Secretariat or Parliament on all issues for a solution, instead of suffering in scorching sun on the street.

The PM repeated her overture yesterday at a public meeting in Dinajpur on the eve of the opposition sit-in outside the Secretariat, protesting the government decision regarding transit facilities to India.

To another query about future plan of action, Begum Zia quipped: "You can see the next programme when announced."

Come to JS or Sectt to settle disputes, PM's call to Khaleda

DINAJPUR, Sept 11: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today offered talks with leader of the opposition at the Secretariat or Parliament to settle all disputes, including the transshipment issues, reports UNB.

A day before the planned opposition sit-in in front of the Secretariat on the transit issue, she appealed to her political rival to give up the politics of confrontation, and come up for negotiations.

"There is no need of giving a push or staging a sit-in in front of the Secretariat, come inside the Secretariat or Parliament to discuss all issues for a solution," she said while addressing a public meeting at Gora Sheheed Maidan here in the afternoon.

"Give up politics of push, you don't have such strength as can

knock down the government. We work with the strength of the people, people have faith and confidence in us."

The leader of the Opposition can talk as long as she wants on the floor of Parliament, the Leader of the House assured.

She told the audience that BNP was showing negative attitude to everything and trying to oust the government by pushes. But they forgot that the people had pulled them down from power for vote stealing.

About the proposed transshipment, the Prime Minister said the Zia government had given transit to India in 1980, which was renewed by the Ershad government and lastly by the government of Khaleda Zia in 1995.

"Now she (Begum Zia) is now-

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Amend Press Council Act, Penal Code to protect newsmen's rights

Roundtable told

Journalists, jurists and cultural activists have proposed amendment to some clauses of Press Council Act and Penal Code to protect the newsmen's rights as well as interests of the citizens, reports BSS.

They proposed insertion in Clause 11 (3) and amendment to Clause 12 (2) of Press Council Act, 1974 and clauses 501 and 502 of Penal Code to empower the Press Council so that prior permission from it is required to prosecute newsmen, printers or publishers and to restrain misuse of press freedom.

Speaking at the roundtable, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said "free press" works as a watchdog in society to help ensure good governance and citizen's rights.

The minister proposed to amend Clause 498 (A) of Penal Code to allow prosecution of newsmen for defamation to discourage yellow journalism involving statesmen and government officials. Rule of law would not be established if the press is not made accountable, he said and reaffirmed that there was no relation between the proposed Public Safety Act and newsmen.

State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed suggested formulation of a national policy for the press to make the media accountable and protect citizens from defamation. He also suggested consideration of the proposal for bringing both the

print and the electronic media under the proposed national policy for the press.

Press Council should be made more active in protecting people's right so that none can be defamed in the name of free press, he said and urged the newsmen to come up with suggestions in formulating a system to take action against those who writes against sovereignty, national interest and war of liberation.

Newsmen, editors and publishers must be accountable to ensure objective journalism, he said, adding that a total of 1,526 dailies, weeklies fortnightly, monthly and quarterly are now being published in the country.

Presided over by Press Council Chairman Justice Ha-

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BCS show opens Computer City comes into being

By Staff Correspondent

The much-vaunted "Computer City" was launched in the city yesterday to facilitate one-stop services for end-users in such areas as marketing, sales, software development, training, internet service and electronic commerce.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria opened the 100-shop permanent IT centre at the city's IDB Bhavan. A 15-day computer fair, which also began yesterday, is marking the launch of the Computer City on four levels of the imposing building with a 100,000-square foot space.

As many as 160 IT firms are participating in the annual fair, dubbed BCS Computer Show '99, organised by Bangladesh Computer Samity. The 10am-8pm show, open to public, will charge Tk 10 each for entry.

The fair concludes on September 25, and the Computer City will be open to all free of charge. During the fair, products will be offered on discount, organisers said.

Meanwhile, the organisers are providing transport to visi-

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CU classes to resume Sept 20

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 11: Classes at the Chittagong University (CU) will resume on September 20 after a month's unscheduled vacation.

This was decided at a syndicate meeting at VC's conference room this evening. The syndicate also decided that all dormitories of the university will be reopened for students on September 18.

The Vice-Chancellor will hold a meeting with the teachers of the university on September 15 to restore congenial academic atmosphere while another meeting between students and the authorities will be held on September 16.

The syndicate also decided resumption of bus service.

The authorities on August 12 closed the university for indefinite period and asked the students to vacate halls following a clash between two BCL factions on the campus.

CPA calls meeting as strike at Ctg port continues

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 11: The merchant workers at Chittagong Port continued their strike for the third day today disrupting delivery of goods from the port jetty.

The merchant workers went on strike on Wednesday as they were barred from entering port jetty without gang booking. The shipowners and C&F agents prohibited their entry on the plea of safety and security of the port, merchant workers said.

Merchant workers alleged that if they are to take booking before entering the jetty there would not have any chance for bargaining and they would be deprived of their actual wages. Meanwhile, Chittagong Port

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Murders, clashes, fraud mark second phase of Indian polls



Sharad Pawar casting his vote in Baramati, yesterday.

NEW DELHI, Sept 11: Hundreds of thousands of troops guarded polls today during the second phase of India's massive elections, after caste clashes, murders, an assassination attempt and election fraud marred the lead-up to the voting, reports AP.

Members of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party allegedly kidnapped and shot dead two activists of the Maoist Communist Centre late Friday in West Bengal state, the United News of India reported.

In the southwestern Maharashtra state, Sharad Leve of

the opposition National Congress party, a breakaway group of the Congress party, was murdered and one of his supporters wounded during an attack by governing Bharatiya Janata Party workers, police said.

Leve was pulled out from his jeep and attacked with swords and wooden sticks by nearly 30 BJP activists in Satara, a town 190 kilometres southeast of Bombay, police said.

Police arrested Udayan Bhosle, a junior minister in Maharashtra state. Five other assailants were absconding. Police said.

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Vajpayee finds his match in battle for Lucknow?

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Sept 11: Veteran Congress party leader and eminent scholar Karan Singh will take on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in Lucknow Parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh state where balloting will be held in the fifth and final phase of general elections on October 3.

The candidature of Dr Singh was announced today by the Congress, India's main opposition party seeking to regain

power, a day after party chief Sonia Gandhi had declared that a "strong" candidate would be fielded against Vajpayee.

The decision to field Karan Singh, a member of the royal family of Jammu and Kashmir, is seen by political observers here as Congress' reply to BJP's throwing in its senior leader Sushma Swaraj against Sonia Gandhi in Bellary parliamentary constituency in the southern state of Karnataka.

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Hundreds of protesters arrested in Karachi

KARACHI, Sept 11: Police arrested hundreds of opposition supporters and their leaders to prevent them from staging an anti-government rally in the violent port city of Karachi today, reports agencies.

Police fired hundreds of rounds of tear gas shells into a crowd of a few hundred, who had gathered in an eastern neighbourhood to demonstrate against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, defying a day-old ban on demonstrations in southern Sindh.

The government is now acting as a military dictatorship. (Prime Minister) Nawaz Sharif and his cronies have decided to tear of the mask of democracy that they had been wearing," said Pakistan Awami Ittehad alliance spokesman Hussain Haqqani.

Haqqani said that about 1600 opposition activists were detained in Sindh, mostly in Karachi.

Protesters hurled rocks and bricks at the police, while shouting "go Nawaz Sharif go". They also stormed police barricades.

Witnesses said police beat demonstrators with steel tipped sticks and clouds of tear gas hung heavy over the area. Two photographers were reportedly beaten and taken to hospital bleeding.

The police crackdown followed a government ban announced Friday on strikes and protest rallies in southern Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital. The anti-government rally

was called by a 19-party opposition alliance, which has promised to wage demonstrations throughout Pakistan to press for their demand for Sharif's resignation.

Also today, four lawmakers belonging to former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples' Party were arrested along with 15 other opposition leaders as they arrived to attend a meeting of the joint opposition.

At the police station, Taj Haider, a lawmaker of Benazir Bhutto's party told The Associated Press that no charges had been laid.

"The government wants to deprive us from exercising our democratic rights," he said. "If is nothing but fascism."

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28 hurt as train derails at Kurigram

KURIGRAM, Sept 11: At least 28 passengers were injured when a train derailed here early today, reports UNB.

Official sources said three bogies of the 442 local mixed down train — BC, CG and SM — went off the track at Ghoshpara, with a big bang.

Panic-stricken passengers jumped from the train and suffered injuries, they said.

The train was moving from one station to another in the town when the derailment occurred at about 4:55 am.

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