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Address to nation over TV, radio

Hasina renews offer for talks on transshipment



'Hartal is another name for harassment'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday made a fresh offer of dialogue with the opposition on transshipment with an assurance that her government would do only what is good for the country, reports UNB.

"I am inviting you to the talks. I tell you (the opposition) that you can raise your objection, if any, during the talks or you can join discussion in Parliament. I will do what is good for the country subject to discussion," she said in her address to the nation over radio and television yesterday evening.

The prime minister held out the olive branch for her political adversaries hours before

leaving for New York to join the silver jubilee celebrations of Bangladesh's admission into the United Nations and deliver her speech at the 54th session of the UN General Assembly.

Rebutting the opposition demand that the government revoke transit agreement with India, Hasina wondered when the government had not yet signed any transit or transshipment accord, how they could raise such a demand.

"And what's the logic behind calling hartal? What dividend would they get out of it by harassing the countrymen?" the prime minister questioned.

Reacting sharply to the opposition strike, the prime minister urged the people to resist this evil design with courage and face up all situations with patience maintaining peace.

"You are not bound to observe this hartal," Hasina told the countrymen.

The prime minister said the government always remained at people's service. The law-enforcers are engaged in giving security to citizens' life and ensuring public order.

Questioning the efficacy of the agitation, Hasina said Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia could speak in the House as long as she desired, as much time as she wanted.

Whatever she has to say, she

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Nasim vows to hit back at 'those creating anarchy'

AL leaders take tough postures

By Staff Correspondent

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday warned to hit back at those who were conspiring to unsettle the government by creating anarchy in the country.

He however asked people to open shops and bring out vehicles on the road in the next two days of the three-day opposition-sponsored hartal and assured them of all sorts of protection.

Apart from the home minister, four other ministers and other Awami League leaders also asked the parliament to take to the streets during the remainder of the countrywide shutdown.

They were addressing a public rally of the city Awami League at Pallan Maidan in the city yesterday. Organised to

protest 'terrorism and anarchy' by the opposition parties, the rally was attended by several thousand people.

The home minister told the rally that he had foiled on Sunday an opposition 'conspiracy to topple the government through creating anarchy across the country and thus free the killers of Bangabandhu from jail'.

"I come to know about your conspiracy 48 hours before you plan it," he said to Opposition leader and BNP chief Khaleda Zia.

As part of the conspiracy, he claimed, a large number of bombs were manufactured at the Chittagong residence of an opposition MP. Action would definitely be taken against that

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PM leaves for NY, Paris

Opposition MPs do not make it, finally

By M Anwarul Haq

Observers have raised some questions relating to the composition of the official delegation and the visit itinerary of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who left the capital last night to address the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York and receive the UNESCO Peace Prize in Paris.

Contrary to the disclosure made by the foreign minister at a press briefing Thursday that nine members of parliament including former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali and other opposition MPs have been included in the eminent personage group, the official list does not include any opposition MPs.

According to the government manual, the trip has been described as an 'official visit' to 'New York, United States of

America, and Paris'. The entourage to New York has 46 members. Headed by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad the list ends with valet Abdul Mannan. The delegation includes 17 core members.

The composition of the core entourage is: Seventeen members, a five-member advance security team and a five-member security team accompanying the entourage, a personal physician and a personal staff, an eight-member media team of whom seven are from the state-controlled media and two editors of two dailies and one valet.

The entourage includes the chairman of the Board of Investment and a 23-member business delegation. They are supposed to pay for their passage, which has normally been the convention with previous visits also.

The list of eminent persons includes Nazma Rahman, Advocate Sahara Kahtun, Anisul Haque, Ramendu Majumdar, Ferdousi Majumdar and businessman Nasir Ahmed Chowdhury.

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UCBL incident IO ordered out of CID

By Staff Correspondent

A CID inspector, who is the investigating officer (IO) of the six cases filed in connection with the vandalism inside UCBL Bank head office on August 26, was stand released yesterday.

Inspector Hai, the IO, was transferred to Dhaka Range from Dhaka CID office yesterday.

The stand release order of the inspector came just one day after an unsigned document regarding the UCBL investigation was faxed to a number of newspaper offices Sunday night.

The faxed document, addressed to the Special Superintendent of CID, Dhaka, seems to be a departmental report regarding the investigation.

CID officials, however, could not confirm last night whether the CID Inspector had disclosed any official document regarding the UCBL investigation or that the stand release order had any connection with it.



Another face of hartal

Vegetable vendor Jabbar Ali was arrested from his shop in front of the AGB Colony in the city yesterday, just two days after he was blessed with a baby. His wife rushed to the Motijheel thana to let the father have a glimpse of the two-day-old, but it was too late. Poor Jabbar was already in the prison van on way to the court while the mother made a last-ditch effort. Our photographer Amran Hossain caught the scene at around 1pm yesterday.

Slow reforms threaten to slash Dhaka's share of soft loans

Slum eviction, corruption, state of law and order, defence expenditure irk aid-givers

Star Report

The donors in a mid-term review meeting in the city yesterday castigated the government for eviction of slum dwellers without any rehabilitation programme, slow implementation of reforms, lack of investment climate due to worsening corruption and law and order situation, and increase in defence expenditure.

They also threatened that aid flow in the coming years could be reduced if the government failed to speed up implementation of reforms.

The two-day meeting began yesterday at the NEC auditorium with Finance Minister SAMS Kibria in the chair. He made a detailed deliberation on the progress on different fronts.

Frederick T Temple, Country Director of the World Bank (WB), told the review meeting there was a real danger that Bangladesh's access to concessional IDA resources could be reduced if the pace of reforms does not pick up.

"In the coming years, the flow of concessional aid resources will depend increasingly on the commitment and success of government's efforts to improve their domestic policy environments through faster reforms. Although the linkage between reform and performance and the size of development assistance programmes is not as explicit for other development partners as it is for IDA, their ability to mobilise funds and provide them to Bangladesh will also inevitably be affected by progress on the reform agenda," Temple said.

Immediately after him, IMF mission chief Ronald Hicks also said the degree of support that can be expected from development partners will depend

on the progress made with the reform effort.

He cautioned against taking an expansionary monetary policy and said the increased defence expenditures, particularly the purchase of a MIG squadron, are serious causes for concern.

Seeking greater discipline on the expenditure side, Hicks said it is critically important to establish and maintain appropriate spending priorities favouring the social sectors and infrastructure development. Efforts should be intensified to

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Police excesses mark hartal in capital

Violence kills 1 in Natore, hurts 100, puts scores behind bars

Star Report

A Juba Dal leader was hacked to death and two others were injured allegedly by ruling party activists who attacked BNP pickets at Gurudaspur in Natore on the first day of the Opposition-called countrywide 60-hour hartal yesterday.

The victim was identified as

BNP speaks of tougher post-hartal programmes

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has warned the government of 'tougher movement programmes' after the three-day countrywide hartal.

"We'll go on with our programmes, no matter whatever repressive measures are taken against us by this government", Bhuiyan asserted at a press briefing in the city last night.

At the end of first 12 hours of the Opposition-called 60-hour hartal in the country, leaders of the opposition parties briefed newsmen about the latest developments. The briefing was held at Minto Road official residence of Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

While some leaders of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote gave vivid description of 'police repression' on peaceful gatherings of opposi-

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Mobidul Islam, 25, who was the local thana Juba Dal convener. Over 100 people were injured in incidents of violence in Dhaka city and in other parts of the country, our correspondents reported. Of the injured, about 70 were in the city. Police said they picked up 134 people from different city areas on various charges.

Clashes involving pro- and anti-hartal activists and police were reported from different areas of the capital and from Feni, Noakhali, Chandpur and Chittagong. Life remained paralysed across the country.

At Dhaka University, Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal supporters were 'ousted' from the campus at gunpoint by rivals, it was alleged.

Ruling party and Opposition activists traded gunshots at Feni, leaving one bullet-hit. UNB said.

Thirty-seven people were injured in clashes at Noakhali, Chandpur and Mymensingh. A mob burnt copies of newspapers at Sherpur.

In the capital, police fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells and used batons indiscriminately to disperse a BNP procession at Bijoynagar. BNP activists replied with rocks and home-made bombs.

Three persons, injured in the clash, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Some others were treated at different clinics. Police said six of their personnel were wounded.

Police didn't allow BNP leaders and activists to bring

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Cops also take kids into custody

By Staff Correspondent

Motijheel police arrested 116 people from areas around the BNP central office in the city during the first six hours of the Opposition-called 60-hour hartal yesterday.

The haul included a good number of children, juveniles and girls who work in garments and other small factories.

Whoever happened to be walking down the street in front of BNP office and its surrounding areas, found himself in custody, witnesses and victims alleged.

But a grumpy Sub-inspector bullied newsmen who went to

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BCL chases JCD out of DU campus

By DU Correspondent

Activists of Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD), BNP's student wing, were ousted from the Dhaka University campus yesterday by ruling party backed students as the BNP-led opposition alliance began enforcing a three-day nationwide shutdown.

The JCD leaders and activists were compelled to leave the campus after AL-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists chased them out of Madhu's Canteen twice, the second time with gunshots. A central leader of JCD was also beaten up during the incident.

Campus sources said the BCL activists first attacked the JCD activists when they entered Madhu's canteen at about 9 am. JCD activists led by its DU unit President Monir Hossain were then chased out of the campus.

BCL activists chased away the JCD workers again at noon when they tried to come back to the Madhu's canteen. Witnesses said the BCL workers fired two rounds of bullets on the JCD workers in front of the canteen, forcing them to leave the campus again. The firing took place in front of police deployed on the campus, they said.

The BCL activists also beat

up Tariqul Islam Bony, Vice-President of JCD's central committee at TSC.

The BCL leaders had decided earlier on Sunday night that they would resist the JCD workers should they come to the campus during the hartal. According to sources, BCL leaders had also taken a decision to oust the JCD men from the campus.

Activists of JCD talking to The Daily Star alleged that BCL 'gunmen' had asked them to leave the campus on Sunday night and warned them 'not to come to the campus during the hartal'.

Meanwhile leaders and workers of BCL brought out a procession on the campus and held a rally in front of DUCSU Building yesterday protesting the opposition sponsored hartal.

Presided over by BCL president Bahadur Bepari, the rally was addressed among others by its general secretary Ajoykar Khokon and leaders Abdul

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Zia murder trial Dec 12 deadline for final report

CHITTAGONG, Sept 13: The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court today asked the Investigation Officer of the Zia Murder Case to submit the final report within December 12, reports UNB.

CMM Mohammad Shamsur Rahman gave further extension as Investigation Officer ASP of CID Abdul Quader Khan sought time explaining difficulties in securing documentary evidence and apathy of the witnesses.

AC of Kotwali thana filed FIR on the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in Chittagong Circuit House on May 30, 1981. But the Home Ministry on June 24 ordered postponement of the case.

It was revived on November 30, 1997. So far, 17 people, including four BNP leaders, had been interrogated by the investigation officer. He will interrogate eight more people in connection with the case.

Repeating the history with exceptions

AL is saying and doing what BNP said and did 5 years ago

By Nurul Kabir

With a couple of distinct exceptions, it was almost a repetition of a 1994 episode.

On April 7 that year, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia was Prime Minister while Awami League President Sheikh Hasina was Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Desperate to oust the BNP government, the AL-led Opposition had announced to lay siege to the Secretariat and the Election Commission office. According to press reports of that time, the Opposition had taken up the programme in demand for resignation of the government of Khaleda Zia and

early general elections under a caretaker government.

The government had imposed a 24-hour ban, starting at April 6 midnight, on all kinds of assembly, meetings and processions around the Secretariat and the EC office. Heavy contingents of law enforcing personnel had also been deployed around those.

Government officials and employees, specially those working in the Secretariat, were asked to go to office early in the morning. Top bosses were advised to spend the April 6 night in their offices and many of them did so.

The city dwellers, especially those living or doing business around the two areas were gripped by panic. Apprehending violence, many people stayed home. Shops and private offices in the areas remained closed.

Police had put up barricades on all roads leading to the Secretariat and the EC office.

The AL had chosen more than one spot to proceed towards the secretariat but decided to concentrate mainly near the Ramna Park Star Gate, some 150 yards from the Foreign Office. Police blocked the road from Shabbagh to the Star Gate to traffic barring

rickshaws. Passers-by were also intercepted.

According to The Daily Star report on the incidents in the Star Gate areas, trouble had started in the morning.

Intermittent brick-batting by AL activists and sporadic police baton charges kept the area tense during siege. After some two hours of peaceful picketing, the demonstrators - stalwarts and activists of the Awami League and its front organisations - started pelting stones at the police, inviting the first baton charge around 10:30 in the morning.

With the passage of time, clashes had spread in certain areas of the city including Siddique Bazar. Eventually, two students-Mustafa Aminur Rasul Paran of New Model Degree College and Habibur Rahman Milton, a student of Class IX in Rustam Ali High School, Demra - were killed. They had succumbed to bullet injuries. Besides, nearly 100 people were injured and 36 arrested during the sporadic clashes.

As usual, the government had issued a Press Note on April 7 night, claiming that the persons were shot at by

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BSTI rules flouted

50 edible oil companies go by their own norms

By Naimul Haq

Fifty edible oil producing companies registered with the BSTI have been operating without 'certification mark' licence since 1994, according to sources in the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI).

Out of total 53 companies, only three renewed their licences, the sources said.

The companies are not renewing their licences protesting an "unreasonably" high rate of fees, fixed at Tk 45 per ton of oil (10 paisa per container) by the BSTI in 1994, sources in the Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanashpati Manufacturers Association said. The rate was Tk 1.50 per ton before 1994, they said.

The defaulting companies were given reminders several times to renew their licences but to no effect, BSTI sources said.

Finally, as per a decision of the 10th Council Meeting of BSTI in March, legal notices were served on the 50 companies individually on May 30, asking for renewal of licences within 15 days.

It was stated in the notices that they were doing business illegally and that action would be taken against them if they failed to renew licences within the specified time.

But neither the companies renewed their licences nor any action was taken by the authorities since then.

As per the BSTI Ordinance, 1985, it is compulsory for company to procure and renew licence for producing and marketing any of the 130 BSTI enlisted items including soyabean oil and palm oil.

Asked why BSTI did not take any step to stop marketing of

products of these companies, its Director General Abu Taleb said, "We have no authority to seize the product or stop production. We have not been given that power."

"What we are authorised to do is collect the products marketed illegally, give notice to create awareness among the members of the public and initiate legal action."

The 40-member BSTI Council meets in every six months. Following demand from the Association, the 8th, 9th and 10th meeting of the Council discussed the situation but remained firm on the earlier decision about the fee.

The decision to increase the fee to Tk 45 per ton was taken as per recommendation of a committee in which the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONDOLENCES



Dr A K Sayeedul Huq, an eminent economist and Founder President, House of Consultants Ltd. (HCL) and Managing Director of Technology Management Consultants Ltd (TMC) passed away at his Baridhara residence in Dhaka on Tuesday, 31st August 1999. (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun). Many organisations, individuals, friends, relatives and admirers of the late Dr Sayeedul Huq, from home and abroad, have sent messages condoling his sudden demise.

HCL and TMC sincerely acknowledge with gratitude the condolence messages and thank all those who have expressed sympathy and support to the members of the bereaved family and to those working with these organisations. HCL and TMC are extremely sorry in this hour of bereavement for their inability to reply to each and everybody individually for their messages of sorrow and sympathy.

May the departed soul of Dr A K Sayeedul Huq rest in eternal peace.



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Prayer Timings

September 14

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-20	5-00
Zohr	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-20	6-23
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation