



Dawn-to-dusk hartal to continue today

By Staff Correspondent
The BNP-led opposition alliance has 'extended' its country-wide dawn to dusk hartal for the third consecutive day today to protest killing of three people in the city during the hartal on Sunday and 'police firing' on senior BNP leaders yesterday.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of its Liaison Committee at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament yesterday evening with BNP Vice Chairman M Shamsul Islam MP in the chair.

Announcing the hartal programme at a press briefing, Shamsul Islam said, "We had no plan to extend the hartal, but the government forced us to do so by killing three people and making armed attack on a procession that left an unspecified number of our leaders and activists injured. Our hartal is aimed at protesting state and party terrorism of the Awami League government."

After today's dawn to dusk hartal, 'tougher programmes' will be announced to bring about fall of this government, he added.

Islam alleged that police at the 'instruction of the government' yesterday created a reign of terror and attacked BNP leaders and activists without any provocation.

Police resorted to lathicharge and indiscriminately fired shots and tear gas shells on a peaceful procession at Jatrahari. This left at least 100

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Aman procurement target, Hajj policy okayed

By Staff Correspondent
The government will procure 2.5 lakh metric tons of Aman rice during the 1999-2000 financial year at a price of Tk 12.50 per kg.

The decision was taken at the weekly Cabinet meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh in the chair, Cabinet sources said.

The Cabinet also approved the government's Hajj policy for 2000. Some 45,000 Bangladeshis will be allowed to perform Hajj. Of them, the government will take care of some 8,000 intending pilgrims and the rest will have to make their own arrangements.

Last year, the quota for Bangladesh was 34,091. The government took the responsibility of 7187 persons.

The Cabinet refrained from approving a proposal for writing off electricity, gas, water, and telephone bills which remained uncollected in the last three years. The Cabinet asked the officials concerned to review it.

The proposal, applicable to residential consumers, was originally made by the Administrative Reforms Committee and was endorsed by the departments concerned. But the Finance Ministry and the office of the Auditor and Comptroller General objected it.

Notice

Due to hartal we are compelled to reduce our paper to 12 pages from regular 16 pages.

We regret any inconvenience to our readers. — Editor

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Prayer Timings

November 9

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Khoka, 3 other BNP leaders shot by police during hartal

Star Report

City BNP Convenor Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP was shot and wounded along with party legislator Zainal Abedin Faruq, Joint Secretary General of the party Abdullah Al-Noman and another leader and DCC ward

commissioner Nabiullah Nabi in the city yesterday during hartal, triggering clashes between BNP activists and police in the capital and in different parts of the country.

Khoka, MP from the city's



BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka being helped by fellow party leader Abdullah Al-Noman after he was injured in police firing yesterday.

—Star photo

Sutrapur-Kotwali constituency and a veteran freedom fighter, was recuperating at a private hospital last night after three shot gun pellets were removed from his forehead, chest and throat. He was out of danger, doctors said.

The incident on the last day of the two-day dawn to dusk hartal led to extension of the shutdown from 6 am to 6 pm today. The two-day hartal was earlier called to protest cancellation of the public holiday on 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day' (November 7) and to resist filing of nomination for election of three city corporations.

Over 200 people were injured in clashes involving pro- and anti-hartal activists and police in the city and in Chittagong, Gaibandha, Bandarban and Joypurhat during yesterday's hartal.

In the capital, over 100 people including seven policemen were injured, according to police, witnesses and hospital sources. Seven of them were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

BNP leaders claimed that a number of their activists also fell sick at their party central office as police fired volleys of tear gas shells.

Police said they detained 49 people from different parts of the city for picketing and rioting.

Trouble started after Sadeque Hossain Khoka and the three other leaders were shot by police at Jatrahari at about 12-40 pm while leading a procession. Police fired at least 50 rounds and several tear gas shells on the procession near Saidabad bridge.

Profusely bleeding, Khoka was rushed to a private hospital at Panthapath where doctors removed three shot gun pellets. The procession was brought out protesting the killing of housewife Rina Ahmed in Jatrahari area during Sunday's hartal.

Police said they opened fire when a home-made bomb was thrown at them near Saidabad bridge. They were also showered with rocks, police said. The procession was stopped by police earlier on its way to Jatrahari crossing. But the processionists broke the police barricade and proceeded towards Saidabad bridge. It was intercepted again by police when it reached near the bridge.

Police also beat two photo-journalists who were taking shots.

After he was injured, Khoka slapped the policeman who fired shots from a close range. Khoka was later charged with assaulting police and firing at them, police said.

The trouble spilled over to other parts of the city where

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15 hurt as police, pickets clash at Ctg: 8 held

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 8: At least 15 people were injured in sporadic clashes during hartal hours in the port city today, according to police and witnesses.

The clashes took place between police and opposition activists at Kazir Dewri near BNP office, Bahaddarhat crossing area in Jalalabad area, they said.

Eight people were also arrested during the hartal.

A clash between police and pro-hartal pickets erupted at Kazir Dewri at around 2 pm when BNP supporters brought out a procession protesting the attack on their leaders in Dhaka today.

Rumours spread here that BNP leader Abdullah Al Noman was seriously injured in Dhaka during hartal today.

Police lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse the agitating processionists who blasted

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Violence during hartal Home minister warns of legal action

By Staff Correspondent

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim has warned of legal action against those resorting to violence in the name of hartal saying, law has empowered the government to protect people's life and property.

The people and the parliament have given us the right to maintain law and order and we will do the job at any cost," he told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. He was making a statement on law and order during the Opposition-called hartal.

Blasting the opposition parties for calling hartals frequently "without any logical issue", the home minister said these parties have become "desperate after losing their illegal power base".

Explaining, he alleged that BNP and its allies started conspiracy to destabilise the government after it launched a combing operation to free the south-western region from terrorists. These terrorists had long been used by these parties in their electoral battle against the AL, he alleged.

Nasim admitted that the Opposition had the right to stage demonstrations and call hartal. But they have no right to sponsor terrorism and create a

situation in the name of agitation. "We would not mind had their hartals been peaceful ... Law enforcers must take action against those trying to create anarchy in the name of hartal."

The home minister claimed that shots fired at police by Opposition activists killed the housewife at Jatrahari in the city during Sunday's hartal. "We have come to know about an Opposition blueprint to sponsor crimes like extortion and robbery during today's (Monday) hartal to embarrass the government. But we will not allow their conspiracy to succeed."

Referring to the cases in connection with the killing of JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed and 10 people at an Udichi's function, the home minister accused BNP chief Khaleda Zia of trying to save the killers.

"The accused in the Udichi murder case confessed in court that the Udichi killing was planned at the house of a BNP central leader. We will bring him to book no matter how big a leader he is."

Blaming the previous governments for patronising notorious terrorists like Ershad Sikdar, Nasim told the House,

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Opposition questions offer for dialogue

By Nazmul Ashraf

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's latest offer of dialogue to end the political crisis is unlikely to bring the opposition to the table especially after yesterday's police action on some top leaders of main opposition BNP.

The BNP-led opposition parties, now in agitation for resignation of the government, do not find Hasina's offer sincere. Neither do they find any consistency between what she said on Sunday and what her government did yesterday.

The prime minister on Sunday said she was ready to sit for dialogue with the Opposition on any agenda, even if it is their one-point demand -- resignation of the government.

Just the day after, police action left three top BNP leaders including two MPs injured with rubber bullets during hartal hours in the capital.

"We've not received the offer officially. We've just learnt it from newspapers. Had the prime minister been sincere in her effort, it would have come through a formal channel. But unfortunately it has not been the case," said M. Saifur Rahman MP, a senior BNP leader and former finance minister.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone last night, he strongly condemned the government action on three of his party leaders, two of them former ministers, only the day after the prime minister's dialogue offer.

"This is shocking and very unfortunate... How can an elected government deal with the opposition in such a way? I'm totally disillusioned and feel sorry for democracy in the country... Police did not shoot at former ministers even during

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Wounded Jubo League activist dies in city

By Staff Correspondent

A Jubo League activist who sustained bullet wounds when unidentified gunmen shot him on Sunday night in the city's Sutrapur area, died at the Pangu (Orthopaedic) Hospital yesterday morning, hospital sources said.

The dead is Babu, 28, son of one Anwar Hossain and a resident of 86 South Moisundi of Narinda.

Hospital sources quoting witnesses said during the incident Babu was taking tea inside the club of Jubo League at Moisundi at about 8pm. At that time, nine youngmen riding three motorcycles appeared there and one of them started shooting at Babu.

Babu was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and later shifted to Pangu Hospital as his condition deteriorated further on Sunday night. Babu died at around 8 yesterday morning.

The body of the victim was sent to the DMCH for autopsy.

Sutrapur police said Babu was not a Jubo League activist or involved in politics either. Moreover, he was shot while having tea in a tea stall in Narinda area.

Police lodged a case in this connection. No one could be arrested till yesterday evening.

'A pellet from shotgun hit Rina's brain'

By Staff Correspondent

Housewife Rina Ahmad was hit by a pellet fired from shotgun, said sources at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The sources quoting doctors at DMCH said the injury proved fatal as the pellet hit the brain piercing through the right side of her right eye.

The victim's body was taken from the DMCH under police protection yesterday, witnesses said. The religious rites for Rina's burial were completed under police protection in presence of her family members. Local MP Habibur Rahman Mollah of the ruling Awami League took part in the janaza.

However, her family members complained that they were only allowed to take part in the burial which was conducted at the behest of the police.

Home Minister Mohammed Nasim, however, informed the parliament yesterday that the housewife was killed in firing by miscreants and that the on-duty policemen were the target.

AKM Shamsuddin, Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police when contacted over telephone, also claimed that Rina was not wounded by shotgun pellets during police firing.

"Pellets used for police shotguns do not reach the height

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Major factors that handicap flood control projects

By Reaz Ahmad

Inequitable distribution of benefits, congestion in the drainage system, negative environmental impact, delay in implementation and lack of maintenance have been identified as the major factors that handicap most of the flood control and drainage (FCD) projects in the country.

Problems in land acquisition is the main reason behind the delay in implementation of projects, which increase the project cost unnecessarily.

Ecological impacts appear to be negative, because of reduction of wetland areas, decline in soil fertility due to diminishing aquatic vegetation fishery. These were found in a just-concluded evaluation of 22 projects. The evaluation was done by experts of the National Water Management Plan Project (NWMP) as the government plans to have a national water management plan in conformity with the National Water Policy.

Inadequate maintenance is an endemic problem in all public sector projects. Other causes include inadequate public funding, poor cost recovery, lack of beneficiary participation and technical difficulties associated with FCD.

According to official sources, in most of the cases, benefits were not evenly distributed. As a result, fishermen and boatmen generally turned out to be the worst losers, while farmers, specially the big ones, appeared to be the biggest gainers.

Reviewing the FAP-12 (Flood Action Plan) components, NWMP experts said that many project areas continued to suffer from high floods, river erosion or breaches in the embankment. To prevent damage to embankments, which is common in water sector projects, the NWMP team called for a 'long-term alternative' to squatting on embankments by landless people.

In a floodplain environment, any FCD (flood control and drainage) intervention will inevitably have a hydrological impact elsewhere, the evaluation said.

It was found that 13 out of 17 projects under FAP-12 resulted in higher water levels outside project areas. Evaluation of eight projects under the Master Planning Organization (MPO) also showed that all had increased external flooding intensity.

Performance of the Dhaka Integrated Flood Protection Project (DIFFP-Phase I), during the 1998 flood was very satisfactory. The only serious flooding in the central west area was caused by congestion in drainage system in the Begunbari canal.

About use of dog squad at airports for detection of drugs, he said, "At present such infrastructure facilities do not exist at our airports".

The squad comprises 25 dogs and there are two veterinary doctors and 40 handlers for those. Five dogs and 20 puppies were procured at a cost of 1,23,400 US dollars about a year ago.

"The Tk three crore dog squad project aims at helping police conduct screening operation against potential terrorists and detect illegal arms and weapons". About half of the amount was spent to set up a 'kennel' to house the dogs and provide breeding and hospital facilities for those, an official said.

The commissioner replied in the negative when asked if the money was being wasted.

Asked if there is any plan to utilise the dog squad for recovery of bombs, he said they are planning to form a bomb squad manned by police personnel.

About Tk two lakh is spent per month for maintenance of the dog squad since it was procured from abroad about a year ago. These dogs belong to German Shepherd and Labrador families, falling under the categories of snipers and fighters, a senior police official said.

Not kept hidden, we did not use dog squad to detect those", DMP Commissioner AKM Shamsuddin said in reply to a question.

Asked if there is any plan to utilise the dog squad for recovery of bombs, he said they are planning to form a bomb squad manned by police personnel.

Even after recovery of explosives from two mosques and a newspaper office and at least six false bomb alarms in different areas of the city, Dhaka Metropolitan Police has failed to utilise its dog squad, sources concerned said.

Since the recovery of explosives first on October 8, army bomb squad is being called by police for assistance even in cases of false bomb alarms.

The benefit from dog squad does not match the amount of money being spent for its maintenance. The squad should have been used for recovery of explosives in the city and detection of drugs at airports, the sources further said.

"As the explosives were found in open spaces and were

The costly dog squad: What for?

Star Report

The costly dog squad: What for?

Fresh hartal frustrates citizens

By Staff Correspondent

Scores of anxious citizens rang up The Daily Star office since early afternoon yesterday seeking to know whether or not there were more hartals in the days ahead.

Those calls definitely spoke of general peoples' concern about continuous strikes that disrupted the normal life and security of the common man.

All the telephone lines of The Daily Star were busy with callers trying frantically to confirm if there was another hartal in the offing today (Tuesday). The air was apparently thick with rumours around the city that another general strike was in the offing

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N'ganj BNP office ransacked, rally attacked, 12 hurt

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 8: At least 12 BNP leaders and activists were injured when rivals ransacked the district BNP office and hurled bombs at a rally during hartal hours here today.

The rally was attacked when the BNP activists were preparing to bring out a procession from near the district BNP office, witnesses said.

The attackers also ransacked the BNP office, damaged furniture and destroyed photos of BNP leaders.

The district BNP later held a rally protesting the incident. The leaders blamed 'Shamim Osman Bahini' for the attack.

"Four bombs were hurled at the meeting injuring 12 BNP leaders and activists," a witness was quoted as saying.

Two injured leaders were Narayanganj City BNP Joint Convenor Abdul Majid and former district JCD convenor Md Abu Al Yusuf Khan Tipu.

"Within minutes the BNP activists ran for cover deserting the area," the witness said. No arrest was made till writing of this report.

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