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45 days to the 3rd Millennium

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Opposition calls hartal today

By Staff Correspondent
The BNP-led opposition alliance has called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal today to protest Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "indecent" remarks about leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and also to force the government to quit immediately.

Today's hartal is the fifth in a fortnight. Earlier, the opposition enforced hartals on November 1, 7, 8 and 9.

In support of today's general strike, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote held separate rallies and brought out torch processions in the city.

Main opposition BNP organised rallies and brought out torch processions from 11 spots — New Market, Khilgaon, Mohakhali, Farmgate, Mohamudpur, Kafur, Mirpur Town Hall, Pallabi, Shyamspur, Uttara and Rampura.

Another hartal likely on November 25

The BNP-led opposition alliance is likely to call another countrywide hartal on November 25 to step up the 'anti-government movement'.

A liaison committee meeting of the alliance held at 29, Minto Road last night discussed the pros and cons of its current one-point movement for holding early parliamentary elections.

There is a possibility of calling hartal on November 25, the day after Shab-e-Barat, instead of a proposed road-rail barricade on the day, a liaison body member told UNB.

He, however, said that the date for holding the much-talked-about meeting of four chiefs of the alliance components is yet to be fixed.

Another member of the liaison committee representing JP said the meeting is likely to be held sometime this month.

Five arrested on charge of killing Dr Mosharraf

Police yesterday arrested five people on charge of killing Dr Mosharraf Hossain, reports BSS.

Mosharraf was killed on Sunday morning while he was taking his eight-year-old daughter to school on Ring Road at Mohamudpur in the city.

Police quoted arrested Masud and Mintu as saying that about four months back Mosharraf caught one of the muggers while they snatched Tk 16,000 from him at a minibus near the Suhrawardy Hospital.

Mosharraf took the mugger to his chamber near the hospital and pressed him to return the money. The man identified himself as Ibrahim of Kalshi of Pallabi area. Mosharraf freed the mugger on condition that he refund the money.

Police suspected Mosharraf was killed by those muggers. Vigorous hunt is going on and a team has gone to Comilla to arrest the alleged killers.

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Prayer Timings
November 16

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:10	5:40
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	3:55	4:10
Maghrib	5:23	5:28
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Polling in 4 centres postponed

Tangail polls held amid violence

From Reaz Ahmed and Mizan Ali

TANGAIL, Nov 15: At least nine people were bullet-hit, scores of others injured and a ruling party MP was allegedly manhandled in incidents of violence during the by-election in Tangail-8 parliamentary constituency today.

Polling was postponed in four centres — Borchuna, Kalia, Araripara and Habla — due to violence and irregularities. Returning Officer and Tangail DC Mollah Waheduzzaman said last night.

Former Awami League MP Abdul Kader Siddique and ruling Awami League candidate

Shawkat Momen Shahjahan were the main contestants. Hundreds of voters, both male and female, were allegedly prevented from voting in the constituency comprising Basail and Sakhipur thanas. The voting was held from 8 am to 4 pm.

Supporters of Shahjahan allegedly cast false votes in a haste well before the voters could reach the polling centres, a number of voters told The Daily Star correspondents during their visit to different polling centres.

Shahjahan alleged that Siddique's 'goons' assaulted AL

MP Emdadul Haq at Sharan in Shakhipur. The AL legislator from Narayanganj was taking rest at that time at the residence of one of his followers, Shajahan claimed. Police said they rescued him.

Siddique's supporters however alleged that Haq was caught red-handed while distributing money among voters. He was later handed over to police, they claimed.

The Returning Officer said law enforcing personnel had to open fire when rival groups clashed near the Borchuna polling station in Shakhipur,

leaving seven persons bullet-hit. However a protesting mob later claimed that the shots were fired at them following rowdy agitation for not allowing the genuine voters to cast votes in Barachuna centre.

While visiting over a dozen polling centres, The Daily Star correspondents witnessed violation of polling rules and places. But the presiding officers failed to give any satisfactory reply about the violations.

Election Commissioner Mushtaq Ahmed visited seven



Independent candidate Kader Siddiqui addressing a rally at Shakhipur in Tangail-8 constituency yesterday. The rally was organised hurriedly to protest alleged capture of polling centres and rigging during the by-elections. — Star photo by Sk Enamul Haque

AL candidate leading

By Staff Correspondent

All eyes were riveted last night on the results of Tangail-8 by-election where independent candidate Abdul Kader Siddique fought with ruling Awami League nominee Shawkat Momen Shahjahan who was leading by 6012 votes, according to unofficial results of 28 centres till midnight.

The Daily Star correspondents reported from Tangail late last night that out of the 82 centres, polling was postponed in four for irregularities. According to results received from the office of the Returning officer (RO) at 12:00 am, the AL candidate polled 27,985 votes and Siddique 21,973.

A correspondent of The Daily Star reported from the Election Commission office in the capital said that the polls results started reaching the EC control room at 6:30 pm.

Till 7:20 pm, election officials based in Tangail sent results of five centres in which Siddique was leading by more than 1000 votes. But the EC headquarters did not receive any result from Tangail from

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Resentment in BNP over today's hartal

By Staff Correspondent

Today's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the opposition alliance has evoked widespread criticism in the rank and file of BNP itself.

Majority of BNP leaders and activists have bitterly criticised the fresh hartal call and observed that this has created a negative impact on the party. They said this hartal is suicidal for BNP.

Five hartals within a fortnight could never be accepted by anyone, especially the activists who always did the picketing and faced all sorts of troubles, including police harassment, they said.

A senior BNP leader, who did not wish to be named, told some reporters at Naya Paltan prior to bringing out torch processions that there was no decision to call any hartal before November 24 in view of the ongoing annual examinations in schools.

He said a good number of party leaders, especially the Dhaka city committee and front organisations met the

party chief on Saturday evening at 29 Minto Road and requested her not to call any hartal before the holy Shab-e-Barat and considering the annual examinations and she appeared to have been fully convinced.

But some hardliners of the party with the support of Jatiya Party and Jamaat, began hectic lobbying, in vein, to pursue the BNP Chairperson in favour of a sudden hartal, the leader said.

In absence of top party leaders, the hardliners and three Jamaat leaders finally succeeded in convincing the leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

The city BNP and front organisation leaders had even told the party chairperson that it would be difficult for them to enforce a "very short noticed" hartal as their city convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, was now undergoing treatment at a hospital.

Many BNP stalwarts alleged that the fresh hartal call was apparently a veritable giving in

Dr Mosharraf murder Dark side of a tragic tale

By Staff Correspondent

Little did Dr Mosharraf know before he was shot dead on Sunday, that he had been dealing with one of the most notorious criminal gangs in the road transport sector.

Just after being robbed of Tk 16,000 inside a bus near the Suhrawardy Hospital on the day of the World Cup cricket final, the 45-year-old doctor, caught one of the gang members. Masud and took him to Barisal Medical Hall in Uttara Adabar where he used to work in the evenings. An angry mob had already beaten Masud up severely and after he had been brought to the area and locked up for the night, he agreed to name the gang members.

The police were not informed, said Monir Hossain, a young shop owner in Adabar area who accompanied Mosharraf on several occasions to track down the gang. The next day, Mosharraf took Masud to his parents residence at Farm Gate and released him on signing a bond. By then Masud had named one Mukul living at Gudaraghat of Mirpur Section-1 as an accomplice. On the same

day Mosharraf caught Mukul and brought him to his Uttara Adabar working place. Mukul, a well-spoken young man, agreed to help Mosharraf recover the stolen money. Mukul too, was 'released' after he has signed a bond.

"We told 'sir' (Dr Mosharraf) several times to lodge a case against those people as we already knew their names and address, but he was not interested," said the owner of the Medical Hall, Mohammad Siddique Rahman.

Monir Hossain quoting Mukul said that the gang was "very organised" and it had long been operating in the passenger buses on many different routes of the country. Mukul had also informed Mosharraf that the gang had more than 25 members and its present leader's name is Ibrahim. Monir also said Mukul kept his promise to help Mosharraf and kept informing over telephone and also on his several visits to the doctor over the last four months.

"We went to see the gang leader at Kalshi behind the ce-

ramic factory at Pallabi Section-12 but were told that Ibrahim had left for Chittagong," Monir said.

Ibrahim's brother Anis was the former gang leader. Monir said. After visiting the place several times with Dr Mosharraf, he finally met Anis on Friday, November 5. Anis talked to them on the street in front of his house and informed Mosharraf that it was not possible to track down Ibrahim. Anis also advised the doctor to file a case against the alleged criminals.

"Dr Mosharraf was an influential man having lots of high-up friends. Instead of filing a case with the police, 'sir' went on pursuing the matter with the help of his friend Jahangir Kabir Nanak and local Ward Commissioner Ismail Hossain," Monir said.

Ismail himself met the gang several times and asked them to return the money. Barely a week after Dr Mosharraf had talked to the 'former gang leader', he was shot dead while taking his

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Polling marked by violent clashes: FEMA

By Staff Correspondent

In its interim report on Tangail-8 by-election, the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) said that polling yesterday was marred by violent clashes, incidents of intimidation, impersonation and multiple voting, police firing at dissatisfied and angry voters.

Presence of a huge contingent of magistrates and security personnel, including Army and BDR.

A FEMA press release issued yesterday said that it deployed observers in almost all polling stations in the two thanas — Shokhipur and Basail.

The FEMA observers, according to the press release, were not allowed at the some polling stations by the magistrates and the presiding officers disregarding relevant rules in this regard.

At others, FEMA observers were allowed to remain inside the polling station after intervention of their supervisors.

FEMA mobile teams visited 12 polling stations at Shokhipur and 27 at Basail and observed that polling stations were set up in pre-design-

Syndicate meets soon to decide reopening of JU

By JU Correspondent

The Jahangirnagar University authorities are yet to take a decision on reopening of the university, closed sine die on September 30.

Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Bayez said yesterday immediate reopening of the university was suggested at two meetings he had with the provosts and deans. He would soon call a meeting of the Syndicate to take a decision in this regard, he added.

Meanwhile, students of the university have expressed resentment over the prolonged closure. The students' movement against admission fee hike was not violent and there was no need to close the university for an indefinite period, many students claimed.

Since August 17 last year, classes were not held for 111 days due to incidents of violence and students agitation, sources concerned pointed out.



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (L) and Botswana President Festus Mogae (R) get ready for an executive session at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Durban yesterday. — AFP Photo

CHOGM concludes Vow to reduce globalisation toll on poor economies

From Toufique Imrose Khalidi

DURBAN, South Africa: Nov 15: The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) ended here today adopting the Fancourt Declaration which called for better market access for poor economies and "committed the Commonwealth to see the globalisation meets the challenges of poverty and development."

They also discussed democracy, debt burden, global financial markets, terrorism, civil society, menace of small arms, children, small states, AIDS and environment in what the Secretary-general Chief Emeke Anyaoku described as "a truly successful meeting."

The heads dealt with most of the "more important issues" when they were on a two-day retreat away from Durban, the main meeting venue, to Fancourt Estate and Country

Club at George, 1000 kilometres off this seaside city.

The retreat produced the most important summit document: "Fancourt Declaration on Globalisation and People-Centred Development". This year's CHOGM theme was: "People-Centred Development: The Challenge of Globalisation".

The communiqué released this afternoon after the four-day meeting said that the heads also decided to establish a High Level Group headed by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to "review the role of the Commonwealth and advise how best it could respond to the challenges of the new century".

The other members of the Group would be the heads of government of Australia, Fiji, India, Malta, Singapore, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, the

United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. The Group will report to the next CHOGM in Canberra, Australia, in 2001.

Chief Anyaoku told the concluding press conference that the High Level Group was aimed at an "appropriate millennium stock taking".

In a new development, the heads gave the chairman of CHOGM — President Mbeki for the next two years — "a representative role between CHOGMs".

The communiqué said the heads also re-constituted the eight-member C-MAG including Bangladesh for the first time since it was born four years ago. For the next two years, the other members are: Britain, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Barbados, Botswana and Nigeria.

The CHOGM confirmed C- See Page 11 Col 7

Strike at Mongla Port Export of Tk 125 cr shrimp hampered

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 15: Exportable frozen shrimps worth over Tk 125 crore are awaiting shipment as the strike by 1100 'casual' staff under the banner of Mongla Bandar Shipping Karmachari Sangha (Mongla Port shipping employees association) continued for the seventh day today.

Production in Meghna Cement Mills and Mongla Cement Factory remained suspended due to dearth of raw materials which could not be unloaded from four of the 28 ships now lying idle with export and import cargoes at Mongla Port, said a reliable source.

Authorities of the two cement factories said today that the four ships are loaded with clinker. Both the mills are incurring net loss of nearly Tk three lakh a day although they are paying workers and employees wages for no work.

According to shrimp exporters, frozen shrimps worth

over Tk 125 crore could not be loaded for shipment to EU countries. The frozen shrimps are to reach the buyers well before the Christmas, falling which contracts will stand cancelled.

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Barricade on Dhaka-Ctg highway

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 15: Road communication between the port city and rest of the country was disrupted throughout the day today as thousands of workers of two laid-off jute mills put up barricade on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Barobkunda under Sitakunda thana here.

Hundreds of vehicles reported. See Page 12 Col 3

Seminar on Media, HR, child abuse begins in city

By Staff Correspondent

A three-day regional seminar on 'Media, Human Rights and Child Abuse' began here yesterday.

About 40 participants from South and South-East Asian countries including Bangladesh are taking part in the seminar, organised jointly by the Centre for Development Services (CDS) and the Asian Institute for Development Communication (AIDCOM) of Malaysia.

The seminar is aimed at creating awareness among media men, government officials and NGOs in the region and make them better prepared to address incidents of child abuse, protect their rights and develop a civil society where children would enjoy better facilities.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Choudhury inaugurated the seminar, being held at a local hotel. Executive Director of AIDCOM Khairul Bashar welcomed the participants from the seven countries — Malaysia, Nepal, Indonesia, India, The Philippines, Thailand and host Bangladesh.

Executive director of CDS Omar Faruque Chowdhury gave

the vote of thanks. Unicef's country representative Shahida Azfar also addressed the inaugural session.

Humayun Rashid Choudhury said, human rights situation, as regards children is unfortunately not satisfactory in Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh is a signatory to the Convention of Rights of the Child, its concepts could not be implemented fully in the country because of socio-economic reasons, he said.

Shahida said the media can take a leadership role in creating awareness about rights of children. Preventing child abuse and exploitation is a challenging job. There are about 100 million child labourers in South Asia. Joint efforts by all the stakeholders are needed to bring about social changes to protect their rights, she said.

The Southeast Asia Fund for Institutional and Legal Development of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Unicef and Biman Bangladesh Airlines jointly sponsored the seminar.

2 killed, 10 hurt as train hits truck at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 15: Two persons were killed and ten others injured when a train hit a truck at Dapa Bat Tala rail crossing in the town today.

The dead were identified as Saiful Islam, 28, a rickshaw-puller and Abdur Rahim, 38, a rickshaw passenger, police said.

Witnesses said the train hit the truck which came on the trail track as the protective bars at the rail crossing were not lowered. The truck fell on some rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and shops nearby. The incident took place at about 10:45 am.

Fatally injured Islam and Rahim died soon after they were taken to Narayanganj General Hospital, police said.

Of the four critically injured persons, two — Kismat Ali and Abdul Malek — were admitted to Narayanganj General Hospital. The two others — Abdus Satter and Abdur Hashem — were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Other injured persons were released after first aid.

A case was lodged with Fatullah police in this connection.

Ragkata Arif, 16 accomplices held in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 15: Police arrested another terrorist Arif Alim 'Ragkata Arif' along with 16 accomplices from Kaunia area in the town this evening.

The armed terrorists were arrested while they were preparing to attack the houses of members of 'Milton group' who were arrested yesterday, police said.

Earlier, indiscriminate explosion of bombs and chase and counter-chase took place between armed terrorists of 'Milton group' and 'Sentu group' in Kaunia area at about Noon today.

Police rushed to the spot and dispersed them. It was alleged that, while in action there, police also searched the house of local MP Majbar Rahman Sarwar but police denied it later.

Police arrested Quyum Hossain Milton, leader of the 'Milton Bahini' and a top terrorist of the town, along with seven accomplices yesterday.

Till today, police arrested 286 alleged terrorists from the town since the attack on Barisal Press Club on October 22.