

## Nasim orders police to probe B'baria clash

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday said that he asked the police to investigate into the fierce clash between pro-Islamic groups and police in Brahmanbaria.

Describing the violence in Brahmanbaria at a press briefing at his office here, Nasim said the fanatic groups attacked para-military BDR, cut the hands of a police havildar, removed the rail line, broke a bridge and exploded a series of bombs in the town. They carried firearms and explosives, he added.

The home minister said the law enforcing agencies took action to maintain law and order.

He categorically said that the government would not bow to any illegal and illogical threat and continue its "legal action against fundamentalists, anti-liberation forces and killers."

"What we're doing was expected by the nation. It's the right time to take action against them. Law will take its own course against the killers," he said.

The home minister said the government had no alternative but to take action against the evil forces for the sake of democracy and stability. He asserted that legal action against

them was on and would continue.

Asked about the demand for formation of a judicial inquiry committee to probe into the police killing, Nasim said some of the arrested admitted their involvement in the killing and investigation was on for digging out more information.

Home Minister also assured action against the culprits who mercilessly beat UNB's Feni correspondent Tipu Sultan resulting in fracture of his limbs on January 25.

"I have already asked to take legal action against the culprits," he said.

Nasim said he would visit Tipu Sultan who is now undergoing treatment at Orthopedic Hospital in Dhaka.

When his attention was drawn to reported police refusal to register the case filed by Tipu, the Home Minister said, "Of course, police is bound to register the case and there is no reason to ignore it."



PHOTO: STAR

BNP brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the killings of 6 persons in Brahmanbaria and also to drum up support for today & tomorrows hartal.

## Ambassadors of Muslim countries

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planted for an attempt on the life of the Prime Minister, attack on Udichi function in Jessore and poet Shamsur Rahman in Dhaka and bomb explosion at the CPB rally at Paltan maidan on January 20 this year.

He blamed Islamic fundamentalists and extremist elements behind these incidents.

These elements, Azad said, also attacked poet Shamsur Rahman in Dhaka and Udichi Group in Jessore.

Referring to the killing of a policeman inside a mosque last Saturday, he said the escalation of violence culminated in the killing of the constable on duty, who was dragged to the local Mosque by Islamic fundamentalists.

"This despicable act struck terror in the minds of the God-fearing general people and practising Muslims of Bangladesh," he said.

Azad said the perpetrators of these violent demonstrations have

proclaimed to set up a "Taleban Style" government in Bangladesh defying not only the law but also constantly jeopardising peace and security in the society.

"This is most unfortunate, and to say the least, undesirable for any democratic society," he said. Since the present government came to power it has been trying to uphold the democratic norms and protect the rights of the citizens, added the minister.

But the fundamentalist groups are openly engaged in adopting destructive means in many public places of the country creating unnecessary law and order situation in the society, he told the ambassadors.

Azad said the government's commitment to global and domestic peace is enshrined in the Constitution. "We are a peace-loving nation. We believe in peaceful solution of any political problem through political dialogue," he said.

He said: "We firmly believe in the

ideology of Islam which is sacred to us. Most Bangladeshis are peace-loving Muslims and like our Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) have faith in the virtuosity of Islam which stands for peace and for the well-being of the mankind but not for the destruction of the existing structures and systems by violent means."

The Foreign Minister said the government requested everyone to eschew violence and make Parliament the hub of national activities.

But, he said, some individuals even had the audacity to pass death sentences on two venerable judges of the High Court. "No government worth the name, can tolerate such threats to law and established norms of the society," Azad said.

He said, "government actions and response to restore normalcy in the law and order situation is being taken with utmost care and restraint."

## Air pollution kills 15000

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the Bangladesh standards or the WHO guidelines for residential areas, the briefing session was told.

Martin referred to the US dollar 4.7 million Learning and Innovative Loan approved by the World Bank in July last year for a Bangladesh Air Quality Management Project (AQMP) and said Dhaka would pilot new ways of controlling urban air pollution with that loan. "Air quality is possibly the worst in Dhaka over the past few weeks," told the news-men.

loan is to learn about options and to develop capacity for urban air quality management by means of pilot projects and institutional support with the ultimate goal of reducing human exposure to air pollution in a cost-effective way. The poor are particularly vulnerable to air pollution due to their excessive exposure, poorer health and limited access to treatment.

The expert said the AQMP, the first WB-funded project to be executed by the Department of Environment, would supplement the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) with its environmental objective of reducing air pollution in the capital city. It will be coordinated closely with an ADB-funded Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Programmes, now being set up in Dhaka and several other cities of the country.

Particularly, the three-wheelers and two-stroke engine and the heavy-duty diesel vehicles are contributing significantly to the air pollution in Dhaka. With funds from the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), the WB along with an environmental NGO and a local motor vehicle sales company is also supporting an auto clinic program to train baby taxi drivers, mechanics and owners to help them properly use the lubricant oil and follow other means to reduce emissions and improve safety for all.

The primary objective of this WB

## Two commit suicide in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An assistant engineer of Public Works Department and a young girl allegedly committed suicide by hanging themselves in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Motiur Rahman Khan, 46, was found hanging with a scarf at about 8 am yesterday at his 375 Hatirpool Free School Street residence.

He committed suicide following a family feud, hospital sources quoting the family members said.

The body of the victim was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Father of the deceased filed a general diary with Dhanmondi police station in this regard.

In another incident, a young girl allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her residence at South Goran in the city's Khilgaon area last afternoon.

Farzana Hossain, 16, daughter of Mobarak Hossain of 334 North Sajahanpur was found hanging at the residence of 308/3 South Goran at about 1:30 pm.

Family members of the girl, however, claimed that her husband killed Farzana and kept her body hanging to divert attention and save himself. They also claimed that if the husband was not responsible for the killing then why did he go on hiding, police quoting the family members said.

## 20 lawyers

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The accused brought out a procession on August 20 last year protesting the killing of advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal and ransacked the rooms.

Later, the accused got anticipatory bail from the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

All the accused, now on bail, were present in the court during the hearing on Monday.

## 2 Brig Generals

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Brigadier General Anwar Farid, following the premature retirement of Major General Imamuzzaman in September 2000.

The position of Adjutant General fell vacant upon the posting of Major General Ahsan Nazmul Amin as the new Chief of General Staff (CGS).

In another development, Major General Abdul Wahab, Commandant of Gazipur Ordnance Factory has been made Master General of Ordnance (MGO) replacing Major General Mahmuduzzaman who is the new Commandant.

Engineer-in-Chief (E-in-C) of Bangladesh Army Major General Hafiz Mallick takes over as the Commandant of Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST). No one has yet been appointed in his place although Brigadier General Wadood, who has been made Director Engineering, will be performing additional duties as E-in-C.

Meanwhile Major General Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, ambassador to Oman, has been retired from army service on January 31 on reaching retirement age. However, he is to continue in his present capacity on contract.

## Third judge

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judgement will be final of three judges," he told the single-judge court. "The third judge bench is not even bound to hear the case."

He argued that the third-judge bench is confined and restricted to the difference portion and all other things should be excluded.

Earlier on February 4, the third judge, Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, fixed February 12 for the hearing of the much-awaited Bangabandhu death reference case, after the case had split judgement from a two-judge bench comprising Justice M Ruhul Amin and ABM Khairul Huq.

Justice Ruhul Amin acquitted five of 15 condemned army officers and also upheld death sentence of one with modification.

The third-judge bench will now take up the hearing from Feb 12 on Lt Col (ret'd) Mohiuddin Ahmed (Artillery), Capt Kismat Hashem, Capt Nazmul Hasan Ansar, Risaldar Moslemuddin, Maj Ahmed Sharful Hasan and Capt Abdul Majed.

## Viqarunnisa Noon Science Club festival

UNB, Dhaka

The 5th science festival of Viqarunnisa Noon Science Club begins in the city today.

The four-day programmes will begin at 3 pm at the college premises.

Minister for Science and Technology Mohammad Nooruddin Khan will be present as chief at the inaugural function.

## Allocate at least 1pc

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Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST).

The draft policy said universities, Bangladesh Institutes of Technology (BITs), colleges and polytechnic institutes should introduce four-year computer science engineering course and three-year computer science course. Post-graduate courses on IT should be introduced in all major universities.

The draft policy suggested setting up of institutes to create trainers to fill up their shortage and development of CD-based courseware to popularise the system of study.

To promote software industry, it suggested development of ISO-standard professionals so that the country can enter into the global software market.

The country will not be able to reap the benefits of information superhighway and cyberspace and enter into the global data communication network and IT market without development of an adequate information infrastructure.

For this, a country-wide telecommunication coverage for both broadcasting and communications and a national Internet backbone is necessary. This will ensure universal public access.

It also suggested creation of a regulatory authority to ensure protection of data and intellectual property rights.

The draft policy said the whole country should be brought under telecommunication networks at the shortest possible time and the existing telecommunication channels be turned into digital from analog and brought under PSTN.

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) should create high-speed data communication links within the country, which

will also have connection with other countries.

The high-speed fibre optic communication channel of Bangladesh Railway should be used for setting up a national data communication network for country-wide transmission of data.

The government should take up a National Software Development Plan (NSDP) to fulfil the target of one billion US dollars export earning from this sector in the next three years.

The 20-page draft policy also emphasised development of computer hardware industry as computer accessories are basic ingredients of IT.

## Hartal tomorrow

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hartal in Brahmanbaria.

The joint statement was issued, among others, by Peer Saheb of Charmonai Hazrat Moulana Fazlul Karim, Bara Hujur of Brahmanbaria Hazrat Moulana Sirajul Islam, Hazrat Moulana Ahmad Shah of Chittagong, Moulana Mohiuddin Khan, Moulana Harun Islamabadi, Moulana Nuruddin Gaowhorpuri and Mufti Mohammad Nurullah.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet reports: The 4-party alliance held a rally in Court Point area here yesterday afternoon to protest the killing of five hartal activists in Brahmanbaria.

Later, a big procession was brought out in the town in support of today's hartal. The processionists damaged a Sonali Bank staff bus at Zindabazar at about 5.30 pm.

## Pro-govt lawyers

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meeting identified us as a party. In fact, we were supposed to mediate a negotiation to resolve the crisis," said Yusuf Hossain Humayun, one of the five pro-government lawyers.

However, the pro-opposition lawyers attended the meeting held at the chamber of Barrister Ishtiaq. Participation of a top Jatiya Party leader, Advocate Kazi Firoz Rashid, sparked off debate at the meeting that lasted about an hour.

The meeting observed that the senior lawyers would further wait for a meeting with the Prime Minister following the law minister's indication that the PM agreed to meet them.

An influential minister told The Daily Star that he was not optimistic of any positive outcome of the proposed meeting with the Prime Minister.

"The PM who does not find anything wrong in the appointment of the judges cannot but agree to such a proposal from the senior lawyers".

Barrister Nazmul Huda, who is leading the anti-government lawyers, told The Daily Star that they had withdrawn their ultimatum for accepting their demand since the Prime Minister agreed to sit with the group of senior lawyers. "Now we'll wait until that meeting is held."

## Postponed

A view exchanging meeting and seminar of Conscious Citizens Committee (CCC) and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), which was scheduled to be held at Mymensingh Zia Parishad auditorium today, has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, said a press release.

The fresh schedule of the programme will be announced later, the release added.

## IOJ chief

FROM PAGE 12

said.

But they did not disclose who possessed the key of Noor Mosque during the incident. Humayun Kabir, however, said yesterday he unlocked the mosque gate for once during the clash with police and handed over the key to someone else. Later, Kabir Hossain, a caretaker of the mosque, locked the door, sources said.

When contacted last night, the Officer-in-Charge of Mohammadpur thana Mohsinuzzaman Khan said, "We've had some valuable information about the case. But we won't disclose it right now for the sake of investigation".

Arrested in the constable murder case in the early hours of Monday, the IOJ chief was sent to Dhaka Central Jail by the CMM's court yesterday.

## Launch victims

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Quoting part of the relevant laws, he said, "Section (2) of Clause 52 of the Inland Shipping Ordinance (ISO) states that the court trying an offence may direct the owner or master of the vessel to pay by way of compensation within three months a sum not exceeding one lakh Taka."

Another official said a probe body formed by the shipping ministry has also submitted its report on the December 29 launch disaster. The ministry is yet to initiate legal action against the accused -- owner and master of Jalkapot-II.

The report recommended summary trial of the accused, he said.

## Armed battles

FROM PAGE 1

throwing brickbats to stop them from approaching.

The law enforcers then charged batons on the activists.

At one stage, when the activists continued fighting back, police fired rubber bullets. As the clash intensified, police opened fire, killing a madrassah student, Tajul Islam, on the spot.

Witnesses and madrassah sources said when police firing killed Tajul Islam the students and IOJ activists became more violent.

At this stage, police started firing shots and tear gas shells and the mob fought back with lethal weapons.

The fight continued till 1 pm when the pro-hartal activists cooled down to join the Zohr prayer in local mosques.

The hartal activists have been bringing out processions in the district town from February 4 in support of their hartal call to protest the arrest of IOJ Secretary General Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini and police action on Olemia Mashayek activists.

They also attacked some houses and offices including a Pubali Bank branch on the main road.

In the evening, the pickets gathered again on the roads and chanted slogans.

The Islamic militants will stage a 'grand rally' at the Paura Mukta Mancha here tomorrow.

Organising Secretary of Brahmanbaria Awami League and former Paura Sabha Chairman Mamun Sarker blamed the Deputy Commissioner for deterioration of the law and order in the town.

According to a source, the SP of Brahmanbaria had earlier suggested imposition of Section 144 in the troubled areas to prohibit assembly of more than five persons. But the DC did not order imposition of Section 144 till filing of the report in the evening.

Despite repeated attempts, neither the DC nor the SP could be reached through phone for their comments.

UNB adds: "The hartal campaigners armed with lethal weapons, including cut-rifles, launched attack injuring a police havildar with bullet and a BDR officer with brick bat," police in Dhaka said.

Havildar Shamsul Alam was shot while Major Nasir sustained injury in his head.

The militants also cut off both wrists and tendons of police sub-inspector Anwar Hossain during the raging violence. His condition was also stated to be "critical."

"The town looked like a veritable battlefield while the demonstrators exploded bombs and traded gunfire with police-BDR for several hours," says a spot account of the troubles.

Train and bus services were suspended as the militants removed rail tracks while a bridge was destroyed in the area.

Meanwhile, a three-member inquiry committee headed by the DIG of CID has been formed to probe the Brahmanbaria incidents.

Brahmanbaria is the hometown of Amini who was arrested Sunday evening in the capital city on charge of instigating violence.

The critically injured persons admitted to the Sadar Hospital include Hafez Kari Md Abul Khayer, 35, Shibly, 18, Yakub Osmani, 28, Hafez Habibullah, 29, Mohammad Hasan, 22, Sujan, 14, Rafiqul Islam, 28, Muzibur Rahman, 20, Deen Islam, 28, Abul Hashim, 52, Musa Mia, 35, Jamal Uddin, 19, Mizanur Rahman, 25, Pankoz Kumar Das, 14, Shahjahan, 35, and Doyal, 22.

During the hartal, all shops and offices remained closed.

All transports were off the streets. Movement of train through Brahmanbaria remained suspended.

Earlier, pickets damaged one ambulance and burnt a bundle of the newspaper, Praja Bandhu.

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## Electoral laws

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has undergone preparatory work for holding the next general election, likely to be held in late September. Despite suggestion from different quarters for staggered election, the Commission is still opposed to the idea, sources at the EC secretariat said.

The Commission has planned a training programme in phases for the huge workforce to be engaged in the next election. This time, more than 4,00,000 people are expected to work for the election, the sources hinted.

A committee was given responsibility to prepare a draft budget for the Election Commission's expenditure in the next national election. Headed by Election Commissioner Abidur Rahman, the committee will soon finalise the draft budget to place it before the Ministry of Finance.

This year's election budget may exceed Tk 100 crore, said another official.

Other preparatory work including procurement of various election materials are progressing slowly. Printing of voters' list is yet to be completed though it was scheduled to be ready by December last year.

## Pak people

FROM PAGE 1

Truth Commission is useful for mutual reconciliation. It is for those who have not admitted remorse."

About trial of war criminals, she said, "You have many laws for forming international tribunal. You will get support from the people of Pakistan."

On forgiveness Asma Jahangir said, "I think apology is not enough. More people are recognising the wrongs done. Many people are saying now what they ought to have said several years ago. Besides, it haunts anyone who has conscience."

She noted, "Foreign policy is not made by the people of Pakistan or in its streets. It is not made at the Foreign Ministry. It is made at the GHQ of the Pakistan Army."

Asma Jahangir said, "It is time to fight not as a Pakistani, not as a Bangladeshi or as an Indian. It is time to fight not against each other but together as a South Asian. We must accept that this region is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society and we must have the strength to find unity in diversity."

Elaborating further, she said, "Globalisation cannot be fought without having regional unity. If India and Pakistan fight each other, we will present two faces. We need to present a common face to the world."

## Pro and anti-hartal rally on DU campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Ruling party backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and main opposition BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday brought out separate processions and held rallies on the Dhaka University campus in protest and support of today's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal respectively.

Following a procession BCL held a rally in front of Aparajeo Bangla on the campus.

Speaking at the rally, BCL leaders vowed to resist the hartal, what they said called by the fundamentalist evil forces.

"The motive of the hartal is to save the fundamentalist killers and religious fanatics", they said with a call to people to reject the hartal and resist the communal fundamentalists, war criminals and their collaborators during the hartal.

The BCL leaders also said, "the communal religious fanatics are creating anarchy in the society and trying to obstruct democracy in the country under patronisation of BNP".

Presided over by Bahadur Bepari, the rally was addressed, among others, by Ajay Kar Khokan, Baloram Podder, Ashrafal Azim Rubon, Rafiqul Islam, Saifuddin Nasir, Miraj Hossain and AKM Azim.

Meanwhile, in a rally, held in front of DUCSU building JCD leaders called upon all its workers to make the hartal a success.

They said "the government is hatching conspiracy to destroy the image of opposition," adding, "as part of the conspiracy they are planting bombs and creating anarchy and blaming the opposition."

Presided over by Manir Hossain, the JCD rally was addressed, among others, by Nazrul Islam Nayan and Omar Faruque Shadhin.