

11-party calls half-day hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The left-leaning 11-party Alliance has called a 6:00am-2:00pm hartal across the country today protesting various 'anti-people' steps of the government.

According to the alliance, the 'anti-people' steps include price hike of the essentials, plan to export gas and demolition of slums without rehabilitating the dwellers.

The alliance has also called upon people to resist various anti-people policies and steps.

It has been protesting the recent hike of oil, power, water, food grains and other essential items.

The grouping also called upon the BNP-led four-party coalition government to put a stop to widespread terrorism in the country.

Meanwhile, police intercepted a procession organised by the alliance

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National Poetry Festival begins

UNB, Dhaka

The National Poetry Festival got off to a festive start in the capital yesterday.

Poet Shamsur Rahman formally inaugurated the two-day poetry fair organised by the National Poetry Council (NPC) for the 16th time now.

The rendezvous of poets is being staged in the Central Library area and Sharadkeep of TSC on the Dhaka University campus in the vicinities of Ekushey Book Fair that also began yesterday.

NPC activists, participating poets and cultural activists brought out a colourful rally after the inaugural function highlighting the theme -- poetry's victory in the passage of time. The procession paraded TSC and Saheed Minar areas and concluded at the venue.

(Details on Culture page)

No Tri-Star, no flight yet

About 9000 pilgrims stranded at camp for fifth day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

About 9,000 pilgrims who booked their seats for Hajj flights by a private tour operator-- Air Bangladesh remained stranded for the fifth consecutive day as it failed to operate any of its scheduled flights till yesterday.

The company was to start its Hajj flights from Monday last but it failed.

It gave two schedules for a flight yesterday-- 2 pm and 4-30 pm. But the flight did not take place as its chartered Tri-Star aircraft due to land at Zia International Airport (ZIA) at 10 am did not arrive.

The company, a subsidiary of Shahjalal Aviation, earlier said it had chartered the aircraft with a capacity to carry 360 passengers from a Jordanian company, The Universal Air.

It had booked pilgrims for Hajj flights without bringing the aircraft to Dhaka and also without obtaining landing rights from the Saudi Arabian authorities or over flight rights from the Indian authorities, civil aviation sources said.

Airport inquiry at ZIA said they were told by the company that the aircraft was stuck at Chennai, capital of Tamil Nadu state of India, where it landed on

its way to Dhaka yesterday.

But no one could be contacted at the company office despite repeated efforts.

Civil aviation sources said they served a notice on Air Bangladesh to explain why it failed to operate flights. The matter would come for a review at a meeting tomorrow.

They also asked the company to make alternate arrangements for Hajj flights.

State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Nasiruddin visited the Hajj camp near ZIA yesterday and told the stranded pilgrims that proper action would be taken against the company. He also assured them that alternative arrangements would be made so that they can perform Hajj, camp sources said.

Meanwhile, several hundred pilgrims are awaiting their promised flights by two other private operators.

The authorities arranged alternative flights by other airlines for a section of them.

Evolve adequate Bangla terminology: PM

Month-long Ekushey book fair opens

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday requested authorities concerned and scholars to work for evolving adequate terminology for applying Bengla at higher levels of education and administration.

Inaugurating a month-long book fair in the Bangla Academy premises on the occasion of the upcoming golden jubilee of language movement on 21st February, the International Mother Language Day, she said her government would provide all necessary assistance in this exercise that is prerequisite to applying the mother tongue at all levels of activity.

The Prime Minister especially called for writers, litterateurs, scientists, academics and scholars to come forward to accomplish this noble task, for which all are indebted to the great language martyrs.

"We have many things remaining to do for using Bengali language in all spheres of life. Though Bengali has been introduced in higher studies, administration and other activities, we could not yet attain desired success for lack of necessary textbooks and terminology, and insufficiency of scientific and technology-related vocabularies," she told the inaugural function.

To give right importance to the memory of language martyrs, the

PM requested all concerned to think about naming of any remarkable establishments in the city after language movement martyrs and veterans.

There are no memorials to the martyrs in the city, except for Shaheed Minar, for upholding the prestige of mother tongue, she noted.

Turning to foreign languages, the Prime Minister also reminded all about learning other important languages of the world besides strengthening the exercise of mother tongue.

"Otherwise on the one hand we

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Businessman shot dead in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman said to be a diehard supporter of BNP was shot dead by unidentified elements at Golartek ferry ghat in the city's Mirpur area yesterday.

The victim was identified as Haji Ahmed Hossain Kabir alias pistol Ahmed, 50.

Sources said a resident of Block-6 in Section-6 of Mirpur, Ahmed went to his village home in Savar, leaving his car at the ferry ghat near Intellectuals' Graveyard. On his way back as he was walking to his car, a gang of four-- Saiful, Pial, Masid and Selim-- shot him. Over 20 bullets hit him.

The gang members fled the spot in a black Lucida microbus.

Mirpur police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Local people said Ahmed, a contractor in profession, was a diehard BNP supporter and was very close to a party leader who is now a minister.

They also said he had rivalry with a local leader in Savar, who defeated

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Jubo Dal leader beaten to death in Feni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A Jubo Dal leader was beaten to death allegedly by Awami League activists at village Rajeshpur under Parashuram upazila on Thursday night.

Police and local people said Abdul Karim, 27, vice-president of Chitalia Union Jubo Dal came under attack while he was returning home from a bazaar at about 10 pm.

A group of eight AL activists beat up Karim mercilessly and fled the scene, leaving him in an unconscious state.

Karim was admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 11 am yesterday.

A case was filed with Parashuram thana in connection with the murder. None was arrested till filing of this report at about 6 pm yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Kazi Wahidul Alam, main organiser of Dhaka Travel Mart (DTM)2000 and Editor of Bangladesh Monitor, a fortnightly on tourism, presenting a crest to President Badruddoza Chowdhury at DTM opening function at Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Former minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism and BNP lawmaker MA Mannan looks on.

Turn Bangladesh into an attractive tourist spot

President opens Dhaka Travel Mart 2002

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first ever international tourism fair in the country-- Dhaka Travel Mart (DTM) 2002 began in the city yesterday with a call to give a long due boost to the prospective but neglected local tourism industry.

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury inaugurated the fair at Sheraton Hotel saying, "Events like Dhaka Travel Mart 2002 will surely help dispel the unfortunate negative image abroad, project true Bangladesh to the world and achieve the objective of becoming a hot tourist destination with its unexploited natural beauty and its friendly people with rich cultural heritage."

Some 60 organisations from 20 countries representing tourism, aviation and hospitality industries are taking part in the three-day event. About 30 delegates from different countries are expected to visit the fair and they will also be taken to various tourist attractions in the country, according to organisers.

Quoting an estimate by the World Travel and Tourism

Council, the President said the world travel and tourism economy will constitute 11 per cent of the global GDP by 2011 and support 260.5 million jobs, which is nine per cent of the global employment.

In this context, he observed, "Bangladesh cannot remain isolated and government cannot also remain indifferent."

Those who spoke at the inaugural session included state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, former tourism minister and lawmaker Abdul Mannan, Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Chairman of DTM-2002 Kazi Wahidul Alam and Chief Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor (a fortnightly on tourism) Raquib Siddiqi.

The speakers expressed the view that the first objective should be to attract domestic tourists and create enough facilities for them at reasonable cost.

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Road accident kills JU teacher

Students barricade road, clash with police: 72 injured

JU CORRESPONDENT

At least 72 students of Jahangirnagar University were injured when police swooped on several hundred angry students yesterday evening as they blocked Dhaka-Aricha highway following the death of a teacher in a road accident.

Acting chairman of English department Kausar Hossain, 39, died in a tragic road accident in front of the University Dairy Farm Gate yesterday morning.

Police lobbed teargas shells, fired rubber bullets and baton-charged students to disperse them and clear the blockade. Police also chased the students and took position around the Teacher Student Centre (TSC) area.

The injured were released after first aid at the university medical centre. Students alleged that the university proctor Enamullah Parvez was present during the police action in which at least 70 rounds of teargas shells were fired.

The police action continued till writing of this report at 8 p.m. However movement of vehicles on the highway resumed at night.

Witnesses of the accident said a Rajshahi-bound coach of Modern Enterprise, coming on from the wrong side hit Kausar Hossain as he was standing near the road divider to cross the road at 8:25 a.m.

The bus ran him over hitting him on the left side of the head. Two JU students found him lying on the spot in a pool of blood and took him to the university medical centre.

Doctors at the centre then sent him to the Orthopaedic Hospital from

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Pak spies using Bangladesh: Buddhadev

REUTERS, Guwahati

The head of an eastern Indian state government said yesterday that Pakistani spies were stirring trouble among separatists and crime gangs in the area from neighbouring Bangladesh.

Last month, gunmen attacked the US cultural office in the West Bengal capital, Calcutta, killing four policemen in an attack India said was carried out by a crime gang and a Pakistan-based Islamic militant group.

"Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is sponsoring the armed groups in the area from Bangladesh to continue with their violent activities in the northeast and West Bengal," West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya told reporters.

Bangladesh has rejected previous Indian media reports that Pakistani agents were using its territory to foment trouble in India.

More than 50 guerilla groups are fighting Indian forces in the troubled northeastern states, sur-

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PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia flips through the pages of a book at a stall on Bangla Academy premises after inaugurating the Ekushey Book Fair yesterday.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 2		5-46 pm
Feb 3	6-39 am	

Prayer Timings

Feb 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-25
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-49	5-55
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation