

AL calls hartal

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generate supports for the strike. The Dhaka city unit of the party brought out a procession from Bangabandhu Avenue in the afternoon.

Police obstructed the procession several times and forced the participants to stay in and around the party office at the Bangabandhu Avenue. At one stage, police drove the opposition activists away from the spot, alleged a party press release.

In a statement last night, Hasina strongly protested the arrest of her party's city unit leaders including former MP Haji Mohammad Selim and the chiefs of six ward chapters of the party.

Police arrested the AL leaders without any warrant and are abusing them on the pretext of questioning, she alleged. The government was plotting to implicate them in criminal cases, she added.

The opposition leader called upon the people to observe today's strike to register their protests against the government's 'repressive' measures, the recent killings including those of BUET student Sahebun Nahar Sony, school student Shihab and baby Noushin, rapes, 'repression' on opposition activists and minorities, price hike of essentials and fresh taxes in the proposed budget for 2002-03.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman in a separate statement also urged the people to make

today's shutdown a success.

Meanwhile, the government has stepped up security to maintain law and order during the opposition-called shutdown across the country. In the capital alone, 10,000 security personnel would be deployed to check outward incidents, police sources said.

They security force would include 4,000 members of police and paramilitary BDR, 1,500 riot police and 200 armed police. Police from detective and special branches and members of ansar would also be on duty.

Police continued search for opposition activists ahead of today's shutdown. Until yesterday, they arrested a good number of AL city leaders including former MP Haji Mohammad Selim.

The party's Dhaka city unit in a statement last night demanded immediate release of the arrested leaders. The statement issued by city AL chief Mohammad Hanif and General Secretary Mozaffar Hossain Choudhury Maya also protested "police raids" at the residences of some other city leaders.

The AL's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League, also issued a statement calling upon the people to observe today's general strike.

2 alleged mugger held with arms in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police yesterday arrested two alleged muggers and recovered an Indian revolver loaded with two bullets from their possession.

The arrested muggers are Kamal, 20, and Haroon, 22, who claimed themselves as activists of Chhatra Dal.

A case has been recorded under Arms Act with Khanjahan Ali thana yesterday noon.

6 bombs found at RMCH

BSS, Rajshahi

Six bombs were recovered from a room of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Friday, RMCH sources said.

According to sources, the Director of RMCH Brigadier General Nurul Islam found six live bombs inside an unused room near Medicine club while he was inspecting the development work of the hospital. vered the bombs.

Quality coal

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saying that Chinese developers of the mining project will hand over the project only after confirming the targeted yearly production.

"Working with the Chinese developers, we have also become confident about producing one million tons of coal per year," said a Bangladesh mining engineer at Barapukuria.

Besides, the coal mine will go into full production from 2004, a year before the power plant is scheduled to start operation, the sources said.

Since April, the Chinese developers of the coal mine has already been producing 40 to 50 tons of coal per day. Partial production will be started in October 2003, before the project moves on to commercial production in October 2004, said Golam Murtoza, the managing director of the coal mining company.

Moreover, as PDB's power plant which will consume more than two-thirds of the total coal production can not go into operation before 2005, it will be very difficult to store the coal produced until then, coal mine officials said.

Implementation work of the country's first coal-fired 250 (2 x 125) Megawatt power project at Barapukuria in Dinajpur, geared mainly towards use of local coal for power supply to the northern region, have been progressing on a priority basis together with the Barapukuria Coal Mine Project.

"About 13 percent of the project has already been completed and now the land development work for the main power plant is going on.

The contract for the US\$ 220 million power project was signed on 12 July, 2001 with a consortium of three Chinese companies— CMC, SEC and SEEC. PDB paid Tk 5.50 crore from its own resources to the consortium on 26 February 2002 so the implementation work could begin.

Of the total production cost, US\$ 188.10 million has been arranged on suppliers' credit at a 3.5 per cent interest rate payable in 12 years after completion of the project including a grace period of first three years.

The minimum required time for completion of the project has been estimated at 38 months from 26 February, 2002, the date the contract came into effect.

There will be two units of 125MW power plants, with a provision for another 125MW power plant. The generation voltage will be 11/15 kV. Power generated at the plant will be supplied to Bogra, Saidpur and Rangpur through 230kV, 132kV and 132kV double-circuit outgoing feeders respectively. There will also be a provision for another two double-circuit 33kV lines.

Of the total 282 acres of acquired land, 100 acres will be used for the main power plant, 90 acres for ash pond, and 76 acres for residential and recreational purposes. The 36 acres of the proposed recreational park would be used in future for further extension of the ash pond. The power plant would generate 0.08 million tons of ash annually consuming 0.72 million tons of coal.

Construction of officers' hostels and employees' barracks has been completed while construction of building for a rest house are in progress.

Soil testing for the main power plant has already been completed and earth-filling is going on.

Talking to The Daily Star, plant officials said that timely completion of the ambitious power project would heavily depend on issuance of the letter of guarantee by the Ministry of Finance and on the revision of ADP for down payment of US\$ 20.90 million.

FM: Delhi

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terms of hard currency and the requirements of an energy-hungry India.

Khan is also likely to see Indian leaders once again raising the issue of Bangladesh giving transit rights to India and the lifting of ban on export of Indian cotton yarn by road to Bangladesh. Although Dhaka has assured to lift the curb, a notification for this is yet to be issued, officials here say.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia plants a sapling at the National Trade Ground in the city, marking the tree-planting programme.

Nuclear antidotes on offer in South Asia

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian hospitals are on alert to treat victims of a nuclear war and an American company is offering anti-radiation pills as fears of a nuclear war persist despite easing of tensions with Pakistan.

Several companies are getting their staff trained to work in a dangerous environment even as India and Pakistan have withdrawn battle-ships and taken other confidence building measures to ease a standoff between their nuclear-armed forces.

But more than a million troops remain massed on the border in a standoff over disputed Kashmir that has raised fears of a conflict, which could escalate into a nuclear war.

U.S.-based Anbex advertised in the Times of India on Friday offering tablets for "protection from nuclear weapons radiation. Certified 'safe and effective' by US Food and Drug Administration."

"Proven at Chernobyl", the advertisement said, and directed readers to its Web site, www.anbex.com, which boasts of low rates of cancer in areas where Soviet authorities gave people Potassium iodide tablets after the Chernobyl

nuclear accident.

But Indian doctors said the drug had a limited application.

"Iodine is helpful in treating thyroid problems but how do you treat a person whose entire system is exposed to radiation," said Lalit Kumar, a doctor in New Delhi.

Contingency plan

The federal government, which has not recommended the use of any preventive drug, has drawn its own contingency plan, although people in major cities seem unperturbed by the threat of war.

Federal Health Minister C.P. Thakur said hospitals have been asked to stock medicines, keep doctors and ambulances on standby to deal with the consequences of a possible nuclear, chemical or biological attack.

"We have about 12,000 beds in government hospitals in Delhi and we have kept all beds ready," Thakur told Reuters.

Thakur said he did not think that the two countries would go to war, but health authorities were discussing various options including building shelters to protect people from radiation.

"We have discussed a plan to build nuclear shields but in that case

huge amount of money is needed and we have to make elaborate arrangements," he said.

Experts at a state-run disaster management institute said they were preparing a manual to sensitise people to the threats of a nuclear attack and the precautions they should take.

Vinod K Sharma, a professor at the National Centre for Disaster Management, said the manual would draw heavily from the experience of Japan, which has suffered the horrors of an atomic bomb.

Hostile environment training

Bruhn Newtech, an international firm that trains people working in dangerous situations, has several South Asian clients including large media companies. The firm has operations in Britain, Denmark and the United States.

David Butler, a British Army veteran sent by the firm to New Delhi to train clients, said his firm was training people in banks, emergency services, large companies and media firms to deal with hazards of nuclear, biological and chemical threats.

Gains go down

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tims of serious mismanagement.

The Review estimate shows that Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) is likely to be the second major loss incurring SOE this fiscal. According finance ministry estimate, BPDB's loss is likely to be around Tk 455.85 crore during this fiscal (2001-2002) against Tk 463.14 crore in the last fiscal.

BPDB is tangled in a vicious cycle of financial mismanagement as its main client owes it Tk 5000 crore. There has been no serious effort by the government to recover the arrears from the defaulter clients who include many government offices.

The other loss makers are Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA), Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), Bangladesh Biman Corporation (BBC), Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC), Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC), which are going to be the major loss incurring

entities during this fiscal also.

The losses estimated by the Review are: BJMC -- Tk 405.77 crore, DESA --Tk 336.11 crore, BCIC --Tk 267.01 crore, Biman --Tk 103.74 crore, BTMC --Tk 44.52 crore, BADC --Tk 33.34 crore, BIWTA --Tk 27.16 crore, BSFIC --Tk 22.36 crore, Chittagong WASA Tk -- 7.66 crore, BRTC --Tk. 16.83, MDWMB --Tk 1.38 crore and RDA --Tk 0.43 crore.

Of these loss-makers, BCIC that owns the fertiliser factories is forced to incur losses as the government makes it swallow fertiliser subsidies. BCIC also bears the gas purchase losses for KAFCO. It purchases gas from Petrobangla at double the price it sells to KAFCO in which it is a partner.

Organisations like BTMC and BJMC are affected by poor marketing, financial mismanagement and unruly trade unionism, the Bangladesh Economic Review 2002 said.

The BADC is incurring losses because there are over 2500 unnecessary staff.

These projections however did not include profits and losses made by T&T, Bangladesh Railway and the Postal Department.

PM: Professionalism

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among others, by PM's political secretaries Haris Chowdhury and Alhaj Mosaddek Ali, and her Principal Secretary Dr. Kamal Siddique.

The prime minister said the members of the SSF have to grow self-confidence and be pro-active in ensuring tight security to VIPs. In this connection, she reminded them that they have to see to it that an elected head of government or head of state is not isolated from people in the process of providing security to them.

The prime minister also recalled the renaming of President's Security Force as SSF with the switching over to parliamentary form of government from the presidential system in 1991. At that time, she said, SSF was entrusted with the responsibility of providing security not only to the president or the prime minister but all the declared VIPs of the country, as per law.

She said SSF was also given the responsibility to ensure security of all visiting foreign heads of govern-

ment or state.

Khaleda Zia said efforts were made during her earlier tenure for higher training and procurement of modern equipment for increasing the professional skill of the members of SSF and also to bring about changes in its organisational structure. She said logistic support was also increased as per requirement. Some changes were made also in its functioning and the area of activities was increased at that time.

When BNP was voted to power this time, she said, her government started taking steps for solving the problems of transport, equipment and also accommodation of the members of the SSF when these problems were brought to her notice.

She said she has asked the authorities concerned for allotment of an under-construction NAM Bhaban to solve the accommodation problem of SSF members. Besides, she said, steps have been taken for establishing an officers' mess for SSF.

City bus drivers

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carefree bus drivers, buses continue making stoppages anywhere they like. These indiscriminate stoppages are regularly contributing to endless chains of traffic at busy intersections and thoroughfares resulting in the invaluable loss of time while adding pollution and stress.

Even at designated bus stoppages, bus drivers stop their vehicles blocking the entire road, creating instant tailbacks. This happens everywhere in the city and even in the presence of traffic policemen.

The traffic department has held several meetings with the bus owners association and decided to deploy members of the transport workers association under the banner of 'Community Police'. The workers were provided with sticks and yellow uniforms and posted at busy intersections of the city. This hasn't been very effective, as bus drivers do not pay much heed to the repeated appeals of these vigilantes, incessantly blocking main thoroughfares while boarding and disembarking passengers.

The deputy commissioner of the Traffic Department, south, admitted that bus drivers are increasingly becoming unruly. He said blamed such behaviour on the fact that drivers do not have any liabilities.

"Since driving licenses are fake, we are only able to file cases against the documents of the vehicles for which the owners always pay the penalty while the actual offender, the driver goes unpunished," Abu Musa Fakhrul Islam, the DC South, told The Daily Star.

A source in the Traffic Department said the drivers' association has a contract in writing with the owners' association regarding payment of all penalties and offences the driver commits on the road. Being unaccountable for any offence, drivers can get away with reckless driving and since most of them need not pay any personal fines to the owners for damage done to the vehicle they enjoy a dangerous freedom.

A traffic department official said a move is underway to streamline driving licenses. A proposal is now lying with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) on the regulation of false driving licenses. The proposal stipulates a short training for drivers before being issued proper licenses.

This will allow the police to book offending drivers and bring back some discipline to the erratic city streets.

England dismantle Danes

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had deserved victory, but acknowledged a woeful goalkeeping performance from Thomas Sorensen -- who was at fault on two of the three England goals -- had helped his side.

"I think we deserved it, we played a good football first half and we created a lot of chances," Eriksson said. "Maybe we were a little bit lucky. Maybe 3-0 is a little bit too much. But anyhow we won it and we are in the quarter-finals."

Owen, who had failed to score in England's three group matches but took the one chance that came his way here, went off at half-time with a groin strain, but Eriksson was confident of him being ready to play on Friday in Shizuoka. "We did not think it was worth risking him (for the second half) but I think he will be available for the next match."

Influential midfielder Paul Scholes also went off, four minutes into the second half but said afterwards that he would be fine. Eriksson appeared to have already begun planning for what will be a mouthwatering clash with Brazil.

"I think Brazil, the way they are playing at this moment are one of the favourites, but a lot of favourites have already gone out of this tournament -- so maybe Brazil is one. So we'll see. "It's open. Now we have six days before the next game -- we have time to rest, recover from injury. We'll have a nice week."

Owen was delighted to open his account. "It's always nice to score a goal, especially if you score an early goal as it helps settle everyone's nerves," he said.

"I'm pleased for Emile and for Michael," he said. "It's good for Michael to get his first goal -- it was what he needed. And Emile needed it too."

"It was a very good performance. We did a job and won 3-0," he said. "We played well in the first half and just made sure of the result in the second half," he said.

The captain added he didn't mind who England's next opponents were.

England got off to a dream start after only five minutes, when Sorensen allowed a corner from Beckham to fly over him to find Ferdinand lurking with intent at the back post.

The Leeds defender's header was off-target but the backpedalling Sorensen fluffed his attempt to gather, inadvertently fumbling the ball over the line. Ferdinand insisted he would be claiming what will be, if confirmed, his first international goal. "You can't take that away from me, man," he said. "I'll fight to the death to get that goal."

The melee saw influential defender Thomas Helveg leave the field injured after colliding with a stanchion behind the goal, forcing an unwanted reshuffle on the Danes.

England's early domination yielded further reward after 22 minutes following a superb eight-pass move launched by a 40-yard ball from Scholes to Manchester United colleague Beckham.

The ball came across to Trevor Sinclair on the left, he played a low centre to Nicky Butt who flicked the ball on to Owen with the help of a kind deflection off Thomas Gravesen. Owen made no mistake tucking the ball into the corner with his left foot. Danish frustration at their inability to get into the match was summed up by midfielder enforcer Stig Tofing's early booking for dissent. Tofing, who had a quiet game, was later substituted.

On the stroke of half-time England all but sealed their place in the next round.

A long throw by Danny Mills was poorly dealt with by Nicolas Jensen and Beckham picked up the loose ball, sweeping to Heskey who thumped a low shot beneath the sprawling Sorensen. For a player whose lack of a deft first touch has come under intense scrutiny, it was a perfect response to his critics.

Denmark's attempts to somehow get back in the game after half-time were frustrated at every turn, and for the final quarter England were happy to let the game play out to its conclusion.

Beckham went close with a shot that Sorensen blocked. Eight minutes from time Denmark almost scored a consolation effort, Jensen's delightful chip forcing Seaman to scramble back and palm the ball over.

TEAMS

Denmark: Sorensen, Helveg (Bogelund 7), N. Jensen, Henriksen, Laursen, Rommedahl, Gravesen, Tofing (C. Jensen 58), Gronkjaer, Sand, Dahl Tomasson
Booked: Tofing

England: Seaman, Mills, Ferdinand, Campbell, Cole, Beckham, Scholes (Dyer 48), Butt, Sinclair, Heskey (Sheringham 69), Owen (Fowler 46)
Goals: Ferdinand 5, Owen 22, Heskey 44
Booked: Mills.
Attendance: 40,582
Referee: M Merk (Germany).

AL bodies

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those from district units would play a significant role in choosing central leaders of the party.

In the past, party delegates to the councils usually authorised the party chief to select other leaders. But a process is now underway to break this tradition and go for elections to practise democracy within the party.

The AL's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has already got its new president and general secretary elected by delegates through secret ballots.

A senior AL leader seeking anonymity said, "The party's polls debacle last year was actually a blessing in disguise because it pushed the party towards reforms, modernisation and democratisation."

The central working committee of AL (ALCWC) at its meeting on June 10-11 took disciplinary action against 376 leaders and workers of the party on charges of acting against party interests in the last polls. They included seven central leaders who were stripped of their party positions.



Vehicles jostle for space in a heavy tailback on the road in front of the Ramna Park in the city yesterday.

Germany crawl

FROM PAGE 1
second half," he said. "This was the first time I have started a game so I'm very happy."

"I lost my place but I talked to Rudi two or three days before this match and now all is well. I only found out I was playing two hours before kick-off."

South American hopes of an upset were not helped by the loss of exciting young Bayern Munich striker Roque Santa Cruz who limped off after appearing to pull a muscle in the 30th minute.

Their day was soured further by Roberto Acune's sending off with just seconds left.

The Paraguayan exit means that out of five starters from South America only Brazil remain in contention.

Paraguay's veteran Italian coach Cesare Maldini, who now moves to a scouting job in Italy, said he was pleased his side fought so well.

"It was a very equal game until the end," he said. "There weren't any real scoring possibilities on either side."

"Most of the game was played in midfield and then suddenly you get a beautiful run down the right and a beautiful score by Neuville."

"This is typical Germany. They are strong physically, maybe not technically, but certainly physically."

Paraguay's eccentric goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert, playing in his last finals aged 36, sent one trademark long-distance free-kick over the bar as he failed in his dream to become the first goalkeeper to score at a World Cup.

He said his team had come close to causing an upset.

"Germany were lucky today -- we were their equals," he insisted. "We lost as heroes, national heroes."

Paraguay had the better of a scrappy first half, creating half a dozen chances as they exposed a shaky defence.

After his introduction for Santa Cruz, Jorge Campos thrashed an effort goalwards which German keeper Oliver Kahn, celebrating his 33rd birthday, did well to parry with his left hand.

Germany's Ballack had earlier

Sapling

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Prime Minister planted a sapling along with two tiny tots, including one of her grand daughters, on the National Parade Square premises to encourage the new generation in tree plantation.

Ministers, diplomats and high officials also planted saplings on the premises.

Khaleda visited some stalls at the Tree Fair, arranged at the National Parade Square, with 92 stalls taking part in the fortnight-long exhibition.

As part of the movement, about five crore saplings of timber, fruit and medicinal trees are planned to be planted across the country this year.

Some 345 social forestry centres in different districts and 98 nurseries and training centres will supply the saplings.

Addressing the function, the Prime Minister called for planting trees on the premises of schools and colleges, by the side of roads, highways and railway tracks, on the banks of rivers, at homes and office premises.

51 AL men

FROM PAGE 1
The plaintiff alleged that the leaders and workers of Awami League, Chhatra League and Juba League torched Thanchhari Darul Aman Madrassah and Chhatra Kalyan Sangha office and on July 22, 2000.

Alcatel project

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But the French vendor was defiant and BTB at one stage considered to "black list" Alcatel. Finally BTB made these proposed modifications as a precursor to award the Dhaka-Chittagong optical fibre link project to Alcatel. This is how the French vendor was forced to fulfil its contractual obligations in 1999.

By then BTB lost more than Tk 60 crore as NWD revenue, and the authorities are yet to realise that money from Alcatel. The sources further said BTB could still deduct the principal amount of Tk 60 crore from various payments to Alcatel.

BTB had blacklisted Marconi Italiana of Italy in early 90s for shortfall similar to that of Alcatel. But the government's generosity for Alcatel puts to question the administrative consistency in the state-run telecom sector.

When contacted, Alcatel's Country Manager Mazhar Taherally told The Daily Star that since 1996, Alcatel took corrective measures to improve performance of the backbone installed.

"In 1998, Alcatel delegated a team to support, maintain and improve operation of the system. During this period, Alcatel experts demonstrated to the highest level of BTB that the design of the network was done in full compliance with ITU (International Telecommunication

Union) standards by using more stringent design parameters," he said.

He said, in early 1999, it was recorded that all the microwave links were fully functional, including power generators, radio equipment and multiplex equipment.

"In order to further improve the quality of services provided by the network, new antennas were installed by Alcatel in 1999, and it was recorded in early 2000 that BTB and Alcatel agreed that the network was fully operational," the Alcatel country chief added.

Flood looms

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The Bangla month of Ashar began yesterday with heavy rains in some areas. Although there were drizzles in the capital, the rainfall was 101 mm in Mymensingh, 67 mm in Srimangal, 39 mm in Bogra, 23 mm in Comilla, 20 mm in Dinajpur, 22 mm in Kutubdia and 16 mm in Majidi Court till 6 pm yesterday.

Flash floods have already hit areas in Sylhet, Rangpur, Sherpur and Netrokona districts.