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AL again calls hartal for tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami Jubo League called a daylong hartal across the country tomorrow, protesting attacks on the opposition leaders and workers including its Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanok during yesterday's shutdown enforced by the Awami League (AL).

The AL and its other front organisations extended support to the 6:00am to 6:00pm shut down, third of its kind in five days.

Meanwhile, an emergency meeting of the AL central working committee last night formally decided to go on a one-night demand of oust-government agitation, as the present government did not pay any

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

LAND DISPUTES

Spl tribunal planned to rid case backlog

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will set up a special tribunal to dispose of land dispute cases, which now total around 6.5 lakh.

The law ministry will place a bill giving legal framework of the tribunal in the current session of parliament, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said yesterday.

A cabinet committee on land dispute cases has finalised its report on the bill and related issues which

will be placed before the cabinet soon prior to the introduction of the bill in the House.

"Land dispute cases go to existing courts and get shelved along with other cases. It takes an unusually long time to resolve the cases," Moudud told The Daily Star.

The bill also seeks to simply land registration system, maintain land-related records and bring transparency to the process.

Land Minister M Shamsul Islam earlier told The Daily Star, "We are

computerising the entire land management system and preparing a structured and prescribed form for land registration, in which all necessary information like 25-year history of a piece of land, name or names of owners and demarcation number will be mentioned clearly."

It will help check fake and forged documentation and sales of a particular piece of land to more than one person, he said.

About the proposed bill, Shamsul

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Oil workers call their strike off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

The indefinite strike enforced from yesterday by staffers in the oil sector was called off last night after the state minister told their representatives at a meeting that the government was yet to decide on privatising the petroleum sector.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain told the BBC Bangla Service last night, "We haven't yet decided to privatise the petroleum sector, we are just making a study on it."

The emergency meeting that started at the house of the state minister at 7:30pm was going on till 10:30 last night to resolve the other demands of the striking staffers.

Operations in the oil sector came to a standstill yesterday following an indefinite strike called by its workers

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

'We have tolerated a lot, no more'

Khaleda's stern warning to opposition

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday renewed her call to the main opposition party to shun politics of vandalism and terrorism and return to parliament.

"We have tolerated a lot -- no more," she said sounding a warning of stern action against indiscipline and anarchy.

Addressing a rally at Shaheed Faruk Road at Jatrahari in the capital, the prime minister apparently



gave directive to her supporters to go for a counter-offensive against any violent political move. "Lock those inside their houses who want to block the roadmap of development," she told her audience.

Khaleda also asked the people to remain alert against this party (Awami League) trying to hinder the development efforts.

Presided over by Salauddin Ahmed MP, the rally was also addressed by Local Government

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Clash-packed hartal cripples life

About 200 injured, 250 picked up country-wide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police and BNP activists clashed with the Awami League (AL) adherents in Dhaka and some other towns during hartal yesterday, when the main opposition enforced a second strike in three days to protest at 'police action on its leaders' during Thursday's hartal.

About 200 people, largely activists of AL and its front organisations, were injured in clashes in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Sakhira, Jessore, Sirajganj, Bogra, Magura and Kurigram and police arrested about 250 opposition activists in the wake of the violence, prompting the AL to call another dawn-to-dusk nationwide shutdown for tomorrow.

In Dhaka, about 100 opposition adherents were injured and 188 arrested near the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue and in Kalabagan, Motijheel, North-South Road in old Dhaka, Badda and other places during the stoppage.

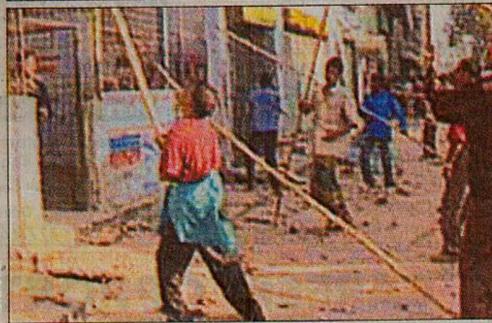
The hartal crippled life in Dhaka and elsewhere by disrupting transport, shutting down most shops, schools, banks and businesses and stock exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong and affecting cargo handling in seaports.

Scenes of hundreds of stone-throwing pickets chasing policemen in riot gear and the law enforcers charging the opposition activists with batons dominated the capital at the height of the hartal.

Jahangir Kabir Nanok, president of AL's Jubo League youth front, was seriously injured when police beat him up indiscriminately grappling

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Police baton-charge a female Awami League (AL) picket, top, on Bangabandhu Avenue and activists of ruling BNP raid the district AL office in Bogra, bottom, during hartal yesterday.



Attack on AL office, college in Bogra: 25 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Ruling BNP activists attacked the district Awami League office and set fire to a college in Sonatola yesterday during hartal hours, leaving at least 25 people injured in clashes.

The anti-hartal demonstrators broke furniture and tore down the signboard of the office in the attack at 8:45am. They also set afire Begum Fazilunnesa Mujib Women's College in Sonatola after ransacking it at around 10:45 in the morning.

President of Sonatola thana BNP AKM Ahsanul Tayeb Zakir, Awami League (AL)-backed district Jatiya Secyha Sebok League President Asadur Rahman Dulu, Sadar unjon BNP President Ansar Ali Mollah and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

21 killed in attack on Iraq cop office

Guerillas free prisoners

AP, Fallujah, Iraq

Guerillas shouting 'God is great' launched a bold daylight assault on an Iraqi police station and security compound west of Baghdad yesterday, freeing prisoners and sparking a gunbattle that killed 21 people and wounded 33, police and hospital officials said.

The same security compound was attacked two days earlier by gunmen just as the top US commander in the Middle East, Gen. John Abizaid, was visiting the site in Fallujah. Abizaid escaped that

attack unharmed.

One shop owner across the street from the security compound said he and his neighbors had been told by guerrillas not to open that morning because an attack was imminent.

Around 25 attackers, some of them masked, faced little resistance as they surrounded the police station and stormed in, going from room to room throwing hand grenades and firing heavy machine guns, survivors said. Few police, most with only small weapons, were present at the time.

"I only had a pistol with me," said

Kamel Allawi, a police lieutenant. "Right away I fell on the ground and blood was gushing out of my left leg."

The attackers freed 75 prisoners held at the station, killing the guards and shooting open the cell doors, police Lt. Col. Jalal Sabri said. The prisoners were criminals -- most arrested for murder or theft -- and none of them were suspected of involvement in the anti-US insurgency, Sabri said.

The gunmen, shouting Islamic slogans "God is great" and "There is

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Their days are numbered, says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the days of BNP-Jamaat alliance government are numbered as its "vandalism" reached its peak.

She made the remarks during her visit to see injured Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak at a city hospital last evening.

Hasina told reporters that the ruling coalition let loose police and its cadres to attack Awami League leaders and activists during hartal yesterday.

"The way they tortured and roughed up female activists of our party is indescribable...they in fact do not believe in democracy," Hasina said.

Later, she visited Dhaka Medical College Hospital to see injured leaders and workers.

Govt to crush hartal violence

Burning vehicles, destructive acts to be tried under Speedy Trial Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to crush hartal-related violence with a heavy hand and put people involved in burning vehicle and other destructive activities on trial under the Speedy Trial Act.

Highly placed sources said the government took a serious view of violent incidents like setting fire to private and public vehicles ahead of and also during hartals called by the main opposition Awami League (AL) and wants to halt those through legal action.

Police have been asked to prepare a list of mid-and low-level leaders and 'active' workers of the

AL and its wings in all wards and thanas in the capital, keep vigil on them and file cases if vehicles are damaged or set fire to in their areas.

Local BNP leaders have also been asked to cooperate with police in preparing the list.

Sources noted government policymakers are convinced that the AL is out to create panic through destructive activities like arson to make its hartals a success.

At a meeting on Friday night, senior BNP leaders blasted the home ministry for failing to file any case against those who set several vehicles ablaze and exploded bombs in the capital ahead of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Outlaws slaughter Kushtia trader after abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Miscreants allegedly belonging to outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) slaughtered a trader after abduction at Khoksa in Kushtia yesterday.

The NBCP cadres picked up Abdul Aziz, 48, a small trader at Khoksa Bazar, from his residence at gunpoint on Thursday night as he was refusing to pay them Tk 1 lakh in extortion money for the last couple of days, family sources alleged.

The victim's family filed a GD (general diary) with Khoksa Police Station. But police failed to rescue him.

Locals found Aziz's bloodstained body at a shoal on Goral river near Kalibari area at about 10:30am. Police sent the body to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

A case was lodged.

Set up anti-graft body soon to save business

FBCCI asks government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday demanded of the government to live up to its election pledge to establish an anti-corruption commission to save business, investment and overall economic development from perennial corruption that continues to eat away at the country's economy.

Nothing has been so damaging to democracy and development like corruption, which has also been the most dangerous impediment to

social well-being and economic growth, the FBCCI said in a press statement.

It said members of the commission should be selected through a national bipartisan committee, headed by a retired justice, and then scrutinised by the parliamentary standing committee.

The apex trade body made a set of recommendations to make the commission a truly independent constitutional body that will investigate and prosecute elected private office bearers as well as career officials.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

CNG STATION SET-UP JS body to probe graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary probe body was formed yesterday, following demand from Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, to investigate alleged irregularities in handing out permissions and allocating

land for CNG refuelling stations. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications Ministry formed the parliamentary sub-committee at a meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhavan.

The three-member sub-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

US clears Red Cross to visit Saddam

AFP, Geneva

US authorities have formally given the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the green light to visit detained former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in prison, the ICRC said yesterday.

"We have the green light for the visit, but we don't yet know when it will take place," ICRC president Jakob Kellenberger told the Swiss

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

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U-19 WC cricket begins today

Bangladesh face NZ at BNS

SPORTS REPORTER

The 5th ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup commences today against the backdrop of the fast-deteriorating political climate.

The 16-nation meet that got off to

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