

Azad Mancha

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protest songs, but they were barred by the JCD men who later drove them away from the spot.

"The JCD men told us we should forget about the movement in the name of general students. They said we were actually working for the left-leaning political parties under the banner of general students and threatened to harm us if we didn't leave immediately," said one of the demonstrators.

"Two of our activists were also picked up by the JCD and some outsiders," another demonstrator said, adding: "JCD activists were seen patrolling the TSC area in the afternoon and told us to leave when we went there at around 6:00pm."

The JCD denied having issued any threat to the demonstrators. "We requested students not to hold any programme on the campus supporting the hartal tomorrow (March 6)," said JCD General Secretary Azizul Bari Helal.

He said the JCD urged teachers to help maintain peace on the campus during today's hartal. The student wing of the ruling BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) would bring out a procession and hold a rally on the

campus today to protest the attack on Prof Azad and denounce the 'illegal hartal'.

A group of JCD men on motorbikes were also seen driving around the university's Institute of Fine Arts and Central Shaheed Minar area yesterday, sources said. The JCD also put up posters on the campus Thursday night in the name of general students, blaming Awami League President Sheikh Hasina for the attack on Azad.

Saroj Sarker, a resident student of room no. 158 of Jagannath Hall, alleged that the hall unit JCD leaders ransacked his room in the early hours of yesterday because he took part in a demonstration protesting the attack on Azad.

Meanwhile, the ruling BNP's cultural wing Jatiyatobadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha has been staging cultural programmes at the Swoparjito Swadhinata since Wednesday after capturing the podium there erected by general students.

Campus sources said the pro-BNP white panel teachers discussed the campus situation during an emergency meeting with DU Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz yesterday.



Protesters of Humayun Azad Mancha, named after the prominent writer who suffered life-threatening stab wounds on February 27, hold a banner at Aparajeo Bangla monument at Dhaka University yesterday during a demonstration against the attack on him.

Three-headed, six-legged frog in Britain

AFP, London

Wildlife experts in Britain were left dumbfounded yesterday after claiming the unique discovery of a frog with three croaking heads and six legs.

"I have never seen anything like this before and as far as I am aware it is unprecedented," leading biologist Mike Dilger said after the frog was spotted at a children's nursery in Weston-super-Mare, southwest England.

Staff at the Green Umbrella nursery at first dismissed claims of the mutant amphibian, believing instead that the multifaceted creature could be three frogs huddled together.

"Frogs have a very primitive embryology -- so the occasional extra toe is not that unusual. But this is something different," Dilger said.

Animal experts were trying to capture the frog to carry out further tests to investigate its biological make-up.

Sylhet clash

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yesterday, an armed group of people launched a sudden and two-pronged attack on the students staying on the newly possessed land from east and south.

They fired guns and chopped students with sharp weapons. The madrasah students on the plot as well as those in the adjacent hostel countered the attack by hurling brickbats, thereby locking into the 90-minute fight.

On information, Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran, district BNP President MA Haque and city Awami League General Secretary Misbahuddin Siraj rushed to the spot.

The fighting stopped after Mayor Kamran appealed over a loudspeaker to both sides to restrain themselves. The madrasah authorities blamed Afsaruddin, owner of neighbouring cattle market, for masterminding the attack and demanded his arrest within 24 hours. Otherwise, they threatened to launch tough agitation.

Police arrested a young man named Ahmed Ruman after the clash and recovered a gun from his possession.

Locals and the madrasah authorities also blamed police inaction for the prolonged combat.

The five who sustained critical bullet injuries are Luthfur Rahman Zakaria, Hafiz Zabayar Ahmed, M Kausar Uddin, Zakaria Ahmed and M Abdul Gani. Five of the attackers also received various degrees of injuries.

Later, the deputy inspector general and superintendent of police of Sylhet visited the spot and deployed a police team in the area.

Blix

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possible to argue that Iraq had violated UN resolutions adopted since 1991, the "ownership" of the resolutions rested with the entire 15-member UN Security Council and not with individuals.

"It's the Security Council that is party to the ceasefire (after the first Gulf war), not the UK and US individually, and therefore it is the Council that has ownership of the ceasefire, in my interpretation."

Asked whether in his view a second resolution authorising force should have been adopted, Blix replied: "Oh yes."

He dismissed calls for British Prime Minister Blair to resign or apologise over the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, cited by London as the main justification for war.

But Blix suggested that Blair may have been wounded politically.

"Some people say (US President George W.) Bush and Blair should be put before a tribunal and I say that you have the punishment in the political field here," Blix told the Independent.

"Their credibility has been affected by this: Bush too lost some credibility."

Pakistan champs

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It was time for a fightback and Iqbal and Salman Qadir took that responsibility.

They first consolidated in a pain-taking manner and then batted with more freedom once fully set. Iqbal, brought into the squad after not being a part of the side for the entire tournament showed that coach Aaqub Javed didn't make a mistake in picking him, top scored with 54 before he was run out by a direct hit from Bachan at extra cover. His innings came off 71 balls and included a six and three fours.

Iqbal's partnership with Mirza was worth 97 runs.

Qadir made 42 while a late cameo 23 not out by wicketkeeper Zulqarnain Haider took the Pakistanis to 230 for nine.

Bachan was the pick of the West Indian bowlers with three for 34 off ten and could have had five wickets had it not been for a couple of dropped catches. Opening bowler Mervin Matthews bowled economically for two for 35.

The target was not going to be easy under lights and the Pakistani spinners in particular were always going to exploit the conditions.

The Windies however made a near-perfect start with openers Xavier Marshall and Tishan Maraj rattling up 69. But when Maraj was run out for 32,

Tanks surround Arafat's headquarters

AFP, Ramallah

More than 10 Israeli army jeeps and armored vehicles surrounded yesterday the Ramallah headquarters of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, an AFP correspondent reported.

Troops were blocking the compound, known in Arabic as the "Mukataa," the main entrance as well as southern and western access.

Israeli security sources confirmed the presence of troops in the area but said they were undertaking "a routine activity, nothing exceptional."

A Palestinian security source told AFP the Israeli army had informed Arafat's Palestinian Authority that his soldiers had no intention of entering the Mukataa.

Arafat has been under virtual Israeli house arrest in his Ramallah headquarters since December 2001. Israel says the action was needed because Arafat was not a partner for peace and was morally and financially supporting anti-Israeli militant groups.

Series of blasts

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"We are still trying to find out more details," he said about the attack in the Iraqi city 370 kilometers north of Baghdad.

In the gun battle, "three were killed on the Iraqi side and no injuries on the coalition side," said the spokesman.

Another report adds: Nine Iraqis were killed in a string of attacks across the war-torn country on Thursday as Nato promised to send troops if it gets a request from the Iraqi government due to take over on July 1.

Polish troops also said they had captured seven al-Qaeda suspects and Karbala law enforcement officials accused the US-supervised interior ministry of short supplying before this week's devastating bombings at a religious festival.

Three Iraqis were killed and at least five wounded in a rocket attack by unknown assailants in southwest Baghdad late Thursday, police and witnesses said.

The target of the attack was not immediately clear, but an AFP journalist said the rocket exploded about 100 metres (yards) from a US military base.

Violence also dogged the northern city of Mosul, where three policemen and two civilians were killed in a rocket and automatic rifle attack, police said.

It became a procession as wickets fell at regular intervals.

Mahmood with a combination of his away-going 'dusras' and traditional off-breaks claimed three for 34 while surprise bowler Mirza took two for 29.

Only skipper Ramdin tried to make a comeback as he shared 50 with Jonathan Augustus but when Ramdin was the seventh man out, leg before to fast bowler Rizaf Afridi for 36 and West Indies on 197, the end was very near.

It came when Bachan became the last of four run outs and the West Indies had perished for 205 in 47.1 overs.

In the post-match briefing Pakistan coach Aaqub Javed said that he was satisfied with finds of the tournament.

"Riaz Afridi, Tariq Mahmood, Salman Qadir and leg-spinner Mansoor Amjad were really impressive. I will inform the national selectors about them, so that they can be taken into the academy and looked after properly.

"I think they are not too far away from starting their international careers."

He also thanked the Bangladesh crowd.

"It is really something. Nowhere in the world will you find such crowd for a under-19 cricket tournament."

West Indies captain Denesh Ramdin said his team could not hold on to the pressure of the situation. (Scoreboard on Page 13)

Global terror threat 'real' and developing: Blair

AFP, London

The global threat facing Britain and the rest of the world is real and developing, Prime Minister Tony Blair said yesterday during a speech highlighting the dangers posed by international terrorism.

"It was in March 2003 (before the Iraq war) and remains my fervent view that the nature of the global threat we face in Britain and around the world is real and in extension," Blair said in his constituency of Sedgefield, northeast England.

"This is the task of leadership to expose it and fight it, whatever the political cost," Blair said.

"No decision I have ever made in politics has been as divisive as the decision to go to war in Iraq," Blair said.

"It remains deeply divisive today," he added.

Murder of Jamaat leader condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The leaders of the Awami League and four-party alliance have condemned the killing of Rampal Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abu Baker Siddique.

The president of Khulna City Awami League, also lawmaker of Bagerhat-3 constituency, has sent a message to the Jamaat's district unit, expressing deep shock at the murder.

The leaders of four-party alliance of Khulna and Bagerhat have demanded immediate arrest of the culprits involved in the murder. The Jamaat of Mongla upazila unit has announced a weeklong programme including a dawn-to-dusk strike on Sunday.

Amir of Bagerhat district unit of Jamaat Mashur Rahman said assailants killed Baker only one hour after he urged to wage war against criminals at an annual waz mahfil on Wednesday midnight on Shantanania Azizia Fazil Madrassah premises.

A mob on Thursday night set two rice, one oil and one flour mills afire - all belonging to arrested BNP leader Mohammad Ali - at Gilatala Bazar in Rampal.

Meanwhile, outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party's (PBCP) Janajuddha faction in messages sent to local newspaper offices has claimed responsibility for the murder of Baker.

Cloth shop employee shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of a cloth shop was shot dead by a gang of miscreants at Shayampur in the city yesterday.

Witnesses said a gang of 10 swooped on Ilias Dewan, 22, son of Miris Ali of South Jatrabari, while he was returning home from one of his friend's house in Mir Hazaribagh at about 5:00pm.

The gang severed tendons of Ilias' legs and hands, shot him point blank and left the spot, they added.

Ilias was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately. No case was filed till the filing of this report at 7:30pm.

B Chy

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festive through Wednesday's attack on innocent students.

They also condemned the police assault on journalists on the DU campus that day, saying it was but an attack on press freedom.

The speakers said an all out popular uprising to topple the government from power was a must, as it had failed to safeguard people's life and rather established a reign of crime.

Among others, Jaitya Gano Front Co-ordinator Tipu Biswas, Ganotantrik Majdur Party Convenor Abdus Salam, Ganosanghati Andolon Coordinator Zonayed Saki and Shahidul Islam Sabuz of Biplobi Oikya Front spoke at the rally.

Magistrate

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shipping sector. He was assured of all support and asked to do his duty properly, sources recalled.

He then launched a special drive and detected and fined dozens of launches and cargo vessels every day for overloading, faulty driving and lack of registration and survey certificate.

But his actions annoyed the higher authorities as he did not spare vessels owned by influential people including ministers, political high-ups and leaders of Bangladesh launch owners associations, sources pointed out.

Many high officials of the ministry concerned put pressure on him to refrain from doing so.

The launch owners association demanded an immediate halt to the special drive and transfer of Munir and warned of continuous strike if their demands were not met. But Munir did not cave in to pressure and continued to perform his duty.

Against this backdrop, Munir was withdrawn from Sadarghat terminal on November 21 last year and the special drive came to an end a week before the late Eid-ul-Fitr, when it was needed most.

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain had told The Daily Star at that time the drive would resume after a week but that never happened.

Munir was kept at the shipping department without any work for long and then sent back to Chittagong Port.

Sources mentioned that during his previous tenure of about three years at the port, he recovered around 46 acres of land from illegal occupation and removed about 3,000 establishments from the lands.

AL headquarters

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11-party left alliance, expressed solidarity with the 6:00am to 6:00pm general strike, the first opposition unity since October 2001 against the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the fifth shutdown across the country since February 12.

ARSON

Mannan, 55, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with severe burns he suffered in the arson attack last night.

A gang of arsonists set three buses alight in Malibagh, Khilgaon and Shyamoli and pro-hartal pickets blasted several crackers close to the National Press Club shortly before 7:00pm.

Two CNG autorickshaws were torched in front of Kazi Nazrul Islam College in Old Dhaka and a minibus and a car near Mirpur College.

Attackers hurled bombs at on-duty policemen near Bangabazaar and Sadarghat and a string of bombs were exploded in Khejurbagan, Arambagh, Sobhanbagh and Malibagh.

The parties that announced the hartal from meetings at their offices on March 1 demanded immediate resignation of the coalition government, accusing it

of failure to curb law and order downside, corruption and price hike of essentials.

The AL views the simultaneous programmes as a step towards forming a common platform in the anti-government movement that the BNP described as a trigger in chaos.

Three killed in Sylhet road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three people were killed in a road accident on Sylhet-Companyanj Road in Companyanj upazila yesterday morning.

The accident took place when a Sylhet bound truck loaded with stones from Bholaganj quarry fell from a bridge, breaking its railing in Borni area at about 6:30am.

The dead are labourers Shamsuddin, 40, son of Kosir Uddin and Maimuddin, 30, son of Abdul Munnas of village Preagan on Sylhet Sadar upazila and the helper (unknown) of the truck.

Police sent the bodies to Osmani Medical College Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Companyanj police.

Bush campaign

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sacred.

"If he does, there will be a protest and it could get ugly," said Doyle.

Several family members said their annoyance stemmed in part from Bush's refusal to testify publicly before the federal commission investigating the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"The Bush administration will not cooperate fully with the 9/11 commission and at the same time they are trying to invoke and own 9/11 and use it for his re-election," said Stephen Push from the Washington office of "Families September 11th." His wife died on the plane that crashed into the Pentagon that day.

The International Association of Fire Fighters, which has endorsed and campaigned for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, denounced the spots as "hypocritical at its worst."

"I'm disappointed but not surprised that the president would try to trade on the heroism of those fire fighters," the union's general president, Harold Schaitberger, said.

US Sen. Frank Lautenberg, a New Jersey Democrat, said the use of the images "demeans and dis-

honors those who died."

"I urge you to direct your campaign to immediately withdraw these advertisements," Lautenberg wrote in a letter to Bush.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg said he had no objections. And not all relatives of victims were upset by the ads.

"I don't have a problem with his pointing to his leadership at that time. He helped us weather it. To me it was a tasteful ad," said Patricia Reilly, who sister Lorraine Lee died in the New York attacks.

Freedom fighters

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separation of judiciary, appointment of ombudsman, rule of law, independent human rights commission and restoration of the constitution of 1972.

Commander of liberation war sector No. 8 CR Dutt, Sector Commander of sector No. 8 Abu Osman Chowdhury, Sub-sector Commanders lawmaker Shawkat Ali and Ziauddin, Parishad convenor Shahjahan Kabir Bir Pratik, Muktiyoddha Samannay Parishad Chairman Abir Ahad, among others, were present.

Traders go vigilant

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"The method seems to be working," says Sajjad, a fish seller. "Apart from extortionists, other criminals including muggers and pickpockets, who were active in the area, have also disappeared."

Prior to adopting this strategy, extortion at Karwan Bazaar, one of the city's biggest fish markets, was a daily routine. "For years, local thugs would come in and hold a bag out in front of our fish baskets. The pay-off would be either in cash or kind, i.e. a certain amount of fish. We would have to pay to continue doing business here -- it was as simple as that. We thought we would never get rid of them," Sajjad recalls.

"But now we feel we can take charge of things around here after all and be able to establish an extortion-free and healthy trading environment," he adds.

The aarot started off 30 years ago in front of the Karwan Bazaar meat market with seven aaradats (wholesalers) -- Kafil Uddin, Anil Babu, Jahangir, Lutfar Rahman Bhuiyan, Afsar Uddin Mollah, Atik Ullah Member and Monwar Uddin Mollah,

said Lutfar, one of the founders.

At present, the aarot accommodates about 600 traders who handle around Tk 60 lakh worth of transactions within a few hours every morning. Besides the wholesalers, there are also a large number of small retailers and roadside vendors who sit on the pavement outside the depot premises and the road beside the railway tracks.

However, traders say stamping out big extortion rackets is impossible without sincere efforts by the law enforcement. "Members of certain extortion rackets still exact money using 'brand names' like Kala Jahangir, Pichehi Hannan and other such dreaded criminals. A local group demanded Tk 50,000 from me last week, but I managed to get out of the jam using my influence," a fish trader said on condition of anonymity.

Asked why they don't ask police for help, he said: "The police and the criminals are all in it together. The extortionists reward the police with a cut from their spoils for turning a blind eye to their illegal activities."

Grameen Bank

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are among about 3,000 beggars who became clients of a unique Grameen Bank programme that offers tiny loans to the destitute to lift them out of grinding poverty.

Most of them raise goats, calves and poultry and some do small-scale business.

The main objective of the programme is to bring sunshine to the lives on the fringe of society by helping them ease the curse of begging, said Muhammad Yunus, managing director of the Grameen Bank and pioneer of microcredit concept.

The bank is giving a maximum of Tk 2,000 in interest-free loans to them for selling goods during the time they spent in begging. The beggars mainly sell vegetables, eggs, bananas, chocolates and small gifts during their door-to-door visit.

Forgetting the loan, a beggar does not have to belong to a group as necessary for other credit programmes of the bank. They do not need any savings or weekly payment system.

In some cases, the bank makes an arrangement with a wholesale shop under which the shop gives a member beggar the highest of Tk 2,000 in goods. The bank gives guarantee to the shopkeeper for the goods given to the beggar.

to take the figure to 10,000 by this year.

"We are very hopeful about the success of the programme as we did not get any case of fraudulent practice or embezzlement by the beggars," said Dipal Chandra Barua, general manager of the bank.

He said the beggars and the destitute would be brought under the regular programme of the bank evaluating their performance.

Forex seized

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down Mozaffal.

Alarmed by the customs officials, other airport officials raced to the scene, prompting one of the banknote carriers to flee dropping his coat.

Customs officials said they found an identity card, issued to Boarding Bridge Operator Mohammad Shahnor Islam by Caab, clipped to the coat. They also found another wad on the boarding bridge.

Airport police carried out several raids in Dhaka until 7:00pm, but could not arrest anybody. Immediately after the recovery of the haul, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, State Minister for Finance Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain and Chairman of the National Board of Revenue Khairuzaman Chowdhury visited the scene, among others. Yesterday's recovery dwarfed the haul of about Tk 2 crore at the same airport on June 16 last year.

Writer improving

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something," she added.

Although CMH authorities gave Azad his spectacle and a newspaper yesterday, it could not be known whether he was able to read.

A medical bulletin of the ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations) released at 11:00am yesterday said Azad's condition improved further in that he is conscious, has regained orientation of time and space, and is able to communicate verbally.

"His pulse, temperature, respiration and blood pressure are within acceptable limits. He can sit with assistance and is getting liquid food orally," the ISPR bulletin said, quoting review by senior specialists of the teamed forces.

"His overall condition is improving but further intensive care is required," the bulletin added.

Citing Azad's physical and mental weakness, CMH authorities refused to let Inspector Kazi Abdul Malek of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) talk to the writer. Malek is investigating the attack.

"Maybe he will not be able to bear the stress of recalling the incident," Malek said. "I'm waiting, I think I will be able to talk to him within a day or two."

With no development in the investigation so far, the CID officer talked with Azad's publisher Osman Gani at the CMH yesterday. Azad used to sit at Gani's stall of Agami

Prokashani at the Ekushey Book Fair and was attacked an hour after leaving the stall.

"The CID asked me when he (Azad) left my stall and where he was heading," Gani said.

Azad asked for Gani after regaining consciousness, but authorities till last evening were still not letting anyone other than his family to visit him.

Fire victim

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