

Street politics set

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On the other hand, the BNP has decided to continue its street programmes throughout this month to face the opposition.

The alternative political stream led by former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury will observe "Hated Day" against corrupt people through a programme at Mukltangon in the capital this afternoon.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) led by Hasanul Haq Inu also called a two-day hartal coinciding with the AL's in demand for immediate resignation of the government and snap polls.

AL sources said after the hartal, the party will go for wildcat programmes that may include more hartals, road march, siege and some other alternative ways of protest.

The human shield across the city the AL organised on March 30 to express no-confidence in the government proved a success, the party leadership thinks and it plans to continue similar programmes to expedite the fall of the government. The party might hold a rally of general people, including women and children, severely affected by the price spiral of essentials. The rally is likely take place on the Central Shaheed Minar premises on April 10.

Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to address a public meeting at Mirpur on April 9. She may announce some future programmes there.

Some AL stalwarts said the ruling alliance has become isolated from people only in two and a half years of its rule due to the law and order slide and price spiral of essentials.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told newsmen on Sunday, "We are going ahead with an anti-government movement in a democratic way. Our main demand – snap polls – is not unusual in parliamentary democracy," Jalil said.

But the BNP leaders have dismissed the opposition demand for early elections, saying the government will not step down even a day before the expiry of its term since the

people have given it the mandate to run the country for five years.

The BNP and its front organisations will move firmly to face the AL programmes aimed at bringing down the government by the month-end, party sources said.

City BNP and its front units held rallies yesterday and on Sunday and are scheduled to hold a joint meeting today to chart out future programmes.

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is also scheduled to address some rallies in the capital this month.

Meanwhile, alternative political stream leader major (Retd) Abdul Mannan in a statement yesterday urged the people to join its Mukltangon programme at 2:00pm today.

Key Unicef-run

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done due to fault in the system.

While briefing the press at Unicef office yesterday, he hoped the incomplete work would be done after reformation of the system under the Tk219-crore PEDP-II drive.

The Ideal project, taken up in 1996, was aimed at improving the quality of primary education by ensuring increased enrolment and attendance and by reducing dropout rate from primary cycle.

It started off working in two upazilas of Jhenidah district for improving the classroom pictures, teaching materials and quality of teachers as well as ensuring participation of community people and accountability of the school authorities.

Social mobilisation and communication, and monitoring and evaluation were other components of the project.

The project has so far covered 36,997 schools and 148,405 teachers of 36 districts in improving the quality of education.

Body found

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workshop Sunday evening but did not return home at night. His family then looked for him at all possible places but in vain.

People of the area said they saw next morning police on duty at the DIG office hiding a dead body and washing the spot where the body was lying. The agitated people then entered the office premises breaking open the collapsible gate and found Masud's body in front of the main office building.

He however could not explain how the microbus entered the guarded area.

He denied the allegation of erasing the evidence of murder. Masud's body was handed over to his family after autopsy. His father was preparing to file a murder case.

Some sources alleged Masud was slaughtered behind the main office building in the early hours of Monday and his body was then dumped at the entrance to the building.

The office area is always kept under police guard.

The victim's father Shah Alam Howlader alleged that a few days ago local BNP cadres including Al-Amin, Salauddin, Zahid and Liton snatched a mobile phone and money from Masud. But they had to return those under pressure from local people. Then they demanded Tk 20,000 in toll from Masud, which he refused to pay. This might have led to his killing, he thought.

DIG Golam Mustafa declined to say anything on the ground that he had been on leave since Thursday due to illness.

Lightning kills

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several thatched houses.

Sources in Rangpur Met Office said the sky in the northern region remains cloudy for the last three days and the hailstorm is lashing the area frequently.

Met office sources and police said another nor'wester hit a vast area under Bera upazila of Pabna at about 5:00pm the same day, causing damages to crops and some thatched houses.

Yuvraj, Gul shine

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five-wicket haul from seamer Umar Gul.

Gul, playing only his fifth Test, ripped through India's top-order with his accurate line and length to dismiss Virender Sehwag (39), Sachin Tendulkar (2), Vangipurappu Laxman (11), Rahul Dravid (33) and Parthiv Patel (0).

He finished with five for 31 from 12 overs, the first time the 19-year-old has taken five wickets in a Test innings.

Yuvraj then shared in a 117-run stand for the eighth wicket with Irfan Pathan, who scored a dogged 49, after India's stand-in captain Rahul Dravid had elected to bat on a greenish pitch.

In reply Pakistan reached 61 for one at the close after losing opener Taufeeq Umar for 24.

Paceman Mohammad Sami had earlier struck the first blow, removing opener Akash Chopra for four with a ball that nipped in sharply from outside off.

Sehwag, who struck an Indian record 309 in their first Test win at Multan, again looked in prime form before he poked at an outswinger from Gul and was caught by wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal, who was playing because of a groin injury to Moin Khan.

Gul, lacking in pace but bowling a

28 killed in China bus crashes

AP, Beijing

Two buses collided and plunged off a mountain road yesterday in southwestern China, killing 28 people, according to official media reports.

One bus hit the rear of another bus shortly after noon in Guizhou province, and both vehicles fell about 500 feet, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

Police were investigating the cause of the accident. The exact number of passengers traveling on the buses wasn't immediately known, the report said.

China's roads are among the world's deadliest.

Last year, traffic accidents killed 104,372 people in China, according to government figures. Most accidents are caused by unsafe roads.

Trader mugged in Keraniganj

UNB, Keraniganj

Armed muggers snatched Tk 5 lakh from a steel trader at Nekrojanj in Keraniganj yesterday.

A gang of muggers waylaid Asaduzzaman, a resident of Ruhitpur, at gunpoint about five km south of Keraniganj Police Station when he was returning home by auto-rickshaw at about 2:30pm and robbed him of the money.

He was returning from Konakhola Sub-register's Office with the money after he failed to break a deal to purchase a piece of land.

A case was lodged, police failed to arrest anyone till 6:30 in the evening.

Youth shot

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to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 3:30pm.

Leaving Sony at the Emergency Department, they went out for blood, but did not return by 5:00pm, when the victim succumbed to his injury.

Mohammadpur police confirmed the incident, adding they could not trace any official of the club or any of Sony's relatives till 7:00pm.

Although police are yet to find out the motive behind the murder, Sony's uncle Shahidul Islam said, "It's no mugging incident, rather it might be the club's internal feud over which Sony was murdered."

While contacted, Lalmatia Club officials said Sony was never a player of the club.

An official of the club on condition of anonymity said, "Sony and some local hoodlums have been occupying the club by force for a long time. They lived in the club and ran drug trade there, marring the sporting atmosphere."

Sony's body was kept at the DMCH morgue.

Meanwhile at around 7:00pm police at the DMCH camp nabbed Akbar from the area in this connection.

In a separate incident at Tajmahal Road yesterday muggers shot one driver of a cigarette distributing company.

Makshudur Rahman, 25, and salesperson Solaiman were distributing cigarettes in a rickshaw-van in the area, when around seven muggers held them at gunpoint at 2:45pm and tried to take away the vehicle. As Makshud refused to hand over the vehicle, the gang shot in his left thigh and fled the spot snatching a few packets from the van.

Makshudur is now receiving treatment at the DMCH.

Ctg arms haul

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Witnesses said police helped smugglers unload the arms, an allegation law enforcers brushed aside.

The investigators visited Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited, where the firearms were offloaded from two trawlers off its jetty on the Karnaphuli coast under the cover of dark. They found the jetty unprotected and said lax security watch left scope for gunrunners to use it for smuggling.

Fertiliser factory officials, including its managing director, security and police personnel and other witnesses to the offloading of the haul gave statements to the team that worked until 7:30pm, sources said.

Managing Director of adjoining Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Mohsinuddin Talukder, Chief Security Officer Zainal Abedin, Officer-in-Charge Ahadur Rahman of Karnaphuli Police Station and Sergeant Alauddin also gave statements.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Special Branch Shamsul Islam, Director of the Directorate of General Forces Intelligence Rezakul Haider Chowdhury, National Security Intelligence Director Enamur Rahman Chowdhury and Criminal Investigation Department DIG Farruk Ahmed Chowdhury are part of the investigating team.

Court yesterday sent to jail Saifuddin, a crew of FV Khazardan, one of the two seized vessels, and Feroz Ahmed, son of Zakir Ahmed, who owns FV Amanat.

Arms brought

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Quader Chowdhury would have to answer this.

The AL chief renewed her allegation that 26,000 people were killed after the BNP-Jamaat alliance came to power and they have plans to kill more people. "We want international probe into the largest-ever arms haul. We can't allow anyone to play ducks and drakes with the people's fate."

Referring to an allegation by some pro-opposition lawyers of the Supreme Court on Sunday, she said: "The BNP-Jamaat terrorists had taken away doors of the office rooms of the president and general secretary of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)."

"Earlier, with direct patronisation of the incumbent communication minister, terrorists also kicked on the door of the chief justice's chamber," she added.

However, SCBA president Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmood informed newsmen Sunday evening that the doors of their office rooms had been taken away for repairing.

The opposition leader further alleged that more than 750 journalists faced torture under the BNP-Jamaat government while eight of them had died.

"Many journalists in the southern districts are fleeing homes to save their life," she said and accused the government of 'torturing journalists, corruption and violation of human rights.'

The former prime minister said this government had come to power to bask in its glory, "not to perform their responsibilities."

But the previous Awami League government, she said, took power as a responsibility. "Awami League will again come to power if there is no conspiracy," she added.

Acting President of Jhalakathi district AL Sarder M Shah Alam, AL leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Obaidul Kader and

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak and General Secretary Mirza Azam MP and Pourasabha Chairman Belayet Hossain also addressed the meeting.

Our Barisal Correspondent reported that at the end of the rally Sheikh Hasina announced the name of Belayet Hossain the AL chairman candidate for the coming Jhalakathi municipal election.

She introduced Belayet and other AL commissioner candidates to the audience. But announcement of AL chairman candidate angered a faction of the party led by Fatal Hossain, panel chairman of Jhalakathi Municipality.

The agitating supporters of Fatal Hossain, also social welfare secretary of district Awami League, attacked Belayet's men and damaged the dais. They also attacked the house of AL central leader Amir Hossain Amu in the town.

Earlier in the morning, Hasina started her journey from Barguna and addressed rallies at Patharghata College ground, Shaheed Mujtaba playground in Mathbaria of Pirojpur, and at Bamna in Barguna, Betagi and Kathalia.

Govt may open

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whether there was a link between the opposition's deadline of ousting the government and the arms cache.

The statement of Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil on giving a 'surprise' has created a doubt among the public, he added.

Rejecting the opposition's accusation, the minister said the government need not bring arms secretly when they can bring those openly. The government should be praised for the seizure, he added.

Govt to be removed

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the party at a time when the elders are about to be washed away by the young Turks in leadership, who believe in the policy of "money and muscle".

In the statement, Jalil said the BNP secretary general himself admitted there had not been any smuggling of illegal weapons during the AL rule, which means the Awami League government proved its efficiency in checking arms smuggling into the country.

"During the Awami League rule, Bangladesh was never used as a gunrunning route, but whenever BNP came to power, Bangladesh

Slain Old Dhaka

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districts are being raided. They said police are also looking for seven to eight of his close associates.

"Investigation has revealed that these men could be linked to the murders," said Abul Khair, investigating officer (IO) of the case.

Police confirmed that Kajal, also accused in the murder of Sergeant Farhad on Jagannath University College campus, made at least three calls to Shamsul Haq's mobile phone before the businessman and his son left home with Tk 2 lakh.

Earlier on Sunday, Guddu alias Shamim Alam, arrested in connection with the murders, was placed on a fresh three-day remand after expiry of an earlier five-day remand.

IO Abul Khair said Guddu has disclosed some important information.

turned into a safe haven for international terrorism, with incidents of arms smuggling occurring more often than not," he said.

The AL general secretary questioned why there has not been proper investigation into the seized illegal weapons: "For whose interest the investigations were mysteriously hushed up?"

Whenever illegal weapons were seized, BNP government tried to shift the blame onto the opposition and divert the process of investigation, he alleged.

When the people expect satisfactory explanation of the biggest-ever arms haul, Mannan Bhuiyan tried to shrug off his responsibilities by issuing a shabby political statement, he said.

"Such a statement from Mannan Bhuiyan, meant for diverting public attention, is not only ludicrous but also indicates the link of the high-ups of the government with this arms smuggling," Jalil said.

Turag fish

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They even urged the factory owners to take appropriate measures for ensuring those wastes go through proper treatment so that those (wastes) cause less harmful effects to the fish population, he said.

"But owners of the industries paid no heed to our demand affecting not only the fish resources, but about one lakh people of the locality with the toxic wastes," said Abdul Karim.

Pak troops closing

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have long found refuge.

Now, Pakistani forces, as part of their campaign to clear foreign militants from the swathe of tribal lands along the border, seem to have set their sights on Shawal.

"There has been some speculation, it's one of the places mentioned as a possible hideout," said Pakistani Afghan expert and journalist Rahimullah Yusufzai, referring to the hunt for bin Laden and his deputies.

But Yusufzai and other analysts doubt bin Laden would stay there if he knew a sweep was being mounted.

The Shawal is an upland valley, with forests and meadows where tribesmen graze their flocks in summer, at about 1,300 metres (4,000 feet), criss-crossed by ravines and ridges soaring up to 3,400 metres (11,000 feet).

The small natural fortress, seldom visited by outsiders, lies on both sides of the unmarked border.

Pakistan sent troops into its side

DU

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three-member committee headed by Prof Kazi Shahidullah, former dean of Arts Faculty and chairman of history department. The committee placed its report to the then government and made the suggestion about its name.

The committee also presented a project concept paper before the education ministry for construction works of the proposed hall at a cost of Tk 27 crore.

Prof Faiz said they took the decision at a syndicate meeting adding, "The final decision on the issue will be taken after discussion with different quarters and obtaining permission from the prime minister."

Court asked to consider suit against Bhorer Kagoj editor, reporter

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the lower court to take cognisance of a defamation suit against the editor and a reporter of the Daily Bhorer Kagoj for running a report headlined "Graft charges against eight judges".

Judge Motiur Rahman of the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge, who himself has been accused of graft in that report, issued the order upon a criminal revision filed on March 22. The revision was filed against the dismissal order of Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

Earlier on March 21, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Emdadul Haq dismissed the case on the ground that the person who filed the suit has not been victimised by the report.

But the sessions court in its order observed that the person who filed the case is a practising lawyer in an established organisation (Dhaka Bar Association). Moreover, he is a conscious citizen and an assistant officer of the court. The lawyer has got sufficient interest in the judicial matter. The opposite parties are found to have reported and published some libellous, defamatory reports involving the judicial officers and the judiciary.

The court also finds sufficient and strong materials and substance to take the case into cognisance against the opposite parties and directs the lower court to take the suit against the opposite parties into cognisance, the order added.

A lawyer of Dhaka Bar Association filed the case with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on March 17 accusing Editor Abed Khan and Staff Reporter Shanker Maitra.

In the plaint, the lawyer claimed the report published on March 15 was false, fabricated and baseless and it tarnished the image of court and damaged the reputation of the lawyers, judges and the judiciary.

It also caused a loss of Tk 50 crore to the judiciary, court premises and the persons engaged in law profession, the complainant added.

Gun smuggling

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The paper also reported that "The meeting, he (Srivastava) asserted, decided to send two major consignments of arms and ammunition to Northeast militants based in Bangladesh through Chittagong port of Cox's Bazar".

It added that Srivastava also said top leaders of five major outfits including Ranjit Debbarma of the Al Tripura Tiger Force and United Liberation of Force of Assam Paresh Barua were represented by Raju Barua at the Bangkok meeting.

The TDF also quoted Srivastava as saying that Bangladesh police are yet to reveal that they have over the past two days arrested 16 activists of the ATTF, Ulfa, National Liberation Front of Tripura, and People's Liberation Army and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup of Manipur.

"Making this public will amount to official admission of the presence of anti-Indian militants on Bangladesh soil."

"Part of the consignment would have gone to fundamentalist elements in Bangladesh," Srivastava was quoted as saying.

TDF also reported that Srivastava told it that a certain group in Bangladesh tipped off the Rapid Action Battalion after they saw the consignment was being offloaded.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi has informed the BBC that he was sure that the 10 truckloads of arms were destined for Ulfa. Gogoi explained that since Ulfa lost a number of arms in southern Bhutan in December they were planning to purchase a huge consignment of arms from Southeast Asia and transport it through Bangladesh.

He added he will request Delhi to set up long-term joint efforts with Bangladesh on matters concerning separatist groups in India.

Archaeological

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work. Though the organogram of the department approves it to have at least 426 staff, fewer than 320 staff currently work with it. About 110 posts are vacant, as there has been no fresh recruitment for the last seven years. "There were no replacement to the posts left vacant by resignation or death of staff," said an official, seeking anonymity.

For manpower shortage, the department fixes 'workers on charge' or temporary workers to maintain the archaeological sites. As these workers are not government employees, they are not paid directly from the government. Sources said around Tk 80 lakh from the department's fund is spent on payment for such temporary workers.

The department can barely allot Tk 7 to 8 lakh to its four regional offices at Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi and as a result, it tends to maintain archaeological sites on a priority basis.

Dewan Delwar Hossain, director of Department of Archaeology, admitted to facing a fund crisis. He, however, said authorities have contacted the ministry which has assured them of looking into the matter.

Tamil Tigers warn

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National Alliance, said they must be recognised as the sole representatives of Tamils, a demand Kumaratunga's leftist Freedom Alliance had steadfastly refused.

"A clear message has been effectively delivered by the Tamil people, in that the concept of the Tamil homeland, Tamil nationalism and the right of Tamil self-rule should be accepted as the basic aspirations of the Tamil people," the LTTE said in a statement.

The Tamil National Alliance's performance in the polls showed that "the Tamil national problem should be politically resolved on that basis, failing which the Tamil people will fight to establish Tamil sovereignty in their homeland on the principle of self-determination," it added.

The Freedom Alliance had rejected all the key demands of the Tigers, but it was not immediately clear what position it could take after assuming office.

The Tigers said they gained recognition as the "sole representatives" of minority Tamils following the vote which returned a hung parliament where President Kumaratunga was looking for coalition partners.

"The Tamil people have elevated the Tamil national struggle to a noble pedestal so that none could vilify or ignore it," the LTTE said. "We consider this as a major political victory for our freedom struggle."

The LTTE statement on its website made no mention of resuming peace talks with a new government that must prove its majority at the first session of the next parliament April 22.

However, it made it clear a future administration must accept their proposals for an "interim self-

governing authority" seeking greater regional autonomy.

Tigers said it was the first time in 27 years that Tamils in the island's embattled northern and eastern regions had voted overwhelmingly for a Tamil party supporting the cause of the Tigers.

The rebels made no reference to a split in their own ranks that may affect the affiliations of the 22 TNA candidates.

Five out of the 22 Tiger proxy victors are said to be loyal to renegade Tiger regional commander, V. Muralitharan, popularly known as Karuna, who holds sway in two districts of the east of the island.

The renegade leader had earlier asked President Kumaratunga to enter into a fresh ceasefire agreement with him to replace the truce accord signed between the main Tiger Leadership and Wickremesinghe.

Kumaratunga has already rejected the call.

Karuna has agreed to abide by the ceasefire that has been in place since February 2002, but has warned about threats to its stability.

The election for the 13th parliament since independence from Britain in 1948 was called by the president following differences with Wickremesinghe over the handling of the Norwegian-backed peace process with the Tigers.

Last November, the president took over three ministries, including control of the security forces, accusing the prime minister of conceding too much to the rebels in a bid to end the three-decade-old ethnic conflict which has claimed over 60,000 lives.

59 including 8 GIs die

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health department.

US forces meanwhile tackled Sunni insurgents in Falluja, where four American security men were killed last week. Residents reported heavy firing overnight and a hospital doctor said five people had been killed and three wounded.

Troops used loudspeakers to announce a night-time curfew and sealed roads around the troubled town west of Baghdad. Schools closed and the streets were empty. The US military said it had also shut the nearby Baghdad-Amman highway indefinitely.

Reuters journalists said they saw two Apache helicopters attacking targets in the mainly Shia Shuala district, where a US tank transporter was in flames.

There was no firm word on casualties in the strike yesterday, thought to be the first of its kind in Baghdad, but an anti-US cleric said five people had been killed and 10 wounded.

Iraq's US administrator Paul Bremer vowed to crack down on firebrand Shia leader Moqtada al-Sadr.

The Shia violence opens a new front for US-led forces already struggling to quell Sunni Muslim insurgents.

It also complicates the task of UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who arrived in Baghdad yesterday to discuss US plans to hand sovereignty to Iraqis at the end of June and future elections.

Bremer said Sadr was an outlaw trying to usurp legitimate authority. "We will not tolerate this," he told an Iraqi ministerial committee for national security.

Sadr responded defiantly. "I'm accused by one of the leaders of evil, Bremer, of being an outlaw," he said in a statement read out in a mosque in Kufa, near Najaf, where he is staging a sit-in.

"If that means breaking the law of the American tyranny and its filthy constitution (for Iraq), I'm proud of that and that is why I'm in revolt," the 30-year-old cleric said.

Gunmen milled around the mosque. Some rode around town in looted police pickup trucks, wearing

Sharon renews

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"disengagement" plan, Sharon said 17 of the 21 settlements, which are home to 7,500 Jews living in the strip, would go.

But he said he was now in favour of an evacuation of all the settlements, as well as "no more than four" settlements in the northern West Bank.

A poll published by the Yediot Aharonot daily Monday showed that a majority of Israelis and Palestinians favour the disengagement plan which is also likely to see Israel strengthen its control over their West Bank settlements.

A total of 64 percent of Israelis said they backed the plan while the figure rose to 73 percent among the Palestinians, even though their government has been kept out of any negotiations.

A majority of Israelis (62 percent) and Palestinians (58 percent) said that the pull-out should be conducted through negotiations and not unilaterally.

Sharon however says that the Palestinian government