

## Fury rages in Dhaka

**FROM PAGE 1**  
mon people, they placed wreaths at the coffin.

Jatiya Party Chairman and former president HM Ershad, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Huq Inu and Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim took part in the janaza. The AL leaders and workers broke down in tears when the slain leader's body was being taken to Gazipur after the janaza.

There were also news of damage of vehicles by unidentified groups of people around the city including Jatrabari and Mohakhali areas reportedly to protest the AL MP's killing.

### BODY HANDED

Earlier, DMCH authorities handed the body of Ahsanullah Master to his eldest son Jabid Hassan Russel at around 10.30am. Over 1,000 workers of AL and its front organisations including AL central leaders Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Akhtaruzzaman and the slain MP's relatives were present.

The autopsy on the body was complete at 10.15am and morgue sources said three bullets pierced through his body. Schoolboy Ratan's brother Nur Mohammad Sujon received his body Friday evening.

### ROAD, RAIL LINKS THRU' GAZIPUR STILL SNAPPED

Road and rail communications through Gazipur remained snapped yesterday as rampaging protesters in Tongi and adjoining areas stopped vehicles on Dhaka-Mymensingh road and barred railway engineers from mending uprooted rail line to protest Friday's killing of Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master.

The AL has called hartal in Gazipur for tomorrow to protest the savage incident at a meeting being held beside his house at Noagaon in Tongi.

Police, meanwhile, arrested about 400 people till last night for their alleged involvement in vandalising vehicles and offices of the ruling BNP and its front organisations since Friday.

Thousands of people blurred the political divide to join the slain lawmaker's namaz-e-janaza at Paltan Maidan, Joydevpur and Tongi Biswa Jtama Maidan before he was buried at their family graveyard at Hyderabad in Tongi.

The victim's family said at 8:30 last night that they were preparing to file a case with Tongi Police Station for the murder.

Defying a virtual curfew, hundreds of protesters blocked different points of the roads from Gazipur Chourasta (intersection) to Tongi Bridge in the morning. They burnt tyres to block traffic and set fire to a BRTC double-decker, a passenger bus and a cargo container, which were vandalised Friday, at Board Bazar. Fire-fighters put out the flames at 11:00am, but the protesters set fire to them again.

As some passenger buses and a staffbus of a garment factory tried to ply the road, the protesters chased those away to Gazipur intersection. Some protesters at Board Bazar looted the carrier of a dairy milk factory.

Long-route and local passenger buses from northern districts dropped passengers at the intersection, prompting hundreds of stranded passengers to walk on both sides of the road to Dhaka and Gazipur intersection with their belongings.

Only rickshaws plied the road apart from buses and vans carrying police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles. The rickshaw-pullers made the most of the opportunity, charging fares much higher than usual.

Some women were sitting with their boxes and bundles at a filling station near Gazipur intersection. "We boarded a bus from Mymensingh and paid double the fare to go to Mohakhali, but the bus staff dropped us here. They said they would not go further, nor did they give us the change," said Amena Begum, who was heading for her daughter's house at Tejgaon.

### ENGINES STONED, SET AFIRE

Protesters stoned and forced an emergency railway engine carrying spares to turn its back after railway officials attempted to replace railway tracks that a mob had removed on Friday at Dhirasram Railway Station in between Tongi and Joydevpur. Agitated people also assaulted the engine driver. Some protesters, meanwhile, set fire to a rail engine in between Tongi and Dhirasram Railway Station. Railway officials could not say when rail links with the northern part will restore.

### WHOLESALE ARREST

Since the eruption of violence on Friday afternoon following Ahsanullah's death, police raided different parts of Gazipur and arrested around 400 people. A top police official said on condition of anonymity that the arrests were made to stop organised violence by the protesters.

But Duty Officer at Tongi Police Station Sub-inspector Mustafizur Rahman told 'The Daily Star' on telephone that they arrested 40 people for damaging vehicles. "But we've not arrested anyone for the

killings," he added.

### CASE TO BE FILED

As rumours ran high that the government has filed a case against 5,000 protesters, Government Railway Police (GRP) said at 8:30pm that a process was on to file a case with GRP for uprooting rail line and setting fire to trains at Tongi.

### MOTIVE FOR THE KILLING

"Some unknown people planted a time bomb in Ahsanullah's room at Noagaon MA Majid High School in 2002. After a student stumbled into a thin cable, army experts retrieved the bomb and defused it," said Rashidul Haq, a cousin of the slain lawmaker.

"We think the same people attacked our office one and a half months back," said Mohammed Bablu, general secretary of ward No. 3 (Tongi) unit of Jubo League, who took a bullet in his left leg on Friday.

Many locals told 'The Daily Star' that BNP activists laid a siege to Tongi municipal office on May 4 and demanded removal of Ahsanullah Master and municipal chairman Azmatullah Khan for 'irregularities'.

They hoisted black flags in Tongi to express no-confidence in the two leaders who were elected for two consecutive terms, some locals said and termed the hoisting of black flags as a prelude to the killing.

Others alleged that those who failed to win against Ahsanullah in the parliamentary elections masterminded the killing to remove him from their way. "He made some enemies as he was vocal about putting an end to violence and drug-peddling here," Bablu noted.

### THOUSANDS ATTEND TONGI JANAZA

Thousands of people joined the namaz-e-janaza of Ahsanullah Master yesterday at the Tongi Biswa Jtama ground and later brought out mourning processions demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the killers.

A large number of people, other than AL supporters, also came from the capital, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Narayanganj to join the janaza.

The lawmaker was buried at his village home at Haidarabad in Gazipur Sadar Upazila in the evening.

Life in the entire Gazipur district, including the industrial town of Tongi, virtually came to a standstill yesterday as plying of motorised vehicles on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and adjacent roads remained suspended and shops, business houses and educational institutions remained closed.

Attendance at government offices was also thin.

Police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel were deployed at all road crossings and important places in the area. People wore black badge and hoisted black flag on their houses.

AL central leaders who joined the janaza included acting President of the party Abdus Samad Azad, General Secretary Abdul Jaill, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Abdul Hamid, Amir Hossain Amu, Obaidul Kader, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Ali Ashraf.

President of the newly floated political party, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, and former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, his son Mahi B Chowdhury and general secretary of the party Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan also took part in the janaza.

### RULING COALITION BLAMED

Speaking on the occasion, AL central leaders blamed the ruling coalition for the killing of the opposition lawmaker. He was killed following directives from the 'government high-ups' because he was very popular in the area, they said.

They also vowed to intensify the ongoing anti-government movement to expedite its fall.

Abdus Samad Azad said the killing of Ahsanullah Master was an onslaught on democracy, independence and sovereignty of the country.

Abdul Jaill said the lawmaker was killed because of his resolute stand against the present government. He hoped people would avenge his killing by unseating the government.

### LAST GLIMPSE

People including women and children started gathering at the lawmaker's house from early morning to have a last glimpse of the leader and to express their shock and sympathy with the bereaved family members.

Local people said Ahsanullah lived a very simple life and stayed at a rented house in Tongi till recently. Of late he built a small house near Noagaon MA Mazid Mian School, where he was a teacher all his life, but he was yet to shift his family to that house.

AL supporters and other locals alleged that police conducted raids in several areas of the district following the killing and picked up dozens of people, mainly Chhatra League and Jubo League leaders and workers.

## Students, transport workers clash in Sylhet, 30 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least 30 people were injured yesterday in a series of clashes between college students and transport workers in Sylhet while vehicular movement on Sylhet-Tamabil highway remained suspended for four hours and a half.

Protesting the killing of Rezaul Hasan Joy, a first year student of MC College, in an accident, about 100 students of Sylhet Government College and MC College damaged about 30 trucks in Islampur and Tilagarh areas at about 1:00pm.

Armed students barricaded Sylhet-Tamabil highway, beat up shopkeepers and transport workers near Islampur bazaar and set fire to two trucks there. Later, transport workers ransacked 12 hostel rooms of Sylhet Government College, sources said.

At least 30 people were injured during the clashes. Of the injured, six transport workers including Habib Ali, 52, and Hossain Ali, 35, were admitted to MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries, they added.

Students also fired 20 bullets during the attack, transport workers and local shopkeepers alleged.

As skirmishes continued, vehicular movement on the road remained snapped for four hours and a half before police cleared it at 5:40pm.

A speeding truck knocked down Joy's motorcycle at around 1:00am on Friday. He was admitted to MAG Osmani Hospital where he died.

## Palestinian state

**FROM PAGE 12**  
militant violence and Israel freeze settlement construction.

But the peace plan ground into deadlock shortly after it was adopted last year due to persistent violence and non-compliance on both sides.

Rejecting Bush's view, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said the creation of a state by 2005 was "more than realistic", while Qurie called for stepped up peace negotiations with Israel to meet next year's deadline.

"Losing time does not serve the peace process nor the stability of this region. Therefore we think 2005 leaves adequate time for serious negotiations (for a state)," Qurie told reporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

## Power supply

**FROM PAGE 12**  
areas suffered from the outage.

However, Desa shed most of the 50 MW power in areas on the suburbs including Postogola and Siddhirganj.

Subscribers in Dhaka have to face a one-hour load shedding in every eight-hour cycle, the officials said.

Power Development Board (PDB), which supplies electricity to the Desa, is currently carrying out a plan of shedding about 200 MW of electricity due to less generation and suspension of generation by a private company.

According to an official, the PDB is running short of about 110 MW, while another 90 MW has recently been added to it as two generation units at Baghabari Westmont plant recently tripped off.

The PDB yesterday generated 3,227 MW of electricity against a demand of 3,450 MW.

## Municipal polls

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Rajbari: Mohammad Ali Chowdhury. A.L.: Suja Nagar; Kamal Biswas, BNP dissident; Tungipara: SK Ilias Hossain, A.L.; Kushitia: Anwar Ali, A.L.; Dhanbari: Habibullah Fakir, BNP and Gobindaganj: Abul Kalam Azad, A.L.

## AL hartal

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points during the hartal hours.

Meanwhile, police yesterday afternoon dispersed a Jatiya Sramik League procession led by its General Secretary Roy Romesh on Bangabandhu Avenue when it was parading Golap Shah Mazar area chanting in favour of today's hartal.

AL front organisations also took out separate processions and held rallies in front of party office in support of the strike.

Addressing a rally of volunteers' front of the AL, Sechchha Sebok League, AL presidium member Motia Chowdhury alleged the government has been killing upcoming opposition leaders in a planned way and the killing of Ahsanullah was a part of it.

AL student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League and youth front Jubo League brought out separate processions supporting the shut-down in the afternoon while police barricaded Bangabandhu Avenue.

The AL and its front organisations kept national and party flags at half-mast at party offices across the country and party leaders and activists wore black badges as part of the three-day opposition programme to mourn the killing of Gazipur-2 constituency lawmaker.

AL supporters bring out mourning processions across the country tomorrow to protest the murder.

## B'Chy launches

**FROM PAGE 1**  
major Abdul Mannan as secretary general of the BDB. Retired brigadier general Gias Uddin seconded the proposal.

Chowdhury earlier filed a writ petition against the government for obstructing them from holding meetings and refusing any meeting venue to his former forum Bikolpo Dhara.

Coming to the DRU office straight from the High Court after filing the writ petition, Chowdhury launched his new party at the impromptu press conference.

He said the BDB would participate in the by-elections for Dhaka-10 and Munshiganj-1 constituencies, the seats vacated by Mannan and Mahi, who resigned from both the Jatiya Sangsad and the ruling BNP to join Bikolpo Dhara.

Explaining the aims of his party, Chowdhury said faith in independence and sovereignty and democracy at all levels formed the central plank of his party.

He said his party was committed to fighting terrorism, corruption and poverty, the major problems facing Bangladesh.

About the quick launch of the party, Chowdhury said he declared on March 11 that he would float the party in two months from a public meeting.

But failing to get permission for the Paltan Maidan, Engineer's Institution and Muktangan, he said he decided to launch the party simultaneously with the filing of the writ petition.

Chowdhury regretted that even the National Press Club authorities did not give them any room for holding the press conference yesterday.

Upon the writ petition, the High Court issued a rule on the govern-

ment to explain in a week why the BDB should not be allowed to hold rally at the Paltan Maidan.

Illustrating his party's structure, the former president said it would have a national council comprising 1,500 to 2,000 members, a national committee of 300 members and a steering committee of 15 members.

There would be some special committees, including several consultative committees on different issues manned by specialists from different professional groups and members of civil society, an advisory committee and a parliamentary board.

In the lower rungs of the set-up, there would be town committees, district committees and electoral constituency-based committees.

On a question on the Liberation War, he said there would be no room for those who do not believe in the spirit of the war in his party.

He termed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the main architect of Bangladesh's independence, but said the roles of the late president Ziaur Rahman and others should not be undermined.

The renowned physician-turned-politician said Bangladesh was divided in the names of two or three leaders and he would try to bridge the divide.

Referring to Friday's killing of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master in a Tongi rally, Chowdhury held the government responsible for failing to even protect the life of a people's representative.

The BDB president called a public meeting of the new party at Paltan Maidan for May 25 when the full committee would be announced.

## NSC showcaused over Bikalpa Dhaka rally application

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued rule upon the National Sports Council (NSC) and others to show cause why they should not be directed to dispose of the Bikalpa Dhara application, preferably in a week, seeking permission for holding public meeting at Paltan maidan on May 25.

The rule came upon a writ filed by Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan, secretary general of the newly floated political party, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, challenging the recent denial of permission to hold public meetings at Paltan maidan and Mohanagar Natyamancha and restriction on using loudspeakers.

A division bench comprising Justice M Abdul Matin and Justice Shamim Hasnain also issued rule upon the NSC to explain why the recent denial of permission to hold public meetings at Paltan maidan and Mohanagar Natyamancha should not be declared to have done without lawful authority.

The rule is made returnable in two weeks.

Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel for the petitioner, submitted that Bikalpa Dhara was denied holding public meetings in the city in gross violation of fundamental rights.

Opposing, Deputy Attorney General Adilur Rahman Khan submitted that the writ was not maintainable as the application seeking permission for holding public meeting was made only yesterday morning, which is under consideration.

## Obituary

Rashidunnesa (Anni), wife of late Mohammad Golam Ahmed (Kanu Mia) of Malotینگar, Bogra town, died of heart attack in Dhaka morning yesterday. She was 92.

She left behind three sons and four daughters. Her eldest son MR Islam is a well-known energy consultant.

Her kulkhwani will be held Tuesday after the Asr prayers at Nasrin Villa, 22/1 Sonargaon Road. Well-wishers and relatives are requested to attend.

## Curbing graft

**FROM PAGE 1**  
collaboration and cooperation."

The prime minister also said the NGOs in Bangladesh enjoy adequate operational freedom in carrying out their development activities. "We are committed to maintaining an enabling environment for them, so that they can be effective development partners."

Effective utilisation of external resources remains a major area of this government's initiatives, Khaleida mentioned.

"We still have a long way to go. A large section of our population still lives under the poverty line. Against this backdrop, we need continued support of our development partners to sustain and carry forward our priority poverty reduction initiatives."

The prime minister said during the last two and a half years, her government has taken a number of measures to promote good governance and establish financial discipline and accountability.

She said steps have been taken to rationalise the size of government organisations and agencies, which include merger, liquidation, closure and partial closure of state-owned enterprises.

## Mob beats 2

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Police said a gang of six entered the house of Alauddin, accounts officer of the university and looted the valuables. As the gang was fleeing the scene, family members shouted for help prompting locals to track down Rafiq and Masud. The other members of the gang however managed to escape.

No case was filed till 8:15pm.

In another incident, a mob beat and injured two people on suspicion of torching a taxicab yesterday evening in Dhanmondi area, hospital sources said.

Police rescued Arafat, 35, an employee of a furniture shop at Green Road, and another unidentified man aged around 30 from the mob's wrath and sent them to the DMCH.

"As I got down from my rickshaw seeing a taxicab set ablaze, I found myself ringed by some angry people, who straightaway started to beat me suspecting that I set fire to the cab," said Arafat.

## India readies

**FROM PAGE 12**  
parliament that could scupper India's aggressive economic reform drive and strong economic growth.

Sonia's Gandhi's son, Rahul, a fifth-generation politician from India's prominent Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, was in pivotal northern Uttar Pradesh state at the weekend to shore up Congress support.

A win in Uttar Pradesh -- which sends 80 MPs to the 543 elected seat parliament -- is crucial for any party or grouping harbouring hopes of forming the next government.

Monday's last voting round in the five-phased poll that began April 20 is key for both Congress and the BJP as 182 seats will be contested - more than on any other voting day. Results will be known next Thursday.

## Jail junks govt claim

**FROM PAGE 12**  
injuries during a massive shootout Friday noon at a conference of the local unit of Awami Shechhashebak League on the premises of a school at Tongi while the new committee of the unit was being announced.

He was taken to Mohakhali Chest Diseases Hospital and then shifted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where the doctors declared him dead, it said, adding a bullet-injured juvenile also died at a hospital.

On primary information, it is assumed that a group of aggrieved activists who have not been accommodated in the new committee have staged this incident, the ministry said.

Following the incident, it said, the leaders of the Awami League and its front organisations resorted to massive violence with a heinous motive to divert the incident caused by their internal conflict to another course.

As the law enforcers rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control, unruly AL men swooped on them, leaving another youth injured with bullets, the press note added.

In a press statement, Jaill said when the entire nation is stunned at the dastardly killing of a member of parliament, the government, instead of constituting a judicial inquiry, has indulged in falsehood.

"It is beyond imagination of the people that a government that claims to be a so-called champion of democracy can issue such a press note," he said.

Jaill observed that such unprecedented falsehood on the part of the government not only surprised and startled the nation but also made the people angry.

As part of blueprint to eliminate popular leaders of Awami League,

the BNP-Jamaat government killed popular leader Ahsanullah Master, he said.

Jaill said Ahsanullah Master became the target of the government for his popularity and organisational capability. In support of his contention, he said police had mercilessly beaten him during a peaceful hartal in February ignoring his identity as an MP.

Moreover, for the last few days criminals belonging to the ruling party had been issuing death threats to Ahsanullah Master and Tongi Municipal Chairman Ajmatullah and both of them had registered GD with the local police station, he said.

Jaill said Ahsanullah Master was killed at the instruction from the top quarters of the government which later issued a misleading press note to protect the real killers.

He said after the heinous murders of Advocate Manzurul Imam in Khulna, ex-MP Momtazuddin in Lalpur, Natore, bomb attacks in Mymensingh and the biggest arms haul in Chittagong, the government tried to shift the blame onto Awami League as part of a conspiracy.

But with the passage of time, it has been proved that influential people and different circles of the government and a special 'Bhaban' were behind these dastardly incidents.

Urging the government to find out the real killers of Ahsanullah Master, Jaill warned that the government would have to bear the responsibility if it failed to bring the culprits to book.

Meanwhile, the left leaning 11-party yesterday condemned the press note and demanded immediate investigation into the killing of Ahsanullah Master.

## Killing of AL MP

**FROM PAGE 12**  
dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the Awami League in protest against the killing.

The Jatiya Sramik League requested all to make the country-wide hartal a success.

The organisations that protested the killing are Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Dhaka Ainjibi Samity, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad, Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jote, Bangladesh Manabadhikar Bastabayan Sanghata, Bangladesh Shisu Adhikar Forum, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, Jatiyatabadi Peshajibi Parishad, Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress, Jatiya Garments Sramik Karmachari League, Bishwa Bangalee Sammelon, Muktiyoddha Oikya Parishad and Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Smriti Sangrakshan Parishad.

The government has totally failed to run the country, they said and called on all to launch a tough agitation to unseat the government.

Our JU correspondent reports:

Some 75 teachers of Jahangirnagar University condemned the killing of Ahsanullah Master and demanded exemplary punishment to the killers.

The government has failed to ensure safety of the people, they said in a statement.

The signatories to the statement included Prof. Suvash Chandra Das and Prof. Afsar Ahmad.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds: The district unit of Awami League held a Gayebana janaza for the slain lawmaker at the Railway Station Krishnachura Square in the afternoon.

AL leaders Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Asaduzzaman Noor MP, and Dewan Arefin Tutul attended the janaza.

Our CU correspondent reports: Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Chittagong University unit staged a demonstration on the campus yesterday protesting the killing of Ahsanullah Master.

The government has pushed the country towards anarchy through the killing of the AL lawmaker, the BCL leaders said at a rally.

## British troops face

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Iraqi women being raped at British-run prisons in Iraq and called on supporters to launch jihad, or holy war, against British troops in this southern city.

He promised to give \$350 to anyone who captures a British soldier and \$150 for killing one. He also said any Iraqi who took a female soldier could keep her as a slave or gift to himself.

Meanwhile, Sadr pointed to Abu Ghraib in a sermon he delivered at Friday prayers in Kufa before thousands of worshippers. "What sort of freedom and democracy can we expect from you (Americans) when you take such joy in torturing Iraqi prisoners?" al-Sadr said, his shoulders draped with a white coffin shroud symbolizing his readiness for martyrdom.

Sadr dismissed apologies from President Bush over the abuse at Abu Ghraib. "I tell this to Bush," Sadr said. "Your statements are not enough. They (the guards) must be punished in kind."

US officials have expressed fears that Iraqi outrage over widely published photos of Iraqis being stripped and humiliated by their guards at Abu Ghraib could fuel attacks on American or other coalition soldiers.

Secretary Donald Rumsfeld Friday remained under pressure yesterday, despite apologising for the Iraq prison abuse scandal amid warnings that the revelations could worsen.

Meanwhile, a US soldier photographed holding a naked prisoner on a leash at the Abu Ghraib prison has been charged with abusing detainees, military officials at the North Carolina base where she is stationed say.

Private Lynndee England faced

four charges -- conspiring to maltreat prisoners, assaulting detainees on multiple occasions, committing acts "prejudicial to good order and discipline