

Protests mount in dists

Thousands mourn as AL leader's body reaches Muladi

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Protests against Saturday's carnage at Awami League meeting in Dhaka continued in districts yesterday.

People in large numbers joined processions and rallies organised by Awami League and other opposition parties demanding an end to such violence and punishment of culprits.

At Muladi in Barisal, thousands brought out a mourning procession with the body of AL leader Mustak Ahmed Centu, killed in Saturday's incident.

Our Barisal Correspondent reports: A pall of gloom descended in Muladi in Barisal as the body of Awami League central leader Mustak Ahmed Centu reached there yesterday morning.

Mourning processions turned into spontaneous protests as black flags fluttered atop houses and closed shops.

Thousands of people including women wearing black badges stood on both sides of the 10 kilometre road from Miranj ferry terminal to Muladi upazila headquarters to pay last respect to their leader.

At several points, people stopped the convoy of vehicles to see the body. Crossing the ferry at about 6 am, the convoy took about three hours to reach Muladi upazila headquarters.

A heartrending scene was created when the body reached the Mahmudjan High school ground at about 9 am. Long-time political colleagues, friends and admirers burst into tears, rending the air with loud wails.

Grief turned into protests as people joined a big procession led by local Awami League and Chhatra League and chanted anti-government slogans.

A former leader of Chhatra League, Mustak Ahmed was Relief and Social Welfare Joint Secretary of central Awami League.

His first *namaj-janaza* was held at the high school ground at about 9:30 am. A large number of people including district AL leaders and Muladi Upazila BNP Convener and Municipal Chairman Abdus Sattar Khan attended the Janaza.

It was followed by a mourning procession that paraded the upazila streets.

The body was then sent to his native Ramarpur village, where the body was buried at the family graveyard after the second Janaza after Jhr prayers.

Mushtak Ahmed left behind a four year-old daughter besides his wife, mother, three sisters and seven brothers.

Meanwhile the body of Chhatra League leader Mamun Mridha, 24, killed in Saturday's carnage in front Awami League office was taken to his ancestral home at Poschim Alipur village in Doshmina upazila in Patuakhali at about 8 am yesterday. The body was buried at the family graveyard after janaza twice.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Rajshahi: Different organisations in separate statements here yesterday condemned the grenade attack on the AL meeting in Dhaka and arrest of the persons responsible for this.

One hundred and 87 teachers of Rajshahi University in a joint statement demanded a judicial probe into the incident and said that the attack was designed to kill opposition leader Sheikh Hasina.

Manusher Odhikar Rakkha Andolon (movement to protect people's rights) in a statement condemned the incident and demanded an international probe. So-called Islamic fanatics might be involvement in the violence, it claimed.

The University Teachers' Association, Progressive Teachers' Society, Muktijuddha Sangsad, Bangabandhu Parishad, the district and the RU units of Udichi, CPB, Workers Party, Liberation War Doctors' Council, Rajshahi Editors Forum and many other organisation in statements condemned the incident.

Pro BNP-Jamat teachers of RU also brought out a procession protesting the carnage and held a rally on the campus in the morning.

RU Chhatra League also brought out a protest procession and held a rally on the campus.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: Awami Ainjibi Parishad brought out a procession in the town yesterday protesting Saturday's grenade attack on party chief Sheikh Hasian's rally in Dhaka.

The processionists chanted various anti-government slogans and held a rally in front of the Bar Association building.

It was addressed by, among others, advocates SM Haidar, Gazi Lutfur Rahman, Prasad Sarkar, Nawsher Ali. They condemned the "assassination attempt" on the leader of the Opposition in Parliament demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Assassami thana Awami Legue also brought out a procession at the upazila headquarters protesting the attack.

Hundreds of people led by local AL leaders joined the procession and chanted anti-government slogans.

It ended with a rally, held in front AL office with former lawmaker and Assussumi upazila AL President Dr. Moklesur Rahman in the chair. It was addressed by, among others, advocate Shahidul Islam Pintu, Yunus Ali, advocate Zahur Islam, Hafizur Rahman and Abdullahel Bachchu.

The speakers claimed that fundamentalist made the attack to destroy the spirit of the Liberation War and the democratic process and demanded punishment of the culprits.

Similar programmes were also held in Shyamnagar, Kalaroa, Debhata, Tala and Kaligonj upazilas.



A mourning procession with the body of AL leader Mustak Ahmed Centu in Muladi yesterday (top). A journalists' procession in Mymensingh town (bottom left) and a lawyers' meeting in Bogra (bottom right) in protest against Saturday's carnage in front of Awami League office in Dhaka..

On Sunday, a Gayabana Janaza was hheld at Shaheed Abdur razzak park for those killed in the carnage.

Our Netrakona Correspondent reports: Netrakona district Awami League and its front organisations brought out a mourning procession and held a protest rally in Netrakona town Sunday evening.

Earlier a Gaybana Janaza was held in front of Netrakona Awami League office.

The rally held in front of the party office was presided over by district AL president Shamsujuha and addressed by, among others,

AL General Secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Kasru, Pourasova Chairman Nazrul Islam Khan and other leaders of the party and its front organisations.

The speaker bitterly condemned the attack and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Our Manikganj Correspondent reports:

Awami League, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu), Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Gono Forum jointly brought out a procession in the town yesterday in support of hartal for today and tomorrow

The procession started from the AL office at 12:30 pm and terminated at Manikganj bus stand, where a rally was held. Manikganj AL President Golam Mohiuddin, secretary Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim, JSD-Inu central leader Afjal Hossain Khan Joki, its Maikganj district unit joint secretary Aslam Khan Babu, among others, addressed the rally.

Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on the Dhaka-Aricha highway because of the rally.

On the other hand, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of ruling BNP, brought out an anti-hartal procession in the town at 11.3am.

It also held a rally in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office condemning the bomb attack on AL meeting in Dhaka.

Our Rangamati Correspondent reports: Rangamati district Awami League and its front organisations held a rally, brought out a procession in the town on Sunday and offered Gayebana Janaja in front of the municipality office for those killed in Saturday's incident in Dhaka.

AL district unit president Diponkor Talukder presided the rally held on the court building premises. It was followed by a procession. Among others, district unit secretary Selim Choudhury, organising secretary Zameer Uddin and Jubo League and Chhatra League spoke at the rally demanding resignation of the government.

Earlier, as the news of attack on AL rally reached here Saturday

evening, agitated AL leaders and activists brought out a procession in the town's Bonorupa area at around 7:00 pm. They also held a rally in front of Shapla Boarding, presided over by AL district unit vice-president Shamima Akter.

Our Magura Correspondent Reports: Awami League brought out a procession in the town yesterday to protest Saturday's incident in Dhaka and drum up support for its country-wide hartals tomorrow and the day after.

The procession ended in a rally, held at Kuchchaborar square in the town.

AL district conveyor Altaf Hossain, Prof MS Akbar MP, former MP Biren Sikder, AL joint-conveyor Abu Nasir Bablu and Abdul Gafur addressed the rally, calling upon the people to observe the hartals to protest incidents violence.

Jessore jute mill facing closure

Over Tk 15 cr liability: No funds for jute purchase

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The Jessore Jute Industries (JJI), the biggest jute mill in the country after now-defunct Adamjee Jute Mills, is facing closure due to manifold problems.

The mill authorities can not pay salary and wages to employees and labourers for seven weeks, buy jute in the current peak harvest season and pay electric bills. Even spares can not be purchased for lack of funds, mill sources told this correspondent on Sunday.

The BJMC (Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation) mill near Noapara industrial town requires 30 tonnes (840 maunds) of raw jute to fulfill its daily production target. A total of two lakh 90 thousand maunds is required for fiscal 2004-05. But only 18,000 maunds were purchased till August 15 and only 1,060 maunds are in stock which can keep the mill running for only two to three days.

Traders did not supply jute this year as the mill authorities could not clear last year's arrears dues, amounting to Tk four crore 27 lakh 38,000.

The mill is also incurring Tk 13,000 loss per ton on sale of products. The production cost is around Tk 50,000 but the sale price is Tk 37,000 only. Earlier, exports from the mill were shipped through Mongla port. The carrying cost was around Tk 1000 for five tonnes. It is now between Tk 12,000 and Tk 15,000 for shipment through Chittagongport.

The mill's CBA and three

employees' unions are pressing hard for payment of dues to officials, employees and labourers.

But 1500 tonnes of exportable products including 431 bales of hessian worth Tk 60 for Iran, 664 bales of jute sacking valued at Tk 65 lakh for Syria, 3983 bales of sacking worth Tk 3 crore 50 lakh for Sudan and 925 bales of sacking worth Tk 70 lakh for Iraq is stockpiled at the mill.

Losses, couples with non-export of products have resulted in acute financial crisis.

Production is often hampered for want of spares, lubricants and other inputs, which can not be purchased for want of funds, they said.

The Power Development Board (PDB) may snap electricity connection any moment for non-payment of Tk 5 crore 72 lakh 45,000 bills for May and June, they said.

A large number of employees retrenched through 'golden handshake' have not been paid their dues amounting to Tk 5 crore 83 lakh 27,000 while pressure is mounting for payment of Tk 30 lakh as VAT, land development tax and municipal tax and another Tk 20 lakh as carrying cost, insurance premium and telephone bills, they said.

When contacted, the mills Finance Director Kamal Hossain said this is because of "discriminatory treatment to jute mills in Khulna zone". He declined to elaborate.

Brahmaputra may swell again

Breach in Sango Dam in Tibet: 43 million cusec water rolling down, says message from Chinese govt

BSS, Kurigram

Local administrations in the Brahmaputra basin districts have taken precautionary measures to face a possible flash flood within next few days in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries.

The government of China informed downstream countries India and Bangladesh that the giant Sango Dam near the origin of the Brahmaputra in Tibet was damaged and over 43 million cause of waters are rolling down, posing a threats to north-eastern Indian states and Bangladesh, officials said here on Sunday.

They said the Kurigram Deputy Commissioner was informed of the matter on Friday by the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management in a fax message. The ministry directed the administration to take necessary steps to face any possible flood.

DC Azizur Rahman Molla directed district and upazila offi-

cials concerned to take precautionary measures.

The Brahmaputra may rise by at least two metres within the next few days if the situation at the Sango Dam point can not be controlled.

The waters may flow to Arunachal and Assam states of India in a few days and subsequently in Kurigram, Gaibandha and Jamalpur districts in Bangladesh, the officials said.

The Kurigram district administration on Sunday also asked officials to take steps, specially in Nageswari, Ulipur, Chilmari, Rowmari and Rajibpur upazilas, to face the possible threat.

Kurigram District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO) Abdul Majid told BSS that the Brahmaputra may swell by two metres and cross the danger level if the forecast comes true.

SNAPS

Boy missing from children's home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A minor boy has been missing from the Sonadanga home of Aparajevo Bangladesh, an NGO working for welfare of disadvantaged children, since July 21.

The missing boy is Rubel Shaikh, 9, only son of Alkas Shaikh in Gobarchaka, Sonadanga here.

Alkas alleged that his son had been sold to child traffickers by the authorities of the home. He could not find his son when he went to see him there on August 15. He further alleged that he had been insulted by the Project Manager of the home, Sikder Hadiuzzaman for protesting the incident.

A General Diary (GD) was filed with Sonadanga Thana on August 16.

On contact, Sikder Hadiuzzaman told The Daily Star he is not supposed to prevent any inmate from leaving the home.

Training on remote sensing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A 10-day training course titled "International Training Programme on Geographic Information System and Remote Sensing" opened at the conference room of Khulna University Science, Engineering and Technology School on Thursday.

The training was jointly organised by Urban and Rural Planning Discipline of Khulna University in collaboration with ERDAS India Private Ltd and ESRI, South Asia, Singapore

About 30 trainees from various government and private organisations participated.

Titas Commuter did not leave B'baria

Burnt Subarna kept at Akhaura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Panic has gripped the people of Brahmanbaria town following the grenade attack on Awami League rally in Dhaka and burning of Subarna Express inter-city train at Bhairab railway station on Sunday.

Many in the town were heard saying that such incidents of arson may be repeated. Many passengers who availed train earlier were seen moving in buses and a few passengers were seen at Brahmanbaria railway station.

Attendance at schools in the town was thin yesterday. Many guardians were seen escorting their boys and girls to schools.

The Titas Commuter, which shuttles between Brahmanbaria and Dhaka, did not leave the station. The train had started with Dhaka-bound passengers but was pulled back before it crossed the station compound.

When contacted, Station Master Shoab Akhter said the train was pulled back following a directive from Dhaka.

Other trains however moved through the station normally.

The 12 burnt compartments of Subarna Express were taken to Akhaura railway junction and kept there.

Police-pirates clash in Sundarbans: 5 cops hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least five police personnel including a sub-inspector of police of Shyamnagar Thana were injured in a gunbattle between police and pirates in Kalirchar area in the Sundarbans on Sunday.

The injured are Sub-Inspector Shahjahan, constables Shahidul and Shahidul Islam of Shyamnagar Thana while the identity of other injured persons are yet to be known.



The International Day of Aborigines was observed in Joypurhat recently. To mark the day, Sanjukta Adibasi Khet Mojur-o-Sramik Federation organised a rally of aborigines at the Zila Parishad auditorium.

Threat to 'blow up' Jhalakathi court, DC and SP offices

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two self styled so-called Islamic extremist organisations have sent letters threatening to "blow up" the Jhalakathi court building and offices of the DC and the SP by August 30 to retaliate the "killing" of Sarbahara leader Parimal Sikder by police.

Sources in the administration said, Deputy Commissioner Md. Shawkat Nabi, Police Superintendent Md Mahfuzul Islam and District and Sessions Judge Md Asgar Ali received the separate letters sent in the name of Zihad-e-Janata on Thursday.

In separate letters, another organisation named Muzahedin-e-Islam also threatened to kill Public Prosecutor advocate Haider Hussein, Assistant Public Prosecutor advocate Manzur

Hussein and freedom fighter and poet Abdul Mannan Sikder, a teacher at Amua Shahid Raja Degree College in Jhalakati. The letters were sent on Tuesday last (August 17).

In the letters, the two so-called extremist bodies expressed annoyance after the incidents before and after the Jhalakathi pourasabha election held on May 9 and the overall political situation and vowed to take "revenge", the sources said.

The letter sent to Prof. Mannan advised him to write in favor of Islam only. "Otherwise, no body will be able to save you", it said.

Police patrol and surveillance have been increased in Jhalakathi town after receipt of the letters, administration sources said.

3X2

4X2

3X2