



Communications come to a near-standstill during yesterday's dawn-to-dusk opposition hartal protesting Saturday's massacre on Bangabandhu Avenue and demanding resignation of the government. *Clockwise from top left:* The almost deserted Shapla Square in Motijheel; a train comes to a halt as Dhaka-Narayanganj railroad at Fatulla snapped; and AL leader Motia Chowdhury lies on the road at Zero Point after police blocked a Mohila Awami League procession.

BJP, IOJ leaders refuse to refute comments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia slated the chiefs of her two coalition partners on Monday, as she was angered by their outspoken criticism of the government for what they said was its failure to arrest any bomb attacker, party colleagues said.

Khaleda asked Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Chairman Nazim Rahman Manzur and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Chairman Mufti Fazlul Haque Amin to refute their comments published in newspapers in the wake of deadly bomb blasts that killed 19 people and injured 200 others on Saturday.

But the alliance leaders called to

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BNP expects anti-govt movement

Plans party revamp, massive political campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fearing an intensified anti-government agitation in the wake of grenade attacks on Awami League (AL) rally in the capital, the ruling BNP has decided to revamp the party and launch a massive political campaign to face the possible agitation politically.

The BNP leadership does not want a confrontation with the main opposition party, sources in the ruling party said.

"We will proceed in a peaceful way and we do not want to irritate Awami League by our programmes. We have instructed all units of our party to avoid any provocation and confrontation," said a top leader of the BNP.

BNP policymakers have asked party units across the country to hold protest rallies and bring out processions denouncing bomb explosions to draw public support, party insiders said.

Talking to The Daily Star, a

policymaker of the BNP said the AL may try to capitalise on the bomb attacks on its rally by launching an out-government move.

"The main opposition party does not want any dialogue or understanding with the government to put an end to bomb explosions and attacks. Rather, they (AL) seem to prefer launching a movement to capitalise on the attacks," he said on condition of anonymity.

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Govt rules out seeking out army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday ruled out any possibility of army intervention to assist the civil administration in tackling the current situation.

"The current situation is not abnormal and doesn't call for army," BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the reporters.

He blasted a news item run by a section of dailies forecasting deployment of army.

Replying to a question, Mannan, also the IGRD and cooperatives minister, said the government is very serious to find out the criminals involved in Saturday's attack on Awami League (AL) rally and taken every possible step to ensure peace

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AHMADIYAA COMPLEX SIEGE THREAT

AL, leftists agree to counter bigots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) and three left-leaning parties yesterday threw their weight behind the civil society its bid to resist a move by religious bigots to capture Ahmadiyya base at Bakhsibazar in the capital on August 27.

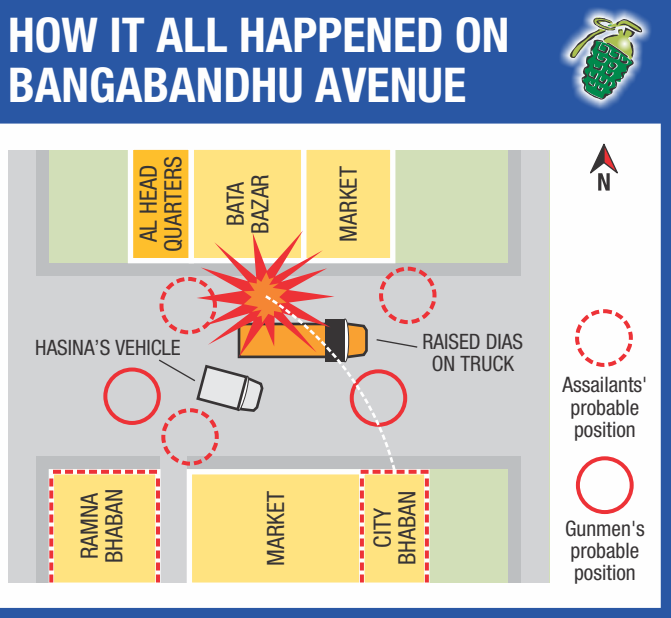
The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) will join the resistance programme while

the AL and the Workers' Party of Bangladesh have agreed in principle to support the move.

"We discussed a plan today (Tuesday) to resist the fanatics from getting near the Ahmadiyya headquarters," said Prof Kabir Chowdhury, president of the South Asian People Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism (SAPUFC) that called for the resistance programme.

"I've sent letters to the AL and

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STAR GRAPHICS

RALLY ATTACK

Neela Chy's condition

worsens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Of the Awami League (AL) leaders injured in the August 21 blasts, condition of Dhaka city AL leader Neela Chowdhury worsened yesterday while the others were either discharged or improving.

Neela, secretary of women affairs of Dhaka city unit AL, is being treated at Samorita Hospital. While

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4 embassies issue travel warning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US, British, Australian and Canadian embassies in Dhaka advised their citizens to carefully monitor events and avoid non-essential movement in the capital in the wake of Saturday's grenade attacks on Awami League rally.

The US Embassy website issued a travel security warning to its citizens staying in Dhaka saying, "In light of this recent incident, the embassy recommends avoiding the downtown area until further notice."

The British foreign and commonwealth office in its Internet homepage also cautioned British citizens in the country: "Attacks using explosive devices continue to take place in locations throughout the country. There is a risk that you might get caught up in such attacks if you are visiting Bangladesh."

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Correction

In the clarification The Daily Star carried on August 24, Anne Marchal's name was mentioned inadvertently as Charge d'affaires of the Royal Dutch Embassy in Dhaka. Anne Marchal is Charge d'affaires of the Delegation of the European Commission. We regret the error.

Nepal rebels kill 4 soldiers

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Maoist rebels blockading the Nepali capital killed four soldiers yesterday in an attack on a patrol trying to keep the main highway to Tibet open for traffic, an army spokesman said.

The gunbattle about 60 miles north of Kathmandu was the first clash over the blockade since it began a week ago.

The rebels had so far relied on the fear of intimidation rather than an armed presence on the highways to keep Kathmandu cut off from the rest of the country.

The attack was likely to scare away the few truck drivers the government had been able to persuade to brave the blockade and haul essential food and fuel under military escort.

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GRENADE ATTACKS

Investigators still in the dark

But they are sure most grenades were thrown from ground

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five days into the deadly grenade attack on an Awami League rally on Saturday, investigators are still trying to find out how the assailants threw the grenades and carried out the subsequent gun attack.

They are however 'almost certain' most of the grenades were hurled from areas close by the rally venue on Bangabandhu Avenue and a few from City Bhaban, sources close to the investigation said.

A top official of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is on the case, said their primary investigation reveals the grenade-equipped assailants split themselves into five groups. The CID investigated all previ-

ous bomb blasts but could not solve the cases.

Two groups took position in City Bhaban and Ramna Bhaban opposite the AL headquarters and one in the alley between the two buildings, while two other groups positioned themselves on the buildings on the western and eastern side of the party headquarters.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Daily Star two squads of gunmen were on the western and eastern side of AL President Sheikh Hasina's bullet-proof sports utility vehicle to carry out the near-simultaneous gun attack.

The position and the subsequent gun attack suggest that another team coordinated the entire

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22 Hindu houses torched, robbed

20 hurt in raid by 'BNP' men

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Armed mobsters with alleged links to ruling BNP in a raid on a remote village under Pirgachha upazila in the district on Monday torched 22 houses of minority Hindus, injured 20 villagers and looted cash, crops and cattle.

Eyewitnesses said a group of 35 to 40 BNP activists armed with machetes, swords and daggers cordoned the Hindu-majority Adam Sarkerpara village in the afternoon and set fire to the houses of eight Hindu families after spraying gasoline and kerosene on them.

Suresh Chandra Borman, one of the victims whose homes were burnt to ashes, told The Daily Star that Abdul Mannan and two of his nephews -- BNP activists Raju and Sajju, one accused of rape attempt and the other of land-grabbing -- led the band.

Raju was caught red-handed while

trying to rape a Hindu girl of the village two years ago, Borman said.

Fearing social stigma, the girl's parents avoided pressing any charge under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act but lodged a case with Pirgachha Police Station under Section 7 of Criminal Procedure Code accusing Raju of threatening them, Borman added.

Saju, on the other hand, is accused of occupying by force eight bighas of land of a Hindu widow, Indu Mai, of the village. The hapless widow was compelled later to flee the country to India. A case was also filed with the police station in this connection.

Locals said Raju and Sajju have been threatening the Hindu families with death if they do not withdraw the cases. The villagers refused to concede, prompting the brothers to stage the raid, arson and robbery

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Annan condemns attack on rally

UNB, Dhaka

Appalled by Saturday's grenade attack on an Awami League rally, UN Secretary-general Kofi Annan has strongly condemned the use of violence against the civilian population and called for the perpetrators of these acts to be brought to justice.

In a statement, he urged all concerned to exercise restraint and extended his deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the attack.

A spokesman for Annan issued the statement as follows:

"The Secretary-General is appalled to learn that the bombing at a rally in Dhaka on Saturday had caused the death reportedly of more

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Prayer Timing		
August 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-33	6-36
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		