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Ivy laid to eternal rest

Country sees her off in tears of rain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of mourners braved downpours to lay Ivy Rahman to eternal rest at Banani Cemetery last night, after a huge procession escorting the veteran Awami League leader's body walked across the city from her nama-e-janaja to the graveyard.

Family, kin, friends and colleagues of the late AL women's affairs secretary filled the front lawn of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, crying and sobbing as her body arrived there for janaja.

"This rain is the nation's tears for her," said Ziaul Hassan, an AL activist and one of the multitude that spilled onto the surrounding avenues. They came to pay their last homage to the Ivy Apa, who succumbed early Tuesday to fatal injuries received in the Saturday's grenade attack on an AL rally on the adjacent Bangabandhu Avenue.

The chant of Kalima Shahadat mingled with the sound of rain and a low-pitched voice describing her life over a loudspeaker as a heavy police escort brought the slain leader's body to the national mosque before

the Asr prayers.

Shops and businesses brought down their shutters in fear of riot as law enforcing agencies cordoned off the surrounding roads and kept vigil over the proceedings from building tops under grave security concerns. No public transport was allowed into the area after the end of the half-day hartal at 1:00pm.

Her co-freedom fighters, fellow partisans, women's rights activists, political leaders and a mammoth crowd of mourners placed wreaths at her coffin at Baitul Mukarram. Others later flooded into the Banani

Graveyard to pay their last respects.

"We could not show as much respect to her when she was alive; so now we hope she accepts our gratitude," said emotion-choked Shamsunnahar, one of the thousands who had been gathering since noon on and around Bangabandhu Avenue, the site of Saturday's carnage.

Thousands escorted Ivy's body across Dhaka through Bijaynagar, Malibagh, Maghbazar and Mahakhali to Banani, chanting slogans, with city commuters

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Hasina first ventures out after attack to visit Ivy's family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amidst a new threat of assassination from an Islamist militant organisation, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday made the first public appearance since the Saturday's deadly grenade attack to pay her last tribute to veteran Awami League leader Ivy Rahman at the deceased's residence.

AL leaders and personal staff of Hasina maintained utmost secrecy until the last moment about the visit. The AL president even avoided

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Police beat up President of Awami Juba Mahila League Nazma Akhter on Road No.32 in Dhanmondi as she was leading a procession of her organisation during yesterday's hartal.

Arrests, cop actions on pickets mark hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police action on peaceful processions and widespread arrests of opposition activists yesterday marked the last day of a two-day nationwide hartal called by 13 opposition political parties protesting the Saturday's grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally in Dhaka.

Law-enforcers picked up about 250 opposition activists and injured at least 26 others during the largely seven-hour hartal that closed schools, businesses, stock exchanges, took most traffic off the road and stopped cargo handling at seaports, virtually crippling life.

The main opposition AL, 11 left parties and the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) reduced yesterday's hartal, originally planned for 12 hours, to seven hours to enable people attend the nama-e-janaza and burial of

slain AL leader Ivy Rahman. But the Chittagong AL enforced the strike for 12 hours.

Ivy died from her wounds at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka early Tuesday fighting for her life for three days after suffering grievous injuries in Saturday's grenade attack on the AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Fearing mob attacks on trains like on Tuesday, railway authorities did not run any train on busy Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Chittagong routes during hartal yesterday, officials said.

In Dhaka, police charged baton to disperse a procession of women AL leaders and activists on their way to Russell Square from Dhanmondi Road No. 32, injuring five activists.

Police also picked up Nazma Akhter, president of Juba League, the youth front of the AL, from the

scene.

At 10.45am, AL lawmakers led by Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, KM Jahangir, Shahjahan Khan, Dr Abdur Razzak, Panchanan Biswas and Jahid Ahsan Russell brought out a procession from the Sangsad Bhaban.

Police blocked the procession at Russell Square where the lawmakers and party activists sat on the street and staged a rally.

Dhaka City AL at a press release claimed the leaders and activists of each ward brought out processions despite 'police clubbing and blanket arrests'.

The unit held a Quranic khwani at the AL headquarters for Ivy and 18 others killed in the grenade attacks.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) staged a rally in front of its headquarters at Purana

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Mourners carry the coffin of Awami League's Women's Affairs Secretary Ivy Rahman in a procession, far left, after the nama-e-janaza at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque before laying her to rest at Banani graveyard yesterday; and AL President Sheikh Hasina, left, consoles Ivy's elder daughter Tania Rahman after placing wreath on her coffin at their Gulshan residence.

ARMS SMUGGLING, BOMB BLASTS Foreign missions critical of govt's performance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several foreign missions in Dhaka have expressed critical dissatisfaction over the government's poor performance in identifying the criminals engaged in arms smuggling and the series of bomb attacks

in different parts of the country.

They also questioned the government's sincerity to institute good governance and observed that though the alliance government made lots of commitments on various issues, most of them remain unfulfilled.

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GRENADE ATTACK Close watch on some people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intelligence agencies are keeping a vigil on some people and closely watching their movements, suspecting their links to Saturday's deadly grenade attack on the Awami League (AL) rally as the probe into the grisly incident is yet to make a headway.

Sources close to the investigators however declined to disclose the names of people under watch at this stage of investigation.

The investigators questioned 32 people till yesterday, including Major General (Retd) Tareq Ahmed Siddique, chief of the private security squad of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, but they were yet to get any lead to the incident. They recorded statements of 22 out of the 32 people.

The home ministry yesterday nominated two officials to extend secretarial support to the Judicial Inquiry Commission on the grenade

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Govt refuses int'l help in probe to hide itself: Hasina

AL president pays homage to Ivy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government refused to take international help to probe grenade attacks on an Awami League rally (AL) on Saturday as 'it would expose their real character to all'.

Hasina, also the president of main opposition Awami League, made the comment when she went to the house of Ivy Rahman, women's affairs secretary of her party, to pay her last respect to her.

Ivy died from her wounds at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka early Tuesday fighting for her life for three days after suffering grievous injuries in Saturday's

grenade attack on the AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

With tears rolling down her cheeks, Hasina said Ivy was like one of her family as their girlhood relations consolidated year by year.

"Her killing by grenade, a battlefield weapon, was violence at its worst," she said.

Holding the 'Khaleda-Nizami administration responsible for the bloodbath' she alleged the government did not arrest anybody after the attacks that killed 19 people, including Ivy, and injured over 200 others.

"So many agencies of the government were deployed at the rally that day, but they could not arrest

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MOSQUE CAPTURE THREAT Ahmadiyyas urge govt to stop fanatics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Bangladesh (AMJB) yesterday appealed to the government to take immediate action to prevent the religious fanatics from carrying out the threat to capture Ahmadiyya base at Bakshibazar tomorrow.

The AMJB called for the prompt government action at a press conference at Ahmadiyya Complex. It also cautioned people not to fall for the propaganda campaign against the sect by the religious radicals.

Ahmadiyya leaders said due to the ban on Ahmadiyya publications, they can not refute the propaganda and false accusations against Ahmadiyyas.

They demanded the government lift the ban, which they said to a certain extent amounts to instigating attacks on Ahmadiyya mosques across the country.

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Dr Kamal, B Chy ask govt to step down

UNB, Dhaka

President of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday made a joint call for the government to step down for what they said was its failure to ensure public security.

"This is a very critical time for the nation," they said and called for unity of all democratic and progressive forces to preserve the democratic state and protect life and property of citizens as well as basic and fundamental rights of the people, political parties, leaders and workers.

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