

Hartal halts life

FROM PAGE 1
schools, colleges and offices, disrupted cargo handling at Chittagong port and largely emptied streets of vehicles in Dhaka and elsewhere. A small number of minibuses and rickshaws however plied.

In Dhaka, AL leaders and workers staged demonstrations near Russell Square in Dhannondii and the party headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue and in Motijheel Commercial area during the hartal hours.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), the 11-party and the JSD also demonstrated near Muktangan and adjacent areas amid tight police vigilance.

About 7,000 riot police and paramilitary BDR personnel were deployed at different strategic points.

Police charged batons and dispersed a procession of Awami Jubo League at Dainik Bangla crossing at around 12.40 pm injuring at least seven activists. The procession, led by AL lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor and Jubo League leaders, was trying to march towards Paltan Maidan braving police barricade.

Police also picked up at least five Jubo League workers from the spot.

Police put up barbed-wire fences on the roads leading to the AL headquarters in the early morning and prevented any opposition demonstrations there. Only top AL leaders including Matia Chowdhury were allowed to enter the barricaded area.

CPB President Monjurul Ahsan Khan led demonstrations in Purana Paltan intersection area during the hartal hours.

A procession led by former AL legislator Haji Selim clashed with police at about 11 am in front of his house in Old Dhaka.

The law enforcers clubbed a Mohila Awami League procession at Kalabagan bus stoppage and picked up three activists from the spot.

Police and leaders of Jubo Mahila League were locked in a scuffle near the Bangabandhu Bhaban on Road No. 32 of Dhannondii at about noon when the AL's front organisation tried to parade through Mirpur Road.

A number of AL lawmakers helped bring the situation under control and the women activists joined a rally of the lawmakers at Russell Square. During the scuffle, police assaulted AL lawmaker Sohel Taz.

Earlier, at about 11:00 am, opposition lawmakers under the banner of AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) brought out a procession from the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban area and after parading through Mirpur Road, they staged a sit-in near Russell Square for about three hours.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports: The hartal passed off peacefully in the port city. The city was by and large quiet till late noon when vehicles began to come out on the streets.

Four flights -- one of Bangladesh Biman and three of the GMG-- were cancelled because of the hartal, sources said.

Chittagong city AL held two big rallies

Interpol experts

FROM PAGE 1
advance mission, the IGP said, "It is to decide what kind of investigators would be needed for thorough investigation into the incident."

Some other sources said the duo would hold talks with officials of the six intelligence agencies currently probing the attack and check grenade splinters and other evidence recovered from the spot.

Bangladesh Police on Friday formally sought help from the Interpol and informed the international police organisation about how many grenades were blasted, how many remained unexploded, their nature and the casualties.

SCPTICISM ABOUT PROBE

Even with the Interpol experts coming to help out local investigators, many doubt whether the probe would make any significant breakthrough, as the investigators assigned in the case are the same who had failed to track down culprits behind previous explosions.

"Interpol don't have expertise like Scotland Yard or FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation, USA) to find clue to such incidents in a country like Bangladesh. The state concerned has to do it," said former IGP Nurul Huda.

"They (Interpol) can help a country to stop cross-border women and children trafficking, money laundering, and arms and drugs smuggling, and by giving information of and arresting criminals hiding abroad," he said, emphasising, "They can help a country by giving information not by probing any incident there."

AL leaders, meanwhile, questioned the government's sincerity in tracking down the perpetrators of the attack claiming the investigators are not only insincere in their task, they are even pointing fingers at those who were the very targets of the attack.

"Adequate number of police were not deployed that day (August 21) at the meeting venue. And, instead of looking for the attackers after the blasts, they fired tear gas shells at our people," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star last night.

"They've failed to arrest any of the culprits and are now destroying the evidence by opening the area to general people," he said.

Some AL leaders also doubted the suitability of seeking Interpol's help at such an early stage of investigation, while others thought it might be a ploy of the government to avoid responsibility.

INVESTIGATORS BUSY IN MEETINGS

The officials of Criminal Investigation Department, Rapid Action Battalion, Detective Branch and Special Branch of Police, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence and National Security Intelligence assigned to investigate the grenade attack were busy yesterday holding meetings.

Contacted over telephone in the afternoon, CID Special Superintendent Ruhul Amin, leader of the CID investigation team, declined to talk on the probe, saying they were in a meeting. But he could not be reached later by repeated attempts until 8:45 last night as his cell phones remained turned off.

The investigation officer of the case, CID Assistant Superintendent Abdur Rashid also kept his phone set off.

The investigation team however reported to collect some evidence yesterday and visited Mukti Joddha Janata

AHMADIYYA DISPUTE

Prof Kabir Chy asks for united stand against bigots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian People's Union Against Fundamentalism and Communalism urged the nation yesterday to be united against fundamentalist and communal forces after the bigots' threat to seize Ahmadiyya headquarters in Dhaka.

The fundamentalists could not stand up to the progressive democratic groups, said the union president and also national professor Kabir Chowdhury in a statement on August 27.

"Their effort to knock the mosque and complex of Ahmadiyya community down was foiled," he stated.

"The pro-liberation and progressive democratic forces with the help of different social, cultural and political organisations again proved the futility of the fundamentalist groups in the country," he added.

If police and law enforcement agencies perform their duties properly, it is impossible for any outfit to commit crime, he said adding that united resistance can stop all evil deeds against the state.

Kabir Chowdhury however thanked all who attended the fundamentalism resistance programme on Friday.

An extremist group earlier declared to demolish the Ahmadiyya mosque and complex at Bakshibazar in the city but failed.

Hearing on Dipu's

FROM PAGE 12
implicate any criminal cases against Dipu and issue any arrest order or make harassment.

However, they could not submit any certified copies of the HC order due to the hartal and prayed for adjournment of the remand hearing for a week, the lawyers said.

Uttara police produced Dipu and his accomplice Zahidul Islam Rana before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court at 4:00pm under a tight security.

Police said Dipu and Rana are criminals, who always use firearms to commit offences in the city. They need to be remanded to find out the clue to their arms and other accomplices.

Police arrested Dipu Chowdhury, son of former state minister for shipping and Awami League leader Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, from a buying house in Gulshan.

In the case filed with Uttara Police Station Friday, Mohammad Sagar Chowdhury, president of Friends Club, alleged Dipu and his two accomplices intercepted them in front of Rajuk College in Uttara and snatched away at gunpoint Tk 20,000 and a Samsung cellphone set worth about Tk 18,000 at about 12:30pm.

AL leaders

FROM PAGE 12
and I feel severe pain for the splinters inside my body," Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star yesterday.

"To take out all the splinters from his (Quader) body, it will take several surgeries that may deteriorate his health condition," said Anjan Lal Ghosh, the on-duty doctor.

The doctors also said the patients might face minor physical problems in future with splinters that could not be removed.

Manzurul Imam

FROM PAGE 1
him. Daulatpur police said he along with some other Janajuddho operatives was planning a killing operation.

The arrested extremist and some other operatives opened fire at Rab and policemen when he was taken to Prashadpur bridge area for recovery of more arms from his possession. The Rab responded with 22 rounds of fire that left Imam killed on the spot.

Other operatives managed to escape, said Bagerhat police superintendent.

Imam was absconding since the AL leader was gunned down on August 25 last year in front of his house at Shamsur Rahman road under Khulna thana.

Of the three other accused in the case, Shukur Gazi is now in jail, Abdur Rabbi alias Ripon is on bail and Ganesh Banerjee is still absconding.

Rickshaw driver Saidul Islam, who was carrying the AL leader, was also injured in the bomb attack and gunfire and succumbed to his injuries later.

AL for int'l probe

FROM PAGE 1
under the investigation," he said, doubting the government's neutrality in investigation.

The government sought Interpol's assistance on Thursday in investigating the grenade attacks an AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue that killed 19 people and injured 200 others.

But the decision did not satisfy the AL that demanded an independent international body to probe the incident on its own rather than assist the government or the police.

Jalil believed the grenade attack took place as the government held back for months the investigation of bomb blasts in Sylhet and other places and the recovery of a series of huge arms caches in Bogra, Chittagong and Dhaka.

"We demanded an international probe after every incident, but the government ignored it," he said.

Ensure fair distribution

would be provided with house-building materials like corrugated iron sheets and cash for rebuilding their houses.

The meeting was told that the government would rehabilitate all the 27 lakh small and marginal farmers under its post-flood rehabilitation programme. Steps have already been taken to provide seeds and fertilisers to such farmers free of cost and also to provide them with agricultural loan.

The prime minister thanked all officials involved in the relief distribution and flood management at upazila, district and divisional levels and the joint secretaries as well as the ministers and public representatives for ensuring fair distribution of relief during the deluge.

Minister for Food and Disaster Management Chowdhury Kamal Ibne

Yusuf, Agriculture Minister M K Anwar, Pime minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, Deputy Minister for Food and Disaster Management Asadul Habib Dulu, Cabinet Secretary Sadat Hossain, Principal Secretary Kamal Siddiqui, secretaries concerned, six divisional commissioners attended the meeting.

The prime minister cautioned against any irregularities in the distribution of VGF cards, which have already been started in the affected areas under seven districts.

She said the army personnel were helping the local administration and also the people's representatives in preparing the lists of VGF card holders. When completed, she said, the list would also help identify the vulnerable families in the calamity-prone areas of the country.

2 killers of Yasmeen

FROM PAGE 12
VICTIMS' VOICE

Yasmeen's mother and kin, relatives of the seven killed by police and locals have shown mixed reactions at the news that two of the rapists are going to be hanged, for which they are happy.

But most of them also demand punishment of the police personnel responsible for the shooting on August 26 and 27 in 1995 on innocent people resulting in the seven deaths. The relatives of the dead also claimed the government did not keep its commitment to rehabilitate the bereaved families.

Referring to a statement of the then home minister, Rafiqul Islam, in parliament, Monoranjon Shil, vice president of Dinajpur district Jatiya Party, told The Daily Star Friday the commitment to employ one member of each of the seven families is yet to be kept by the government. The affected families are still in dire straits, he added.

Youth gunned down

FROM PAGE 1
his foster parents' house in Islambagh Thursday. But he was found in front of Al-Madina Traders near his house the next day.

Angered, Delwar Hossain, foster father and uncle of Russell, slapped him that left the victim unconscious.

Russell was rushed to Mitford Hospital at 9:00pm where he died two hours later.

Rehana Begum, Delwar's wife, told reporters that Russell left the house without any notice and her husband beat up him to punish him for his irresponsibility. "We had been looking after him since he was three. My husband is innocent," she claimed.

Police arrested Delwar from his house Friday night.

A trawler repairer and sand trader Abu Taher, 40, meanwhile, died of bullet

wounds at Chest Diseases Hospital yesterday after struggling for four days.

Local extortionists known as Tuka Group shot Taher of Durgapur, Feni, in Satarkul in Badda Tuesday afternoon as he refused to pay them Tk 500 as toll.

Police, meanwhile, recovered the stabbed body of an unidentified man of around 48 and in lungi, from Agaraga in Mohammadpur Friday evening.

Hindu arson

FROM PAGE 12
Nekmamud Traders Association offered six bundles of tins for rebuilding the houses three days back, but the families have not yet seen any sign of them.

Some 40 ruling BNP men torched the 22 houses of the Hindu families to grab their land on behalf of Abdul Zabbar, a former BNP leader, and his family.

Pond stands in way

FROM PAGE 1
Industries Corporation (BSCIC), the authority to implement the project by June 2006, fears missing the deadline as it is getting late to finalise the PCP, let alone having the project approved by the Executive Committee on the National Economic Council (Ecneec). The BSCIC was scheduled to start working on the project on July 1.

The BSCIC on June 2 last year prepared the PCP, but it was not finalised, as the government remained undecided about the value of the land and the type of industries. The Planning Commission at a pre-Ecneec meeting on June 21 laid down fresh guidelines for the BSCIC to prepare a fresh PCP.

The difference of opinion about the pond and road has however been

delaying the PCP finalisation for the last two months, sources said.

An official of the ministry, asking not be named, said although thousands of people lost their job overnight, the government is yet to start work on the park, let alone creating jobs.

The revised PCP says the park will have 455 plots -- 332 for garment units, 81 for weaving and 42 for dying, finishing and printing units -- of half bigha, one bigha and two bigha area. Each bigha has been priced at Tk 60 lakh.

The park will be set on 292 acres, of which 198 acres will have industries, while the rest will be used for infrastructure including a container yard, banks, insurance companies, a police station, a power station and motels.

Opposition parties plan

FROM PAGE 1
use of hartal" by the AL.

Bikalpa Dhara is also confused about joining the united movement, as it is not sure about the next step of opposition unity.

"All the mainstream opposition parties have agreed to launch an out-government movement and are now working out the ways to kick off it," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters at his house yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu said at yesterday's meeting he would ask Hasina, also the AL president, about the strategy of the movement.

The opposition parties earlier turned down Khaleda's talk offer, saying her call was cosmetic and bent on diverting people's attention from the grisly grenade attack in the heart of the capital.

"The prime minister's glib statement to sit with the opposition parties is nothing but a political stunt to divert people's attention from her government's involvement in the grisly attacks," Jalil told reporters.

Political analysts believe the prime minister's call will not bear any fruit in the tense political situation.

They say the government's prime duty now is to identify criminals behind the grenade attacks rather than opening a dialogue with Hasina, but the Khaleda

Govt rubbishes hartal salary-cut report

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday described as baseless a report published in a Bengali daily that besides taking action against 1.50 lakh officials and employees, their salaries will be deducted, as they were absent at their workplaces during the hartal hours of August 24 and 25.

The government in a clarification said it did not take a decision as yet, neither did it issue any directive in this regard, said an official handout last night.

According to the clarification, the government officials and employees, including the women, remained present at their workplaces defying hartal on August 24 and 25 and performed their respective duties in a disciplined manner.

So, the report on taking action or deducting salaries of the government officials and employees is totally baseless, said the clarification.

Jubo League men hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A Jubo League activist was hacked to death by his party rivals in Jessore town yesterday.

The victim was identified as Jamshed, 22, son of Sirajul Islam of Kashba Kazipara in the town.

Police and witnesses said Jamshed came under attack while he was crossing Dartana Bridge at about 12:30pm. The attackers hit him with sharp weapons and left the spot immediately.

Jamshed was admitted to Sadar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 1:45pm.

Locals said the killing was a sequel to Friday night's incident in which Jubo League activist Saifuzzaman babu of Ararup area was seriously injured by Jamshed and his accomplices at Erandah village under Sadar upazila.

Police arrested Jubo League activist, Aminur, in the town for his alleged involvement in the killing. They also seized two sharp weapons used in the killing.

Attack on lawyer condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League yesterday condemned the attack on Advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun of the Supreme Court.

Advocate Humayun suffered injuries in his throat and eye in the attack by unknown criminals on Saturday morning.

He is one of the organisers of the Supreme Court Bar Association committee formed to probe the August 21 grenade attack.

In a statement, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil blamed the attack on the BNP-Jamaat-backed criminals who are 'trying to wipe out the secular and pro-liberation forces'.

In another statement, Bangladesh Bar Council also protested the attack on the lawyer and demanded stern action against the culprits.

The signatories to the statement include Council Vice-Chairman Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, Mahhubey Alam, ZI Khan Panna and PC Guo.

In a joint statement, Sammilita Ainjibi Samannayya Parishad Convener Barrister M Amirul islam, Joint Convener Barrister Shafique Ahmed and Advocate Shahara Khatun said such attack again points to the deteriorating law and order situation.

Charges

FROM PAGE 12
the run while the rest are now behind bars at Khulna District Jail.

Humayun Kabir Balu, editor of Dainik Janmabhumii, was bombed to death on June 27 at his office on Haji Ismail Road under Khulna Police Station.

Two separate FIRs were lodged -- one for the murder while the other under the Explosive Substances (Amendment) Act, 1987. Sub Inspector Maruf Hossain filed the FIRs on June 28 naming 10 Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) operatives as the

Ministries

FROM PAGE 12
government agencies other than the ones involved with maintaining law and order.

The circular has asked the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) not to clear bills that do not concern the law-enforcement agencies and are of an amount higher than the allocation in the revised budget for the supplies and services sector. The current budget has allocated Tk 3,170 crore for the sector.

The circular also discouraged foreign tours on government money.

Six cops, five others

FROM PAGE 12

were out for the first time in weeks, sweeping debris off roads lined with battle-scarred buildings, ripped up by US bombs.

Meanwhile, six Iraqi policemen were shot dead and 11 people wounded yesterday when gunmen travelling in two minibuses opened fire on a checkpoint in the restive city of Baquba, north of Baghdad, medics said.

The attack happened on a main road in the eastern Al-Tahir district of the city at about 4:00 pm (1200 GMT), said Brigadier General Abdul Salam Mahmud.

Police manning the checkpoint came under a hail of bullets, before the gunmen took flight in their minibuses.

A doctor said six people were killed and 11 others wounded -- nine of them police officers.

The fighting flared in Sadr City, an al-Sadr stronghold in Baghdad, as gunbattles broke out between militants and US forces.

US soldiers in Humvees drove through the impoverished neighborhood with loudspeakers, demanding people stay home because coalition forces were "cleaning the area of armed men," according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene. Sporadic gunfire could be heard.

Saad al-Amili, a Health Ministry official, said three people were killed and 25 were wounded in the skirmishes.

Militants fired assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades at American troops patrolling the area, said US Capt. Brian O'Malley of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, adding that US forces suffered no casualties.

As the battles raged, insurgents fired a round of mortars into a crowded eastern Baghdad neighborhood, killing two boys washing cars in a street near the former Iraqi National Olympic Committee building, said Interior Ministry spokesman Col. Adnan Abdul-Rahman.

Witnesses said at least four mortars also fell near the Palestine Hotel, where foreign journalists and contractors stay.

One 120 mm mortar shell fell near Firdous Square, the roundabout in front of the Palestine where US forces helped Iraqis topple a statue of Saddam Hussein on April 9, 2003. The shell didn't explode and could be seen sticking out of the street.

PM holds image

FROM PAGE 1
world leaders project it as a model for moderate and tolerant nation.

The seven of 11 living former secretaries who attended the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office expressed their satisfaction over the government's decision to seek Interpol help in the investigation into the grenade attack on the AL rally in Dhaka, saying it was the best international probe available.

After the rally bombing, world leaders, including George Bush and the European Union presidency, expressed grave concern over the wave of recent bomb blasts and the rise in persecution of minorities, especially of the Ahmadiyyas.

"No one had believed that Bangladesh was becoming Talibanised when it was propagated in the past," Morshed said, reiterating that the government was committed to looking into any international or domestic splinter groups of religion-based political parties or leftist extremists.

After reviewing the state of Ahmadiyyas in Bangladesh, US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca during her April visit said: "Bangladesh is going off-track from its tolerant tradition."

In January, US Congressman and Member of the Congressional Committee on International Affairs Joseph Crowley said, "Religious intolerance is taking a grip on the country."

Referring to AL dissatisfaction over the probe even after Interpol involvement, Morshed said the Interpol was the

largest international investigative organisation and the only international crime-fighting body under the United Nations.

"This is the best way to go if an international probe is wanted," said Morshed, adding, "We can't do anything else as this is the right way."

"By demanding the resignation of the government the Awami League is degrading the importance and significance of the blasts," he said, adding the government was committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice.

"We don't see the blasts on August 21 as an attempt to assassinate the leader of a particular party, but an assault on the nation and its democracy."

"We did not receive any conclusive results from the bomb blasts that took place during their (AL) reign and we did not demand their resignation but wanted the perpetrators to be brought to book," he said.

Of the 11 former secretaries, Faruk Chowdhury, CM Shafi Sami, Farook Sobhan and Ataul Karim did not attend the meeting.

Farook is in India, Faruk and Shafi are in the US and Ataul is sick, the foreign ministers said.

18 stations to be set up to check overloading of trucks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to set up 18 monitoring stations at important points on major highways to check overloading of trucks and other vehicles.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Advisory Council on road transport in the city yesterday, with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda in the chair.

The meeting was told that around Tk 71 crore would be required for the construction of the stations by the Roads and Highways Department.

The government decided to take actions against those responsible for overloading trucks.

The meeting also decided to file cases against the owners of illegal structures such as shops, bazars and factories on the highways to ensure smooth transportation and safety of the passengers.

'DNA analysis' spots

FROM PAGE 12
"Obviously algorithms that pertain to pattern discovery are applicable to a vast range of problems," Rigoutsos explained to BBC News Online.

Instead of looking at strings of protein, Chung-Kwei uses Teiresias to identify strings of character sequences, which appear in spam, but never in non-spam mail.

Their work, said Rigoutsos, was helped by the large volume of spam, which they received at their own workplace.

"We have lots of e-mails that we know are bona fide spam. If we run a pattern analysis on those, it can see letters that appear frequently."

"One of the properties of the algorithm is that it will spot two or more occurrences. It doesn't matter where they are in the message."

"If you do this, effectively you get small collections of letters so you can think of these as a vocabulary of sorts. If you have lots of data to work with, your vocabulary will be able to describe the data in a different form."

The algorithm can be trained so that it will not be fooled by cunning replacements of "S" with "\$", a common play used by spammers to bypass conventional e-mail filters.

The Chung-Kwei method builds up its database of known true-spam patterns and constantly adds new patterns it spots.

It compares its vocabulary with e-mails which it knows do not contain spam. So, an incoming message hit

with this pattern analysis will be rejected if it contains a large proportion of the same vocabulary patterns.

If a message received had a lot of spam patterns in it, it was scored highly. Chung-Kwei succeeded in spotting almost 97 percent of junk mails.

"We experimented with large collections of e-mail. We have 66,000 training messages that are all spam and 22,000 training messages that are all 'white' [non-spam]."

"To train 88,000 messages takes about 15 minutes on a normal single processor. If an hour later we have more spam, we can add to the collection so we keep on learning more and more."

Various anti-spam programs use several techniques to spot and kill junk mail, but IBM believes the Chung-Kwei algorithm to be the only anti-spam tool that uses pattern discovery in this way.