

Cultural outfits

FROM PAGE 1 ing one Hamid, his neighbour, and a female student of Arabic department in Rahshahi University. Both are members of the militant organisation Jamatul Mujahidin, the former name of JMB, Shafiqullah said, adding that he himself is a newly recruited member of the group.

On training camps, Shafiqullah named a Charshi Madrasa at Nayapara under Jamalpur district, formed by JMB chief Abdur Rahman. Although Shafiqullah himself took yoga lessons at another madrasa, he said many operatives were trained in Charshi Madrasa.

A top Bogra police official said they are certain of the presence of a strong JMB camp at Bogra, which is located in the east of the district.

The police official also told reporters that some JMB operatives, arrested while making heavy explosives at the Bonarpara Rail Station in Gaibandha, named a teacher of Bogra Government Azizul Hoque College as a JMB operative. The teacher is kept under police watch, he added.

The arrestees said under interrogation that they were making the bombs to hurl at a music concert of Mamta, which was supposed to be held at Bogra Stadium.

Police could not file a case against Shafiqullah and others under the explosives act, since they have failed to receive a report from the army on the explosives recovered from Gabtali village on January 16.

An explosives expert team last week examined evidence on the Gabtali Police Station premises and confirmed that materials found there were explosive.

Kibria's son wants

FROM PAGE 12 than any such gesture and a few meaningless phrases would be real action on her (PM) part to bring the killers of his father to justice.

"If she had done this there would be no need to come to us - we ourselves would go to her office to thank her," he added.

He urged the authorities concerned to suspend holding of the 13th Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) summit.

"My father wrote the original position paper that led to the formation of Saarc. We feel that at this time it is inappropriate to hold such a summit, hosted by a failed government led by a group of people who have lost the moral authority to govern this country," he said.

Expressing grave concern over the deterioration of the law and order in the country, he said, "No one is safe under this government and there is real fear in every house."

Asma Kibria, wife of the deceased former finance minister, called upon all to be united against terrorism and said, "Now I have nothing to do but make a relentless effort to fight against anarchy and injustice."

SP, OC suspended

FROM PAGE 1 failed to ensure protection of the local MP. He also does not think the suspension will affect the probe.

NO ARREST Police are yet to make any arrest in connection with the bombing. Police and other law enforcing agencies said they were working to hunt down the suspects but had no success till yesterday evening.

"This is not a case of petty theft or robbery that we'll arrest the suspects immediately after the incident," said DIG Haque. "This is a case of international import and we want to arrest any one only after being sure of his or her involvement," he added.

NEW SP YET TO JOIN Mostofa Kamal, deputy commissioner (traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, reached the town yesterday but did not take charge as the new SP of Habiganj until 8:00pm yesterday.

Suspended SP Khan earlier had handed over the charge to the additional SP of the district.

Next week MORE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. If enforced next week, the three-day hartal may coincide with the 13th Saarc Summit scheduled for February 6-7.

The AL will declare its fresh programmes today after consulting allied opposition parties, with whom it is running a simultaneous out-governments movement.

"We'll discuss the issue with other opposition parties before declaring fresh programmes," AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta yesterday told The Daily Star.

However, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil in a press briefing said AL chief Hasina will declare the fresh programmes.

Meantime, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque inu yesterday told The Daily Star that they will sit today to finalise the next course of agitation.

US wants

FROM PAGE 1 FBI to remain with the local investigators 'until or unless an effective investigation is finished'.

The government on Saturday asked the US for FBI assistance in probing last Thursday's Habiganj grenade attacks and the US is currently considering the request, said the spokesman.

"For such assistance to be useful, we believe it would be important for the government to establish clear terms of reference and to make other provisions to ensure that FBI consultants are given full access to all relevant evidence and witnesses," the spokesman said.

"If such terms of reference had been established prior to the involvement of foreign consultants of the August 21 attack, their contribution to the investigation might have been more meaningful," the spokesman added.

"In both cases, the August 21 and the January 27 attacks, the potential utility of the FBI assistance was greatly undermined when the crime scene was not properly protected from contamination," said the spokesman.

Meanwhile, a two-member Interpol team who arrive today to investigate the August 21 grenade attacks would also be requested by the government to probe Habiganj grenade attack, Ashraful Huda, Inspector General of Police, said.

He said not a single perpetrator of Thursday's grenade attack has been caught. The attack killed former finance minister SAMS Kibria and four others.

Earlier, US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said on Friday, "The failure to bring to justice the perpetrators of acts of political violence fosters an intimidating climate of insecurity and impunity that encourages further attacks."

He said not a single perpetrator of Thursday's grenade attack has been caught. The attack killed former finance minister SAMS Kibria and four others.

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Bangla Bhai

FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh as well to fight the 'conspiracies of Kafirs and retain the glory of Muslims'.

People were leafleted also to come up with any sort of help for these organisations to accelerate the preparations for Jihad.

"Muslims are cornered everywhere in the world because they are not resorting to arms," the leaflets read.

Hinting at the United States, it said Kafirs (infidels) are now out to wipe Muslims off the face of the earth. The jihadist organisations across the world are working relentlessly to fight the infidels, it continued.

The leaflet circulation by the JMB has caused widespread fear among the locals that Bangla Bhai men might start atrocities afresh.

Meanwhile, JMB men failed to hold a scheduled rally at Hamirkutsa Primary School field yesterday morning as police, already tipped off, cordoned off the area, said locals.

Later over 100 JMB cadres from different areas sat a meeting at the house of Mostafizur Rahman Montu at Hamirkutsa Bazar, said a witness.

ABM Golam Kibria, officer-in-charge of Bagmara Police Station, however, said they were deployed in the Hamirkutsa Bazar for hartal, not for any scheduled rally of any outfit.

JMB Bagmara chapter chief Abus Sattar Mastur and 24 others, who were arrested on January 24 for assault on police, were taken on a four-day police remand from Saturday. Earlier on Friday, the second in command of Bangla Bhai's operations squad Mustafizur Rahman Mustaque was arrested on charge of the assault.

BTRC top posts

FROM PAGE 12 process for appointments at the BTRC, a key official of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications said. He, however, declined to say whether the incumbent officials would get extension or not.

The MoPT has sent a file to the PMO but no decision has yet been made, a PMO source said.

It was the last day of office also for QM Farooq, who served as the vice-chairman and commissioner, system and service, Khandokar Abu Bakar, commissioner, legal and licensing, M Rezaul Haque, the commissioner in charge of engineering and operation, has been hospitalised since last week following a heart attack.

The post of commissioner, spectrum management, has been vacant since February 17 last year after NH Chowdhury had joined in a UNDP project as consultant for capacity building of the BTRC officials.

3 outlaws killed

FROM PAGE 12 admitted his involvement with the outfit and possessing firearms hidden at various locations in Singhoria village.

Police left for Singhoria to recover the firearms at about 4:00am. When they reached Singhoria field, Janajuddho operatives fired on them, resulting in an hour-long gunfight.

While trying to escape from the police van, Idrish got caught in 'crossfire' and died on the spot, police said.

Police seized a revolver and five bullets from the spot.

JS body worried

FROM PAGE 12 To step up activities of the national detective agencies. It also observed that both military and civil agencies had become inactive and failed to discharge their duties.

The parliamentary body had asked the government to better equip the detective agencies.

At yesterday's meeting, the committee discussed the activities of the Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory at Khulna Shipyard.

AL lawmakers and members of the committee did not attend the meeting while the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party lawmakers and members of the committee and the chiefs of the army and the navy were present.

AL to boycott JS session

FROM PAGE 1 political situation.

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will consult her deputies before taking a decision on continuation of the House boycott, sources said.

The speaker yesterday finalised the day's business without realising the opposition's demand to defer the presidential speech to the second day. The day's order says the first sitting of the session will deal with nomination of panel chairmen, submission of an ordinance, adoption of an obituary reference and presidential address.

However, the session is likely to be adjourned for sometime after adopting the obituary reference. The Business Advisory Committee (Bac) will decide the time of the adjournment and allocate other pieces of business to be dealt with in the session.

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar earlier said there is no scope for

Cabinet body okays

FROM PAGE 12 proposal that was accompanied with a number of explanations to justify BTB's decision. The committee felt that the proposal needs a lengthy discussion to get the nod. Further discussion on it is likely in the next meeting, the sources said.

Although the cabinet committee earlier had raised questions about both the projects, it approved the 9.40 million-dollar project yesterday.

The cabinet division earlier found that BTB had bypassed all procedures while sealing this 'repeat order deal' (telecoms gear) with China National Machinery Equipment Import and Export Corporation (CMEC).

In 1999, the BTB had signed a \$ 202.89 million supplier's credit contract with CMEC to roll out 216,000 telephones in 58 district headquarters. When BNP came to power in 2001, its white paper on corruption alleged that \$17.28 million had been siphoned from the deal. In March 2002, now defunct Bureau of Anti-corruption filed a graft case against the former finance and telecommunications ministers and officials.

While the Bac was processing the charge sheet, the BTB initiated the \$ 9.40 million negotiated repeat order under supplier's credit. The cabinet division objected to the purchase saying it violates the Public Procurement Regulations that restrict use of supplier's credit to finance any purchase.

Besides, it detected some other serious violations of procedures and found no justification as to why BTB should approach CMEC for such a purchase.

The BTB yesterday defending its decision said that they made the deal with CMEC a year before the Public Procurement Regulations had come into effect. The original deal was signed back in 1999 when

some of the existing rules and regulations were not applicable, it added.

Barapukuria Coal Mine Contract In another decision, the purchase committee approved a Petrobangla proposal to award Production, Management and Maintenance contract of the Barapukuria Coal Mine to the second lowest bidder, Chinese company CMEC. The lowest bidder, another Chinese company CSLG, had signed a contract with Petrobangla in April last year, but failed to honour it and the work for coal mine stalled.

CMEC would start coal production from April.

According to the Petrobangla proposal, CMEC would produce 4.75 million tons of coals in 71 months at the rate of US \$17.32 per ton. The government would pay in total \$55 million or Tk 157 crore in foreign exchange for the coal production during this period.

The management, production and maintenance of the coal mine would cost the CMEC Tk 493 crore.

Agenda setting

FROM PAGE 1 started to fly in from six other Saarc member states.

The programming committee meeting will be followed by the 31st Standing Committee meeting, comprising foreign secretaries, on February 3-4. The 26th Council of Ministers, comprising foreign ministers of the Saarc nations, will be held on February 5.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told The Daily Star last night, "We feel the security measures taken so far ahead of the summit are sufficient. But we'll monitor the proceedings more closely in the wake of Thursday's incident."

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Opposition crackdown

FROM PAGE 1 counter-offensive against any violent opposition move.

"If necessary, opposition activists, who want to damage the law and order, will be kept confined to their houses," said a senior BNP leader.

The law-enforcers have received instructions to file foolproof cases against AL activists charging them with violence, arson and ransacking of property. Plans are also underway to revive frozen cases against opposition leaders to quell their anti-government initiatives, sources said.

EU wants

FROM PAGE 1 AL activists.

In a statement, the mission chiefs urged the government to show its commitment that acts of political terrorism are not acceptable. They also asked the government to take urgent measures to build up confidence with opposition parties and the civil society.

"We shared our deep concern that the apparent failure to investigate similar previous attacks had led to a climate of impunity," the statement added.

"The foreign minister has assured us of leaving no stone unturned in pursuing the killers of Mr Kibria," British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury told reporters after the EU mission heads handed over the statement to Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan.

The minister reiterated that the government is fully aware of its responsibilities to the citizens. "The prime minister has ordered a thorough and full investigation into the incident so that the perpetrators are brought to justice."

Asked if they were satisfied with the government response, German Ambassador Dietrich Andreas said, "If the government finds out the culprits of these terrible acts, of course, it will prove that his (Morshed) statement was correct; and we're hoping for that."

Poor victim

FROM PAGE 12 Unknown assailants bombed rickshawpuller Mafizul Islam to death near Mirpur section-1 roundabout Saturday night. He left his house in Duarpara in Pallabi with a rented rickshaw and was awaiting passengers when the assailants threw a bomb from a nearby building.

A worker of a garment factory, Mafiz had to pull a rickshaw at night to feed his wife and nine-month-old son.

"He had no food at home. He assured his wife that he'd return with food. Ultimately, they received his body," Mafiz's brother Mokbul told reporters at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital yesterday.

CNG-run autorickshaw driver Syed Sourav suffered serious burns as two youths threw petrol and two home-made bombs at his vehicle in Dholaipara in Shyampur at about 12:50pm yesterday. His vehicle was completely destroyed.

Six people including a teenage girl suffered burns yesterday afternoon when criminals disguised as passengers attempted to set fire to a bus, pouring flammable liquid on it in Chankhalpoor in Rama.

Police go too harsh

FROM PAGE 1 Life and economic activities remained crippled for the second consecutive day of the hartal enforced by AL and its allies in protest against Thursday's grenade attack in Habiganj that killed former minister Shah AMS Kibria and four AL activists.

The shutdown that ends at 6:00pm today, also disrupted road communication and train services across the country yesterday.

At least four minibuses and one CNG autorickshaw were set ablaze and another 10 vehicles were damaged in the capital while a taxi cab was set on fire in Manikganj.

In the evening, unknown people set fire to a bus at Sector 7 of suburban Uttara, a microbus at the commercial hub of Dilkusha and a private car at Agaraon in the capital. Later in the night, a mob set ablaze another bus near the PWD quarters at Sobhanbagh.

On Bailey Road, unknown miscreants blasted a bomb in front of an office of National Security Intelligence (NSI), but no injury was reported.

The police yesterday picked up over 100 people from different parts of the country, 40 of them from the capital where the law-enforcers tried to foil every attempt to stage demonstration on the streets.

A correspondent from Laxmipur reports: A tempo driver identified as Mohammad Ibrahim was killed and four others injured as the three-wheeler turned turtle when trying to escape an attack by hartal supporters in the district.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at Abirampur in Ramganj upazila at noon as the driver lost control of it when the pickets threw stones at the vehicle. The three-wheeler was on its way to Dalalbazar from Ramganj.

LAWMAKERS COME UNDER ATTACK The police stopped an AL procession led by a dozen AL lawmakers near Kalabagan bus stand at about 11:30am. When the AL leaders asked them why they were intercepting the peaceful procession, the police started beating them up.

AL lawmakers Nasim and Ekabber fell to the ground and sustained head injuries. Both were rushed to Samartha Hospital in a newspaper vehicle.

The police also swooped on the photojournalists who were taking snaps of the police action. Witnesses said police Sergeant Shafiqul first hurled abuse on the journalists. When they protested his behaviour, the law-enforcers clubbed them.

Mohammad Nasim is being kept on artificial ventilator as he has been suffering from respiratory problems after receiving the injuries, said a doctor at Samartha Hospital. Both Nasim and Ekabber are however out of danger, he added.

The photojournalists injured in the police beating are Shamsul Haque Tenku of the Bhorer Kagoj, Azizur Rahim Peu of the Ittefaq, Hasanuzzaman Tarun of the Janakantha, Rahamat Ali of Aker Kagoj and James of Bangladesh Today.

Police picked up ten AL activists, including two women, from the spot.

After the incident, the AL lawmakers held a rally at Russell Square.

CLASHES IN OLD DHAKA The police charged batons and lobbed teargas shells to disperse an opposition procession at Nawabpur Road near the local ward unit AL office at about 10:00am, prompting the pickets to throw bricks at the law-enforcers.

At least 30 people were injured during the hour-long clash. The demonstrators damaged several vehicles and rickshaws on the North South Road during the clash.

As the protesters took out small processions in Tantiabazar, Bangsal, Alaudin Road areas, the police in a more aggressive mood resorted to indiscriminate baton-charge on the pickets and pedestrians in the lanes and by-lanes of the areas.

VEHICLES SET ABLAZE Miscreants set fire to a bus at Chankhalpoor at 4:00pm. The police said the miscreants boarded the bus in the guise of passengers and set it on fire injuring six passengers. They were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) with burn injuries.

The miscreants set fire to another two buses at Dainik Bangla intersection and near Muktagong at about 11:15am in the same way. Nobody was injured in the incidents.

The police however arrested one Amir Hossain who claimed himself a hotel staff. He was nabbed while assisting the firefighters to douse the fire, witnesses said.

At about 1:30pm, some people set ablaze another bus at Shabbag.

A CNG autorickshaw came under arson attack by pickets at Dholaipara at around 12:50pm. They also blasted two crackers when the autorickshaw driver tried to run away from the scene.

The vehicle was gutted and the driver Sourav, 25, received burns in the face, hands and body.

Some people tried to set fire to a petrol pump near the Matsya Bhaban at about 2:20pm, but the pump employees foiled the arson attempt.

The pickets damaged a minibus

Panic driving kills

FROM PAGE 12 Alam and Police Constable Ataur Rahman.

One of the wounded workers, Jahangir, said the driver of the Dhaka-bound bus (Dhaka Metro Ja 11-2215) carrying the garment workers was driving very fast in panic, seeing a group of pickets setting fire to another bus in Gazipur.

"When he reached the ZIA roundabout at 8:50pm, the driver lost control and hit a running Rab motorbike," Jahangir told The Daily Star.

Senior Rab Warrant Officer Lutfor Rahman, 40, who was riding the bike, died on the spot and Corporal Alam was badly injured.

Overturning the bus then hit a police pickup parked nearby, injuring Constable Rahman, before smashing into an adjacent police box.

The Rab corporal and the police constable were admitted to a local clinic while 22 garment workers were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared two of them dead.

Fourteen of the injured workers -- Yusuf, Janu, Hossain, Yasin, Jaman, Ruby, Mita, Sabina, Jahangir, Hosne Ara, Razia, Enamul Khan, Mamun Reza and Anwara -- were admitted at the DMCH and the rest were released after treatment.

Airport police took the bus in their custody. Police failed to confirm whether the bus driver is among the injured or not.

The protesters threw bricks at the deputy commissioner's office and attempted to attack Sadar Police Station.

Rapid Action Battalion and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles patrolled all day long in the town where the AL brought out several processions.

The AL activists assaulted two journalists from Dhaka -- Razib Noor of the Daily Prothom Alo and Nazimul Haq Bipul of daily Manabzaman -- while they were on their professional duty in Habiganj yesterday.

The opposition men snatched their identity cards and damaged their motorcycle. Some AL leaders rushed to the spot and rescued them.

Our Sylhet correspondent says: The police arrested five leaders of Sylhet district Juba Mahila League during the second day of the 60-hour hartal.

They are president of district Mahila League Nazrin Akhtar acting General secretary Tasnim I. Swarna, Organising Secretary Khatun Rani Dey, and members Shamima Begum and Rehana Begum.

In Chittagong, the police barred the hartal supporters from holding any demonstration and kept the city AL office at Darul Fazar Market under lock and key for about four hours from 7:30am with a few party leaders trapped inside.

The police also picked up 12 activists from in front of the AL office. Protesting the police actions, the opposition activists vandalised four vehicles in Station Road and DC Hill areas, our staff correspondent reports from the port city.

Our Rajshahi correspondent says: The second day of the hartal passed off peacefully, barring some stray incidents in the divisional city.

In Khulna, the police picked up 15 opposition leaders and workers including the Sadar thana AL general secretary.

Unidentified miscreants set fire to a taxi cab after beating its driver on Dhaka-Paturia highway near Manikganj town at about 12:45am.

In Mymensingh, the opposition activists damaged a truck and five human-haulers in the town. The police arrested five activists during the hartal.

In Netrakona, at least 15 opposition men were injured in a clash between the police and hartal activists when police swooped on an AL rally at Machtabazar in the town in the afternoon.

Manmohan

FROM PAGE 12 Bangladesh were of a high order.

"He also played a significant role in promoting ties between India and Bangladesh," the Indian premier said.

Kibria's death is a loss to the people of Bangladesh and many of his well-wishers in both the countries, he said.

Manmohan conveyed his deepest sympathy to Kibria's bereaved family members.

BNP accuses AL

FROM PAGE 12 homebound pilgrims," he said.

Bhuiyan urged the main opposition to withdraw its 'destructive' programmes like hartal and co-operate with the government in investigating, identifying and hunting down the killers of the AL leader.

Saifur

FROM PAGE 12 "We've not recommended any increase for the pensioners," he said, explaining what he meant by zero percent increase.

They had an hour-long meeting with Saifur, who noted that if the Commission's recommendations demand a huge cost, "we'll stagger the implementation."

Saifur told reporters after the meeting, "In the past, Pay Commission recommendations were implemented in instalments."

He added that the Commission also believes the government can implement the recommendations in two or three instalments considering its own financial strength.

The Pay Commission was scheduled to submit its report to the prime minister today. But it now wants to delay the submission, as it wants to make a few last minute corrections and hold a meeting with all the commission members, Saifur said.

The Commission will submit the report after four to five days.

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Suicide attacks

FROM PAGE 12 Baghdad, three people and the bomber died, police said.

And in a fourth, at another school in eastern Baghdad, a suicide bomber killed himself and at least three others. Another five people died in other suicide attacks.

Also, a suicide bomber blew himself up near the home of Iraq's justice minister in western Baghdad in an apparent assassination attempt.

The rest were killed in shootings and explosions in several communities north of Baghdad.

Overall, eight of the 36 people killed were suicide bombers.

In addition, three people were killed when mortars landed near a polling station in Sadr City.

Drug policy okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT The cabinet yesterday approved the National Drug Policy 2005 and the drafts of Drug Control (Amendment) Act 2005 and Seeds (Amendment) Bill 2005.

The cabinet meeting also endorsed an agreement on cultural co-operation between Bangladesh and Malaysia.

This is the second drug policy. The first one was approved in 1982.

The new policy contains a proposal to recognise 'alternative' (ayurvedic and homeopathic) medicines.

"If the new policy is implemented, local pharmaceutical products will get a boost," Health Secretary A F M Sarwar Kamal told The Daily Star last night. Under the new policy, direct foreign investment in the pharmaceutical sector will be allowed, he added.

It also dictates stringent punishment measures including fines for those responsible for producing fake drugs and adulteration of medicine.

The draft policy will be sent to the law ministry soon for review before being tabled in parliament.

One-day series

FROM PAGE 1 Tigers, who came back from two-nil down to level the series 2-2 with an emphatic 58-run victory at the same venue on Saturday night.

Bangladesh Television and ESPN will telecast the grand finale live from the Big Bowl at 9am.