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Govt-backed transport union's wildcat strike paralyses country

Opposition terms it attempt to foil today's rally, govt denies its link

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an alleged intention to foil the opposition's 'grand' rally today, a government-backed transport workers' union enforced a wildcat strike yesterday, leaving thousands of commuters stuck in the streets and keeping opposition workers from converging in the capital.

The 14-party opposition has termed the strike programme a 'brazen attempt of the ruling alliance to foil the rally' and threatened a fresh spell of programmes including hartal to rev up the 'oust government' movement.

"No matter wherever you are and wherever they (the government) obstruct you, stand up and resist the repression of the coalition rule," Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina urged the people through journalists at her residence yesterday.

The pro-government transport workers called the strike from yesterday morning, demanding release of Mujibur Rahman, general secretary of North Bengal Transport Workers Union.

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and its left allies have been preparing to mobilise 25 lakh

people at the rally. They are expecting vast numbers of people to gather at the Paltan Maidan from the districts adjacent to the capital.

Security measures have been stepped up across the city with the police and other agencies alerted to a potentially explosive situation. A large number of law enforcers

will be deployed around the venue.

Irked by the sudden transport strike and the alarming rise in harassment of opposition leaders, AL President Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned the government of tougher actions.

She also urged the opposition supporters to join the rally even if

they have to reach on foot.

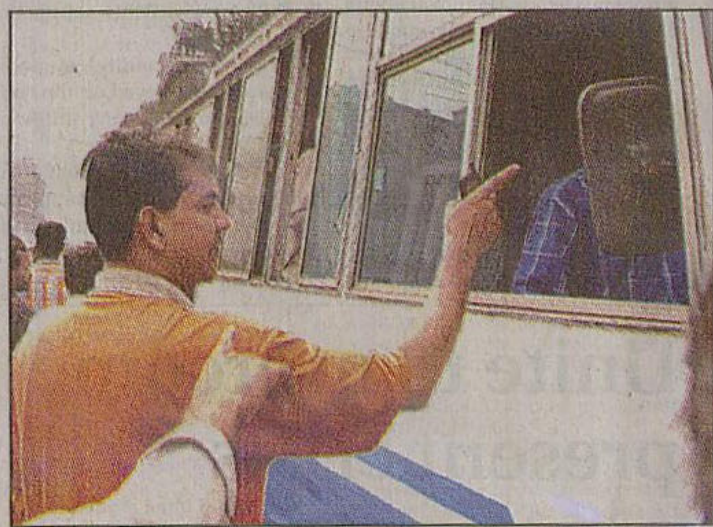
She said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has been out to foil today's rally as they are increasingly getting scared of the people.

"Government's activities show how panicked it has turned," Hasina said adding that if the government does not allow people to

join the grand rally, an even more vigorous resistance will be effected throughout the country.

Frequent hartals and road blockades will be enforced if the government prevents its adherents from attending the rally, hinted the opposition policymakers.

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During the transport strike yesterday, a workers' leader warns a driver at Motijheel in the capital not to run his bus, left, the strike made many passengers through Kamalapur Railway Station, but want of tickets added to their sufferings.

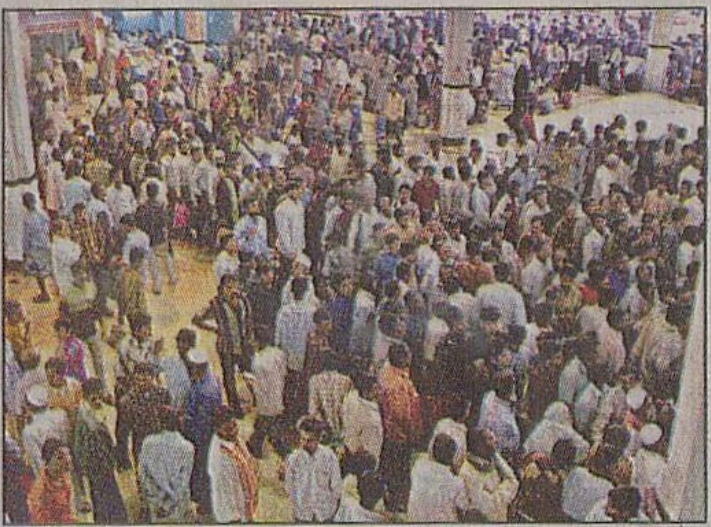


PHOTO: STAR

Judges threaten to go on leave en masse

Demand tax free private cars, firearms; lawyers vow to protect judiciary

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judges from across the country yesterday demanded that the government should exempt their private vehicles and firearms from taxes, and that it should also provide them with personal gunmen and guards at their residences by December 21. They threatened the government with a tougher move-

ment including abstention from the courts and taking of leaves en masse, if their demands are not met.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) leaders at a rally yesterday vowed to foil at any cost the Islamist militants' conspiracy to destroy the country's judicial system.

They also called upon the peo-

ple to join today's 'grand rally' of the 14-party opposition ignoring the government's 'unconstitutional' resistance.

President of the Bangladesh Judicial Service Association (BJS) Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, also a Dhaka District and Sessions Judge, briefed journalists last night on their demands after an extended

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Paltan heavily guarded for high profile rally

Common nat'l programme ready to be declared

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition combine holds a grand rally in the capital today to announce a fresh spell of agitation programmes to intensify the anti-government movement amidst tightened security measures by the government.

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and its left allies have been busy throughout the month gearing up for the rally to be held at Paltan Maidan.

The parties held rallies and

meetings across the country with an aim to mobilise at least 25 lakh people in the rally. They are expecting vast numbers of people from the districts adjacent to the capital.

The government meanwhile has stepped up the security measures across the city with the police and other agencies alerted to a potentially explosive situation. A large number of law enforcers will be deployed around the venue.

Besides, the parliament session has been adjourned till 5:30 today

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ranking leaders of the 14-party opposition coalition held a series of meetings yesterday to finalise its common minimum national programme, which will be announced from today's 'grand rally' at Paltan Maidan.

After discussing the draft within each partner party, leaders of the coalition met the convener of its

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Galib tape reveals his int'l network

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab) chief Asadullah Al Galib's speeches, recorded in audiocassettes in the late 1990s, revealed the depth of his involvement in Islamist militant activities in the country and the stretch of his network across South Asia and Middle East.

Listening to the confiscated tapes the investigators found that the Ahab chief played an important role in masterminding militancy in the country using Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) as his operational wing and Harkatul Jihad (Huji) as the training unit.

In the speeches, Galib talked about his visits and contacts with suspected international militants of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Kuwait and Libya

including a close associate of al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden.

He talked about a militant training centre at Asmat in Afghanistan, world wide activities of Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), spat out expletives

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Asadullah Al Galib

AL mulls hartal on Nov 23-24 if transport strike not withdrawn

UNB, Dhaka

The Awami League (AL) yesterday said it would enforce a two-day hartal on November 23 and 24 across the country if what it said the government sponsored transport strike and obstructions to the people coming to the grand rally were not withdrawn immediately.

Emerging from the party presidium meeting at its Dhanmondi office, AL presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP told reporters that the government sponsored transport strike created a deadlock across the country.

Besides, he said ferry service at Aricha was suspended and rail communications were disrupted to prevent people from attending the opposition grand rally.

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JMB threatens to blow up offices, war memorials

Asks not to observe Victory Day

STAR REPORT

Outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday threatened to blow up the major government offices, courts and all Liberation War memorials in Rangamati if "the law of Allah is not introduced and the Martyred Intellectuals Day or the Victory Day is observed."

The JMB's policymaking body Majlish-e-Sura has meantime asked its suicide squad members to fight to death to eliminate those blocking their way and to continue

striking the government offices and courts.

Members of banned Harkatul Jihad (Huji) yesterday sent a letter to Companiganj upazila land office in Noakhali.

They renewed their previous threat to kill and bury Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and all officials of the land office, AG office and police stations in the minister's constituency.

Feeling insecure, a Chittagong judge yesterday threatened to file a case against the police commissioner unless he is provided police

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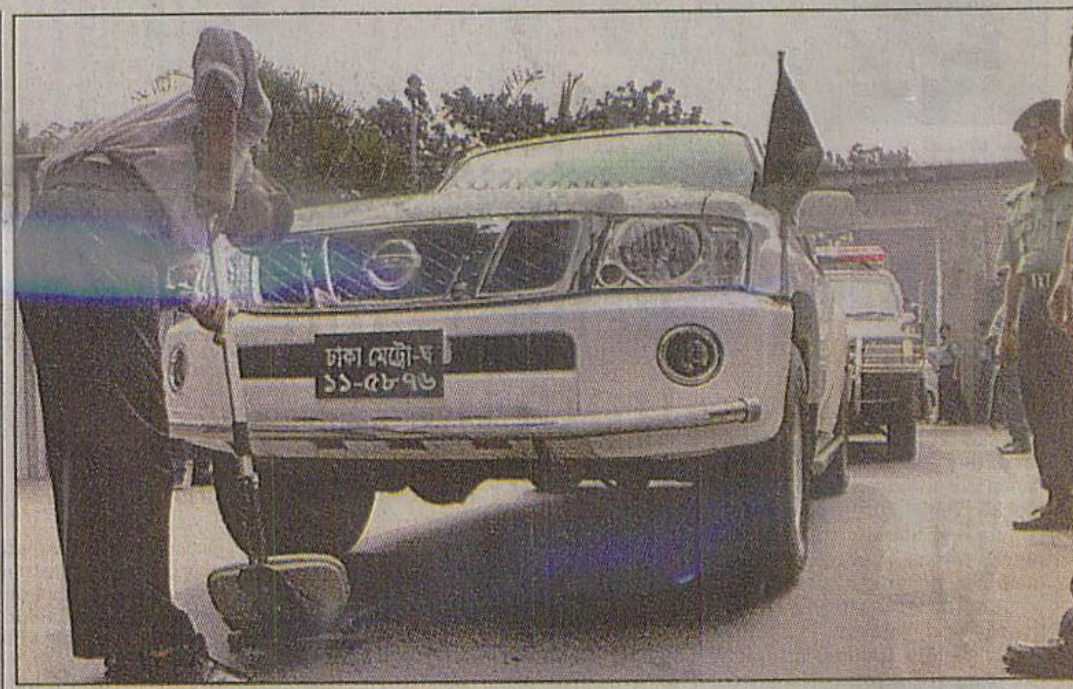


PHOTO: STAR

Security men check the car of LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at the entrance to the Secretariat as part of beefed up security yesterday.

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