

Clashes mark

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for electoral reforms, resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two 'politically appointed' election commissioners, and to protest 'police atrocities' on opposition leaders and workers during the Dhaka siege on Sunday.

The countrywide shutdown badly disrupted normal life, affecting road communications and economic and other activities.

Educational institutions, markets, shops, business establishments and many private offices remained closed due to the hartal.

Motorised vehicles kept off the roads while rickshaws plied unhindered in Dhaka and other major cities and towns. Bus communication between the capital and districts remained suspended while train and launch services operated as usual.

CLASHES IN THE CAPITAL
Some 50 people including women activists of the 14-party were injured in clashes with police in different parts of the capital. Pro-hartal pickets threw brickbats at police and the latter fired teargas shells and charged batons to disperse them.

At least 20 people including three policemen were injured in clashes between police and pickets in Lalbagh area. Pickets also set fire to seven vehicles including one requisitioned by police.

Police picked up at least 20 opposition men from the area. AL leader Haji Mohammad Selim claimed that 60 of their party workers were injured during the clashes.

The trouble started as police intercepted a pro-hartal procession from Begum Bazar marching towards Chawkhazar at about noon.

Pickets hurled brickbats at police and police fired blank shots, lobbed teargas shells and charged batons at them. Intermittent clashes between the two sides followed this, turning the entire area into a virtual battle field.

Violence spread to Mughaltoli, Rahmatganj, Devi Das Ghat Lane, Moulavibazar and other adjacent areas and continued till about 12:30pm.

Pickets set fire to three loaded trucks at Panghat and a pick up van and a police-requisitioned vehicle at Rahmatganj.

Some 10 persons were injured in a clash between police and pickets in front of Government Titumir College at Rahmatganj.

Of them, AL presidium member Toftai Ahmed suffered minor injuries. He was leading a procession that police intercepted.

Photojournalist of the New Age Rekib Khan was among the injured.

At least 20 AL lawmakers brought out a procession from parliament area and marched towards Farmgate at about 11:00am but police intercepted the procession near Tejgoan College.

The lawmakers staged a demonstration there and five of them -- Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj, Shahjahan Khan, Ekabbor Hossain, Mahbubur Rahman, and Mohammad Ali -- proceeded to the VIP Road and staged a sit-in there.

They stayed there until 3:00pm and demanded electoral reforms and resignation of the CEC. They did not leave the spot even when the prime minister's motorcade passed through the road. Police picked up some 10 passers-by a few minutes before this.

Police charged batons on a procession led by AL leader Abdur Razzak on Mirpur Road near Shukrabad. More than five activists were injured there. Police also picked up four activists, three of them women.

The opposition men then brought out another procession and held a rally at Russel Square, protesting the police action.

Police also charged batons on a procession led by AL leader Mohammad Nasim at Kalabagan.

Pro-hartal pickets damaged two three-wheelers near Russell Square.

A procession led by AL lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor from Motijheel area was repeatedly attacked by police and finally dispersed before it reached Paltan area.

Police also dispersed a Jatiya Sramik League procession at Motijheel and picked up at least five activists.

Pickets hurled brickbats at passenger buses, leaving five people injured at Lalbagh intersection at about noon.

The AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue was virtually under police siege since Monday midnight as the law enforcers put barbed wire fences on the adjacent roads. The opposition men held a brief rally near it under police vigilance.

Around 7,000 police, Rab and BDR were deployed in the area to avert untoward incidents.

COUNTRYWIDE HARTAL
A correspondent reports from Tongi that hartal supporters vandalised and torched five buses on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Tongi early in the morning. They also ransacked several rickshaws and autorickshaws.

Our Narayanganj correspondent reports: At least 40 people including two journalists were injured in violence during the hartal in Narayanganj.

Storming into district AL office, police beat up 14-party workers, prompting them to retaliate hurling brickbats and other things.

The opposition activists barricaded roads in Ukipala area of the town and police chased them resulting in chase and counter-chase.

Forty people including district AL President Anwar Hossain, BCL General Secretary GM Arafat, photojournalists of the 'Jugantor' Shameen Nur and of 'Ajker Narayanganj' Sajib Khondoker

were injured there.

In Sirajganj, at least 15 pro-hartal activists were injured, including two seriously, when police charged batons on them at Nalika bus station in Raiganj upazila yesterday morning, reports our Sirajganj correspondent.

The pickets vandalised about 10 BCL and JDU League activists were injured when JDU activists attacked them during the hartal hours, reports our Pabna correspondent.

JDU cadres chopped JDU League leader Azizul Babu who was rushed later to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Our Jessor correspondent reports: BNP activists in a motor-bike procession attacked a JDU League procession at Chittagong in Benapole at 11:30am yesterday. Some people also attacked AL leader Nuruzzaman's house injuring his brother Wahiduzzaman and four others.

Police arrested three AL activists earlier on Monday night.

Our Barisal correspondent reported that pickets tried to put barricades at Nathullab, Rupatali, Kalijira and other entry points of the city in the early morning and vandalised two buses and trucks, four tempos and rickshaws, injuring at least two passers.

In Manikganj, opposition activists set fire to two passenger buses in Dhamrai and Uthly in Shibaliya upazila, reports our Manikganj correspondent.

Our staff correspondent in Syedpur reported that pickets pelted brickbats on Islami Bank and T&T Office at Taltola in the city and damaged eight rickshaws there.

Reports from our correspondents in Bogra, Khulna and Bandarban, and at Rajshahi University said hartal was observed peacefully in the districts.

HASINA STATEMENT
Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina blasted the police for excesses on opposition leaders during the countrywide shutdown yesterday and urged them to stop attacking and torturing the opposition's peaceful demonstrations.

Hasina, also the AL president, in a statement yesterday thanked the countrymen for observing yesterday's hartal and urged them to make today's hartal a complete success.

The AL chief also demanded immediate release of the opposition leaders and activists arrested during Sunday's Dhaka siege and hartal.

The government will have to step aside from the path of conflict to overcome political crisis," Hasina said urging the alliance government to accept their demand for electoral reform. She said otherwise the government would be forced to accept the demand and resign after vigorous movements.

Brazil ride

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Pela as his country's all-time top scorer at the competition.

His lack of form meant a chance for clubmate Robinho to impress.

Brazil began brightly. Roberto Carlos stinging Pletikosa's finger tips with a long-distance drive before Ronaldinho again forced the Croatian shot-stopper into action with a low effort which the Hajdu Splitkeeper turned away for a corner.

But despite early trickery and industry from Ronaldinho, Croatia were not intimidated and Rangers striker Dado Prso burst down the left before cutting in to send an ambitious effort over Dido's cross-bar.

Facing the Brazilian "magic carpet" of Ronaldinho, Kaka, Ronaldo and Adriano, Croatian coach Zlatko Krancic fielded a five-man midfield including former Juventus defender Igor Tudor.

The Croatians had to make a change on 40 minutes when skipper Niko Kovac, already booked for a challenge on Kaka, withdrew clutching his chest after a tussle with Adriano, giving way to Jerko Leko as Tudor took the captain's armband.

Behind at the interval, Croatia had to raise their game and Prso and Ivan Klasnic forced Kaka's clubmate Dido into two smart stops in quick succession.

After 55 minutes, Ronaldo, languid in the extreme in the opening period, suddenly roused himself to shoot just over.

Adriano had also been quiet and it was left to Ronaldinho to move into the centre forward position on 63 minutes, his header from a rightwing cross by veteran skipper Cafu bringing an athletic stop from Pletikosa.

Robert Kovac then followed his sibling into Mexican referee Benito Archundia's book for felling Adriano.

With 20 minutes remaining and not satisfied that a blunt Ronaldinho -- whose weight and form have been sources of much controversy -- was going to find a way through, Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira sent Robinho into the fray.

That only spurred the Croatians to make a change on 80 minutes straight at Dido and Niko Kraljic headed over.

Kaka then showed he has a right foot as talented as his left in firing a snapshot just wide as Brazil closed out the result.

TEAMS

BRAZIL: Dida; Cafu, Lucio, Juan, Roberto Carlos, Emerson, Ze Roberto; Kaka, Ronaldinho; Robinho (69); Adriano; Yellow card: Emerson (42).

CROATIA: Stipe Pletikosa; Dario Simic, Robert Kovac, Josip Simunic; Dario Srdic, Igor Tudor, Niko Kovac (Jerko Leko 40), Marko Babic; Niko Kovac; Dado Prso, Ivan Klasnic (Ivica Olic 57).

Yellow cards: (67); Tudor (90); Kovac (67); Niko Kovac (32); Robert Kovac (67); Dado Prso, Ivan Klasnic (90).

Referee: Benito Archundia (Mexico)

Attendance: 72,000

JS approves

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defence ministry spent Tk 330 crore extra, and the home ministry spent Tk 229 crore extra. The local government department's extra expenditure is Tk 215 crore, while the power division, and the textile and jute ministry spent Tk 127 crore and Tk 120 crore extra respectively.

The pickets vandalised about 10 vehicles.

In Pabna, at least 10 BCL and JDU League activists were injured when JDU activists attacked them during the hartal hours, reports our Pabna correspondent.

JDU cadres chopped JDU League leader Azizul Babu who was rushed later to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

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No compensation

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but compensation for the damage is yet to be realised.

During a recent visit to Magurchara area by this correspondent, the affected people expressed their dissatisfaction to him over the role of national political leaders as well as the government in the failure to realise compensation for the damage. They wanted to know the mystery behind the long silence of the leaders and the government regarding settlement of compensation claims.

Louwachara Reserve Forest adjacent to the exploded gas well was massively damaged. A sheung timber garden, established in the years 1944 to 1950, a bamboo garden, established in the years 1993 to 1995, and a strip of plantation, which was established in 1994 was also extensively damaged by the fire.

About 96 acres of Louwachara forest were completely burnt. Fifty percent of forest resources on 111.15 acres of land and 30 percent resources on 106.21 acres of land of the reserve forest were also damaged. A variety of organisms and animals which use the forest as a safe habitat were also extensively harmed. Experts said the loss is irrecoverable. The DFO said the file is now at the ministry. He said he had joined the office a few years ago.

Govt forms

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country's apparel industry.

Ten teams will work in Dhaka, four in Chittagong and one in Narayanganj, an official of the labour and employment ministry told the news agency yesterday.

The teams will visit 15 to 20 factories every week and closely monitor whether the workers are paid regularly and given identity card, appointment letter, overtime allowance, maternity leave and weekly holiday as per the memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The teams have been asked to submit report once a week to the labour and employment ministry.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is likely to form a committee to ensure implementation of the MoU.

5 boys

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Mohammadpur in Dhaka.

The boys, hail from Comilla, Magura, Borguna and Dhaka districts, said they came out of the shelter on promise by the traffickers of good jobs in India.

3 missing

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remained missing since the accident.

Fire Brigade divers from Sadarghat rushed to the spot, but could not rescue any of the victims as of 7:00pm.

The boatman was identified as Ratan, 60. Identity of the passengers could not be known.

BNP leader

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place. He was rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Police said Salam used to issue death threats to owners of shrimp farms to extract money from them. Locals attacked him around 11:30pm on Monday, beat him up and gouged out both his eyes.

Police quoting locals said Salam was also closely linked to Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) Janajuddho faction.

Indian

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Commission in Dhaka requested the Bangladesh government to share with it the details about the identity of those killed in the operation, reported as being 10 Indian nationals and members of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), sources said.

A top ranking official of Chevron in Dhaka told this correspondent that they had conducted a third party survey several years ago to make a safe exit from Magurchara.

After the accident, another US company Unocal took over the operations of Magurchara gas field and later yet another US company Chevron bought out Unocal. Now the onus is on Chevron for disbursing the claimed compensations.

According to Chevron, Moulibazar gas field at Magurchara has been operating safely since its re-inception in March 2005. The company drilled through sand twice where the accident had taken place in 1997. One well is currently producing natural gas.