

More checks

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Large hubs such as London, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt alone account for 20-30 trans-Atlantic flights a day each.

In Britain, a major international transport hub, a spokesman for the Department of Transportation said he was still trying to decipher the practical implications for Britain of the new US rules. He refused to give his name due to the sensitivity of the subject.

US authorities said as of Monday, anyone travelling from or through nations regarded as state sponsors of terrorism as well as "other countries of interest" will be required to go through enhanced screening. The Transportation Security Administration said those techniques would include full-body pat-downs, carry-on bag searches, full-body scanning and explosive detection technology.

The US State Department lists Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. The other countries whose passengers will face enhanced screening include Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Yemen.

The new measures followed the arrest of a Nigerian man, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who allegedly tried to set off an explosive device on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day.

Germany announced increased security at all airports following the failed Christmas Day attack, but authorities on Monday said no further measures have been taken since.

In Switzerland, authorities were studying the new US security measures, but so far the old controls were still in place, said Jean-Claude Donzel, spokesman for Swiss International Air Lines.

And a security official in Spain, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with agency rules, said US-bound passengers from countries on the new watch list were not being singled out for bodyfrisks.

Elsewhere in the world, there has been a general ramping up of security since Christmas.

In Jordan, a key US ally, security was beefed up at Amman's main international airport since the Christmas Day bombing attempt. An official at Queen Alia International Airport said "enhanced techniques" were being applied, especially in screening passengers bound for the United States. He declined to elaborate.

Pakistan's national airline said it was intensifying security checks for US-bound passengers, even though there are no direct flights to the States from Pakistan. Screening was also stepped up for those flying to the US from other parts of Asia and the Middle East.

"It is beyond my imagination what more they could do," said Nadim Umer, 40, a Karachi-based liner merchant who said he was subjected to a strip search when he arrived in New York last June. "Those who are dying to go to America at any cost can put up with all this inhuman behaviour, but I cannot."

A spokesman for Pakistan International Airlines said the company began applying the new security standards Jan. 1 on US-bound passengers.

Sultan Hasan said the passengers are subjected to special screening, including full body

searches, in a designated area of the departure lounge. He said the airline had run advertisements in newspapers to warn prospective passengers of the increased safety measures, maintaining strict security standards at all airports for all flights.

"We are already carrying out all possible security arrangements at our airports which can be compared with any Western airport," Pervaz George, spokesman for Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority. "Safety of the airlines and passengers as well as security at the airports is a top priority and we are maintaining it irrespective where the flights are going."

In South Korea, an official at Seoul's Incheon International Airport, Lee Ji-hye, said US-bound passengers are now required to go through additional security before boarding their flights, and security officials also compile lists of "suspicious" passengers to monitor based on their nationalities, travel patterns and ticket purchases.

Australian Transport Ministry spokeswoman Moksha Watts said all passengers flying to the US would continue to be patted down and have all their cabin luggage searched.

Baghdad's International Airport already has extremely tight security, with passengers having their luggage sniffed by dogs and getting patted down before entering the airport.

"Our security procedures at the airport are more intensified than that in any other airport in the world," said security official Umran Idris.

Maayan Malkin, spokeswoman for Israel Airports Authority, declined to discuss security arrangements. The Ben-Gurion International Airport is considered one of the safest in the world.

Dhaka, Delhi

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positive outcome," said Umesh Narayan Panjari, secretary of the water resources ministry, India and chief of the Indian delegation.

"We are very hopeful that a substantial progress will be made from the meeting," he said while briefing reporters during lunch break.

Asked if any agreement could be signed at the meeting, he said, "We aren't authorised to sign any agreement here. We are preparing the groundwork."

On how much India is concerned about Bangladesh's issues, the Indian secretary said, "India wants to share water with Bangladesh. We are considering all the issues that Bangladesh raises."

Terminating the meeting a good beginning, Sheikh Wahid-Uz-Zaman, secretary of the water resources ministry, Bangladesh, also expressed the hope of a positive outcome.

Wahid-Uz-Zaman, who is leading a delegation of 12 members, said, "Talks have started after a long break and it is a good sign."

Asked which issue is dominating the talks, he said all issues are important for Bangladesh.

The talks between Dhaka and Delhi are the culmination of an expert committee deliberation on the issue in December last year. Bangladesh is hopeful about reaching an agreement at the talks.

Earlier, Dhaka submitted a draft agreement proposal to India through the foreign ministry in this regard.

10 conditions

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As a precondition for joining the Sangsad, BNP wants the government to scrap the decision to cancel lease of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment residence, strengthen her security, withdraw "politically motivated" cases against Khaleda, Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman and other leaders, and give BNP legislators chairmanship of two more standing committees.

Also among the demands is adjourning the scheduled business of the House to allow discussions on issues like Tipaimukh dam, Asian highway, law and order, price hike of essentials, tender manipulation and persecution of opposition leaders and workers.

Besides, the BNP parliamentary party wants the ruling party lawmakers on reserved seats for women to be pulled back from the opposition lawmakers' constituencies.

BNP began keeping off the ninth parliament's session at the outset in protest against reduction of their front-row seats from nine to four.

They joined only 23 out of 39 sittings of the first session, and went for continued boycott from the second session in June last year.

The BNP-led opposition lawmakers have been absent for all 47 sittings of the second and third sessions.

According to the constitution, a lawmaker will lose his seat if he is absent from parliament for 90 consecutive sittings.

in the timetable, if necessary.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday placed in parliament the Public Servants (retirement) (amendment) Ordinance 2009.

The House adopted an obituary reference on the death of former ministers and lawmakers, and distinguished personalities.

After the president's speech, the House session was adjourned till 3:00 pm on January 11.

Khaleda

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court in Dhaka seeking an injunction so that Khaleda cannot celebrate her birth anniversary on August 15.

Khaleda on September 16, 1999 filed a revision petition with the HC challenging the legality of the proceedings of the case filed by Sohrwardy.

As the petition was listed for hearing, Khaleda on November 14 last year filed an application with the HC for dropping the case from the cause list as she feared she will not get justice from the bench of this judge.

Khaleda expressed the apprehension since Justice Momtazuddin at his felicitation ceremony at the Supreme Court on March 25 last year said BNP-led four-party alliance government dropped some HC judges including him and also created obstructions at different times so that they cannot get justice.

Sohrwardy on November 16 submitted a petition with the HC bench, saying Khaleda's statement in her petition is contemptuous.

The issues came up before the bench yesterday, as it was the date to hear the petitions filed by Khaleda and Sohrwardy.

AL leaders

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The prime minister said if necessary, her government would import electricity from India, Nepal or Bhutan to meet the local demand. She said the government would seek India's nod so that Bangladesh could import power from Nepal or Bhutan using Indian territory.

Revealing her plans for her visit to India next week, Hasina directed the authorities concerned to take immediate steps and dredge all the rivers shared with India. She said she would also table a proposal before the Indian government to dredge 54 such rivers jointly.

The prime minister assured her party and cabinet colleagues that her government would not do anything that goes against the interest of the country.

Hasina asked ministers to ensure that rules and regulations are maintained in all government recruitments.

At the meeting, AL leaders also demanded that the government takes immediate steps, including holding talks with the Election Commission if required, for holding the long-awaited union parishad elections.

While talking about the opposition, Sheikh Hasina urged AL leaders to be patient and tolerant so that the people understand that politics in Bangladesh has changed. "We will have to be liberal democrats, otherwise people will say there is no difference between the Awami League and them (BNP)," her party colleague quoted her as saying.

Briefing reporters after the hour-long meeting, Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam said Hasina would address the nation tomorrow on the one-year anniversary of her government.

He said the AL would hold a meeting with its allies in the 14-party coalition today around 7:00pm at Jamuna. The AL chief will chair the meeting.

The AL will also hold a separate meeting with Jatiya Party today at the same venue followed by a dinner party, party sources said.

Replying to a query he said his party is always ready to face any movement launched by opposition BNP. He, however, said the AL sees no possibility of any movement now. "If any party wishes to come to power, it would have to wait four more years and win in the elections," Ashraf, also the LGRD minister, said.

Talking about BNP senior joint secretary general's comment on Ashraf's remark about BNP's newly formed committee, Ashraf said, "I just tried to reflect the people's feelings towards the committee. People got panicked seeing several names on the new BNP committee as the media had reported."

He said the latest political and organisational matters were discussed at the Awami League Central Working Committee meeting. He said the AL would hold an extended meeting on January 30.

He said a press conference would be held on January 7 on the one-year anniversary. The AL will also hold a discussion on January 10 marking the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Homecoming Day at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Dense fog

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In Nilphamari district, four people reportedly died of pneumonia and other cold-related illnesses between January 3 and 4, although the causes of death could not be verified by hospital authorities.

The dead were identified as Hossain Ali Nuru, 65, of Mirzagan village in Dohar upazila, Khatibon Bawa of Halhalia village in Dohar upazila, Zabeda Begum, 95, of Dimla upazila and Moni, 2, of Sundarkhata village of Dimla.

The cold wave is now sweeping over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions, the regions of Tangail and Srimangal, as well as spreading over Barisal and the regions of Madaripur and Faridpur.

In Manikganj, the ferry service of Paturia-Doulatdia was suspended for three hours in the early morning due to dense fog, causing a backlog of around 400 trucks.

The passage of the ferry "Ketoki" was delayed by eight hours on the Chandpur-Shariatpur route on the Meghna River.

Twenty launches on the Dhaka-Chandpur route and those travelling towards Dhaka from the south suffered delays of around five hours.

Ferries travelling on the Mawa-Kewrakandi route were suspended by around nine hours, leaving several hundred vehicles stranded on either side of the ferry ghat.



Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia addresses the closing of 3rd International Environmental Conference at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday. Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon and Bangladesh Environment Network jointly organised the conference.

Religion-based

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of its main body.

The fifth amendment had legitimised all governments that had been in power following the coup of August 15, 1975 till April 9, 1979 including late president Ziaur Rahman's ascension to the presidency, and included Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim in the preamble of the constitution.

The SC on Sunday lifted its four-year old stay on a HC verdict that had declared the fifth amendment illegal.

Meanwhile yesterday, BNP Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain and three SC lawyers Tajul Islam, Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, and Munshi Ahsan Kabir filed two separate petitions with the apex court seeking reinstatement of the stay on the HC judgement.

Tajul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday that the chamber bench of the Appellate Division of SC will hear the petitions today.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the original spirit of the constitution will be restored if the HC verdict's implementation is cleared by the SC.

"We will seek suggestions from the law commission on how we can implement the High Court verdict after January 18, when the Supreme Court is due to hear the leave to appeal petitions against the verdict," he said.

He made the statements while talking to reporters in his Bangladesh Secretariat office yesterday afternoon.

Replying to a question, the minister told The Daily Star that despite the cancellation of the fifth amendment, the fourth amendment will however not be restored as the 12th amendment of 1991 blocks the way for that restoration.

The Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act 1975 was passed on January 25, 1975. Sweeping changes were brought to the constitution by this amendment. The presidential form of government was introduced in place of the parliamentary system, a one-party system was put in place instead of a multi-party system, the power of the parliament was curtailed increasing the power of the president, and the judiciary lost much of its independence, according to legal

experts.

The 12th amendment restored the parliamentary system of government replacing the presidential system.

Although the fifth amendment cancelled the fourth amendment which had introduced the one party system putting BKSAL in power, it however kept the provision of the presidential government intact.

Dumping

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which includes both the cost of cleaning and safe disposal of the rubbish.

BIWTA's Chief Engineer (Dredging) Abdul Matin said the rubbish extracted from the riverbed would be placed in a barge and taken to Gabtoli and Amin Bazar areas for dumping.

He admitted that this posed a problem. "If we use the DCC dumping site at Amin Bazar it will be filled up very fast as we need acres of land to dispose of this sludge and rubbish," Matin said.

"We are therefore also trying to find interested land owners who may buy the sludge for landfill. As per our contract with the private companies, the BIWTA owns the material extracted from the riverbed," said Matin hinting that any revenue coming from the sale of the sludge would go back to his organisation.

"They [the companies] are under legal obligation to dispose of the wastes but we have to designate the area on which it could be dumped," Matin added.

BIWTA officials admit that the cleaning of a riverbed is a new concept in the country and they lack experience. The authority has no specialised equipment to undertake this work, and is planning to remove the deposited wastes using a "grab excavator", mounted on a barge, which would be lowered into the riverbed.

"This is a pilot project and money for which comes from our own revenue budget. We shall learn from the project to eventually move onto cleaning the Balu and the Turag," said another top official of the BIWTA seeking anonymity.

Questions also remain about the benefit of removing this waste from the riverbed when no action is being taken to stop dumping of household and other waste into the river. Every day tonnes of solid waste are dumped into the river Buriganga at various spots.

Change political

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opposition in parliament to achieve the desired goals.

"The opposition parties should also play a suitable role in the process of national development and take part in policy formulation and thereby in the process of achieving the Charter for Change. We have to come out of the practice of 'oppose for the sake of opposition'," Zillur added.

The president in his address expressed the hope the opposition lawmakers will join parliament and contribute to the politics of discipline.

He said the lawmakers are responsible to the nation. So the expectation of the people is that all the parties will regularly attend parliament to make it effective and meaningful.

On the ruling Awami League's electoral manifesto, he said the present government's election manifesto and declaration of the Charter for Change have given rise to widespread expectation in the hearts of the people.

"Our people dreamed of change during the War of Independence. More than 38 years elapsed since the achievement of independ-

ence. During this period the forward journey of independence was obstructed repeatedly," the president continued.

"Therefore, people desired a goal -- a modern and prosperous society, a society free from hunger, poverty, illiteracy, exploitation, deprivation and disparity is yet to come into reality," he asserted.

The president read out the gist of the 63-page written speech in Bangla which was earlier approved by the cabinet. At the beginning of his speech, he urged the Speaker to include his entire speech in the parliament proceedings.

At the end of the 23-minute speech, Speaker Abdul Hamid said the president's address has already been included in yesterday's parliament proceedings.

In the next sitting of parliament on January 11, the chief minister will move a thanksgiving motion on the president's address and the lawmakers will participate in a discussion on the motion and finally the House will accept it.

In his address, the president briefly described the government's success in the first year in various sectors both at home and abroad.

12 Taliban men killed in Pakistan

ANI, AFP, Peshawar

At least 12 militants were killed in Swat and Waziristan in the Pakistan Army operation and US drone strikes, while two soldiers were martyred in separate incidents in the last 24 hours.

Missiles fired by a suspected US drone killed five terrorists in Mosakki village, about 25 kilometres east of Miranshah. It was the third suspected US missile attack in the tribal district in less than a week.

"There may have been an important figure hiding in the house," a Pakistani security official in Miranshah told AFP on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak about the sensitive strikes.

Probe gets

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Yesterdays was the sixth extension.

Investigation Officer ASP Moniruzzaman Chowdhury of CID, Chittagong, said the extension was necessary to probe the case and interrogate the officials of Customs Rummage and Anti-Smuggling team who were in service during the seizure of the deadly consignment.

A further enquiry about Ulfa (United Liberation Front of Asom) link in the case will also be carried out, said the IO. Earlier, two accused in the case stated that the smuggling of the huge cache of weapons was being done under the direct supervision of Ulfa leader Pareswari Barua, who was residing in Dhaka back then.

ASP Moniruzzaman of CID, Chittagong, was appointed as the fifth IO of the case replacing ASP Ismail Hossain of CID, Gazipur zone.

A Chittagong court on February 12, 2008 ordered CID for second time reinvestigation into the case.

Ismail failed to submit a report after the second time reinvestigation within the scheduled time. He was the fourth IO of the case.

ASP Nawsher Ali of CID, Sylhet Zone, carried out the first reinvestigation as the third IO. CID started the probe into the case on April 26, 2004 after the controversial investigation conducted by Ahadur Rahman, first IO of the case and officer-in-charge of Karmaphuli Police Station.

Kabir Uddin Ahmed, assistant superintendent of police in CID Chittagong zone, was the second IO of the case filed in connection with 10 truckloads of firearms and ammunition hauled at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Company Limited (CUFL) jetty ghat on April 02, 2004.

August 21 case

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August 21 grenade attack cases.

ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Dhaka allowed the time after the investigation officer (IO) sought four more months to submit the report.

He filed the petition on Sunday -- the last date for submitting the investigation report in the case filed under the explosive substances act. The other case is a murder case.

The IO Abdul Kahar Akond, additional special superintendent of CID, pleaded for the time saying he arrested a few more accused and some of them already made confessional statements in connection with the murder case.

On August 3 last year, a Dhaka court ordered the inspector general of police to reinvestigate the cases and submit reports in two months after identifying the persons who had procured and supplied the grenades used in the August 21, 2004 carnage.

Twenty-three Awami League leaders and workers were killed and over 300 maimed in the incident.

AL President Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

Lanka tame Tigers

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overs to spare under the lights of Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

World's number one one-day batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan smashed his first hundred (104) against Bangladesh while skipper Kumar Sangakkara scored 74 to steer their side to the target of 261 in 44.5 overs.

In modern cricket, which is so much dominated by power and not by technique, where a switch hit is more applauded than a straight drive, where Twenty20 is more fashionable than Test cricket, 260 runs in a one-day can at best be termed an average score. And on a pitch that was described at the toss as a very good batting track with prospects of dew later in the evening, that 260 runs is bound to look as an ordinary effort. However in the context of the game, it ended as a good one, especially after the way the top four faltered in a space of just nine runs.

Bangladesh had a very good start on a surface conducive to big score and against a depleted Sri Lankan bowling attack that had no Muralidaran, Malinga or Mendis in the line up. Openers Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes were picking boundaries and singles at relative ease and it looked like a 300-run innings until the 12th over after which things changed dramatically. The next five overs exposed an old picture of Bangladesh batting as four of the top fell prey to their own demons, playing uncontrolled shots on short-pitched stuff. There were no demons in the pitch for sure.

Imrul started the rot mistiming a pull of Nuwan Kulasekara and holing out at fine leg. Tamim followed as he tried one hoick too many against Dilshan. Rokibul Hasan was squared up by a short-pitch delivery from Suranga Lakmal, brilliantly taken at slips by Thilan Samaraweera while skipper Shakib Al Hasan flashed hard at a wider one from Lakmal which was equally brilliantly

grabbed by Chanaka Welegedara at third man. 65 for no loss became 74 for 4 in space of four overs.

Consolidation came in the form of Mushfiqur Rahim and Mohammad Ashraful. Mushfiqur took the attacking role while Ashraful decided to sit back for a while, but they together amassed few valuable runs before the wicketkeeper-batsman was dismissed by a full-toss from Suraj Randiv. At 132 for five after 32 overs Bangladesh looked in dire need of a big and rollicking partnership.

Ashraful's knock of 75 was as contrasting as his batting style has flung over the years. He started pretty slow, in fact very slow for a one-day game. He scored his first 30 runs at a rate slightly above 50. But more importantly he kept the runs ticking and was prepared to shift gear when the occasion demanded. Towards the end of the innings, he started to play aggressive and exquisite shots that reminded all of his past flamboyance. He found good support in Mahmudullah Riyad who craftily mixed aggression with caution. Mahmudullah's brave knock came to an end in the 48th over after he had added a valuable 45 runs including the first six of the innings.

Ashraful was by then having his time at the crease, playing all the shots in his repertoire. He was looking good to carry it till the end, but an unfortunate run-out ended his excellent effort. He scored his runs with the help of only four boundaries. Bangladesh did their best to put on a challenging total, the batting powerplay, taken between 45th and 49th overs, yielded 43 runs. And Naeem Islam, dubbed 'Chhokka Naeem' in local cricket, gave it a grandstand finish smacking two sixes in the last over to take the score to 260 for 7 after fifty overs. Naeem ended not out on 22 off just nine deliveries and gave Bangladesh a lift in their spirit.

Unite on climate

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party is voted back to power.

She said her party gives so much importance to the mitigation of climate change that it created a post of a climate secretary in its new executive committee.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Environment Network (Ben) jointly organised the conference. Yesterday's session was presided over by Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad.

Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, accused India of unilaterally diverting water from international rivers, and identified the move as an important reason for drying up of rivers in Bangladesh.

"The people of Bangladesh are not ready to accept any project for diverting water from the country's rivers. They want removal of Farakka and Gajaldoba barrages. Natural flow of water must continue," she said and hoped that Bangladesh's incumbent government will reflect the aspirations of the people in its discussions with the government of India.

Referring to the recent Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, the former premier said, "Our government could not shed proper light on Bangladesh's situation," and that is why Bangladesh did not get anything from the conference."

She said Bangladesh has to play a vital role in forcing developed countries into signing an accord that will make it mandatory to cut carbon emissions by 50 per cent.

"As the most vulnerable country, we have to take initiatives for getting sufficient compensation and necessary technologies from developed countries. We have to organise other affected countries as well, as Bangladesh alone cannot do it," Khaleda added.

She stressed on working unitedly within the country rising above all differences, for which shunning conceit of power and narrow partisan interest is a must, she added.

Khaleda urged the government to start taking preparations for the next climate change conference that is scheduled to be held in Mexico this year.

of harmful pesticides and fertilisers, and declaring important hoars-boars (marshlands) as sanctuary for bio-diversity.

Khaleda Zia also distributed prizes among the winners in different categories of a children's competition arranged on the occasion of the conference.

Bapa Vice-president Dr Nazrul Islam, and North South University Vice-chancellor Prof Hafiz GA Siddiqi also spoke, while Bapa General Secretary Dr MA Matin gave the vote of thanks.

Jam worsens

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Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out massive processions to celebrate its 62nd founding anniversary obstructing the traffic flow.

Besides, movement of a huge number of VIPs on their way to attend the fourth parliamentary session added to the worsening condition.

A less number of traffic police personnel were on duty, as most of them had to attend the preparations for the Police Week-2010 at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

Admitting the yesterday's chaotic traffic situation, Joint Commissioner (Traffic) Shafiqur Rahman told The Daily Star that, "It was temporary only for today [yesterday] due to some reasons."

"Indiscriminate processions and vehicles of a large number of VIPs created some problems in traffic management," he said adding, "A major portion of policemen had to be present at Rajarbagh for the Police Week preparation."

Chhatra League brought out processions from every part of the capital in the morning and gathered at Aparajevo Bangla at Dhaka University around 12:00noon from where they went to BCL office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Each of the processions was led by several