

Channel 1 shut

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Prime Bank, when reached, refrained from making any official comment on the status of the auction.

The employees of Channel 1 broke down in tears after the channel was sent off-air. They had repeatedly urged the BTRC team not to shut down the channel and go for alternative action if there are any irregularities.

The Channel 1 management claimed that they replied to all BTRC notices in time. The BTRC issued the last show-cause notice to the channel on April 14, asking it why the channel will not be shut down.

"We replied properly to all the BTRC notices," said Channel 1 Director Mazdul Islam at a briefing.

"We are also ready to reconstitute the management if the government wants," he said.

He said they filed a case against Prime bank for arranging the auction, but the court judgment came against the channel.

He said the Prime Bank recently informed the Channel 1 management that the broadcasting equipment was not yet handed over to the

bid winner as the payment was not made.

Channel 1 was established on June 1, 2005. It started broadcasting on January 24, 2006 with 400 employees. The channel's founder Gasuddin Al Mamun is known as a close associate of BNP chief Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman.

Asked if there is any political intention behind shutting down the channel, minister Raju said, "We are not considering who the owners of the channel are."

He said the Channel 1 authority failed to give satisfactory replies to the BTRC notices.

The private television industry has been flourishing in Bangladesh since mid-1990s.

However, suspension of TV channels' operation is not new.

In August 2002, the government shut down the operation of ETV. The last caretaker government shut down broadcasting of news channel CSB in September 2007. The present government suspended operation of Jamuna Television in November 2009 during test transmission.

NEIGHBOURS' ATTACK Woman, her 2 daughters injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two college-going girls and their mother were severely injured by their neighbours last night following a land dispute in the city's Dania under Kadomtoli Police Station.

The injured were identified as Monowara Begum, wife of Anwar Hossain Chowdhury of East Dania, her daughters Ismat Ara, 23, a third-year student of Eden College, and Iflat Ara, 21, a first year student of Home Economics College.

They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Monowara and her daughters alleged that their neighbours Rafiq and his associates swooped on them following a feud over a disputed land.

Anwar Hossain said the criminals attacked his family members at around 8:00pm as he lodged a complaint with police regarding cutting down of trees from his land by Rafiq.

Kadomtoli police said they are looking into the matter.

Focus on climate

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threat of climate change as an integral part and pull millions of people out of abject poverty, combat terrorism and deal more effectively with the region's natural disasters.

Thimphu is ready to hold the 16th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) comprised of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka amid tight security.

Bangladeshi Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina, Indian PM Manmohan Singh, Pakistani PM Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai, Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed, Nepalese PM Madhav Kumar and Bhutanese PM Lyonchhoen Jigmi Thinley will attend the summit, which will mark the 25th year of the establishment of the body in Dhaka in 1985.

In these 25 years, Bhutan could not host the summit for once and had skipped being the host thrice, citing lack of infrastructure. However, it has agreed to host, coincidentally, the silver jubilee of the Saarc summit on April 28-29.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who reached Thimphu yesterday, will take up the issue of climate change at the summit and it will be the burning issue in Thimphu. She is expected to emphasise the importance of a new commitment from Saarc countries in dealing issues like poverty alleviation, combined fight against terrorism, economic integration and natural disasters, while pointing out that this region not only has shared boundaries and history of civilisation but also a shared destiny.

The panoramic mountainous city has been put under a thick security blanket and it has donned a festive look as the main thoroughfares from Paro airport to the summit venue and places where the heads of the state and government of Saarc nations will reside. Hotels have been decorated with flags of the member countries and banners inscribed with welcome slogans and portraits of the leaders.

Cooperation in the aftermath of natural disasters will also figure prominently on the agenda for discussion. Sources at the Saarc Secretariat in Kathmandu said Nepal would push for an effective regional mechanism to cope with the climate change.

Also, Bangladesh and Maldives are likely to support Nepal's effort to set up a regional body, as both the countries will face the most drastic impacts of climate change. South Asia has been hit by some of the world's worst natural disasters in recent years, including tsunami, Kashmir earthquake and Aila in

Bangladesh. The other issues likely to be taken up by the summit would be energy and food crisis, and the effective implementation of Saarc Development Fund. The permanent secretariat of SDF with initial fund of \$300 million will also be inaugurated during the summit.

Two agreements one on environment and another on trade in services will be signed at the summit.

In addition to making formal speeches at the summit today, Saarc leaders will have the opportunity to sit together for several times, mainly during the retreat on the concluding day tomorrow at Saarc Village.

The retreat is considered as one of the most interactive part of the summit as the heads of state and government will sit together with open agendas.

The Saarc leaders have a packed schedule with a number of bilateral meetings being worked out around the summit schedule.

Sheikh Hasina's meetings with her Indian and Pakistani counterparts will be crucial since they will discuss a whole gamut of bilateral issues. The Indian prime minister is likely to have meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister.

The summit will adopt a Thimphu Declaration that has been prepared through intensive consultations by senior officials, foreign secretaries and foreign ministers of the member countries for the last four days.

41 workers

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realise compensation to the 31 seamen from the Greek shipping company that recruited them, she said.

The seamen joined the ships late December last year, but they have since remained stranded a few miles off the Cotonou port as their employer Golden Shipping SA Company had troubles with Nigeria from where it transports oil to Europe, the victims said.

The company has neither paid them nor provide food, water and fuel regularly, said the crewmembers, some of whom have fallen ill under the circumstances.

Initially there was a communication gap, but now that the Bangladesh chargé d'affaires in Morocco is going to Benin, expectations of the seamen and their relatives have increased.

Ashraf Alam, chief officer of a ship, MT Paloma, told The Daily Star over phone that the Golden Shipping SA yesterday offered him and two others salaries and air tickets to return home.

But Ashraf was confused about what to do since Chargé d'Affaires Lutfar Rahman was to arrive there shortly. He expressed hope that all of them will return together.

Channel 1

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already ended him enough bad name.

Many eyebrows then raised as this TV station, still in toddling stage, ran apparently very bold reports against land grabbing by a sitting minister, public outcry for power outage in Kansat and enrolment of fictitious names in voters' list.

But future was destined otherwise for Channel 1. Too many people took interest in the affairs of this channel once the law enforcers put Mamun behind the bar on numerous charges.

The entire regime of the military-aided caretaker government saw people entering and departing in failed bids to put a stake on the then promising TV station.

After Mamun's arrest, its chairman, an ex-lawmaker of BNP tried to take command but got caught on graft charges later.

Then one of the directors came to the scene amidst the increasing impatience of a private commercial bank over non-repayment of outstanding dues against the big chunk of loans sanctioned for the channel.

Many brilliant professionals later left the TV channel amidst cash crunch and fading professionalism, putting its slide down further in TRP (target rating point)

In recent months tension brewed, said insiders, on the question of whether to keep the channel's ownership under the board that was once helmed by Mamun or gradually transfer the ownership to its present operators.

Transmission of Channel 1 was suspended yesterday evening after Post and Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju said the government had decided to shut the channel.

Govt to spend

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minister said the government's first priority is to create at least one job for a family.

The government is also committed to ensure rights and welfare of workers though around 80 percent of the labour force is engaged in informal sector where they work in hazardous and unsafe conditions, and their wages are low.

Separate committees have already been formed to recommend minimum wage, review the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, formulate a new labour policy and look ways to form trade unions in the garment sector, he said.

Praising ILO for the workshop to measure decent work in Bangladesh, he said a database should be prepared to measure progress in decent work over time.

ILO Director Gagan Rajbhandari in Dhaka said decent work is central to reduce poverty and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

"It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families," the ILO director said, adding it also gives people freedom of expression and ability to make decisions that affect their lives.

Dr Stefan Frowein, ambassador of EC delegation to Bangladesh, Farooq Ahmed, secretary general of Bangladesh Employers' Federation and trade union leader Abdul Matin Master also spoke. Labour Secretary Nurul Haque chaired the session.

Bachelor's

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Now around 30 percent female and 10 percent male students, which come around 39.99 lakh in total number at secondary level, are enjoying this benefit, according to a DSHE data.

The data also shows that approximately 5.40 lakh students are currently studying at bachelor's level (pass course). Of them, 2.35 lakh students are female.

Under this new project that will run until June 2015, 40 percent or around one lakh female students will receive the stipends, said Bashir, the DSHE official.

The factors to be considered for stipend include poverty, regular attendance in classes, being unmarried if the student's age is 20 years or below and satisfactory results, he said.

DSHE has proposed for allocation of the stipends in the upcoming budget, he added.

The main objective of the initiative is to help the female students of poor families continue their studies, reduce drop out and prevent their early marriage.

27 stand trial

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maroon fatua and lungi. Like him the twenty-six others were in civil dresses wearing either shirt or T-shirt and lungi or pants. Some of them also started to keep beard since their imprisonment last year.

BDR Director General Maj Gen M Mainul Islam, who is the president of the three-member court, ordered during Monday's proceedings to bring them in civil dresses and fetters.

Salim, who ordered slain BDR DG Shakil Ahmed and other officers to go out from the Darbar Hall on February 25 saying "go one by one" before they were shot to death, was eager to speak to journalists yesterday.

While entering Darbar Hall, he repeatedly told the newsmen, "I committed the mutiny, I am a mutineer. But it should not so happen that we are tried by the victims [army officers]; I want trial in the civil court."

He was wearing an angry expression in the face and was trying to make the same allegations against the slain army officers regarding the "Dal Bhat" project.

He was also claiming he himself did not kill any officer during the mutiny.

But the court of inquiry of the paramilitary force suspects these 27 were involved not only in the mutiny but also in murders and other grievous offences.

However, they will be tried in the civil court for committing murders and other grievous offences.

But as they are also accused in the case for mutiny, they are being tried by the BDR courts.

RMG workers

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wage and attendance bonus since long, but the authorities did not pay them to it.

"But at the last owner agreed to increase the attendance bonus," said the worker requesting anonymity.

Talking to The Daily Star, Chairman of Sinha Group Anisur Rahman Sinha said he has assured the workers for increasing the attendance bonus up to Tk 400 per month. He said the company will also allow genuine leaves to the workers.

"The outsiders also influenced the workers to make the whole matter volatile," Sinha said adding it is difficult to say exactly how much loss the group sustains for production halt in a day.

Sinha Group is the largest garment factory in the country, which employs more than 60,000 workers. It has garment factories also at the city's Mirpur, he said.

"The problem is that the international buyers lose their confidence on the country for such kind of unexpected labour unrest. The buyers also look for alternative destinations when such unrest takes place in the factories," Sinha said.

Officer-in-charge of Sonargaon Police Station Mohammad Yunus Ali said no case was filed with the police in this connection.

Earlier on April 10 workers' unrest took place in the factory for realising the same demand.

New trophy

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The discovery created quite a ripple among the wildlife lovers in Bangladesh.

"It is a big surprise for us who visit Lalachhera frequently," said Ronal Halder, a bird photographer. "We never even imagined this animal could exist in Bangladesh. It's a big find for us."

CM Reza spotted the marten on a 40 meter tall tree. It was searching for food and was in sight for about two minutes after which it hid in the forest.

Largest among the Himalayan Martens, this yellow and black coated species is known to live in the Himalayas from below the tree line to 160 meters above the sealevel.

"So the Lawachhara population of the animal would represent the lowest elevation in its distributional range," Dr Khan said.

IUCN considers its world population as not in danger of extinction and as such categorized it as "Least Concerned", added Dr Reza.

"But as it has so far been sighted only once in Bangladesh and that too in a small patch of forest 'island' encircled by heavily populated villages and tea estates, it must be considered as the most highly endangered or critically endangered Marten population," Dr Reza said.

The animal measures up to 60cm from the tip of the snout to the base of the tail. Bushy black tail is longer than its cousins' at about 40cm when weight varies from 3kg to 3.5 kg.

Its nearest Indian population lives in Assam. According to literature, this Marten lives in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam,

WB worried

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about it. I've told them the amendment is now under our consideration. After having these examined by the law ministry, a final decision will be taken in this regard."

The finance minister added the government is considering the amendments to the Act on the basis of a recommendation of a taskforce.

A delegation including Muhith, Prime Minister's Financial Affairs Adviser Dr Mashur Rahman and ERD Additional Secretary Arastu Khan went to Washington on April 21 ahead of the WB-IMF's Spring meeting and some other international meetings.

The Bangladesh delegation also met the WB high officials on bilateral issues on the sidelines of the meeting.

On any possible impact on the inflow of foreign assistance as a result of the amendments, Muhith said they never directly said they would not provide assistance. They express their concern and when that is not addressed, they go for action.

On the civil society and some other organisation's concern that the government action would make the anti-corruption watchdog weaker, Muhith said, "Well, I can understand the concern expressed by the civil society as well as the donors."

He said independence of ACC was most highlighted during the caretaker rule and this government is also working to make it stronger.

The cabinet approved amendment to the anti-corruption law on Monday which many quarters including the civil society decried saying it would weaken the anti-graft body.

Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan.

Marten is a hill forest dwelling very bold and agile mammal hunting mostly on all creatures bigger and smaller than its size living on trees or on land. It is more apt on trees than on ground.

But hunger-driven, it would run even for the large prey like the pheasants and junglefowls, rats, mice and hares. In addition to animals this marten loves the nectar from Shimul Phul (silk cotton flower) and eggs of birds and reptiles.

It leads a solitary life but a mother might be joined by its growing litter while hunting. Marten breeds in early summer after a pregnancy of about four months when up to five pups are produced in a litter. Mother takes care of the baby single-handedly for another four months or so.

BSMMU

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The doctors then got involved and drove the attackers out of the auditorium by physically harassing at least seven Ansar members. The doctors were chanting "Joy Bangla" slogan at that time.

The people injured in the clash are drivers Rafiq, Iqbal and Jashim and Ansar members Abu Salam, Babar, Abdul Hakim, Dewlar and Zihadul Islam.

The health minister termed the incident untoward and hoped that the university administration would take action against the people responsible for the chaos.

BSSMU Director Brig Gen Abdul Majid Bhuiyan said a five-member probe committee has been formed to investigate the matter. Abu Shafi Ahmed Amin, chairman of ENT department of the university, will lead the committee.

A general diary has been recorded in this connection, said Officer-in-Charge Rezaul Karim of Shahbagh Police Station.

More BDR

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connection with the Pilkhana mutiny case so far. Of them 2267 were remanded while 539 gave confessional statements before the magistrates.

Our correspondent from Thakurgaon reports: A police team led by Sub-inspector Jahangir Alam arrested Sipoy Bilal Hossain at about 9:30pm with the help of Rifle Battalion-20 officials.

Cops dig out

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the decomposed bodies and were trying to drag those out around 4:00pm.

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge of Mohammadpur Police Station Bhuiyan Mahbob Hossain said all the bodies were decomposed and bore injuries inflicted with sharp weapons.

Witnesses said the bodies were recovered from a ditch about three feet deep. One of the youths was wearing shirt and lungi while the other two were naked.

The OC said, "We are trying to unearth the mystery behind the triple murder."

Khaleda asks

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ruling Awami League activists who obstructed voters to turn up in the polling centers.

The opposition leader was talking to a delegation of newly elected leaders of JCD Dhaka city North unit at her Gulshan office at about 9:00pm. JCD President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku introduced the new office bearers to Khaleda.

She was critical of the government for shutting down the private TV channel 1 without any reason and demanded immediate withdrawal of the restriction on its operation. She said the Channel 1 was closed down as it became popular.

The BNP chairperson lamented that the government did not care about the job loss of about 500 people in Channel 1, when it was telling of giving job to at least one person from each family.

Responding to JCD members' eagerness for an action programme against the "repressive" government, Khaleda said people also want movement. BNP is considering vigorous movement in the near future.

ADB won't

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Adivasi people, ADB would not give any fund for it, he added.

Roger made the comment at a discussion titled "Capacity development issues on indigenous people's safeguard and indigenous people's network forum in Bangladesh" following criticism from Adivasi participants regarding ADB funding on different development projects that affect their lives.

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum (BAF) organised the programme in cooperation with ADB at IDB Bhaban yesterday morning. Roger made the comment with reference to ADB safeguard policy-2009.

"Participation of Adivasi people must be ensured in a development project beginning from the stage of designing to monitoring. The development should be done respecting the culture of Adivasi communities," said BAF general secretary Sanjib Drong.

"Policy and law regarding Adivasi people should be formulated in a way that not only ensures protection of indigenous people but also benefits the marginalised indigenous community in the country," he added.

Adivasi participants mentioned instances of projects like the ones in Fulbari and Madhupur National Park that affected indigenous people severely displacing them from their own land.

The ADB policy ensures culturally appropriate social and economic benefits for adivasi people in its future projects and their active participation in all levels of a project including its design and implementation.

Kirti Nishan Chakma presented a paper at the discussion. The discussion was presided over by Prof Dalem Chandra Barman.

Prof Shourav Shikder, Prof Mesbah Kamal, Shamsul Huda, executive director of association for land reform and development, and Adivasi representatives from different organisations and areas also attended it.

PM talks

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called on her at Bangladesh House in the Saarc Village yesterday afternoon.

She said collective strength of the South Asian countries should be put in place for increased socio-economic development leading to emancipation of the nations from poverty.

"Bangladesh and Pakistan can work together to add further momentum to the Saarc process, make it a more vibrant and meaningful organisation in the greater interest of the people of this region," she said.

The meeting between the two leaders covered various issues of bilateral and multilateral interests, strengthening of democracy, increasing people to people contact and expansion of trade and business among the South Asian countries.

Laying emphasis on democracy, Hasina said no country can achieve its desired development without uninterrupted democracy. In this context, she stressed on strengthening all democratic institutions to this end.

The premier mentioned her government's various steps to further strengthening parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh by empowering all local government institutions.

After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen.

On expansion of trade and business between Bangladesh and Pakistan, Hasina said there are ample potentials for enhancing the bilateral trade between the two countries and this should be exploited to increase the trade volume and also to narrow down the trade imbalance.

She pointed out that Pakistan may take steps to reduce high tariff on import of

jute goods, particularly jute bags from Bangladesh. In this respect, she invited increased Pakistani investment in pharmaceuticals, textiles, IT, telecommunications and agro-based industries sectors in Bangladesh.

Gilani hailed Sheikh Hasina for her visionary leadership in steering Bangladesh towards development and her sincere efforts for effectively tackling the climate change consequences.

Laying emphasis on uninterrupted democracy, he solicited Hasina's able leadership in further strengthening the democratic institutions in the region. "You have vast experiences and ideas as you have inherited those. So, you can play a vital role to this end," he said with a note of high appreciation.

The Pakistan PM said his country attaches the highest importance to its relations with Bangladesh. "Pakistan wants to work closely with Bangladesh for establishing regional and world peace as well," he said.

Later, Hasina paid separate call on Maldives President Nashid Ahmad and Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai at the Maldives House and the Afghanistan House respectively in the Saarc Village.

During the meetings, they discussed various issues of bilateral interests as well as the consequences of climate change.

Hasina and Ahmed stressed on working closely with other South Asian countries to face the grim challenges of climate change caused by the global warming.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud and Ambassador at Large M Ziauddin, among others, were present on the occasion.

The Special Court-5 asked the jail authorities to send the 27 in fetters to ensure security of the court.

Lt Col Kazi Aniruddha, prosecutor of the mutiny case, told The Daily Star, "The 27 were produced in fetters as per our requirement. We wanted this to ensure security of the court apprehending that they might try to be unruly again in the same place [Darbar Hall] where they started the mutiny."

"According to the information of the court of inquiry, we have evidence that the twenty seven committed grievous offences during the two-day mutiny," said prosecutor Aniruddha.

The prosecutor in his yesterday's submission briefly described the specific charges of mutiny against the accused.

He said Salim Reza in the morning of February 25 divided his followers into two groups who looted the arsenal.

After taking arms from the arsenal, sepoy Moin of 13 Battalion and Kajal Ali of 44 Battalion went to Darbar Hall at 9:25am to trigger the mutiny.

Armed sepoy Salim, Kajal, Altaf and others soon took control of Darbar Hall and its surrounding areas, Aniruddha added.

Sepoys Salim, Kajal, Habibur Rahman, Jasim Mallik, Rafiqul Islam and Abaidul broke into slain DG Shakil Ahmed's residence where DG's wife and other members were living.

The sepoy committed heinous offences at the DG's house including committing torture, ransacking, looting and arson.

After the prosecutor's submission the court fixed November 1 for hearing on charge framing. Two other members of the court are Lt Col Golam Rabbani and Maj Sayed Hasan Taposh.

The court asked all the accused to appear in the next day's proceedings at 10:00am in the same get-up they had during the mutiny.

No more

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Bank said the amount of bank loan for purchasing land has been increasing every year. In 2008, the banks gave Tk 291 crore loan in total to the subscribers for purchasing lands while the amount was Tk 404 crore in 2009.

However, in real sense, the amount of loans for the purpose would be much more as many people take loan showing other purposes and use it for buying land.

Bangladesh Bank's latest quarterly report said the inflated price of land is one of the elements which may create inflation in the near future.

A high official of the bank said many take loan from banks and buy land. In one or two years, the price of the land increases and the subscriber then sells the land at a higher price. In this way, the land price in the country has reached such a level which is quite abnormal.

This trend of buying and selling land is not contributing to the economic productivity, he mentioned.

Shutdown in India

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"Let us see what happens... people are protesting outside and inside the parliament," a senior leader from the opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, Venkaiah Naidu, told reporters when asked about the vote.

"This is a good occasion for us to test the government's ability -- there is a controversy surrounding the IPL, price rise, phone tapping. The government has to answer to all of this."

In a move repeated regularly over the last weeks, the opposition forced the adjournment of parliament again on Tuesday as angry MPs leapt to their feet and shouted over speakers.

The cricket and phone-tapping scandals have distracted the government at a crucial time as it looks to pass important new legislation, including a national budget.

They have also sapped its momentum less than a year after Congress was returned to power in national elections that were seen as giving it a strong mandate to push through economic liberalisation and welfare reform.

There was uproar on Monday over the phone-tapping allegations, carried in Outlook magazine last week, though Home Minister P Chidambaram has denied that the government eavesdropped on its rivals.

There were sporadic protests across India on Tuesday, from Kerala in the south