

Quiet day

FROM PAGE 1
At the apartment in Gulshan yesterday none other than close family members of the BNP chief were allowed entrance. The security personnel were informed that she would not receive any visitor, Mohammad Nur-e-Alam, caretaker of the residence told The Daily Star. No gathering of people, other than two police vehicles, was seen in front of the compound at noon.

At 196 Gulshan Avenue, the lane connecting the house with the avenue was also being repaired.

"We were told that the opposition leader might start staying here, and so the renovation started," said a worker. Heavy tiles were gathered in front of the swimming pool of the house to fix it up.

Security guards were directed not to let any person enter the house, not even journalists.

AL RESPONSE TO KHALEDA'S ALLEGATIONS

About Khaleda's allegation that the government evicted her from the cantonment house, Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said yesterday, "The government was no way involved in the process, rather it was between the Cantonment Board and Khaleda Zia." He however did not mention how he separates the Cantonment Board from the government.

Replying to a query at a media briefing in AL president's political office in Dhanmondi, he said, "Khaleda Zia did not seek a Supreme Court stay order on the High Court decision upholding the eviction notice, so the High Court order was supposed to be executed after 30 days of the decision."

He questioned why Khaleda shifted her household items from the cantonment house, if she was not interested in moving out.

He also alleged that Khaleda called members of the army "ungrateful and national enemy" when two women police approached her room in that house, seeing her delay in coming out.

Hanif also claimed that Khaleda threatened the officials, who went to help her to move, with dismissal of their jobs when BNP will return to power.

He questioned why she blames the government, as the eviction notice was issued by the Cantonment Board not the government, and as she herself went to the court to settle the issue.

Hanif said the opposition leader shed tears before the media as she had failed to protect the "illegally occupied" cantonment house. It is not understandable as to why she is staying in her brother's residence when she has two

Qaeda denies plot to target Muslim pilgrims

REUTERS, Dubai

Yemen-based al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula denied on Sunday it would stage any action to coincide with the Muslim hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia after a Saudi minister said such an operation could not be ruled out.

Just over a week ago, AQAP claimed a plot to mail two parcel bombs to the United States that caused a global security alert. The explosives were intercepted in Dubai and Britain before they could be detonated following a tip-off from Saudi Arabia.

"We are against any crimes against pilgrims ... Hajj is a pillar of Islam and we are most eager (not to spill) the blood of Muslims, wherever they may be. Mecca is more sacred than any other place," AQAP said in a statement posted on an Islamist website often used by militants.

The statement followed remarks last week by the Saudi interior minister in which he suggested al-Qaeda may attack the around two million Muslims who are due to start their pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

Asked whether al-Qaeda might stage an attack on the hajj or use the event to try and get fighters from Yemen into the kingdom, Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz said: "We cannot rule out any operation but we are ready to foil it."

Saudi Arabia is worried about infiltration across the 1,500 km- (900-mile)-long border it shares with Yemen and which is known for smuggling. The Yemen-based regional wing of al-Qaeda has said it wants to topple the Saudi ruling family.

other houses in the city allocated by the government, he added.

BNP'S CLAIM
BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said ISPR has been lying repeatedly under government pressure about Khaleda's "eviction".

"Khaleda Zia was thrown out from her house cruelly and illegally, which tarnished the nation's image. She narrated the incident thoroughly, and the people of the country believed that," he said while addressing a media briefing in BNP's Nayapalton office in the capital.

He said ISPR invited television channels yesterday to visit the house in cantonment, but it did not allow any TV channel crew access to that house the day before, when a number of them were waiting at Jahangir Gate of Dhaka Cantonment for permission to enter.

He alleged that ISPR has an ill motive of confusing the people. "The false publicity of ISPR and Awami League are the same, and we are protesting that," he said.

The government and ISPR are not only lying, but also running similar smear campaigns, he claimed.

ISPR'S VERSION
At another press briefing in Captain's World, a cafe near Jahangir Gate, ISPR reiterated its claim that Khaleda Zia was neither evicted nor forced to leave the cantonment residence.

It also rebutted the former premier's claim that her rooms were ransacked on Saturday.

ISPR Director Shahinul Islam termed all allegations as baseless, false, fabricated, and motivated. He said the residence is now under the Cantonment Board.

Public Relation Officer of the Army Station Headquarters Lt Col (ret'd) Wali Ullah said the world will not believe the opposition leaders' claim that she was dragged out of the residence at a time when the country's democracy is in good shape.

Home rush

FROM PAGE 1

Many thronged Kamalapur Railway Station to travel to the city's northern parts -- Uttara, Mohakhali DOHS and Tongi.

Businessman Motaleb Hossain was one of them.

He arrived at Syedabad from Teknaf at 5:00am. He could not find any bus or auto-rickshaw to Uttara. He finally decided to take a train.

Like Motaleb, hundreds of people waited for hours at the station since early morning to board trains.

"It is hartal today. You never know what might happen on the streets. For this reason, we came to the station at 6:00am," said Shirin Ahmed, a teacher from Khilgaon.

She had to wait much longer than she had anticipated. Her train came four hours behind the schedule. The Dinajpur-bound Ekata Express, which was supposed to leave the station at 9:50am, finally departed at 2:30pm.

The Chittagong-bound Subarna Express, scheduled to leave at 4:40pm, arrived at the Kamalapur station at 5:30pm.

The delay, however, could not deter the passengers from flocking to the station. Almost all tickets for destinations outside Dhaka were sold out. Some passengers said they bought tickets at higher prices.

A number of passengers complained that they had to pay more to buy launch tickets.

"We bought tickets for Tk 2,200 while the usual fare is Tk 1,500," said Monirul Islam, managing director of a private telecommunication company, who was going to Barguna.

Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, chairman of Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carrier) Association, however, denied the allegation.

No launch owner could charge more than the rate fixed by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), he said.

It was not easy to reach Sadarghat Launch Terminal during the hartal. Some had to walk several kilometres to get a rickshaw to reach there.

But those who endured all hassles to get to the station rule had a pleasant journey back home.

"We boarded a bus from Shyamoli bus counter risking our lives," said Afroza Begum of Mirpur.

Hajj today

FROM PAGE 1

a further 200,000 issued to pilgrims from within Saudi Arabia and from neighbouring Gulf states.

Buses, choked with both people and luggage inside, carried yet more on their roofs. Tens of thousands of illegal pilgrims sat on the pavements, many with tents.

"We don't have permits" said Ramadan Ismael, an Egyptian in his mid-50s who also came from Riyadh.

Meanwhile, pilgrims in licensed groups sat comfortably in their enclosed and well-equipped camps.

The passage to Mina marks the official launch of the hajj on the eighth day of the Muslim calendar month of Dhul Hijja.

The day is known as Tarwiah (Watering) as pilgrims in the past stopped at Mina to water their animals and stock up for the trip to Mount Arafat.

At Mount Arafat, some 10 kilometres (six miles) south-east of Mina, the pilgrims spend the day in prayer and reflection.

After sunset, they move to Muzdalifah, half way between Mount Arafat and Mina, to spend the night.

Tomorrow, they head back to Mina after dawn prayers and perform the first stage of the symbolic "stoning of the devil" and make the ritual sacrifice of an animal, usually a lamb.

On the remaining three days of the hajj, the pilgrims continue the ritual stoning before performing the circumambulation of the Kaaba shrine in Mecca and then heading home.

Security also remains a concern. On Wednesday, Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said he could not rule out the possibility of an Al-Qaeda attack.

Yesterday, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) said in an online statement that it is against attacks targeting the hajj.

"We assure our Islamic nation that we are against any criminal action aimed at the pilgrims," it said.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 16

The attorney general termed the intention of Khaleda's lawyers 'mysterious and politically motivated' and claimed that they have not moved for staying the HC verdict.

The lawyers of the former premier are fully aware of the fact that there is no stay order on the HC verdict, but they are still making false propaganda with ill intention and giving wrong interpretations of law and court orders to create confusion in people's minds, said the top state lawyer.

According to the SC rules, an HC verdict cannot be automatically stayed at the SC, unless it involves a death sentence, asserted Mahbubey Alam.

Meanwhile, Khaleda Zia's lawyer barrister Mahbub Uddin Khokon yesterday accused the attorney general of carrying out a conspiracy to evict the opposition leader from her house and warned that he has to be accountable to the nation for his conspiracy at some stage.

Mahbubey Alam on November 11 told the media that Khaleda would commit contempt of court if she stayed in that house after November 12, stated the lawyer while briefing the media at the south hall of the Supreme Court Bar Association building.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on the following day in a statement said Khaleda had made preparations to leave her cantonment house; so there is a connection between the statements of ISPR and the attorney general, alleged Khokon, also a BNP lawmaker.

The law enforcers have implemented the conspiracy by evicting the former premier, he added.

The attorney general has made untrue and confusing statements on the issue, he argued, insisting that the HC has not directed the BNP chairperson to leave the house.

The Appellate Division on November 10 only adjourned the hearing and asked the government to give her 30 days' time, mentioned the lawyer.

A trip inside

FROM PAGE 1

residence on Shahid Mainul Road yesterday afternoon.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) took journalists on a visit to the house after the BNP chairperson alleged that some people broke into her residence and evicted her on Saturday.

Earlier, the ISPR at a press conference denied Khaleda's allegations that the doors and the gate had been broken and she was forced out.

The doors, the iron fence of the balcony and mosquito nets fitted to the windows were found in good shape. However, the latch of the front door seemed to have been painted lately. A deep scratch was there on the doorframe.

The wooden door of the master bedroom of the BNP chief seemed to be new.

No representative of Khaleda or her family was there. ISPR officials in plain clothes and armed guards were on the premises of the house where Khaleda lived for nearly 38 years.

The interior of the rooms was exquisite. They all were air-conditioned and had expensive furniture, curtains, decorative pieces and thick carpet.

A dressing room and a bathroom is attached to the master bedroom of the leader of the opposition. The six closets, a chest of drawers and the wardrobes in her dressing room and the bedroom were found almost empty. Only

cosmetics, a few combs and hair clips were there.

An orchid, a Barbie-doll and four bottles of perfumes were left in the spacious bathroom. A small refrigerator with food items like chocolate and biscuits inside was also there.

Cartons were found lying almost everywhere in the house.

Clothes, showpieces, utensils, cosmetics were packed in cartons, tin boxes, suitcases and bags.

A refrigerator stuffed with papaya, citrus, dates and apple was in the kitchen.

Some cartons were marked with words like -- barandar porda (veranda curtains), Chhoto bhैया-27 (younger brother), Shithi bhabi-24, and bhaiyar punjabi-7.

The two-storey building built in 2004 on the premises was locked.

At least five vehicles including a white Nissan Patrol, Toyota Runner, a microbus and a Toyota Crown were parked under a shed on the premises.

The house would be handed over to Khaleda and her family if the Supreme Court gives verdict in her favour said a source of the Bangladesh Army.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said several times in parliament that the government would construct a high-rise at the place to provide flats to the family members of the army officials killed in the BDR mutiny at Pilkhana.

Dhaka, Ankara

FROM PAGE 1

competitive in the world market.

About promoting bilateral trade, she sought initiatives from Turkey to facilitate banking transactions and easing of different barriers for expansion of Bangladeshi exports to its market.

During the meeting, Hasina requested her Turkish counterpart to accept European Union Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) instead of Turkish GMP in giving access to Bangladeshi pharmaceuticals to Turkish market.

"I can assure you that our pharmaceuticals products are among the best in the world. The products are being exported to 73 countries including the European Union," she said and hoped that Turkey would accept the EU GMP certificate.

She expressed the hope that the existing cooperation between Bangladesh and Turkey in various sectors, including defense, education and health would continue to grow in strength in the future.

Referring to the opening of Turkish Airlines flights next month, Hasina also expressed the hope that it would help increase interaction between Bangladesh and Turkey and facilitate trade between the two countries.

After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told journalists that during the talks, the Turkish PM invited Sheikh Hasina in his country. The premier accepted the invitation saying that she will visit Turkey in a convenient time.

Later in his statement, the Turkish PM expressed his country's support to Bangladesh so that it can turn into a middle-income country by 2021.

Erdogan expressed his satisfaction over Bangladesh's continued socio-economic development saying it has

1 killed

FROM PAGE 16

under sadar upazila of the district.

Fazal, also known as "cadre Fazlu", was accused in eight cases, including for murder, filed with Shiddhirganj Police Station, Rab sources said.

According to a Rab press release, a team of Rab-11 challenged a gang when they were holding a secret meeting at Naya Ati Housing area in the upazila at about 2:30am.

At one stage, the gang opened fire on the members of elite force prompting them to fire back.

Fazal received bullet during the gun battle. Rab members rushed him to Khanpur 200-bed hospital in the district when doctors declared him dead. A Rab member was also injured.

Fazal's associates, however, fled the scene. Rab members recovered a pistol from the spot.

ASM Badrul Alam, officer-in-charge of Shiddhirganj Police Station, said they are preparing to file a case in this connection.

cosmetics, a few combs and hair clips were there.

An orchid, a Barbie-doll and four bottles of perfumes were left in the spacious bathroom. A small refrigerator with food items like chocolate and biscuits inside was also there.

Cartons were found lying almost everywhere in the house.

Clothes, showpieces, utensils, cosmetics were packed in cartons, tin boxes, suitcases and bags.

A refrigerator stuffed with papaya, citrus, dates and apple was in the kitchen.

Some cartons were marked with words like -- barandar porda (veranda curtains), Chhoto bhैया-27 (younger brother), Shithi bhabi-24, and bhaiyar punjabi-7.

The two-storey building built in 2004 on the premises was locked.

At least five vehicles including a white Nissan Patrol, Toyota Runner, a microbus and a Toyota Crown were parked under a shed on the premises.

The house would be handed over to Khaleda and her family if the Supreme Court gives verdict in her favour said a source of the Bangladesh Army.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said several times in parliament that the government would construct a high-rise at the place to provide flats to the family members of the army officials killed in the BDR mutiny at Pilkhana.

proved the present government's commitment to the well being of its people.

He specially appreciated Bangladesh's advancement in strengthening democracy, rule of law, human rights situation, gender equality and empowerment of people.

Referring to \$644 million trades between the two countries from January to August this year, Erdogan said Bangladesh has many potential areas where Turkey can cooperate.

Mentioning the excellent bilateral relations exist between Bangladesh and Turkey, Erdogan hoped that the relation would be further enhanced with the expansion of trade and business between the two countries and continued cooperation in different international forums.

Besides, he also expressed his country's willingness to enhance cooperation in education sector.

Finance Minister A M A Muhiht, Commerce Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Finance and Planning Adviser to the PM Moshirur Rahman, Adviser for Energy Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury were, among others, present.

Turkish PM leaves for home Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his spouse Emine Erdogan were given a hearty send off yesterday afternoon when they left for home after a two-day official visit to Bangladesh.

This was the second high-level tour by a Turkish leader after the visit of its President Abdullah Gul in February this year.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Commerce Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan and Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh M Vakur Erkul as well as high civil and military officials were present at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to see off the Turkish premier.

Baby missing

FROM PAGE 1

Mosharrar came under attack near Khaleque's Pump at Kalyanpur, where he was looking to hire a vehicle to go to Uttara.

Witnesses said Sumi ran after the car for about 300 metres as the gang dragged away Mosharrar. After the locals saved her husband, she returned to the place where she had left her son, but found to her horror the kid was nowhere to be seen.

The couple fear their child was abducted by the other two of the gang.

Reaz Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said Bakhtiar and Zayed, the arrested youths, and Mosharrar are known to each other. He suspects maybe something between them had gone wrong leading to the kidnap attempt.

The police were looking for the missing child, the OC said adding that a case was filed for the snatching of Tk 4 lakh.

Tougher law

FROM PAGE 16

of any woman or makes any indecent gesture, his act shall be deemed to be sexual harassment.

Under the section, such a male will be punished by rigorous imprisonment for a term that may be extended up to ten years but shall not be less than three years and shall additionally also be liable to fine.

Sources said the section would be made applicable for stalking by bringing necessary changes to it.

The meeting also decided to speed up social movement against the crime to prevent harassment of girls, and to enact a new law if needed, meeting sources added.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, the education minister said enacting a new law to resist stalking would be a time-consuming and that's why the Women and Children Repression Act would be amended.

"But, we are not leaving aside the enacting of a new law," Nahid said, adding the government would do every possible thing to ensure punishment to stalkers.

Termining stalking a social disease, he said a tougher law alongside social movement would help combat the crime, which claimed lives of a number of girls in recent times.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury; Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder; Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury; Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary M Shahidul Haque, among others, attended the meeting.

SATKHIRA STALKER PUNISHED

A mobile court sentenced a college student to 20 days' imprisonment for stalking a schoolgirl in Satkhira yesterday.

The convicted, Emrul Hasan, 19, of village Tujalpur is a first year bachelor's student of Jhhowdanga Degree College in the district headquarters.

Locals said Emrul used to tease the girl, a class-X student of the same village, every day on her way to school and then to home.

Around 9:30am yesterday, he tried to harass the girl near schoolgate.

Teachers and the school managing committee urged Satkhira deputy commissioner to take action against the stalker.

Instructed by the DC, the mobile court led by Magistrate Sadequr Rahman reached the spot and arrested Emrul. In a trial held on the school premises, the court pronounced the punishment.

Sued at home

FROM PAGE 1

and 27 other party activists on charge of assaulting police and torching a double-decker BRTC bus in front of the BNP office.

Advocate Mohiuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that his cousin Manju had gone to Saudi Arabia on November 11 for performing hajj. But police filed a case against his brother, Mohiuddin said.

The case was false, fabricated and concocted and it was filed to harass the BNP leaders and activists, he added.

BNP men torched the BRTC bus that was carrying the students of Dhaka University in front of the BNP office on Saturday afternoon.

Meantime, police arrested 18 leaders and activists of the party from the spot on charge of torching the bus and several other vehicles. Paltan police yesterday produced them before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

Of the accused, the court granted bails to three women and sent others to jail. It also fixed today for hearing of their bail petitions.

The same court also sent nine other accused, who were arrested from Motijheel area on similar charges, to jail fixing today for hearing of their bail petitions.

Another Dhaka court granted bails to 17 BNP leaders and activists who were arrested from Mirpur area on Saturday for their alleged involvement in damaging vehicles.

Meantime, pro-BNP and pro-Awami League lawyers yesterday brought out processions on the court premises in support and against the hartal.

Trial proceedings of Dhaka District and Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Courts, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's and Chief Judicial Magistrate's Courts were normal.

8 power contracts

FROM PAGE 16

kilowatt hour for 22 years.

This offer is termed stunning by industry operators as most of the gas-based bids drew tariffs higher than 4 cents in the last six years.

After signing the contract, Summit-GE would have to complete building the simple-cycle component and supply 222MW to the national grid within two years and complete the remaining component within the next one year.

Summit won the Meghnaghat dual-fuel project by offering US 3.98 cents per kilowatt hour for gas-based power and 9.11 cents per unit for furnace oil-based electricity. Its average tariff stood at US 6.86 cents.

This price is higher than Summit's Bibiyana project because Bibiyana project is a gas fired power project and this one is dual fuel. "This would be the first dual-fuel IPP [Independent Power Project] of the country. The cost of construction and maintenance of a dual-fuel project is higher than gas-based power project," the proposal that was approved by the purchase committee read.

Summit-GE would build the first part of the plant--the 220MW Simple Cycle component--within two years of signing of the contract and complete the project by launching the combined cycle component within three years.

The purchase committee also approved another IPP contract in Bhola to build a 225MW gas-based power project. Malaysian-Bangladeshi joint venture Ranhil-STS won the bid by offering a power tariff of US 3.43 cents or Tk 2.38 per kilowatt hour.

Ranhil is expected to launch the first part of this project within 20 months and supply 146MW power to the national grid using the simple cycle component of the plant. It would complete and launch the combined cycle plant within 32 months of contract signing.

The Bhola plant would utilise gas produced from the under-utilised Shahbazpur gas field that was discovered in the mid-nineties but was never connected to the national grid.

Combined cycle plants use the heat generated by a simple cycle gas or oil generator unit to produce extra power and thus ensure less fuel consumption and lower cost for electricity generation.

The remaining five power

projects are all rental ones--341MW in total--and these are being awarded on the basis of unsolicited negotiations. All the contractors are local with most lacking prior experience with electricity generation projects. Most of them will be gas-fired.

Despite gas crisis in general, the Power Development Board (PDB) sought some gas-fired rental