

# Hartal eve sees

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Khaleda over the violence. But Khaleda said cancellation of the airport project on Arial Beel is not enough to call off the hartal. Public sufferings like shortage of gas, water and electricity have to be resolved or more such programmes will be enforced, she said.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain has accused the government of trying to disrupt the hartal.

"We will go for non-stop hartal if the government tries to disrupt this hartal," he told a press conference at BNP's Naya Paltan office yesterday. "We will go for any programmes necessary to press home public demands."

Senior ruling Awami League lawmakers Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta in parliament yesterday blasted BNP for calling the hartal terming it "unconstitutional and undemocratic".

Taking the floor on point of order, the two leaders accused BNP of trying to tarnish the country's image by calling such "illogical hartal without any issues".

## CLASHES, VIOLENCE

Hartal supporters attacked and set fire to at least nine buses and a private car in Demra, Tongi, Farmgate, Mirpur, Kakrail and Shankar.

Mirpur police say they have detained Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal local unit joint secretary Awlad Hossain and Arif Hossain in this connection.

Meanwhile, the opposition leaders have decided to stay at 26 points in the city to make the hartal a success.

The party brought out processions and distributed leaflets drumming up support for the hartal, fourth since June last year.

BNP observed two other hartals in November over Khaleda's former house in cantonment and another in June last year.

Police and BNP activists yesterday locked into

clashes that left 17 people including former mayor Mujibur Rahman Sarwar injured, reports Sushanta Ghosh from Barisal.

Police picked up eight people from the spot.

The clashes occurred when the opposition supporters tried to hold rallies at Aswani Kumar Hall premises in support of hartal.

Police also charged batons to disperse a rally organised by another former mayor Ahsan Habib Kamal in court area.

Meantime, Rab arrested Khorsheed Alam, younger brother of DCC Ward-56 councillor Chowdhury Alam, at his Khilgaon residence with three hand bombs. Alam, also president of Ramna BNP unit, went missing in the capital on June 25 last year.

Police foiled pro-hartal processions in the port city as BNP activists locked into chase and counter chase with law-enforcers and damaged at least four vehicles, writes our staff correspondent in Chittagong.

## BNP LAWMAKERS FORM HUMAN CHAIN

BNP lawmakers yesterday formed a human chain on the premises of the parliament demanding withdrawal of cases filed against Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia and others in connection with the proposed Bangabandhu International Airport at Arial Beel.

The opposition MPs lined up at the entrance of the parliament building in the morning for half an hour to voice their demand.

Addressing a rally after the human chain programme, Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque alleged that the government is filing cases against the BNP chief and party leaders which are preventing them from returning to the parliament.

The government's activities proved it does not want to make the parliament effective with the presence

of opposition lawmakers, he alleged.

Asked when the opposition lawmakers will return to parliament, the opposition chief whip said they had planned to join the current session. But filing of the case obstructed them to go ahead with their plan, he alleged.

Among others, BNP lawmakers AKM Mosharaf Hossain, Zainul Abedin, ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan, Shaheed Uddin Chowdhury Annie, Rasheda Begum Hira, Syeda Asifa Ashrafi Papiya and Nilufar Chowdhury Moni took part in the human chain.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami MP Hamidur Rahman also joined the human chain expressing his party's solidarity with the BNP's demand.

## BUSINESS LEADERS

Business leaders yesterday heavily criticised today's hartal, reports BSS.

President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association Abdus Salam Mursheed said, "Hartal always brings negative impact for a country's economy and it can never be an instrument to realise demands of political parties."

President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Afif Ibrahim said the entire business community is against hartal.

## Thai, Cambodian clashes resume at disputed border

AP, Bangkok

Fighting erupted yesterday between soldiers along Cambodia's disputed border with Thailand near an 11th century temple for a third day, shattering a shaky cease-fire.

A Cambodian soldier at the front line, Lt Pen Song, said troops exchanged artillery and mortar fire along the Phnom Troap mountain range, about 3 kilometers from the historic Preah Vihear temple, a UN World Heritage Site that belongs to Cambodia under a 1962 World Court ruling disputed by many Thais.

A Thai official in the border area, Nakhon Siripanyanant, confirmed that clashes had resumed yesterday evening and said some villagers who had returned to their homes were again evacuated.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

## Babar

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Chittagong court yesterday.

Faruk gave confessional statement under 164 before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbubur Rahman.

Assistant Commissioner (Prosecution) Nirmalendu Bikash Chakrabarty said the magistrate recorded the eight-page statement from 3:00 to 4:30pm.

In his statement, Faruk, also the chief of the five-member probe body formed by the then BNP government, said they found involvement of National Security Intelligence (NSI) officials in the incident.

They informed Babar of the matter but he forbade them to mention it in the report, a source at the court said quoting Faruk's statement.

Faruk also mentioned about the investigation of the probe body and its report, the source said.

The former home secretary gave the statement as a witness of the case filed in connection with the haul of ten truckloads of firearms and ammunition at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Company Ltd jetty on April 2, 2004.

Earlier three probe committee members -- the then DIG (Special Branch) Shamsul Islam, former DIG (CID) Farrukh Ahmed and former NSI Director Brig Gen Enamur Rahman -- implicated Babar and Omar Faruk for twisting the probe report in their confessional statement under section 164.

The Daily Star also found the case filed with Noria Police Station inconsistent with the incident described by the victim's family members. In the case, the place of occurrence has been wrongly recorded.

The deputy commissioner of Shariatpur said the matter did not come to their notice, as the victim and the perpetrators are close relatives who tried to settle it among themselves.

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