

Land trader

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yesterday along with two youths.

After they walked out through the club's main gate, Ramzan Miah, a security guard of the building heard screams, the SI said.

Ramzan rushed to the spot and found the victim stabbed in his throat and the youths running away, he added.

Locals took Roman to a private hospital of the area where doctors declared him dead.

The SI said police were yet to identify the two youths and also trying to find out the reason of the victim's visit to the club.

Shabnam Kabir, wife of Roman, filed a murder case with Gulshan Police Station.

In the case statement, she said her husband had been entangled in a feud with a top real estate company over erecting a wall around a plot of land at Khilkhet about a weekago.

2 Bangladeshi

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Bangladeshis as Major KM Ziaul Haque and Corporal Clerk Md Yunus Mian.

News Agency Associated Press (AP) said the UN plane carrying staff members and peacekeepers crashed upon landing at the airport in Congo's capital. It broke into pieces and claimed 26 out of 32 passengers. The flight was travelling from Kisangani to Kinshasa.

The cause of the crash could not be known instantly. A crisis taskforce is working at the crash site.

The UN mission in Congo, known as MONUSCO, includes more than 19,000 uniformed peacekeeping troops with a task to protect civilians in the Central African nation massively troubled by violence of myriad of rebel groups and militias.

Congo has one of the worst air safety records in the world. The country's safety regulations are notoriously lax, according to AP.

BNP, Jamaat

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press after a meeting of Mujibnagar Day Observance Committee at the political office of party President Sheikh Hasina at Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday.

Announcing hartal from behind the scene and supplying fund and arms for the strike cannot be acceptable and it does not suit BNP, mentioned AshrafuI.

He also complained that activists of BNP and Jamaat were on the streets during the strike.

The AL leader censured BNP for being reluctant to talk about the national women development policy and demanded it to clarify weather they believe in the policy or not.

He said pro-hartal leaders and activists, who joined in picketing, will be identified and action would be taken accordingly.

Aminee has been protesting the women policy as he has failed to understand it, observed AshrafuI.

Fazlul Haque Aminee, chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), announced the dawn-to-dusk hartal on March 8 protesting the women development policy adopted by the cabinet recently.

The meeting of Mujibnagar Day Observance Committee chalked out different programmes in the capital and Mujibnagar to observe the historic day in a befitting manner.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Shamsul Islam Tuku yesterday criticised BNP for offering 'moral support' to the 'meaningless but politically motivated general strike' called by IOJ, reports BSS.

"Visibly the hartal was called by the IOJ, but it was supported by BNP . . . they actually are of the same character," he told a group of newsmen.

The state minister said the rightwing group called the hartal to mislead the people about the national women policy, despite explanations from the government that it contained nothing against the principles of the Quran.

Fresh assault

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and accused the United Nations of bias. The standoff that followed has now turned into a resumption of the civil war of 2002-03.

After swiftly taking control of most of the country, pro-Ouattara forces have met fierce resistance in Abidjan where Gbagbo's troops are holding on to positions around the presidential palace, Gbagbo's residence, and state television.

After several days of fighting in Abidjan, nervous citizens ventured out to get food and water on Monday morning after being holed up at home because of the fighting.

Speaking on Sunday on the pro-Ouattara TCI television channel, Ouattara's prime minister Guillaume Soro said their strategy had been to encircle the city, harass Gbagbo's troops and gather intelligence on their arsenal.

"The situation is now ripe for a lightning offensive," which he said would come anytime soon.

France said on Monday it was sending an extra 150 soldiers to help protect civilians in Ivory Coast.

The deployment brings the number of French troops in Ivory Coast to 1,650. France has about 12,000 nationals in the country and the French military contingent has already mounted patrols in Abidjan and taken control of the airport.

It had been expected that Ouattara's forces would quickly overrun Gbagbo's troops following defection by high ranking officers, but they have managed to withstand

the assault so far and regain control of the state broadcaster RTI.

Through the television channel, they have broadcast virulent anti-French and anti-UN messages, while rallying support from Gbagbo's youth wing, the Young Patriots, who have formed a human chain around Gbagbo's residence and presidential palace.

ARMY CHIEF FLIP FLOP

A Reuters reporter saw scores of Young Patriots gather by the lagoon near the palace with plastic buckets and bottles to collect water, guarded by jumpy soldiers brandishing AK-47s.

Gbagbo's camp has also received a potential morale booster with the return of army chief General Philippe Mangou, who had sought refuge at the residence of the South African ambassador on Wednesday as pro-Ouattara troops advanced on Abidjan.

More than 1,500 people have been killed since the violence began five months ago.

The ICRC said it stuck by an estimate of 800 killed in the western town of Duekoue alone in intercommunal

violence in one day last week, which Ouattara's camp has said was "exaggerated."

African Union secretary general Jean Ping urged both sides to "show restraint and protect civilians" and said he hoped Ouattara would be able to take up "the office to which he has been democratically elected."

UNTHREATENS

The UN has threatened air attacks on forces loyal to besieged Ivorian President

Laurent Gbagbo after 11 peacekeepers were shot in recent days.

The UN chief's representative accused pro-Gbagbo forces of "mindless" attacks on the UN base in Abidjan, adds BBC.

The threat came as French forces were poised to evacuate foreigners ahead of an expected offensive by forces loyal to president-elect Ouattara.

CID warned

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The same court on March 1 warned Akand for delaying the investigation.

"We'll all be responsible if President Zillur Rahman cannot see the trial of his wife's [Ivy Rahman] killers in his lifetime," the judge told the prosecutor yesterday.

At least 23 people, including Awami League leader Ivy Rahman, were killed and scores more injured in the grenade attack on an AL rally at capital's Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader, was also wounded.

The judge also raised the question over the probe by such an officer who was delaying the investigation.

He asked Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu as to why the IO has been repeatedly submitting time petitions.

"This is a sensational case and the nation is waiting to see the trial, and we all must realise the importance of the case," Zohurul said.

The metropolitan public prosecutor said the prosecution will not seek more time after the April 20 deadline.

At one stage, Abdullah Abu said the four-party alliance government played a drama to divert the investigation and arrested one Juj Miah of Noakhali in connection with the attack.

The judge then wanted to know why the current government, which came to power two years ago, has been delaying the probe.

Abdullah Abu avoided a direct reply, but said the investigation is progressing.

The court extended the time following a petition by the IO on Sunday seeking 45 days more to complete the probe.

Another case filed for murder is now pending with the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka.

10 killed

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Besides, several hundred of thatched houses were battered, huge crops damaged and innumerable trees and electric poles uprooted during the storm.

In Jamalpur, tornado which lashed four upazilas of the district, claimed three people in the afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Firoze, 3, son of Alam of Belgachha village of Islampur upazila, Monowara Begum, 14, daughter of Salim Ullah of the same village and Jerin, 13, a student of Class VII of a local school and daughter of JossiuIah Haque Master of Patharshi village of the upazila.

In Sherpur, tornado swept over the district killing three people and injuring at least five others in Sreebardi, Nalitabari, Jhinaigati and Sadar upazila.

The deceased were identified as Tofazzal Hossain, 50, of Meerganj in Sherpur town, Shaymla Begum, 60, of Kekerchar village in Sreebardi upazila and Momena Khatun, 45, of Dakpara village in Sadar upazila.

In Mymensingh, storm lashed the district killing two people, including a minor boy and damaging houses and uprooting trees.

The deceased were identified as Mokbul Hossain, 70, of Goroibhanga village and Shahadat, 7, son of Abdul Zailil of village Gamaritola in Dhobaura upazila.

In Gaibandha, violent storm killed a man and injured at least 45 people.

In Thakurgaon, an old woman was killed by lightning strike during a 20-minute tornado that swept over 15 villages of Sadar upazila.

The deceased Maleka Begum, 70, instantly died hit by thunderbolt at Beelpara village at Salandar union in the evening.

Pickets on the rampage

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the city, traffic was thin in Shanti Nagar-Paltan-Gulistan areas, where much of the city's violence occurred.

Hartal supporters attacked vehicles of ruling party lawmakers in Chandpur and Brahmanbaria. Lawmakers Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and RMA Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury of Chandpur-1 and Brahmanbaria-3 constituencies, however, escaped unhurt.

Aminee, also chief of IOJ -- a component of four-party alliance led by main opposition BNP, claimed that police arrested 315 of his supporters while more than 200 were injured. He had earlier threatened to burn the country in an hour in the event of the court verdict on fatwa going against them. At a press briefing yesterday evening, he declared a fresh protest programme.

In Dhaka, pickets, mostly madrasa students, clashed with law enforcers in Shanti Nagar, Paltan, Dainik Bangla, Press Club, Mirpur section-10, Mohammadpur, Lalbagh and Demra areas leaving around 100 injured. Police detained 120 people.

The law enforcers used rubber bullets and hurled teargas canisters to disperse the pickets attacking with brickbats and bamboos. Chases and counter chases took place.

Police detained 65 persons from Paltan, six from Mirpur and 15 from Demra. At least 50 people were injured in the clashes at Signboard area in Demra.

Gazi Mozammel Huq, deputy commissioner (Wari Zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the clash in Demra erupted around 11:00am when police resisted teachers and students of Kawmi Madrasa from vandalising vehicles.

CHITTAGONG

Around 2,000 pro-hartal

activists attacked a convoy of around 400 buses carrying devotees from different parts of the country to Maizbhandar Sharif (a shrine) in Fatikhchhari upazila around 12:30pm. The pickets vandalised over 100 buses, reports our Chittagong correspondent.

Nine people, including a policeman, were injured in the incident. Five of them were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital while the rest to Hathazari upazila health complex.

The protesters also set fire to Sheuli Petrol Pump in the area. On information, firemen rushed to the spot and doused the flames around 1:00pm.

Vehicular movement in Hathazari area remained suspended till 4:30pm yesterday as students of Darul Ulm Moitul Islam Madrasa blocked roads. Pickets also put a barricade on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway in Patiya upazila in the morning.

CHANDPUR

Pro-hartal activists attacked the motorcade of Awami League lawmaker MK Alamgir at the district's Kochua around 12:00 noon.

Alamgir escaped the attack unhurt.

The pickets vandalised six vehicles of the motorcade and a filling station.

Bangladesh Chhatra League workers dispersed the attackers following a chase and counter chase, which left five protesters injured.

B'BARIA

Hartal supporters threw bricks on the car carrying local lawmaker RMA Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury near Kotwali on his way to Brahmanbaria.

Four policemen of Kotwali Police Station were injured in the attack.

The injured are: Officer-in-Charge Gazi Shakhawat Hossain, Sub-Inspector

Troops, cops open fire

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drive to oust veteran President Ali Abdullah Saleh gathered pace, witnesses said.

The violent attempt to suppress mounting protests inspired by uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia came amid signs that the United States was seeking an end to Saleh's 32-year rule, long seen as a rampart against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

In Taiz, south of the capital Sanaa, police mowed down protesters trying to storm the provincial government building, killing at least 12 people, and wounding 30 more by gunfire, hospital sources said.

But AFP quoted Sadeq al-Shujaa, head of a makeshift field hospital at a square in central Taez, as saying, "The death toll has gone up to 17."

The bloodshed came as protesters staged a march on the governorate headquarters in the city about 200 kilometres from the capital.

Witnesses said the demonstrators stormed the courtyard of the governorate and that plainclothes gunmen opened fire in an attempt to push them back.

The killings, a day after another protester was shot dead in Taez, sent the death toll to more than 100 in a crackdown on protests in the impoverished Arabian peninsula state since late January.

In a similar confrontation, 13 people were shot and wounded late on Sunday as police clashed with tens of thousands of demonstrators in the western city of Hudaida, according to witnesses.

In the Red Sea port of Hudaida, police and armed men in civilian clothes fired live rounds and teargas at hundreds of demonstrators marching on a presidential palace and some 50 people were wounded, another medical source said.

Negotiations for Saleh to hand over power appear to have stalled, prompting the escalating clashes and mounting pressure from the United States.

Sources close to the talks said Washington had given Saleh an ultimatum last week to agree on a deal negotiated by the US ambassador in Sanaa to ensure a peaceful exit and transition of power, otherwise it would publicly call on him to step down.

The Obama administra-

tion has not so far made a public statement urging Saleh to stand aside. Such calls were key in bringing an end to the rule of Tunisia's Zine al-Abidine bin Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak.

But the New York Times said yesterday that Washington "has now quietly shifted positions and has concluded that he is unlikely to bring about the required reforms and must be eased out of office."

Saleh, a perennial survivor, called on Sunday for an end to the violence, suggesting he had no intention of resigning soon.

"We call on the opposition coalition to end the crisis by ending sit-ins, blocking roads and assassinations, and they should end the state of rebellion in some military units," the president told visiting supporters from Taiz province on Sunday.

"We are ready to discuss transferring power, but in a peaceful and constitutional framework."

TRANSITION STALLED

His apparent stalling prompted new protests, including one in the middle of the night.

Demonstrators organised a march on a presidential palace in Hudaida in protest at a security crackdown on rallies in Taiz on Sunday that doctors said killed two and wounded hundreds.

"They suddenly gathered around the province's administrative building and headed to the presidential palace, but police stopped them by firing gunshots in the air and using teargas. I saw a lot of plainclothes police attack them too," a witness in Hudaida told Reuters by phone.

The governor of Taiz later denied anyone had been killed there on Sunday and Saleh blamed the violence on the opposition.

Former Yemeni MP Mohammed Muqbil al-Hamiri, who had resigned from parliament in recent weeks, told Al Jazeera television by telephone that what was happening in Taiz was "a true massacre."

"The regime has surprised us with this extent of killing. I don't think the people will do anything other than come out with the bare chests to drain the government of all its ammunition," he said.

The ruling party said it had

Mizanur Rahman Abdus Salam, Assistant Sub-Inspector Mahfuz and Constable Taslim.

FARIDPUR

Police detained 15 people in Faridpur sadar, Nagarkanda and Bhanga upazilas after a series of clashes with the pro-hartal activists.

Fifteen people, including 10 policemen, were injured during the clashes.

Noor-e-Alam, OC of Faridpur Sadar Police Station, was among the wounded.

Police charged batons on the pickets when they besieged Nagarkanda Police Station after the law enforcers stopped them from blocking a road.

The demonstrators set fire to a police van.

FENI

Police rounded up two pickets for vandalising at least 20 buses, a truck, and an auto-rickshaw at Mohammad Ali Bazar in Dattasar, Fatehpur Starline filling station, and establishments in Dula Mia crossing and Palli Bidyut office area, and on Shahid Shahidullah Kaiser Road.

MOULVIBAZAR

Teachers and students of Baruna Madrasa put a barricade with benches on Moulvibazar-Dhaka highway at Bhairabganj and started reciting from the Quran in the morning.

When police asked them to leave, they attacked police with wooden sticks, prompting the latter to fire rubber bullets.

Three people, including Assistant Superintendent of Police Alamgir Hussain, were injured.

KHULNA

Pro-hartal activists damaged two BRTC buses and six rickshaws on PTI Road in the town.

The pickets, carrying wooden sticks, were passing by the area with a procession when they made the attack.

Aminee goes for 2-month fresh agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fazlul Huq Aminee, chief of the Islamic Law Implementation Committee, yesterday came up with two-month long agitation programmes including organising a grand rally in the capital to protest the 'anti-Quran women development policy'.

He announced the programmes from a post-hartal briefing held at the temporary office of the organisation at Lalbagh of Old Dhaka in the capital. The organisation observed the dawn to dusk hartal yesterday protesting the government's adoption of the women development policy.

On Fatwa, an issue pending in the High Court, Aminee said, "What you people have seen? ... Fire will be set on the whole country within an hour if the court verdict goes against Fatwa."

According to the fresh programmes, protest rallies will be held in all districts under Dhaka division tomorrow and campaign against the anti-Quran provisions in the women development policy on April 8.

A conference of the Ulama Mashayekh will be held in Dhaka on April 20 while grand rallies in all divisional headquarters in between May 10 and 25 and a grand rally will take place in the capital on May 27.

Aminee, also the chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote, said, "Nobody will be able to stay in state power after taking position against Quran and Hadith. Hasina will fall from chair if she does not give up her position against Islam."

Aminee termed yesterday's hartal most successful since the present government assumed office.

"We are now on the streets and will remain until the Quran and Hadith are protected," Aminee said adding, "We will not sit idle in madrasa anymore; rather will take to the street."

He claimed 315 activists were arrested during the hartal and demanded release of them within 24 hours.

Khaleda warns

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moved forward a lot in women's development and more will be achieved in coming days. But an anarchy may occur if any steps which hurt religious sentiment are taken," her adviser Osman Farruk quoted Khaleda as saying in the meeting.

Farruk said Khaleda also described to the delegation how her government combated terrorism.

NESA Director Ambassador Larocco led the delegation. US Ambassador James F Moriarty was also present while BNP chairperson's advisors Sabihuddin Ahmed, Reaz Rahman and Osman Farruk accompanied her during the one-hour long meeting in the evening.

900 waiting

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press release yesterday.

However, there was no new arrival of any Bangladeshis till yesterday at Al Salloum border point in Egypt.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' consular team has been asked to stay put at this border point to facilitate repatriation arrangements of Bangladeshis who cross over into Egypt.

Until April 1, some 2,528 travel permits were issued at Al Salloum Camp to the Bangladesh nationals who did not have passports and some passports were also renewed for a limited period for free, said the release.

Since the beginning of repatriation of Bangladeshis, a total of 125 flights have been operated till date.

To this day, 34,198 Bangladeshis employed in Libya have been repatriated to Bangladesh.

One Bangladeshi remains missing at Hania, Crete Island in Greece, since March 6 when 49 Bangladeshis jumped from a ship during evacuation.