

**Businesses**

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AK Azad, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said businessmen are perturbed by the spectre of confrontational politics.

His comment underlines fears among the business community that Bangladesh will lose the export growth pace because of hartal. The country posted more than 40 percent export growth in July-May, buoyed by ready-made garment sector.

Urging the opposition parties to withdraw hartal, the business community suggested disputed issues be resolved in parliament.

The main opposition BNP and its allies including Jamaat-e-Islami called a 48-hour hartal from 6:00am today, protesting the repeal of caretaker government system.

"Hartal will not only hamper the local investment, but also foreign direct investment," he said. He said businessmen are already in a lot of troubles like higher bank interest rate and inadequate supply of gas and power. Hartal will add woes to the economy.

The economy will suffer if businessmen cannot generate employment due to destructive activities, Azad added.

**A m j a d K h a n** Chowdhury, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said hartal will push the country into anarchy.

"Of course, hartal will have a detrimental effect on our economy. We lose crores of taka in a hartal day, as we cannot sell our products. Hartal hampers both tax collection and export," he said.

**A s i f I b r a h i m**, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said now the economy is in a take-off situation. Hartal is not desirable at this moment. "We must grab more foreign investment through creating a better business environment."

**M u r s h e d M u r a d I b r a h i m**, president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry said businessmen face troubles for stoppage of delivery in the Chittagong Port during the hartal.

"We have to count a huge demurrage per day for overstaying of ships at port during hartal," he added.

**S h a f i u l I s l a m M o h i u d d i n**, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, in a statement said international buyers might shift to other destinations for frequent hartal.

The risks of discount, cancellation, air freight and deferred payment compound in the garment business for hartal, he said.

International buyers are delaying in placing orders for frequent hartal.

**A K M S a l i m O s m a n**, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said workers will face the trouble for hartal as the garment factory owners will not be able to pay them properly due to loss in production for hartal. "The owners will face the delayed shipment problem."

**Hanif's assets**  
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house around 8:00pm. A Dhaka court on Sunday issued an arrest warrant against 18 fugitive accused in the August 21 grenade attack cases and ordered to seize their properties.

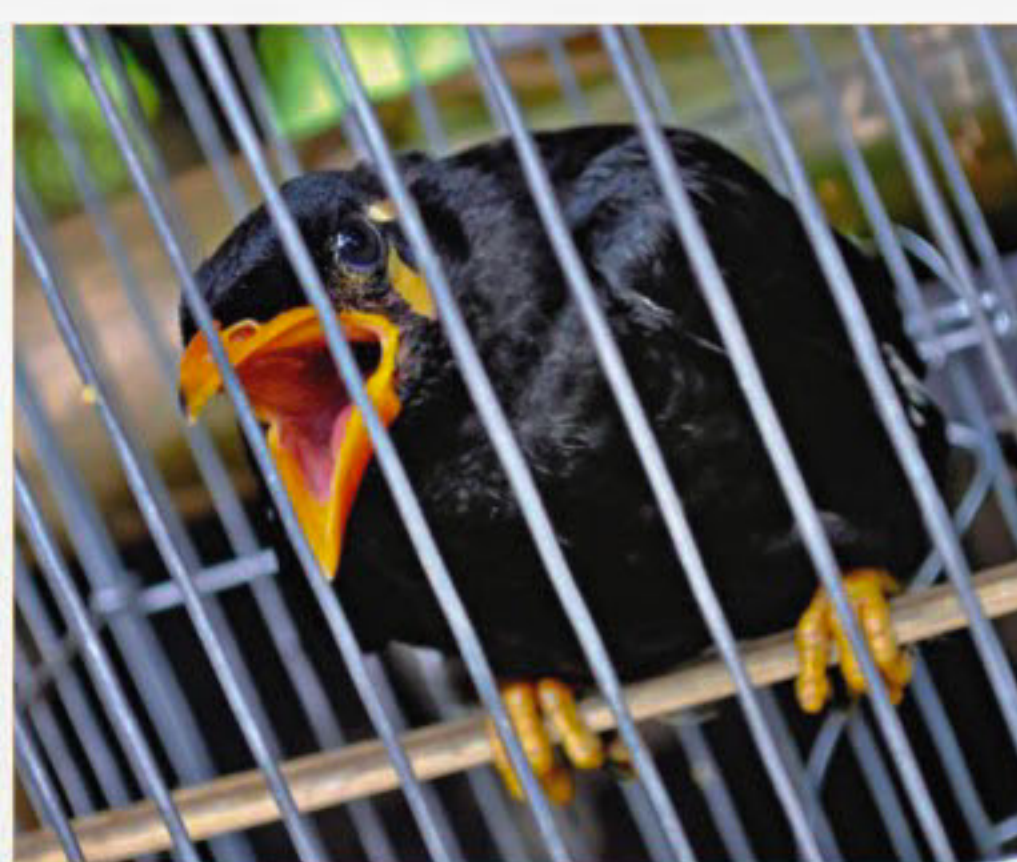
"We carried out the court order issued on Sunday," the OC said, "As we do not have enough room in our police station to keep those, we made a list in presence of Hanif's family members and locals. The house was later sealed off." The OC added that Hanif's family members left the house after it was sealed. Hanif is the general secretary of Savar thana BNP.



**WILDLIFE on sale**

These wild birds and animals -- oriole, purple moorhen, hill myna, mongoose and many other species -- are on sale at a fair "Rother Mela" close to the Sylhet Osmani Stadium just beside the police line. Although it is a crime to trade in wildlife, police have turned a blind eye to this illicit activity.

Photo Courtesy: REZA NOOR MUIN



**Long hartal on, no respite**

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Awami League-led coalition assumed office in 2009 as the four-party shutdown will be followed by a two-day hartal called by 12 political parties, most of them Islamist.

The 12-party alliance led by Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish will enforce a 30-hour shutdown from Sunday morning till 12:00noon of Monday in protest against dropping of the phrase "absolute faith in Allah" from the constitution.

The two-day weekend -- Friday and Saturday -- fall between the two hartals.

The House passed the 15th amendment bill on June 30 bringing some significant changes including revoking of the provision for caretaker system. The amendment means that the next parliamentary election due in 2014 will be held under the Awami League government instead of a non-partisan caretaker government.

BNP maintains it will not participate in an election held under a political government. Party Chairperson Khaleida Zia has threatened to compel the government to meet their demand through movement.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam, however, urged the opposition to shun hartal and resolve the matter through discussion with the government.

Against this backdrop, political tension between the government and opposition parties is likely to intensify, as neither of the parties has initiated any move for talks.

However, the 78-hour shutdown in two phases will badly affect the economy as industrial production and export and import will remain suspended during the period.

It will also hamper ac-

democratic activities. Meanwhile, panic spread across the capital after unidentified people set fire to at least 11 vehicles in different areas and exploded a Molotov cocktail in front of the BNP central office at Nayapaltna.

Thousands of working people were seen waiting for buses for long at bus stops, as there was hardly any transport on many city streets from the late afternoon fearing attack.

But a huge rush was marked at inter district bus terminals at Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Mohakhali as many people were leaving the capital.

Many educational institutions and businesses, however, will remain open on Saturday to cover the losses caused by hartal.

Meantime, BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday warned the government of tougher movement if it obstructs their programmes in support of the shutdown.

BNP's parliamentary party has decided to hold street march this morning in the capital and the party leaders will be at 40 important points to make the hartal successful.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, however, categorically said the law enforcers will not allow any pro-hartal procession, and mobile courts will conduct spot trial of those trying to create anarchy.

Law enforcement agencies were already on alert to ensure security and safety of the public life and property. Police almost cordoned off BNP's central office from yesterday afternoon. Police also arrested

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal President Sultan Salauddin Tuku from a Gulshan house early on Monday. **VEHICLES SET ON FIRE**  
At least eight buses, two private cars and a covered van were set ablaze in different areas of the capital yesterday.

Fire service sources said a 52-seater bus was torched in front of AGB Colony at Motijheel around 2:00pm while a second one was torched at Maniknagar around 3:30pm. Two other buses were set on fire at Kazipara in Mirpur and Rampura around 5:00pm.

Two hours later, unidentified people set another bus on fire at Chankharpool. Mobile court sentenced one person to one year's imprisonment in this connection. Three more buses were torched near Rajarbagh police line, Gulshan Police Station and Tongi Hossain Market between 9:30pm and 11:45pm.

The covered van was torched at Kakrail around 4:00pm while the two private cars were torched in Mohakhali areas between 8:30pm and 9:30pm.

**SOME SCHOOLS OPEN SATURDAY**  
Although there is no government announcement to keep schools and colleges open on Friday and Saturday, many educational institutions in the capital will remain open on Saturday.

"We will give Sunday's lesson on Saturday as we need to complete the syllabus," said a teacher of South Point School and College.

"We don't open our school during hartal as the nature of hartal has changed. So we will be open on Saturday," said an official of Udayan High School.

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"As investigations are on, I won't name anyone. But I do know for sure that there was a plot, which is still being nursed," she told her party meeting on September 2, 2004.

Less than a month into the attack, BNP lawmakers in parliament blamed AL for carrying out the attack on its own rally, which killed 24 of its leaders and workers including incumbent president Zillur Rahman's wife Ivy Rahman and injured 300 more. Hasina, then leader of the opposition, narrowly escaped death.

Through multiple investigations, the BNP-Jamaat alliance government was relentless in its efforts to establish that AL killed its own activists to tarnish the government's image.

They also tried to prove that "foreign enemies" instigated the carnage, and some listed criminals holed up in India had taken part in the attack.

The one-member judicial probe commission of Justice Joynul Abedin, which the then government formed a few days after the attack, claimed to have identified the perpetrators.

"The incident is a naked attack on the country's independence and sovereignty," the commission chief told reporters after submitting a 162-page report in October 2004.

The report, which has never been made public, put it all down to a "foreign enemy". But the investigators failed to substantiate that claim.

In line with the four-party alliance government's stance, the investigators made up a story involving Mokhlesur Rahman, an AL leader and former ward commissioner of Moghbazar in the capital.

They also attempted to feed the public with another story woven around one Joj Miah. Joj was made to give a confessional statement naming Mokhlesur as one of the plotters.

During the BNP-Jamaat rule till October 2006, the investigators were out to send the probe in the wrong direction to save the real culprits. Three former Criminal Investigation Department officials now face charges of misleading the investigation.

During the four-party rule, the CID had failed to submit charge sheets, though the then govern-

ment leaders claimed several times the investigation was about to be completed and everything revealed. Media reports on the cooked-up story of Joj Mia brought to public attention the then CID officials' move to divert the investigation.

During the last caretaker government rule, the first charge sheets in the August 21 cases were placed against 22 people including ex-BNP deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu and 21 Hujji leaders and workers.

Even then, the investigators could not unmask the masterminds and unearth the sources of the grenades used in the attack.

Some officials in the law enforcement and investigation agencies told this correspondent that when government high-ups openly blame some people or groups for any crime, investigators cannot work independently.

It was obvious to the top officials that either they have to follow the dictates of the four-party government or quit, added the officials.

Besides Khaleida, several influential ministers and leaders blamed AL for the grenade attack. Ironically, a few of them are now accused in the August 21 cases.

After the blasts, Lutfozzaman Babar, the then state minister for home, declared a Tk 1 crore reward for information leading to the names of the individuals or groups responsible.

Describing his announcement of reward as "unprecedented", Babar told journalists eight days after the attack, "The government has decided to announce the reward since it is giving highest priority to the matter."

In parliament, BNP lawmaker Shamsuzzoha Khan alleged that AL itself had exploded the grenades at its rally as part of a conspiracy against the government.

At the same sitting, the then foreign minister Morshed Khan said, "We know better who sheds crocodile tears at meetings with foreign envoys and from where the money for treatment comes." Abul Khaer Bhuiyan, another BNP lawmaker, asked Babar in parliament why AL had changed the rally venue. Babar replied, "It's a good question. Awami League had sought permission for Mukhtangan,

but in the afternoon of the day they moved the venue to Bangabandhu Avenue."

A day after the attack, when journalists asked Babar to comment, he urged people to help the probe by providing information to the home ministry.

The following day, journalists were barred from the home ministry, but the state minister denied any such move by his ministry.

After the August 21 carnage, Harris Chowdhury said, "The prime minister has called upon all, irrespective of party affiliations, to uproot terrorism from the country. She strongly condemned the incident.

"A judicial investigation commission has been formed. The commission will find out the reasons and the masterminds behind the incident to try them."

Apart from the August 21 blasts, at least two dozen terror attacks took place during the BNP-Jamaat rule. They included the grenade attacks on former finance minister and AL leader Shah AMS Kibria, the then British high commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury, AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta and Sylhet city mayor and AL leader Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, militant assault on writer Humayun Azad, and blasts at three cinemas in M y m e n s i n g h Investigations into all the incidents had been politicised like the one into the August 21 blasts.

**EC invites BNP**  
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BNP's alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami and two other parties, Bangladesh Jatiya Party and Jamiyat-e-Ulama-e-Islam, also skipped the dialogue.

**A fatal jump**  
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rooftop of a nearby single-story building with his five-year-old sister, Jannat Akhter, and tried to show her that he could jump on to the rooftop of the adjacent building, Alamgir told The Daily Star.

As he tried to leap on to the next rooftop, Iman fell and severely injured his head, said the grief-stricken father.

Locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where he succumbed to his injuries an hour later.

**Film banned**

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Breaking Wave), which was shot in Thailand, was refused a screening permit as it "mocks" ruling party officials, Surat Kumar Sarker, vice-chairman of the censor board, told AFP Monday.

The main villain in the film is shown wearing a "Mujib coat" -- a distinctive, black sleeveless jacket named after Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujib Rahman, who wore it when addressing political rallies.

"We have rejected the film because it clearly violates the country's film censor rules. It goes against a political philosophy of the country," Surat said.

"There is no need for the character to wear this dress. It could spark violence," said Akanda Sanawar Morshed, a filmmaker and member of the censor board.

Morshed also noted that a hero in the film was shown wearing a safari suit of the style favoured by members of the opposition BNP.

The film's director Gazi Mazharul Anwar told AFP that he had never set out to mock anyone.

"Politics has nothing to do with the film," Mazharul said, adding that he would appeal against the ban.

In 2007, Bangladesh's then army-backed government banned a movie after a character--playing the role of a criminal--was shown in military fatigues.

**Sexual assault**

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Another four teachers, against whom the students raised allegations, will be transferred.

Yesterday afternoon, the victim's father filed a case with Badda Police Station, accusing Porimol, Lutfur and Husne Ara.

In the complaint, he mentioned that Porimol, who runs a coaching centre at his Badda residence, first molested his daughter on May 28.

As she went to the coaching centre in the morning, Porimol told her to go to another room, the complainant said, adding he locked the door and sexually assaulted her. Porimol violated her once again on June 17.

An unconfirmed source said Porimol on May 28 took a nude photograph of the girl and threatened her with posting the snapshot on the Internet if she refused to meet him.

The blackmail forced her to go to the tutorial house again on June 17, the source added.

Yesterday, enraged parents demonstrated in front of the two campuses, demanding arrest and punishment of Porimol and action against the school principal for her inaction.

They wanted to form a human chain in front of the Shiddeshwari campus but the school authorities did not allow. They, however, managed to form a human chain in front of Bashundhara campus which was declared closed on Monday.

The guardians have been staging protest for the last few days but the authorities did not pay any heed, rather tried to save Porimol, he said.

They also brought allegations of sexual harassment against fellow teachers.

"How come a culprit like Porimol escaped whereas the students submitted a written allegation against him in the last week of June?" questioned a mother whose children studies in class X.

The guardians alleged the authorities initially tried to cover up the incident as Porimol was once involved with Bangladesh Chhatra League, a student organisation backed by ruling Awami League.

Prof Noman-ur-Rashid, director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), visited the campuses yesterday and talked to parents and teachers.

He said the DSHE's one-member probe body, formed on Monday, will recommend filing criminal case against Porimol and Barun.

The committee will also suggest suspending four other teachers against whom the students and guardians brought allegations, he said.

"The probe committee will also recommend taking steps against the school principal since she cannot deny responsibility."