

AL sees an evil plot

FROM PAGE 1
Sheikh Hasina's political office at Dhanmondi with coordinator of the alliance Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

The meeting discussed the prevailing political situation and warned that a vested quarter is out to foil the ongoing war crimes trial.

"An evil force is conspiring at home and abroad to foil the trial," said Ashraf, who is AL's spokesperson. The alliance will go for various programmes across the country in favour of the war crimes trial, he said.

As part of the programmes, a human chain will be formed on February 7 from the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital to the National Memorial at Savar, around 30 km away.

One of the leaders present at the alliance meeting proposed forming a human chain from Teknaf to Tentulia in support of the war crimes trial. The proposal would be considered later, meeting sources said.

The AL general secretary said the meeting discussed in detail the recent plot within the army to topple the government, and congratulated the army for tackling it. The 14-party combine welcomed the army move to investigate and try those involved in the plot.

Replying to a query, Ashraf said if civilians are found involved in the plot, they would also be tried according to the existing laws of the country. Asked about the city AL's rally rescheduled for today, coinciding with BNP's mass procession, Ashraf said the city AL is an independent unit which can take up any programmes on its own. It does not have to take permission from the party central leadership about its programmes.

He also said they do not know whether the city AL has rescheduled its rally or not.

The meeting was attended by, among others, 14-party leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haque Inu, Mahbulul Alam Hanif, AFM Bahauddin Nasim, BM Muzammel Haque, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Abdus Samad, Enamul Haque, Asit Baran Roy, Nurur Rahman Selim and Shirin Akhter.

CITYAL BRIEFING
Briefing journalists at the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, city AL General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya announced a two-day programme to protest "The opposition's conspiracy to create anarchy and foil the war crimes trial".

It will hold a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3:00pm today, to be followed by a procession.

Maya said they have rescheduled yesterday's rally for today, and party workers' meetings and processions for tomorrow following the police ban on gatherings on Sunday.

Party workers' meetings and procession will now take place tomorrow in the city's 100 wards, 19 unions and 16 parliamentary constituencies, he added.

City AL leaders including Mukul Chowdhury, Qamrul Islam, Mohammad Selim, Aslamul Haque Aslam, and Shahe Alam Murad were present at the briefing.

JUBA LEAGUE'S HUMAN CHAIN TODAY
Awami Juba League, an associated body of the ruling party, will form a human chain in the capital today protesting what it said was the opposition's recent plot to topple the elected government.

The human chain will be formed from Shapla Chattar at Motijheel to Shahbagh intersection from 11:00am to 1:00pm, office secretary of Juba League Fazlul Haque Atique said.

He claimed the programme was announced from a rally on January 22.

Facebook

FROM PAGE 20
financial watchdog on Wednesday, according to the Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal.

The flotation later this year would raise about \$10bn, they reported.

This would be one of the biggest share sales seen on Wall Street.

It would dwarf the \$1.9bn raised by Google when it went public in 2004.

It would still, however, be some way short of the \$20bn raised by carmaker General Motors in November 2010.

'BRILLIANT ACHIEVEMENT'

The reports suggest that Morgan Stanley will be the lead underwriter for the sale, with Goldman Sachs also expected to be heavily involved.

Rumours of Facebook's so-called initial public offering (IPO) have circulated for many months, and the company has maintained it will not comment on the subject.

The reported valuation would make Facebook one of the world's biggest companies by market capitalisation.

"Facebook a brilliant achievement, but \$75-\$100bn? Would make Apple look really cheap," said Rupert Murdoch on Twitter.

The company was started by Mark Zuckerberg and fellow students at Harvard University in 2004 and has quickly grown to become one of the world's most popular websites.

It makes most of its money through advertising.

As a private company, Facebook does not have to publish its accounts, but reports in January last year suggested a document sent by Goldman Sachs to its clients showed the firm made a net profit of \$355m on revenues of \$1.2bn in the first nine months of 2010.

Libya adopts election law

AFP, Tripoli

The ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) on Saturday adopted a new electoral law for Libya to form its first constituent assembly in June, dropping a quota set aside for women.

The law, announced on the NTC's Facebook page, scraps a draft proposal that would have reserved 10 percent of seats on the 200-member General National Congress for women, after it was criticised by women's and rights groups.

Mugger killed

FROM PAGE 1
speak out his name before his death.

Injured Shamsu Mia at DMCH told reporters he along with his colleagues Shahid and Farid was coming out of the Moulvibazar branch of Jamuna Bank at around 12:00noon after drawing Tk 14.25 lakh from there.

At this stage, five armed muggers surrounded the trio and tried to grab a bag containing the money from Shahid, he said. When Shahid put up resistance, they shot him in his right leg.

"Farid and I grabbed mugger Babul and started crying for help," he said. On hearing the gunshots and screams, locals rushed to the spot, which prompted the gang to open fire and explode bombs. Babul along with them was injured in the indiscriminate shooting and blasts, he added.

Witness Mohammad Rocky, employee of a nearby shop, said, "I heard gunshots and saw some youths fleeing hurling handmade bombs and shooting. We chased the youths and then took the injured to the hospital."

Quoting locals, Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Ali of Chawkbazar police station said the muggers, exploding bombs and firing bullets, fled the scene. The locals also gave injured Babul a good beating.

Police rushed to the spot and rescued Babul, he said. Besides, the injured Shahid and Shamsu identified Babul at DMCH. Hospital sources said there were several bruises marks on Babul's body.

In another incident, a mob beat an alleged robber to death when he, with his associates, was fleeing after committing robbery at Charkhalsi village in Nawabganj upazila in Dhaka, reports a correspondent.

Masud Karim, Officer-in-Charge of Nawabganj police, confirmed the incident but could not give the identity of the robber. The body was sent to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Local residents and the police said a gang of 15 to 20 robbers swooped on the home of Rimon Bishwas around 2:00am and looted cash, jewellery and other valuables while keeping the family members hostage.

The intruders also attacked Rimon, his mother Padma Bishwas and brother Sameer Bishwas with sharp weapons when they tried to resist them.

Hearing their screams, neighbours rushed to the house and chased the gang. At one stage, they captured one of the gang members and gave him a good beating, leaving him dead on the spot.

In another incident, locals beat up three alleged robbers at Shoradangi village of Ataikula in Pabna, leaving one of them dead.

Police recovered two bombs and some of the looted gold ornaments from the spot. The dead was identified as Eakub Ali, 28.

Critically injured robbers -- Manik Hossain, 25, and Imran Sheikh, 25 -- were admitted to Pabna Medical College Hospital.

Robiul Hasan Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Ataikula police, said up to eight robbers entered the house of Hazrat Ali around 2:00am and looted gold ornaments and cash worth about Tk 3.87 lakh.

Hearing the reluctant commotion, villagers rushed to the spot and caught three of the robbers while the rest escaped.

4 killed as cops fire on BNP men

FROM PAGE 1
Meantime, police formed two separate committees to investigate the Chandpur and Laxmipur incidents, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Hassan Mahmood Khandker told reporters at the Police Headquarters in the capital in the afternoon.

The committees, to be headed by Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police Biswas Afzal Hossain, were asked to submit reports in seven days.

"The committees will also probe whether the policemen were at fault," the IGP said, claiming that police showed tolerance although resorted to firing.

CHANDPUR
Violence in Chandpur erupted around 11:00am when police asked opposition activists, gathering at Hasan Ali Govt High School ground, to disperse. The crowd was preparing to bring out a march.

"Without listening to us, they started hurling brickbats," Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chandpur Model Police Station, told The Daily Star, estimating that there were at least 1,000 people.

Cordoning off the law enforcers, the opposition activists later vandalised a police van.

"The magistrate ordered us to open fire to bring the situation under control," the OC said.

Our Chandpur correspondent, who was caught inside the cordon, reported that police first fired live bullets and then switched to rubber bullets and shotgun pellets.

The opposition activists continued their attacks on police, though the latter stopped firing at noon.

Around 12:45pm, activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), ruling Awami League backed student organisation, joined police and dispersed the demonstrators in 15 minutes.

Bullet-hit, Abul Mreedha, a rickshawpuller aged about 50 years, died on the spot. Limon Soiyal, another rickshawpuller aged about 25, and Mahfuzur Rahman, a 22-year-old activist of BNP backed Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, sustained bullet injuries.

Rushed to Chandpur Sadar Hospital, Soiyal died at 12:15pm, hospital sources said.

Mreedha used to live in Baburhat while Soiyal in Gorkhola areas of Chandpur town.

Amir Zafar, Chandpur

assistant superintendent of police (ASP), said over 100 people, including 30 police, were injured during the clash.

Police said they opened fire in self defence after being ordered by Magistrate Shamimul Haq Pavel.

The opposition activists vandalised 15-20 vehicles as the clash spread to other parts of the town.

BCL activists later vandalised the BNP office and the house of BNP district unit General Secretary Sheikh Farid Ahmed Manik.

Addressing a press conference at his house at 4:30pm, Sheikh Farid announced a half-day hartal in the town from 6:00am today to protest the police atrocities.

LAXMIPUR
As activists of BNP-led four-party alliance brought out a march from South Trimohoni area around 11:00am, police tried to stop them. When the demonstrators tried to march forward, police charged batons on them, reported our Noakhali correspondent.

The demonstrators retaliated by throwing brick bats at the law enforcers. Chases and counter-chases took place for some time before police fired 68 rounds from shotguns and 20 tear gas canisters to successfully disperse the crowd.

Police arrested five demonstrators from the spot. During the clash, more than 100 people including BNP's youth wing Jubo Dal's activist Rubel Hossain, 25; and BNP supporter Abul Kashem, 50 were injured. Ten sustained shotgun pellet wounds.

Rubel, among the injured, died while undergoing treatment in Laxmipur Sadar Hospital while Abul Kashem died later in Comilla while being transported to Dhaka for treatment.

Twenty six police including Golam Sarwar, OC of Laxmipur Sadar Police Station, and three sub-inspectors were injured. Of them, 24 were admitted to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital while two others to Noakhali Medical College Hospital.

Claiming that some people from the BNP march first opened fire on police, Laxmipur Superintendent of Police (SP) Zamsher Ali told The Daily Star that police opened fire in self-defence.

A three-member committee headed by additional SP of Laxmipur was formed to investigate the incident, the SP said adding that the

committee will submit a report in three days.

Later in the evening BNP activists and supporters brought out another protest march that went through the town led by the party's local unit's General Secretary Shahabuddin Shabu, who announced from the march a half-day hartal from 6:00am in the town for today.

DINAJPUR
Obstructed from bringing out a march from local BNP office, party activists pelted police with brickbats, prompting the latter to charge batons.

Police also fired 10 tear gas shells and rubber bullets. They picked up five persons during the clash which left 25 injured.

KISHOREGANJ
Fifty including 11 police and 4 journalists were injured and a police vehicle was damaged during clashes between opposition activists and police at Ishaka Road and Gaital Firm intersection in the town.

Police picked up around 12 BNP and Jamaat activists, including district BNP Vice-chairman Amiruzzaman. The injured police were admitted to Kishoreganj Adhunik Sadar Hospital.

KURIGRAM
Twenty including the OC of Kurigram Sadar Police Station were injured and a police vehicle was damaged during clashes between police and four-party opposition alliance activists in Kurigram town.

As a march of opposition activists reached Kurigram Central Mosque area, police tried to stop it, prompting the marchers to attack them with sticks and brickbats. The demonstrators also vandalised a police vehicle.

Besides charging batons, police fired 20 teargas shells and rubber bullets.

RANGAMATI
Three BNP activists were injured when police charged batons on their march near Rangamati municipality office.

NILPHAMARI
Police fired 12 rounds of rubber bullets and 3 rounds of tear gas shells to disperse opposition activists as they tried to defy police obstruction to their march in the town.

Thirty including 10 police and two journalists were injured, and police arrested 5 demonstrators.

NATORE
Fifty people including a journalist were injured in Natore when alleged activists of ruling party backed BCL and Jubo League hurled

brick bats at a BNP-Jamaat march in Natore town. Police arrested four Jamaat activists from the procession.

BARGUNA
Barred by police from going to their party office or gathering in the town, BNP activists hurled brick bats at the law enforcers. In reply, police shot rubber bullets at them. The clash left 50 including 15 police injured.

Later the protesters set police motorbikes on fire, while police arrested 20 BNP activists from the scene.

SUNAMGANJ
Five BNP activists sustained injuries as police charged batons on their procession in the town.

BRAHMANBARIA
Four Jamaat activists were injured when police lobbed teargas shells on their procession at Kalibari point in the town.

BANDARBAN
Twenty BNP activists and 10 police were injured during a clash in front of BNP office in Bandarban town. Police later arrested 30 BNP activists, reported UNB.

(Our correspondents from Dinajpur, Kishoreganj, Kurigram, Rangamati, Nilphamari, Natore, Barguna, Sunamganj, and Brahmanbaria contributed to this report.)

Parties

FROM PAGE 1
another two days to give names for five posts in the Election Commission.

The committee, headed by Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, urged all political parties, which had had talks with the president on the formation of a new EC, to recommend five persons by January 31.

The search committee on January 25 at its first meeting set January 29 as the deadline to submit the names.

The decision to extend the deadline came at a meeting of the committee at the judges' lounge of the Supreme Court yesterday afternoon.

Auditor and Comptroller General Ahmed Ataul Hakim, a member of the committee, told the media that the committee had urged the political parties to send the names with brief profiles to the cabinet secretary of the Bangladesh Secretariat.

He said the secretariat had been assigned to give secretarial assistance to the search committee, the first of its kind in the history of Bangladesh.

Road crash

FROM PAGE 20
Sabina Begum, 28, was crossing a road near the Chadmari slum when the lorry ran her over at about 7:00pm, according to witnesses.

Sabina, wife of Md Yasin of Isdair in the town, died on the spot.

Angered at the incident, over 500 locals barricaded the road and torched the lorry. They also vandalised 15 other vehicles.

The mob hurled brick chips targeting police and Rapid Action Battalion members when they turned up in riot gear to control the situation.

The law enforcers responded by firing nine rounds of rubber bullets and a teargas shell, police sources said.

Vehicle movement remained halted for an hour from 7:30pm on the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road, causing sufferings to passengers.

Fear gripped the entire area and most roadside shops were closed down following the clash.

Two policemen were among the injured, said Mahiduzzaman, assistant police super of Fatullah. They are Havildar Md Saddam Hossain and constable Tobibur Rahman.

Three people were arrested in connection with the incident, police sources added.

Sheikh Nazmul Alam, district police super, alleged that a group of slum dwellers, who are involved in drug peddling, attacked the law enforcers "enthusiastically" as police had been conducting drives at the slum over the last few days.

PM evaluating

FROM PAGE 1
The reports were prepared on the lawmakers' performance in the last two years and nine months in areas that include strengthening the party, carrying out development work and their conduct with locals and party activists, said some lawmakers after the meeting.

The reports have also provided Hasina with information about prospective candidates for the next parliamentary election.

"She has even collected information about those party nominees who were defeated by the BNP-led alliance candidates in the 2008 parliamentary polls," AL lawmaker Shafiqul Islam of Jhenidah told The Daily Star.

He said the PM was also studying the performance of the lawmakers of the Jatiya Party, Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, components of the AL-led alliance.

Quoting the prime minister, Shafiqul said the AL had picked its candidates for the 2008 parliamentary polls on the basis of field reports.

A number of lawmakers said Hasina had engaged different intelligence agencies in the preparation of the reports.

Hasina said the ruling

alliance would face the opposition's ongoing anti-government movement politically. She advised the lawmakers to communicate the message to the people that the BNP-led coalition was out to "prevent the trial of war criminals".

The AL alone won 230 seats in the parliamentary polls on December 29, 2008.

FORMATION OF THE EC
The AL parliamentary party decided that the AL would consult other components of the AL-led alliance and then send names to the search committee on the constitution of a new Election Commission.

The decision came after a brief debate at the meeting.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, AL leaders Tofail Ahmed and Abdul Matin Khasru spoke against proposing any names to the search committee, said sources.

They said such a move would give rise to controversy.

However, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and senior party leader Amir Hossain Amu spoke in favour of proposing names to the search committee on the appointment of election commissioners.

Emerging from the meet-

ing, AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam told The Daily Star, "We will sit with the leaders of the 14-party alliance and will possibly send names to the search committee tomorrow [today]."

Later, Hasina held a meeting with the 14-party alliance leaders, including Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu.

A source said the issues of names for the search committee, the failed plot to topple the government and the opposition's anti-government movement figured prominently at the meeting.

The prime minister said that she would not say anything about proposing names to the search committee and that the party and other components of the ruling alliance would decide on the matter, said the source.

Hasina also said she would not even give her opinion on the issue at the party's upcoming meeting about suggesting names to the search committee.

After the meeting, Ashraf sat with the ruling alliance leaders to discuss the issue.

Stocks nosedive

FROM PAGE 20
of the SEC.

"As there is a rumour that sponsors and directors of listed companies desired to buy shares at prices as low as possible to fulfil a regulatory requirement, the SEC should monitor the trading on daily basis," he said.

Others said the free fall was caused by a combination of several factors such as lack of confidence, institutional investors' inactiveness, ongoing political instability and the tough monetary policy.

"The liquidity crisis that has been remaining in the market for a long time and lack of confidence brought

the market down," said Ahmed Rashid, a stockbroker.

Most of the investors lost confidence as the market experienced a series of fall, said Ahmed, also a director of the DSE.

"Market suffered the massive fall following the publication of monetary policy for the second half of this fiscal year," BRAC-EPL, an investment bank, said in an analysis.

According to the policy, Bangladesh Bank will continue to maintain a tight monetary stance in order to tackle inflation and external pressures. Targets for all monetary aggregates have

been revised downwards.

"A group of investors intentionally went for huge sell offs to push down the market," Jamal Hossain, an investor, alleged.

Unless this is stopped by the market regulator or the downward trend is continued, the retail investors will have no other options but to quit the market, he said.

At yesterday's trade, the losers outnumbered the gainers by 254 to 3, with two securities remaining unchanged on the premier bourse, which transacted 6.14 crore shares and mutual fund units on a value of Tk 261 crore.