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PHOTO: STAR

1. A Bangladesh Chhatra League activist with a machete. 2. One of the BCL activists is seen carrying a hockey stick. 3. Pro-Awami League traders vandalise the motorbike of a pro-BNP trader. 4. The Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Narayanganj is unusually free of vehicles at noon. 5. Pro-opposition men burn posters and banners of Awami League. 6. Cricket bat and machete -- both for the same use -- in the hand of a BCL activist. All the photos (except No 4) were shot on Elephant Road in the capital yesterday. More photos on page 5.

Politics cared least for the people

Conclude citizens after 3 days of sufferings

SHARIFUL ISLAM, KAILASH SARKAR and WASIM BIN HABIB

It was a day incomparable with any other. An ever-bustling Dhaka looked deserted, with almost no passenger buses and other motor vehicles seen on most city thoroughfares yesterday.

Most educational institutions, private offices, shopping malls and markets in the city were seen shut without any prior notice.

Long-distance bus and launch services to and from the capital also remained

snapped for a third day yesterday, causing immense sufferings to thousands. A precious few trucks entered the city carrying daily essentials, resulting in a price spiral of some items.

Although tension ran high centring on the BNP rally, a peaceful atmosphere prevailed throughout the day except for a few sporadic incidents of attacks on opposition men by police and ruling Awami League supporters.

Several people were injured when ruling party men, equipped with homemade

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Freedom Honour for 129

Govt to recognise foreign friends

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government will confer "Bangladesh Freedom Honour" on some 129 foreign nationals and organisations for their outstanding contributions in the 1971 Liberation War.

They will be awarded at a ceremonial reception at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on March 27, said foreign ministry sources.

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Businesses bear the brunt of it

SOHEL PARVEZ

The opposition grand rally at Nayapaltan and few public transport on the city streets took a heavy toll on the trade and business yesterday.

Salesmen at markets and shopping malls passed an idle day amid very minimal turnout of customers.

Transactions in commercial banks were low. Many officials and staff at private firms could not join their offices as only a few vehicles plied the streets.

The distributors of consumer goods suspended their supplies fearing trouble.

"It's a bad day today [yesterday]. I am yet to sell out my vegetables that I had bought the day before," said a vegetable vendor at New Market kitchen market adding, he had not yet recouped his investment.

Panic gripped the retailers in the area following a clash on Elephant Road between the activists of Awami League

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PHOTO ON PAGE 2

ETV refutes BTRC claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private satellite channel ETV (Ekushey Television) yesterday denied the telecom regulator's claim that they were broadcasting illegally and termed it untrue.

On Sunday evening, Bangladesh Telecommunication

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PRAYER TIMING			March 13
	Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	5-05	5-40	
Zohr	12-45	1-15	
Asr	4-30	4-45	
Maghrib	6-12	6-15	
Esha	7-30	8-00	

Source: Islamic Foundation



Two policemen and a pro-government trader beat up an opposition man on the city's Elephant Road yesterday.

Ghulam Azam's lawyers skip hearing

ICT rejects plea for adjournment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday rejected an appeal seeking adjournment of the proceedings against former Jamaat-e Islami ameer Ghulam Azam in connection with crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

It set today for hearing arguments of the defence counsels on charge framing against the Jamaat leader.

The tribunal was scheduled to hear arguments yesterday, but as none of the defence lawyers appeared before the court, two judges of the three member-tribunal decided to reschedule the hearing date.

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Flew home for a shock

SHARIFUL ISLAM and WASIM BIN HABIB

Instead of a warm homecoming reception, Lebu Mian found a nervous capital and felt uncertainty within when he landed at Shahjalal International Airport from Riyadh yesterday.

Even two hours after his arrival, none of his family could show up at the airport to take him home in Tangail, around 100 kilometres from the capital. Thanks to government's "precautionary measures" and subsequent panic among citizens centring BNP's grand rally.

Lebu Mian was found waiting under the airport canopy with trolley load of luggage around 4:45pm. With almost all mode of transport off the road the

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Latif (in white shirt) and his brother Hamid chill out outside Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: WASIM BIN HABIB