

Jamaat, allies strike terror

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launched the attacks in a planned way. He said none of the attackers would be spared.

Police have detained 172 attackers in Dhaka and several hundred more in other districts. Border Guard Bangladesh personnel have been deployed in Chittagong and Sylhet to ward off further violence.

Eight Islamist parties led by Khelafat Andolon yesterday called a dawn-to-dusk hartal for tomorrow and countrywide demonstrations for Monday to protest the police attack on them and for punishment to Shahbagh protesters.

In the capital, Jamaat activists took position inside the Baitul Mukarram national mosque much before the Juma prayers and started hurling bricks at the law enforcers. They also attacked the journalists there.

At the mosque, members of Jamaat and like-minded parties snatched the microphone from the Imam and started chanting provocative slogans. They also barred the Khatib from delivering Khutba, said witnesses.

The fanatics also circulated copies of the offensive advertisements that Hefazat-e-Islam took out in three national dailies recently to stir up religious sentiments against the Shahbagh youths.

After prayers, around 1:45pm, they brought out a militant procession and started marching towards Shahbagh. Obstructed near Paltan crossing, they got into pitched battles with the law enforcers.

The clashes soon spread to other parts of the city. Police fired bullets and teargas shells from armoured vehicles to disperse the marchers.

During the mayhem, Jamaat activists beat up camerapersons of different TV channels, photographers of several newspapers and some reporters of both electronic and print media.

They vandalised dozens of vehicles. Traffic on the roads near Baitul Mukarram remained suspended for hours following the clashes.

As police broke up the demonstrators in Jatiya Press Club, Matsya Bhaban and Paltan areas, Jamaat-Shibir activists got back to the national mosque premises and started throwing bombs and brickbats at police.

They even set fire to prayer mats inside the mosque, said witnesses.

Police and Rab personnel kept the mosque surrounded for an hour and asked those inside to come out peacefully.

A group of ruling party members gathered in front of Awami League's central office on the Bangabandhu Avenue and brought out a procession. They chased some Jamaat-Shibir men out of the area.

The situation there became normal after Asr prayers.

On Thursday, the government decided to allow Islamist parties to bring out peaceful processions.

In Rajshahi city, Jamaat-Shibir activists clashed with police at different points, leaving around 50 people, including 10 policemen, injured.

In Bogra, they launched attacks on police prompting the law enforcers to fire at least 200 shots and teargas shells. More than 50 people, including nine policemen, were wounded in the clashes.

More than 70 people were injured in clashes in Sylhet. At least 20 of them were hit by bullets.

In Patuakhali, at least 35 people, including three policemen, were injured in clashes.

DU HALLS ATTACKED
Jamaat men attacked Dhaka University's Ekushey and Shahidullah halls around 2:00pm, leaving at least 15 students injured.

The attackers also vandalised the office of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh on the DU campus.

Some 30 attackers gathered near the main gates of the two dormitories and started pelting stones and brickbats at the students returning to the dormitories after the Juma prayers, witnesses said.

Two of the injured were identified as Hridoy, a first-year student of information technology, and Al Amin, a second-year student of chemistry.

Hearing the news, students came out of the dormitories and retaliated by pelting brickbats and stones at the attackers.

In the meantime, another group of religious fanatics joined the attackers. However, they all fled the scene after police reached there and lobbed teargas canisters.

The DU students captured four attackers and handed them over to police.

SPORADIC CLASHES
Near the Kataban mosque gate around 1:45pm, a group of Shibir men attacked police after they were barred from bringing out a procession.

Law enforcers fired rubber bullets and teargas canisters to disperse them.

Police arrested Hefazat-e-Islam leader Sheikh Nur-e-Alam Hamidi after he hit Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh police

station, in the face. Hamidi earlier arrived in the capital from Srimangal.

One of his followers tried to snatch firearms from a cop.

Police detained three Hefazat-e-Islam activists. Later, students and locals brought out a procession in the area, chanting anti-Jamaat slogans.

Jamaat activists under the banner of "Sachetan Jagrata Muslim Janata" brought out a procession from Tejturi Bazar mosque in Karwan Bazar around 2:00pm.

As they reached near the Sonargaon intersection, police and Rab personnel fired several rounds of blank shots, forcing them to disperse.

Meanwhile in Old Dhaka, constable Abdul Jalil was hit by a bullet in his left foot, as several hundred Jamaat activists attacked police on Nawabpur Road around 2:15pm. Two other cops were also injured.

The religious extremists swooped on police when intercepted on their way to the national mosque. They also vandalised several roadside shops.

Police fired shots and teargas shells to disperse the attackers.

Jamaat activists also beat up two devotees in front of Bangabazar Market around 2:15pm after the two asked them not to bring out any procession in the area. Later, police swung into action and dispersed them.

Of those injured in yesterday's violence in the capital, at least 30 people, including four journalists and a policeman, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Most of them were hit by splinters during clashes in Baitul Mukarram, Press Club, Ananda Bazar, Kataban and Nawabpur areas.

During the Juma prayers at Baitul Aman Jam-e-Mosque in Mirpur-12, the imam described the Shahbagh movement organisers as atheists. He also called upon the devotees to launch a counter movement.

Locals said the imam along with his followers brought out a procession soon after the prayers.



People at Shahbagh in the capital yesterday sign the petition for death penalty to Liberation War criminals and banning Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir. PHOTO: STAR

BNP to set up

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caretaker government," he told a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club.

Bangladesh Democratic Council (BDC) hosted the discussion styled "Background of the great Language Movement: Today's Bangladesh."

Referring to the Shahbagh movement, Moudud said it is "suicidal and self-contradictory" for the government who will have to pay for this in the coming days.

He claimed that the movement did not create any problem for BNP.

The movement at Shahbagh intersection began on February 5, hours after the International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah to life imprisonment for committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

Thousands of young protesters in Shahbagh demanded capital punishment to all the war criminals including Mollah.

Identifying the "limitations" of the movement, the BNP leader said the trial of war criminals is not the lone demand of the people. "Their demands also include restoring democracy in the country and ensuring the rule of law, press freedom and independence of the judiciary."

Cop killed

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Station Haiyatuzzaman Mollah said they suspect that the constable might have been a victim of mugging. "We are also investigating whether he was a victim of conspiracy. Besides, we are trying to find out how he went out of Shahbagh," he added.

Sub-inspector Abdul Awal of Motijheel Police Station said they first received information that a man was pushed out of a yellow car in an unconscious state. "We rushed to the spot, searched his pocket and found the identity card of the police constable", he said. "We took him to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital, and he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead."

Quoting a tea vendor at AGB Colony, the SI said, "The woman saw some people pushing a man out of a car. Locals tried to stop the car but it sped away."

Sources at DMCH morgue, where autopsy of Badal's body was done, said there were some injury marks in his head but he was strangled to death.

Badal had joined the police force six years ago and had been staying in a rented house at Madartek with his wife and son.

The victim's cousin Mamun Hossain said Badal was one of the policemen taking care of the CCTV cameras installed at Shahbagh. He quoted Badal's wife Ruma Akhter as saying her husband had telephoned her around 11:00pm while on duty.

Family members have urged the authorities to track down the killers of Badal.

Attacks, rampage

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towards police. At least four policemen were injured, one with bullet, in the clash.

The injured -- Inspector Pravash Chandra Dhar of Khulshi Police Station, Sub-Inspector Md Kamruzzaman of Kotwali Police Station, its Assistant Sub-Inspector Mafizur Rahman and constable Mohammad Jahangir of Armed Police Battalion -- were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Constable Jahangir received a bullet in the right leg, said Additional Commissioner Banaj Kumar Majumder of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP).

He said 25 people had been detained in the port city in connection with the rampage.

Around 2:00pm, activists of Hefazat-e-Islam assaulted five photojournalists and TV camerapersons at Anderkillah intersection when the party supporters brought out a procession from Anderkillah Shahi Jame Mosque.

Photojournalist of daily Inqilab, Ahmed Kutub, was critically injured in the attack and was admitted to CMCH.

Eyewitnesses and police said activists of Hefazat-e-Islam had started chanting slogans against "atheists" inside Anderkillah mosque after the Juma prayers and brought out a procession.

Shibli, who offered his prayers at the mosque, said the activists had started chanting slogans even before the munazaat (supplication) was over.

A few thousand activists of the Islamist organisations including Jamaat, Islami Chhatra Shibir, Hefazat-e-Islam, Islami Oikya Jote, and Nabi Premik Jagrata Janata, gathered at Anderkillah intersection in processions.

Around 3:00pm, they brought out a procession and headed towards Jamiyatul Falah Jatiya Mosque at Wasa intersection. On their way, the activists hurled stones at the bureau offices of newspapers Amader Shomoy, Kaler Kantho, The Daily Sun, banglanews24.com and TV channel Bangla Vision.

A large group from the procession entered Jamal Khan Road breaking through police resistance.

People in the procession smashed windowpanes of several buildings on the road.

Reaching Gonojagoron Mancha, the activists vandalised structures bearing slogans against war criminals and tore down banners and festoons and set fire to those. They also tried to pull down the portrait of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam after getting inside the press club.

They chanted slogans against the Shahbagh movement activists terming them infidels.

After the rampage, the activists again gathered at Jamiyatul Falah mosque and held a rally at Wasa intersection around 3:30pm. At the rally, Mufti Izharul Islam Chowdhury, president of Nizami Islam Party,

demanding capital punishment to bloggers who organised the Shahbagh movement.

He called Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid "atheists" and leftist, and demanded their resignation.

Izharul called for a grand rally at Hathazari Parboti High School on Monday.

While returning from the rally around 4:00pm, Jamaat-Shibir activists tried to go on Jamal Khan Road again but they faced resistance from Bangladesh Chhatra League activists and locals.

A clash erupted. Police lobbed several teargas canisters to bring the situation under control.

Meanwhile, agitated locals in retaliation set fire to shops inside the Mahanagar Jamaat office premises at Dewanbazar around 9:20pm. Jamaat leaders claimed that the locals had also set their office ablaze.

RAJSHAH
Jamaat-Shibir activists clashed with police at different points in the city yesterday afternoon, leaving around 50 people, including 10 policemen, injured.

During sporadic clashes, the activists hurled brick chips and blasted hand-made bombs while police fired several hundred rubber bullets, teargas shells and sound grenades to disperse them.

Jamaat-Shibir men ransacked the Ekattor Mancha at Alupotty during a half-an-hour-long clash between them and law enforcers in the afternoon.

After Juma prayers, Jamaat-Shibir men brought out a procession under the banner of Hefazat-e-Islam and went towards Zero Point, said Commissioner SM Moniruzzaman of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP).

They later split into groups and marched towards Alupotty and ransacked loud speakers, chairs, tables, banners and posters of the Ekattor Mancha.

The activists also hurled brick chips at the passing vehicle of Rajshahi Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton. He escaped but his car was damaged.

Police intercepted the procession at Kumarpara when the activists started throwing brick chips at the city unit Awami League office.

The Jamaat-Shibir men blasted several bombs and hurled brick chips at the law enforcers and police fired several hundred rubber bullets, teargas shells and sound grenades to disperse them.

Jamaat-Shibir men also damaged glasses of several roadside offices including Uttara Bank, Dhaka Bank and IFIC Bank and some 12 others shops.

Police arrested some 26 people, reports our Rajshahi correspondent.

Around 30 Jamaat-Shibir activists were wounded, party sources claimed.

SYLHET
A student of Sylhet MC College was killed and 50 others were injured during sporadic clashes between law enforcers and activists of different Islamist organisations in the city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mostafa Morshed Tahmid, 18. Mostafa, a first-year student of HSC, was not involved in any political party, family sources said.

After Juma prayers, students of different madrasas and imams from different mosques brought out a procession in the city under the banner of Olama Mashayekh Parishad and other Islamist organisations, witnesses said.

When the procession reached Chouhatta area around 2:55pm, the activists stormed the Shaheed Minar and tore down its gate and walls.

They also vandalised the windowpanes of an adjacent Trust Bank office and torched a pick-up truck, two motorbikes and a human haulier of police parked near the bank.

When they resorted to vandalism in front of the Krishi Bank building, police fired rubber bullets to disperse them, witnesses added.

Some 426 shotgun shells, 40 rubber bullets, 28 teargas shells and 18 sound grenades were used to bring the situation under control, said Deputy Commissioner Rezaul Karim of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

Over 50 people and around 35 policemen were injured during the clashes. At least 35 people were arrested.

Around 4:00pm, several activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League brought out a procession at Zindabazar protesting the vandalism at the Shaheed Minar. They ransacked Al Hamra Shopping Complex.

Some on-duty journalists were assaulted then. The activists of the pro-Awami League student body also set fire to five motorbikes of newsmen.

They also vandalised an ATM booth of Islami Bank at Taltola, hurled brick chips at Sylhet Women's Medical College at Mirbokshtola, and damaged windows of Ibne Sina Hospital.

KHULNA
Sporadic clashes between law enforcers and Jamaat-Shibir men in different parts of Khulna city left around 25 people injured yesterday.

Witnesses said the clashes began when Jamaat and its likeminded parties brought out a procession from Dackbanglow area and was obstructed by police near Sangeeta Cinema.

The activists pelted police with brick chips and exploded several homemade bombs forcing law enforcers to retaliate with rubber bullets and teargas.

Shahbagh

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killing ground) as announced on Thursday, but will carry national flags in protest at the Jamaat-Shibir men burning and tearing down the national flag, organisers said last night.

Organisers also urged the people to demonstrate with national flags across the country in protest against the violence.

The mass-signature campaign will resume at 10:00am today before the national museum and will continue till 10:00pm for a second day.

Imran said protesters carrying national flags would resist Sunday's hartal called by the Islamist parties.

He also formally wrapped up yesterday's protests around 11:00pm, saying the movement would continue today as announced on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, people from all walks of life started gathering at the protest venue from around 2:00pm, chanting slogans against Jamaat-Shibir.

In port city Chittagong, thousands of protesters thronged the protest venue chanting slogans against Jamaat-Shibir. An angry mob damaged windowpanes of the offices of Diganta Television and daily Sangram -- two media houses linked with Jamaat -- near Cheragi Pahar Mor, reports our district correspondent.

Shahidul Islam Shamim, a service holder who joined the Shahbagh protest yesterday, said as activists of Jamaat and its affiliated organisations attacked police and journalists their politics must be banned.

"Leaders of these parties should be given exemplary punishment," he said.

"We have been here for the last 17 days. We must not leave Shahbagh," said Fazle Masudur Rahman, another protester.

Zahirul Islam, a businessman, agrees and says: "It seems they [Jamaat] won't let me live in my own country."

The Shahbagh movement began on February 5, hours after Jamaat assistant secretary general Abdul Quader Mollah was sentenced to life in prison for rape, killing and genocide in 1971. Protesters say a life term is too lenient a punishment for Mollah, known as the "Butcher of Mirpur" for his notorious role in the killing of hundreds during the war.

Protesters have been demanding capital punishment to Mollah and all other war criminals.

On Thursday, issuing an ultimatum to the government to bring war crimes charges against Jamaat-e-Islami and initiate the legal process by March 26 to ban the party, the Shahbagh protesters announced a series of countrywide programmes beginning yesterday.

The programmes include special prayers at mosques after Juma prayers as well as at churches, pagodas and temples yesterday and holding more grand rallies, demonstrations and cultural programmes at different parts in Dhaka and other divisional cities.

Organisers had also told The Daily Star on Thursday night that although the protesters would not keep the Shahbagh intersection occupied for 24 hours from yesterday, they would gather at the venue the day before the war crimes tribunal is to deliver a verdict.

Bus crash kills 13 in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

At least 13 people including eight women and four children were killed and 12 others injured when a speeding bus plunged into a ravine in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar yesterday, officials said.

The bus travelling from Hazar Khani to the Landi Sarak area of Peshawar, fell into the ravine due to "overspeeding", police said.

"At least 13 people were killed and 12 others were wounded in the accident caused by overspeeding," local police official, Khalid Hamdani told AFP.

Gigantic nests

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the South African Kalahari Desert using grass and twigs and can weigh up to one ton.

Photographer Dillon Marsh decided to document the habitats constructed by the industrious birds to show how they make good use of the manmade poles in a landscape with little vegetation.

Marsh, from Cape Town, explains: "In the vast barren landscapes of the southern Kalahari, sociable weaver birds assume ownership of the telephone poles that cut across their habitat.

"Their burgeoning nests are at once inertly statuesque and teeming with life. The twigs and grass collected to build these nests combine to give strangely recognisable personalities to the otherwise inanimate poles.

5 Nigerians held with 2.5kg heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested five Nigerian nationals and recovered 2.5 kilograms of heroin from their possessions in the capital's Uttara yesterday afternoon.

In another incident, members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) detained a Saudi expatriate Mosharrif Hossain, 24, along with four gold bars around 2:00pm.

Mosharrif, of Koshba upazila in Brahmanbaria district, had arrived in Dhaka by a Saudia flight.

Police arrested him when he was crossing the customs hall of the airport.

said acting on a tip-off, the Rab men conducted a raid at a house in Sector-10 of Uttara around 3:30pm and arrested them along with the heroin.

Jahed Parvez Chowdhury, senior assistant superintendent of APBn, said they detained Saudi expatriate Mosharrif Hossain, 24, along with four gold bars around 2:00pm.

Mosharrif, a maintenance employee at a Saudi Airport, might be a member of a gang involved in gold-smuggling, APBn official added.