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OF EXTREMISM

Air commodore (retd) Ishfaq
Ilahi talks of remedy

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OFF TO ZIMBABWE

Bangladesh to play 2 Tests,
3 ODIs and 2 T20s

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"OUR MODERN WATCHWORDS"

Winston Churchill's poem is to be auctioned
in London; expected fetch £ 15,000

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Examinees may miss global bus

Hartal spate threatens cancellation of O, A-level examinations in Bangladesh

WASIM BIN HABIB

Recurrent shutdowns have heightened anxiety among the O-level and A-level students and their guardians, who apprehend that vengeful political programmes may disrupt the examinations set to begin next month.

These tests are held around the world simultaneously, and the authorities in the country will be unable to hold the exams during consecutive hartals.

The O-level exams are set to start across the globe on May 7 and the A-level examinations will begin after that and may end in mid-June. In case an exam is cancelled due to hartal, students will have to wait for at least six months for the next available slot to take the test.

This year, about 13,000 students from across the country registered to take the two exams that are administered by the British Council.

Anxious guardians say the repeated hartals, which had left the SSC candidates in the lurch and are now disrupting the HSC exams, send

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Save RMG sector

Garment-makers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday called upon the ruling and the opposition parties to save the country's apparel sector by stopping the ongoing political violence.

BGMEA President Atiqul Islam urged politicians to immediately sit for a dialogue to end the violence while speaking to Labour Minister

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Pahela Baishakh is one of the biggest seasons for apparel retailers and boutique shops. But with hartals taking away four working days out of five this week alone, they are in trouble as they made special materials for Baishakh. The retailers and boutique owners with their products formed a human chain on Bailey Road in the capital yesterday. They held placards that read "what do I do with the products" and "who's going to pay back my bank loan". Related story on B1.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



BINOD BIHARI CHOWDHURY
(1909-2013)

The passing of a warrior

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The passing of Binod Bihari Chowdhury is truly a descent of twilight on an era defined by patriotism and courage. His was a struggle marked by something epic about it. Now that he is dead, at

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13 HEFAJAT DEMANDS

Govt does its homework

Law ministry finds 6 against constitution, 7 covered by existing laws

REAZ AHMAD and SHAKHAWAT LITON

The law ministry has identified six out of the 13 demands of the Islamist group Hefajat-e Islam that go against the constitution and said the remaining seven are well covered by existing laws.

Hefajat-e Islam's demand for restoration of the phrase "Absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah" in the constitution as one of the fundamental principles of state policy goes against the basic spirit of the constitution, the law ministry said.

"Therefore, there is no constitutional obligation to meet the demand," the law ministry said in its opinion prepared after reviewing the 13-point demands of Hefajat.

The law ministry made the review upon receipt of a letter from the foreign ministry on April 7, a day after the Hefajat long march to the capital.

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Govt won't bow down to any pressure

Dipu Moni tells foreign diplomats

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday vowed not to bow down to any pressure and continue to reject all forms of bigotry, hatred and obscurantism that push Bangladesh backwards.

Terming some of Hefajat-e Islam's 13 demands disturbing and controversial, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni told foreign diplomats that the government was working towards building a

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Hefajat eyes bigger role

Moves to expand network across country

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

Emboldened by Saturday's gathering in the capital, Hefajat-e Islam policymakers now look to consolidating their position as the new religious force they claim will be a factor in power politics.

In an instant post assessment of the long march and the rally in the capital's Motijheel, top leaders of the Islamist organisation claimed that Islamists had united under the banner of Hefajat after a long time.

Policymakers say that apart from expanding their network across the country, they want to strengthen such unity and make the organisation stronger by bringing the remaining Islamic forces under one umbrella.

To this end, they will try to convince people about their

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18-party to call hartal for Apr 17-18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national standing committee of BNP, the highest policymaking body of the main opposition, last night decided to call another two-day countrywide hartal from April 17 protesting "wholesale arrest" of its leaders.

The call for hartal would be made official after discussion with other components of the 18-party opposition alliance.

The committee yesterday decided in principle to go for a "non-cooperation movement" and blockades across the

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Hartal on with blasts, clashes

STAR REPORT

The pro-hartal activists clashed with ruling party men and police, blasted crude bombs and carried out vandalism on the last day of the 36-hour countrywide hartal yesterday.

At least 32 people were injured in different incidents of violence while police detained BNP leaders and activists from different districts during the hartal hours, report our district correspondents.

The BNP-led 18-party alliance enforced the shutdown demanding release of their top leaders.

With yesterday's shutdown, the alliance has enforced hartals for 18 days since January 31.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, called for a daylong hartal today protesting the "torture of its

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Labourers sit and wait for contractors to hire them near the footbridge at Mirpur-1 in the capital yesterday. With back-to-back hartals since Monday, there has been very little work to go around. They had grim faces worried about how they would survive without work since the next working day without hartal is likely to be Monday next week.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bus plunges into river

30 passengers missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 30 people went missing as a bus plunged into the Rangamati river yesterday after boarding a ferry at Goma terminal in Charadi union of the district.

The bus with more than 40 passengers was heading towards DC Road bus stand in Bakerganj upazila from Char Kauwa of Barisal town, said Babul Sikder, one of the passengers of the bus.

He said, "The accident occurred around 4:30pm when the driver failed to control the bus after boarding the ferry. The vehicle then skidded and plunged into the river breaking the safety chain on the ferry."

Some of the passengers of the bus had got off the bus when it reached the terminal, said another passenger, adding that about 10 more passengers had managed to get out of the bus through the windows and swam ashore.

An eight-member team of fire service, including three divers, was conducting rescue operation till filing of the report around 8:00pm. So far none has been rescued.

Mozammel Huq, one of the divers, said they had found the bus 30 feet under water with nobody inside.

The rescue operation was being hampered due to strong current and lack of underwater visibility, he added.

Salvage vessel Hamza of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has been asked to leave Barisal station for the spot to salvage the vehicle, said

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