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Hefajat to muscle in

Dhaka blockade starts today, continues till called off by its chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Qawmi madrasa-based Islamist group Hefajat-e Islam is to lay siege to the capital today.

The organisation claimed that it would mobilise several lakh workers and supporters at Amin Bazar, Abdullahpur, Demra, Jatrabari, and at Kanchpur, Postogola and Babubazar bridges to make the Dhaka siege programme a success.

The organisation has recently been campaigning to realise its 13-point demand that includes stern punishment to "atheist leaders" of the Shahbagh movement.

Hefajat Secretary General Junaid Babunagri told The Daily Star yesterday that their programme would begin at daybreak. He said Hefajat's ameer Shah Ahmad Shafi would say when to end the siege.

With the country's main opposition BNP rendering its support to the siege, Hefajat-e Islam yesterday rejected

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MAP ON PAGE 19



A shot of the BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance rally at Shapla Chattar in the capital yesterday. Inset, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia talking to Mufti Fayeazullah, joint secretary general of Hefajat-e Islam, during the rally. However, she forgot the name of the organisation during her speech.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN/RASHED SHUMON

Forgetful Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia faced difficulty remembering Hefajat-e Islam's name while she addressed a rally in the capital yesterday.

It took the main opposition leader nearly 50 seconds before party leaders reminded her of the title. She extended her support for the Dhaka blockade programme, for today organised by the madrasa based group, at the rally from the Motijheel's Shapla Chattar.

As she stepped aside from the microphone, she was heard asking twice, "What is the name of the Alems whose program is tomorrow [today]?" to party leaders standing by her.

Her memory was refreshed after BNP

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Respond to talks offer

PM urges Khaleda again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday once again invited the opposition leader Khaleda Zia for talks to resolve the ongoing political stalemate.

"Respond to our call for discussion," she said, urging the opposition leader to stop "killing people", and stop the "politics of killing".

The prime minister made the call at a view-exchange

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

WAR CRIMES TRIAL ACCUSED

Alim's security not beefed up yet

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Dhaka Metropolitan Police did not take security measures for war crimes accused Abdul Alim on his way to and from the International Crimes Tribunal-2 even three weeks after an order was issued to that end.

On April 10, the prosecution in an unusual move sought security for Alim, who is facing 17 charges of crimes against humanity, after receiving

"alarming information" that he could be attacked by snipers.

It also said bdnews24.com and amadershomoy.com had recently posted news items, claiming Alim might come under attack so that the war crimes trial could be foiled.

The following day, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 ordered the police to provide security for Alim, a former member of late president Ziaur

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Israel strikes Syria

Claims its airstrike targets 'Hezbollah-bound missile shipment'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Israel has confirmed that it launched an airstrike into Syria on Friday, saying it targeted a "game-changing" shipment of advanced missiles bound for the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

It was the second Israeli strike in Syria this year.

The officials said the attack was early on Friday and aimed at sophisticated weapons, but not chemical arms. One official said the target was a shipment of advanced, long-range ground-to-ground missiles but was not more specific.

They spoke to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose information about a secret military operation to the media.

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Four cops assaulted

'Jamaat acted' without any reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four policemen were severely injured in an attack on law enforcers allegedly by Jamaat-Shibir activists in the capital's Motijheel yesterday, nearly half an hour before the rally of the BNP-led 18-party alliance began there.

The victims are Sub-Inspector KM Azizul Huq, 40, Assistant Sub-Inspector Ekram Hossain, 35, and constables Ashrafur Islam, 25, and Hasinur Rahman, 35, of Motijheel Police Station.

Hasinur suffered stab wounds to the head and

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A few hundred people wait at Adhar Chandra High School playground in Savar for the bodies of their loved ones who have been missing since the Rana Plaza came crashing down on April 24.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

How textile kings weave a hold on Bangladesh

REUTERS, Dhaka

Bangladesh's garment boom has made Mohammad Fazlul Azim a wealthy man. Over three decades his empire has grown from a single factory to a string of plants that employ 26,000 workers and clock up an annual turnover of about \$200 million.

Azim, who is also a member of parliament, has benefited from government policies to grow the industry into a global powerhouse. His elegant home here in Dhaka is a haven of luxury with an outdoor swimming pool, walled off from the chaos of the capital's streets.

But he has a complaint: His costs have almost doubled over the past several years. It's now time for the big Western brands he supplies to pay more for their clothes, and stop squeezing his margins, he declares.

"The buyers have not given anything. They just say 'increase your productivity'," Azim said in an interview. In workshops across this South Asian country of 160

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The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with Pope Francis' terming the working conditions of the Bangladesh garment workers as "slave labour"?

Yes (79%)
No (21%)

TOTAL VOTES: 250

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith that the Savar building collapse disaster would not harm Bangladesh's garment industry?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT [facebook.com/dailystarnews](https://www.facebook.com/dailystarnews)

PRAYER TIMING May 5

Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-31	6-35
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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