

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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Showbiz



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Rain washes out the final day of Mirpur Test

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**UPSET WITH MAMATA**

Family refuses to have Manna Dey's funeral in Kolkata

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# 60-hour hartal from tomorrow

*Threatens Khaleda, asking govt to initiate talks by today to form non-party polls-time govt*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition alliance will call a 60-hour hartal beginning tomorrow morning if the government does not initiate talks with the BNP by today over formation of a non-partisan election-time government, Khaleda Zia has warned.

The BNP chief gave the ultimatum at a rally at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday, threatening to wage even tougher agitations should the government fail to act by Tuesday evening, when the 60-hour hartal ends.

Thousands of the BNP-led 18-party MORE ON PAGE 3

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Khaleda asks govt employees, police, Rab, BGB not to carry out govt orders after Oct 27

Tougher agitation after Oct 29 if govt does not hold dialogue

Talks and movement will go side by side

Oust govt to release illegally imprisoned political leaders



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addresses a rally of 18-parrrty opposition alliance at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 5 killed in violence

*BGB opens fire in Cox's Bazar, BNP men clash with cops, AL activists elsewhere*

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and more than 450 were injured as opposition activists clashed with ruling party men and law enforcers centring demonstrations across the country yesterday.

Of the deceased, two pro-BNP activists were killed in Cox's Bazar, two in Chandpur, and a Jamaat man in Nilphamari. Another Jamaat-e-Islami activist died reportedly of cardiac arrest during a procession in Satkhira.

Violence marred the day in several other districts as well.

In Cox's Bazar, the two men were killed and five others sustained bullet injuries when law enforcers opened fire on a BNP procession brought out in Chakaria yesterday afternoon violating a ban on political programmes, reports our correspondent there.

The deceased were Mohammad Badsha, 25, an activist of BNP's youth wing Jubo Dal, and Mizanur Rahman, 22, activist of Jatiyataabadi Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP student body.

The officer-in-charge of Chakaria Police Station claimed that opposition activists fired "around 250" bullets at police and Border Guard Bangladesh personnel forcing them to retaliate.

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**NEWS ANALYSIS**

GOVT'S LEGALITY

## Deliberate bid to confuse people

INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia's repeated assertion that the government has become illegal since yesterday (October 25), which she later revised to tomorrow (October 27), is nothing but a new strategy of the BNP to confuse people, create disturbance and more worryingly, to invite disobedience.

Her claim is nothing but untrue. But she is sticking to her wrong stance. First she made this claim at a rally of teachers and employees on Thursday. Then she repeated the claim at yesterday's rally. She did not give any logical explanation in support of her claim.

But the fact remains that Hasina's government is elected for five years (and so is parliament) and it continues until

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POLLS IN 90 DAYS

Countdown

starts tomorrow

*Fresh debate over dissolution of JS*

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The 90-day countdown to the next general election begins tomorrow, as stipulated in the constitution, triggering a debate whether parliament could be dissolved before the polls.

The next parliamentary polls according to the constitution must take place between October 27 and January 24, when the tenure of 9th Jatiya Sangsad ends.

Apart from the BNP-led 18-party opposition

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**COMMENTARY**

## How long does it take to make a phone call?

MAHFUZ ANAM

Throughout yesterday, triggered by a press comment of Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu, most electronic and online media ran what they thought to be a breaking news that PM would make a telephone call to the leader of the opposition at any moment. Till the writing of this commentary the call never came.

In fact the story of the "call" has a longer past. It started on Monday last, when after a cabinet meeting the press reported that the PM plans to call her counterpart very soon. Throughout the week the nation waited with bated breath for that vital call.

In the meantime, the BNP handed over a formal letter from Mirza Fakhrul to Syed Ashraf, asking for talks, and followed it up by placing its polls-time government formula in parliament. In all fairness the BNP fulfilled all the demands of the AL for formal talks to be held.

And yet the much hyped phone call never came.

To us the phone call episode serves as an example of how Sheikh

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## Khoka appears in public first time after Oct 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the eyes of law he is on the run, but the people of the country yesterday saw him presiding over the opposition rally in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan and demean the constitution.

Terming the constitution "Tejpata [a bay leaf]", BNP Dhaka city unit convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka said the way the prime minister had brought changes to the constitution to fulfil her personal desire, there remains no constitution at all.

"If the 18-party alliance was voted to power, the constitution will be made

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A bus burns after it is set alight by unidentified people on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital yesterday evening.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Tense Dhaka sees arson, blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fearing possible violence from a face-off between the ruling and opposition parties, panic-stricken city residents mostly stayed indoors yesterday, leaving the streets almost empty.

In the end, the day passed with some minor incidents, including crude bomb blasts and vandalism.

Unidentified miscreants hurled two cocktails at the Zigatola residence of minister without portfolio Suranjit Sengupta around 6:00am. In the evening, at least 12 crude bombs blasted at different parts of the capital and two vehicles were torched and another one was vandalised, said police and witnesses.

Meantime, around 20 platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members have been deployed in the city for 12 hours from 7:00pm.

"We've deployed our force in aid of civil administration following their request," Col Hafiz Ahsan Farid, deputy director general (operations) of BGB, told The Daily Star last night.

Besides, members of Rapid Action Battalion and police were seen guarding and patrolling the city streets.

Tension was heightened in the city as the opposition 18-party alliance announced to stage a rally and the ruling

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## Dreadful days ahead?

*Opposition's call for 3-day hartal worries commoners*

M RAHMAN and HELEMUL ALAM

Having no alternative means of livelihood, bus driver Amin Sheikh fears of dreadful days ahead, as the opposition leader yesterday called a 60-hour nationwide hartal from Sunday morning.

He already suffered from passenger scarcity yesterday as the city dwellers had hardly stepped out of their homes fearing political violence centring opposition's rally at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

"I get to drive the bus on alternate days which fetch me something between Tk 800 and Tk 1,000. With this income, I have to support my

family of four living at Lalkuthi area in Darussalam," said Amin, adding that he would have to ask local shopkeepers to sell him essentials on credit.

With a capital of Tk 4,000 at hand, vegetable vendor of Karwan Bazar Mohammad Bashar expressed similar apprehension, as he too lives on daily income.

He feels the three-day shutdown will be of the fiercest of its kind and there would be no scope for trucks to bring in vegetables to the capital.

"I maintain a three-member family with my daily income of Tk 400 to Tk 500. If I have to live on my capital for the next three days, I will not be able to continue my business on the foot-

path," said Bashar.

Vendor Karim, who sells shoes on a pavement in Farmgate, also sees hard times ahead. He is at a loss regarding how to feed his family of four living in the city's Kathalbagan area.

Yesterday, he saw many possible customers instead of taking a pause at his makeshift shop rushing home.

"I could not sell a single pair of shoes from 3:30pm until 6:00pm, whereas on regular days, I sell several pairs by this time," he said.

Thousands, who live hand to mouth, bear most of the burnt on hartal days.

Since this January until last month,

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## Call off hartal

*AL asks 18-party*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Responding to opposition leader Khaleda Zia's speech at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, the ruling Awami League urged Khaleda to call off the hartal, give up the path of confrontation and sit for dialogue.

"... Respond to the prime minister's call for a dialogue," said presidium member Mohammad Nasim at a press briefing at the party chief Hasina's Dhanmondi office.

He said the Awami League chief would make a phone call to the opposition leader soon to hold a dialogue over the formation of the polls-time government.

Nasim said the BNP would give in and take part in the elections held under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government just

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## Jamaat, Shibir try to show strength

*Dominate 18-party rallies across country; scuffle with BNP men to take charge*

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami, a key ally in the 18-party alliance, and its associate student body Islami Chhatra Shibir yesterday staged huge showdowns in the capital and elsewhere, apparently sidelining the main opposition BNP.

Shibir looked well organised and it captured the focus by occupying the front areas of the podium at Suhrawardy Udyan, the historic venue where the Pakistani occupation forces had surrendered in 1971, pushing the BNP and pro-BNP youth and student bodies aside.

The Jamaat-Shibir activists kept coming in with banners, placards, festoons and food, occupying the streets from Matsya Bhaban to Shahbagh and a large portion of the rally venue since the morning.

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