







CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT ... Nine-year-old Rahima lost the sight in one eye after she picked up a homemade bomb assuming it was a ball during an opposition-called hartal on October 29. Injured students of Khuniyagachh Govt Primary School in Lalmonirhat lie on their school benches after supporters of a BNP-called hartal beat up the students and a few teachers for coming to school on a hartal day in March this year. Eight-year-old Sumi at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She was on a bus to Dhaka on Sunday, the day before a 60-hour hartal, when hartal supporters torched the vehicle burning her face badly. All burnt and blackened, Lal Mia being taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital during the hartal on Tuesday after he picked up an abandoned crude bomb thinking it was a ball he could play with. PHOTO: STAR

Death relieves his pain

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respiratory tract was burned. Doctors all along said it would be impossible to save the boy who had suffered severe burns over 95 percent of his

Monir's father Ramjan Ali had brought Monir anymore. him to Dhaka on his repeated pleas to be allowed to see the city he had never been

Pro-hartal rowdies torched Ramjan's covered van with the boy inside at Gazipur Chowrasta on the first day of the BNP-led 18-party alliance's 60-hour shutdown.

Ramjan kept a constant vigil by his son's bed at the burn unit of the DMCH.

He said, "Just the night before his death, Monir kept begging me to take him home.

"He slept only for a few hours and woke up around 3:50am. As I was making some juice for him, he suddenly started twitching and jerking, his face contorted in pain. He tried to pull his tubes out, wanted to jump out of the bed and kept crying. I calmed him down, and he laid his head against my chest.

"Moments later, his body went limp. I

knew he was gone."

Ramjan had previously lost two chil-

dren, one in a road accident and the "We don't have any alternative." other in infancy.

glimpse of her son at the DMCH on false. Tuesday night. She fainted as soon as she saw him and was not allowed near

and loved ones were fuming with anger when the boy was brought dead yesterday afternoon, our correspondent reported.

Thousands of people attended Monir's namaz-e-janaza. Sunk in gloom, many were heard asking, "What do we do with the politics that takes away our children?"

The mother kept fainting, unable to bear the pain.

Whenever she came to her senses, she wailed, "I wanted my son to be an engineer one day ... Who will bring my child back to me? Those who burnt my son alive must be hanged."

The day Monir was fatally burned, The Daily Star asked BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir why the opposition was indulging in violence in the streets.

He replied they enforce hartal not out of joy, but to ensure people's voting rights.

Contacted again after Monir's death, he Monir's mother Minuara had just a said the case filed in this connection was

party [BNP] has done this. I know that government agents are responsible for Back home in Gazipur, family members Monir's death." Shawkat Hossain Babu, leader of

Gazipur Jubo Dal, a pro-BNP youth in July. organisation, and 83 others are accused in the case, filed with Joydevpur Police Station in Gazipur on Tuesday.

Police arrested 12, but prime accused Shawkat was yet to be caught.

Ruling Awami League stalwart Tofail Ahmed, who spoke about Monir in parliament on Tuesday, told The Daily Star yesterday, "The way he died is heartrending. I have no words to condemn this. It's difficult to fathom how the mother must be feeling now ... who can console

He went on, "Khaleda Zia is a mother too. Does she not feel anything when these happen? Is this politics? Hartal supporters have killed him, but the opposition is now refusing to take responsibility. They must shoulder the responsibility for such violent hartals. Hartal is a political programme ... it's not a

licence to kill."

Monir is among the 76 children affected in hartals so far this year. Of them, two others have died, while many have been He added, "None affiliated with the blinded or crippled for life.

Nadia Sultana, a nine-year-old of

Gazipur, was crushed to death by a bus while running away from picketers chasing her during a Jamaat-enforced hartal During Jamaat's hartal in March, a class-

eight student named Junaidul Islam was standing in the balcony of his home in Kamalapur when a stray bullet fired by police upon rioting picketers killed him.

In another incident, 60 children in Lalmonirhat were beaten up by prohartal activists during a BNP hartal on March 25 this year. The reason was they had dared to come to school during a hartal that did not concern them in any way. Their school was vandalised, and three of their teachers were beaten up as well.

AS Mahmood, director-in-charge of Bangladesh Shishu Odhikar Forum, told The Daily Star that all political parties must pledge in their election manifestos that they would shun hartal violence and keep children out of political programmes.

20 ministers 'resign'

FROM PAGE 1 development.

"The rest of the ministers will resign on Sunday," he added, requesting anonymity.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader told this newspaper yesterday that he would resign in a day or two.

It came after Sheikh Hasina called on her cabinet colleagues on Monday to resign so she could form an election-

time cabinet by the middle of this month. State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Capt (retd) AB Tajul Islam was the first to respond to the call, handing over

his resignation to the PM on Wednesday. Meanwhile, veteran Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed said he did not want to be in the new cabinet. Several AL

leaders told The Daily Star that Tofail had already expressed

In a stark contrast, several ministers and lawmakers have been lobbying hard for a place in the polls-time government.

In September last year, Tofail refused to join the cabinet when Hasina reshuffled it for the forth time.

Workers Party president Rashed Khan Menon had also turned down the offer at the time, but sources say Menon now wants to be in the polls-time cabinet and that he has already conveyed his readiness to the prime minister.

day directed the public servants to work impartially during

'WORK IMPARTIALLY' Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan yester-

his unwillingness to Hasina.

the election period. "Departmental actions will be taken if anyone demonstrates partiality," he told a secretary committee meeting at the secretariat.

The AL will start selling nomination forms for the MP

NOMINATION SALE FROM SUNDAY

aspirants from Sunday. The forms will be available at the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue from 10:00am to 5:00pm every day.

Each form will cost Tk 25,000, said a party press release.

Denied polls ticket

FROM PAGE 20 He had never contested the state elections before but was

hoping to make a debut with this one. Party leaders say Malviya was hoping to get a ticket to contest the polls from Agar, but the party fielded another

candidate, Madhu Gehlot, instead. Furious at the party's refusal to field him, Malviya protested for days and even burnt effigies of Madhu Gehlot. Party sources say he was never in the race and had never been assured of a ticket to contest.

Madhya Pradesh is among the five state going to polls in November-December, in what is being seen as a semi-final ahead of national elections due by May. The counting of votes will be held on December 8.

Compensation

will be held responsible for any death in hartal violence, he added. The minister made the remarks while talking to journalists

after attending a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital. "Those who enforce hartal and vandalise vehicles, loot shops

and bar people from going to hospitals will have to give compensation. We are thinking about enacting a law, " he said. Cases will be filed against the hartal enforcers under penal

codes 302, 304 and 307, he added. Terming vandalism and violence during the hartal hours

unconstitutional and immoral, the minister said the government was determined to prevent any such undesirable activities. "People do not accept shutdown as the opposition leaders

hid in their homes during hartal hours," he told newsmen. Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad and Prime Minister's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, among

others, spoke at the discussion organised by Bangladesh Awami Forum.

Mir Quasem's trial delayed further

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The investigation agency took a record 34 months to complete probe against Quasem, a member of Jamaat-e-Islami's executive coun-

The Tribunal-1 framed charges against Quasem on September 5 after the prosecution pressed charges against him on May 16 this year. The investigation against Quasem and four other Jamaat leaders -- Motiur Rahman

Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Mollah -- began in July, 2010. The tribunals, however, had already delivered verdict in the cases against Quader

Mollah, Kamaruzzaman and Mojaheed while Nizami's case is now at the final stage. Even the Supreme Court disposed of Quader Mollah's appeal in September. But the

formal trial against Quasem is yet to begin. On September 5, Tribunal-1 indicted Quasem on 14 charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War and fixed September 30 for

recording the prosecution's opening statement. On September 30, Tribunal-1, on its own motion, transferred the case to Tribunal-2 for

quick disposal. But the defence said they had filed a petireview of the indictment order.

However, Tribunal-2 did not find such review application with the case record that was shifted from Tribunal-1, while the prosecution said they had received a copy of the petition.

The court, in its yesterday's order, said "Review refers to a judicial process which enables a court of law in going through any of its own order for the purpose of alteration or modifica-

tion by reviewing it, if needed." So, the alleged review petition needs to be Badr force in 1971.

resolved by Tribunal-1. The probe against Quasem began on July 26, 2010, and the investigation agency submitted its probe report to the prosecution on May

6,2013. bers of Al-Badr of Chittagong in 1971, was arrested on June 17, 2012, after Tribunal-1 issued an arrest warrant against him.

Meanwhile, Tribunal-2 yesterday completed recording the cross-examination of AKM Shamsul Alam alias Jahangir, the third prosecution witness in the case against another Jamaat leader AKM Yusuf.

tion with Tribunal-1 on September 17 seeking court adjourned the case proceeding until Sunday.

> ICT-1 The defence at Tribunal-1 yesterday began placing their arguments in the war crimes case against Motiur Rahman Nizami to prove him innocent of the charges pressed for his alleged

involvement in the crimes against humanity. Quoting from different prosecution documents and formal charges, defence counse Mizanul Islam said there were different versions regarding the date of formation of Al-

He also raised question about which ver-

sion they should rely upon. According to prosecution documents, Nizami was the chief of Al-Badr till September but he was charged for killing the intellectuals Quasem, who had allegedly led the mem- by Al-Badr between October and November in

1971, he said. The prosecution had "whimsically" pressed formal charges against Nizami, he claimed.

The defence counsel placed arguments for about four hours and also spent around three hours to discredit the first prosecution witness in the case -- Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury.

Mizanul also said the prosecution and their | the flyover. Defence counsel Syed Mizanur Rahman witnesses gave "untrue statements" before the completed cross-examining Shamsul before the tribunal. The proceeding of the case was

Increased toll

FROM PAGE 20 such action."

But the DSCC has sought help from the higher authorities and they expect to resolve the matter soon.

"If we fail to reach any agreement we will go for legal action," the official said. DSCC Chief executive officer Md Ansar Ali

Khan said prior to the inauguration of the flyover, Orion had been reminded of the toll rates for different vehicles and the 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT).

Orion was supposed to collect the toll and VAT in separate receipts, he added.

DSCC Administrator Nozmul Islam said that in a letter on October 21, they had asked Orion to follow the toll list of 2005.

Meanwhile, because of the higher toll rate many vehicles are avoiding the flyover and crowding the roads below. The purpose of the 10-km flyover is thus losing the point. "I had decided to use the flyover to save time

on my way from Narayanganj. But seeing the exorbitant toll rate I chose to brave the traffic jam below, " said private car driver Anwar. Many public buses are, however, seen using and transfer basis.

"We are using the flyover, as the toll booth operators have assured us that the tariff rate years.

ORION **VEHICLES** CONTRACT **CHARGING (TK)** RATE (TK) 10 Two-wheelers 5 18 Auto-rickshaw 10 35 60 Car 70 SUV 40 50 85 Microbus Pick-up vans 130 100 173 Minibus 150 260 Bus 100 173 Small trucks

TARIFF RATE AT MAYOR HANIF FLYOVER

200 345 Lorries will be lowered soon," said Al-Amin, who

150

260

drives a bus on Narayanganj-Gulistan route. The Tk 2,300 crore flyover -- the country's first Public Private Partnership scheme -- has been constructed on a build, own, operate

The concessionaire is to hand it over to the government after a concession period of 24

group are said to be automatically upgraded to the best tables in the house.

Good-looking

The claims have been made by two former employees who also revealed that the same rules apply for staff with female hostesses needing 'a model's physique' to be considered for the job.

Guests at Le Georges, a restaurant at the top of Paris' Centre Pompidou with stunning panoramic views of the French capital, and Café Marly, near the Louvre, are given tables following a strict appearance policy -the better looking they are, the better the "The good-looking ones are led to the

good places, where they can be easily seen," they two former staff members told French weekly Le Canard Enchaîné.

"As for the non-good-looking ones, it is imperative that they be dispatched to the

corners of the room."

Trucks

If the staff seats a less aesthetically pleasing guest at a good table, they are told off along the lines of: "What are these ugly mugs doing at this table? Everyone can see them when they come in. It's very bad for our image," The Telegraph reports.

The Costes group are run by brothers Thierry and Gilbert Costes and include several other restaurants and cafes in Paris, as well as hotels and cinemas.

Those attempting to get around the problem by booking over the telephone are told that no promises on tables are made, so as to give hostesses a "get out of jail freecard" should the guests have an undesirable visage.

A spokesperson for the Costes group told The Telegraph they would not comment on the allegations.

Brutality sparks anger on social media immediate ban on hartal have been posted on A Facebook user named Shamim Mansur

FROM PAGE 20 three days.

Monir was one of the 13 children who fell spells of 60-hour shutdown in less than two hartal. weeks. Others with critical wounds are still undergoing treatment with at least one of them drifting between life and death.

People have roared in utter shock and disbelief at the images of charred bodies of children, destruction of public property and indiscriminate use of crude bombs in the name of hartal, a constitutional right of the political parties which many have decried for its overtly destructive nature nowadays.

Against such backdrop, people on social media have demanded a permanent ban on hartal as they think this is no more a tool for protecting the interests of the people. Rather, it is being used as an excuse for destroying public property and causing more sufferings to the

has urged The Daily Star to initiate a public victim to the mindless violence during the two poll before the national election on banning

> Another user named Naimul Rinku has commented, "Last time Awami League got votes saying they would punish war criminals. This time people should vote the party who will say that they would definitely ban Hartal." "No more political chaos on the streets.

> Streets belong to the public, not to the politicians anymore. For all the political issues, there is a house called Jatiya Sangsad! So, go there and fight with each other... Just leave us alone," Naimul added. One Ashik Imran has even questioned the

validity of hartal by saying, "... Why Hartal is

not banned? Can it still be called a democratic

Similar comments with the demand for an

right? If so, is democracy needed in Bangladesh?"

social media by a number of users. Online readers of The Daily Star have also expressed horror and revulsion at the brutality

committed during hartals.

One Abdur Razzak Farazi has posted, "Humanity is at stake at the hand of beasts in human shape." Another reader Sajal Das expressed his

resentment, saying "... Is [the] Bangalee becoming [a] barbaric nation? Our culture of violence is [so] cruel that people kill each other for simple argument or different political view. This is not democracy." A reader named Shazzatunnessa Lipi has

vented her disappointment by calling the politicians "cannibalistic". Some users like Alekanda have gone as far as to suggest that people take to streets "to raise

voice against hartal."