

In the name of politics THIS IS WHAT THEY DO TO PEOPLE



Sumi, 8.



Milton, 10.



Rony, 13.



Muktar, 23.



Sagor, 28.



Kamal, 32.

Victims of hartal violence lying in the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Three of the victims are children below the age of 13, who have been traumatised to the core and would probably carry the marks of their wounds for the rest of their lives if they survive.

PHOTO: STAR

FROM PAGE 1

Still recovering at the National Ophthalmology Institute is Rahima, the nine-year-old who was caught up in an explosion during the hartal on October 29.

The explosion has damaged both her eyes -- one fully, the other partly. Splinters have peppered her palm when she picked up a cocktail mistaking it for a ball.

It is understood that it was one of those crude bombs carelessly thrown by pickets. At least six children have been similarly caught up and injured in explosions.

Another little girl, who was burnt inside a bus in a pre-hartal violence, is being treated at the DMCH burn unit.

Eight-year-old Sumi was coming to Dhaka to visit her sister when hartal supporters set the bus on fire. Still in racking

pain, she wants to get out of the hospital. But doctors are not sure when they can release her, as her condition is critical.

Upstairs, lay two more victims -- Abdur Razzak Mithu and Ruhul Amin. They were attacked by pro-hartal men on Saturday, the day before the "official" start of the hartal.

Mithu, 20, an office assistant at an insurance company, was injured when hartal supporters swooped on the bus he was in around 6:00pm at Shahbagh. He was on his way home to Savar after work.

Ruhul Amin, 32, a driver of a rental car service, too was going home when he came under attack around 8:30pm on the same day.

"A piece of brick flew in through the window and hit me on the head. As I slowed the car down, the attackers hurled a petrol bomb from behind. My car burst into flames instantly," he told The Daily

Star.

Al-Amin, the 20-year-old human hauler driver who was burnt inside his vehicle on November 5, lay shivering under a heap of blankets when a correspondent of this newspaper went to see him at the DMCH on Sunday.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman visited some of these patients on the day.

After his visit, he told The Daily Star: "Enforcing hartals through violence is not a democratic right. Pre-hartal violence is definitely a criminal offence and we must hold them accountable."

He said the general public wanted peace and security and the state must ensure that.

Meanwhile, Asad Gazi, a CNG-run auto rickshaw driver who was badly burnt when hartal supporters hurled a petrol bomb in his vehicle during last week's

hartal, had to be moved to the Intensive Care Unit. His condition is unstable.

Two other hartal victims, Rokon Zaman, a covered van driver, and Hasu Mia, a CNG-run auto rickshaw passenger, are still recovering at the DMCH.

The condition of Montu Chandra Pal, who was badly burned in an arson attack by pickets on Sunday night, worsened yesterday. Doctors say 90 percent of his body was burned and there is little hope of his survival.

Five others were injured in the incident when pickets hurled a petrol bomb in the vehicle in Laxmibazar.

Asked about such widespread violence, Hassan Mahmood Khandker, inspector general of police, said, "The number of burn victims is decreasing and will further decrease. Cases have been filed for all these incidents and we have arrested some of those involved in the

Govt making all but people happy

FROM PAGE 1

The government, it seems, was desperate to offer the bureaucrats legal protection from graft charges. This is why it did not care about the huge public outcry triggered since the government disclosed the provision in a bill placed in parliament in February 2011.

Different non-government organisations and individuals working for good governance, and various donor agencies and countries expressed concern over the government move to make such a provision curtailing the authority of the anti-graft body.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith himself had opposed the provision. He wrote to the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry and requested that the anti-graft body's power to sue government officials not be curtailed.

The ACC itself strongly opposed the provision terming this unconstitutional. In a letter to the parliamentary standing committee in May 2011, the ACC said the proposed change ran counter to Article 27 of the constitution on equality before law.

Article 27 of the constitution, which

deals with one of the fundamental rights of citizens, reads: "All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law."

Legal experts also termed the provision unconstitutional as it was aimed at offering special protection to a special community --- government officials.

The constitution prohibits the state from making any law inconsistent with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the country's supreme charter.

Amid the huge uproar, the parliamentary body decided to visit some countries to gather experiences on best practices on the anti-graft body. A seven member parliamentary delegation visited Australia, Indonesia and South Korea from September 9 to 24, 2011.

In its report placed before the parliamentary standing committee, the delegation said the anti-graft bodies in those countries function independently without interventions from other organisations of the state.

From that perspective, it continued, no provision should be in place in amending the ACC act, which if passed, shall cause impairment of the anti-graft's functional

independence.

"As a result the section containing the provision for prior approval to inquire, investigate or prosecute public servant with the charge of corruption should not get passed through the parliament," said the report, which was also placed in parliament recently along with the report on the overall activities of the committee.

In light of the delegation's observation, the parliamentary standing committee took a strong stance against the controversial proposal. And in September this year it recommended that the House reject the controversial provision proposed by the government.

But nothing could prevent the government from introducing the provision. During the passage of the bill on Sunday, a ruling AL MP, on the advice of the government high command, proposed the inclusion of the controversial provision. And a House dominated by ruling AL MPs acted on the government's wish and voted in favour of the controversial provision.

By doing it, the government finally did exactly the opposite of what the Awami League had promised around five years ago before the ninth parliamentary polls regard-

ing a strengthening of the fight against corruption.

In its electoral manifesto 'A Charter for Change', the AL promised to take multi-pronged measures to fight corruption.

Effective Action against Corruption: Multi-pronged measures to fight corruption will be put into place. At the end of its tenure, it finally clipped the wings of the ACC, let alone making it stronger.

The reason behind the government's desperation is clear. Before the 2008 parliamentary polls, the AL relied on the people and came up with pledges to fight corruption. That situation has changed. The government has been trying to bank on other forces, including civil bureaucrats, to win the next battle of ballots.

In the last five years, the government has taken many steps, including the much talked about one of mass promotions in the civil administration to please the civil bureaucrats. And curtailing the ACC's power to file graft cases against officials of the civil administration is not any isolated step.

All these have exposed the AL's desperation to get re-elected anyhow.

Beyond PM's authority

MAHMUDUL ISLAM

Constitution expert Mahmudul Islam also said the ministers could hold on to their offices and enjoy state facilities until their resignation letters were submitted to the president.

Replying to a question whether the prime minister could keep the resignation letters to herself and decide who's to accept, the veteran counsel said, "It is a matter of understanding."

M AMIR-UL ISLAM

FROM PAGE 1
forwarded them to the president, and she could hold on to the letters if she wants to.

Amir-ul Islam said the prime minister could ask any minister to resign any time and if the minister does not comply, she could ask the president to sack the minister.

He said the prime minister could also decide whose resignation letters to accept and whose to not.

SHAHDEEN MALIK

FROM PAGE 1
serving employee of the Prime Minister's Office, but not someone who holds the constitutional office of minister," he said.

When his attention was drawn to the prevailing situation after the ministers' resignation, he said the ministers could not work anymore.

In his view, this has triggered a fresh constitutional debate and it would deepen the political crisis centring the next parliamentary elections.

ALI IMAM MAJUMDER

FROM PAGE 1
2006 during the then caretaker government's tenure, he said, "The advisers sent their resignations and did not go to work any more. Later, I [then cabinet secretary] took signatures of the president and completed the other procedures."

He also viewed that the ongoing political crisis would not ease through this initiative since many political parties including the main opposition BNP would not join the prime minister-proposed all-party interim government.



AKBAR ALI KHAN

Former adviser to a caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan said resignation of all ministers and state ministers was a political decision. There was no constitutional obligation for quitting in order to form an all-party interim cabinet.

This would not help end the political crisis because the main opposition and many other political parties had not accepted the prime minister's proposal for an all-party interim government, he said.

If representation of all political parties, including BNP, in the all-party interim government could be ensured, then it would significantly contribute to end the political deadlock, he added.



SULTANA KAMAL

Noted rights activist and former adviser to a caretaker government Sultana Kamal said, "As far as I know, there is no provision in the constitution for the prime minister to accept a minister's resignation. But such incidents have had happened earlier in this government's tenure."

She said it could be legal if the prime minister sends the resignation letters to the president and re-appoint ministers of her choosing.

About the political situation, she said resignation of ministers would not ease the political crisis rather, it might deteriorate matters because the people would not know what would happen next.

Lack of clarity on courses of actions taken by the ruling party and the opposition parties might create confusion. The parties have to be more clear and transparent on their activities, she added.

Power generation

FROM PAGE 16

766MW, adding up to a total much higher than what the ruling 14-party alliance pledged in its election manifesto," said Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

"When our government took over, the electricity production capacity was only 4,942MW. But the capacity has doubled in the last five years under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," he said, reading from a statement.

Noting that the newly achieved power generation capacity was still not enough for a country of 16 crore people, Inu said it was expected to reach 24,000MW by 2021 as the government had undertaken short, medium and long term plans for the power sector.

Since taking office in 2009, the Hasina government had signed agreements on setting up 70 power plants, 37 of which

are already in production, said the information minister.

He claimed the increased power-generation capacity helped bolster the country's economy. The 41 percent growth in export income in recession-hit 2011 was possible as the readymade garment factories enjoyed uninterrupted supply.

This feat also helped increase food production as adequate power supply could be ensured for irrigation, he added. "If you ask me to rate the success of the government, I would say the government has achieved a golden A+ in power sector," said Tawfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury, energy affairs adviser to the prime minister.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Muhammad Enamul Huq and Power Division Secretary Monowar Islam, ndc, were also present at the press conference.

Migrant workers

FROM PAGE 16

capital before the current 84-hour-long shutdown that began on Sunday morning. Many more are flocking to different points in the capital, hoping to leave the city.

The 18-party opposition coalition had already observed 120 hours of hartal in two spells to press home their demand for a non-party caretaker government to oversee the next general elections.

As soon as a pick-up truck came into sight at Karwan Bazar, around four dozen people dashed forward in a body, hoping that it would drive long-distance. But it did not.

"I decided to stay in Dhaka on the first day of this hartal. But that day I was able to earn only Tk 200, which is less than half of what I earn on an average day," said Nayeab Ali, a rickshaw-puller in the city for

five years. He was trying to return to his village in Bogra.

"A rickshaw-puller needs to make at least Tk 400 to survive in the city, and that covers the payment to the rickshaw owner and three meals," Nayeab said. "I think I am better off working in agricultural fields back home."

Mohammad Azhar, who makes a living by vending toys on city streets, said he had managed to earn only about Tk 800 in the last two weeks, which is why he decided to return home.

He added, "I have to provide for a four-member family but it becomes impossible when your earnings go down so steeply during hartals."

The workers were still waiting there for transport when this report was filed at about 11:30pm that night.