



Only a handful of three-wheelers ply a thoroughfare in Gazipur yesterday. The 20-party alliance had called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city yesterday protesting a ban on holding rallies. It had scheduled a rally in the city which the BNP chief was supposed to address.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# BNP acts quite strangely

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the imposing section-144 in Gazipur Bhawal Badre Alam College ground where BNP chief Khaleda Zia was scheduled to address a rally.

The local administration on Friday imposed the injunction on public gathering to avert any unwarranted incident as pro-Awami League student body Bangladesh Chhatra League also announced to hold a rally at the same venue protesting BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman's controversial remarks on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Before announcing the hartal in the evening, the secretary-generals of the alliance members held an emergency meeting for about 10 minutes at the BNP chief's Gulshan office.

"We will be compelled to announce tougher programmes in the days to come if the government continues to deprive us of our democratic rights to hold rally and pursue other political activities," Fakhrul told reporters after the meeting.

**KHALEDA UNHAPPY WITH GAZIPUR LEADERSHIP**

In an emergency meeting at her Gulshan office Friday night, Khaleda expressed her disappointment with the BNP leaders in Gazipur, especially City Corporation Mayor MA Mannan, for their failure to counter the BCL steps to resist Khaleda from holding the rally.

The rally was scheduled as part of the alliance's countrywide campaign to mobilise public support in favour of its demand for holding a fresh inclusive election under a non-party administration.

Khaleda asked her party leaders to stage vigorous demonstration in Gazipur during the hartal.

"I am ready to go to Gazipur in spite of the section 144. I want your suggestion about this," sources quoted Khaleda as saying in the meeting.

In response, Mannan and some other BNP leaders of Gazipur commented that they would have to face police harassment if they violated the ban.

Pointing at Mannan, Khaleda said, "As the mayor of Gazipur City Corporation, you have lot to do. You should work seriously."

However, the city saw a tepid hartal with only a handful of BNP men and pickets active during the shutdown, frustrating the party high command, according to BNP sources.

No top leaders of the district were seen on the streets throughout the day and all the pickets did was to pelt stones at some vehicles, partially damaging three human hauliers, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Police detained nine people during the hartal hours.

MA Farid, general secretary of Gazipur Reporters' Club, last night filed a case with Gazipur Sadar Police Station accusing 40 BNP leaders and activists, including Gazipur city mayor MA Mannan and district BNP President Fazlul Haq Milon, of vandalism during the shutdown.

**DEMOS ACROSS COUNTRY**

The BNP and its allies staged demonstrations in districts, including Bogra, Gaibandha, Barisal and Rajshahi, to protest the ban on Gazipur rally.

In Bogra, BNP men vandalised the Chamber of Commerce building Friday afternoon. When police reached the spot, they blasted some crude bombs and fled.

Eleven BNP men were arrested in connection with this, reports our Bogra correspondent.

A few hours later, some AL men attacked the Temple Road office of the pro-BNP Sramik Dal in the town.

In Gaibandha, police charged truncheons on a demonstration of the 20-party alliance, leaving at least 10 injured. In protest, the coalition announced half-day hartal from 6:00am today in the district town, reports our correspondent.

**ALAL DETAINED**

Police last night arrested Jubo Dal President Moazzem Hossain Alal from his Lalmatia residence.

A patrol team of Mohammadpur police picked him up around 11:50pm.

Talking to The Daily Star, Biplob Kumar Sarker, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Tejgaon division, confirmed the news and said Alal was detained on charges of planning destructive activities.

## Ship

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Tokyo, told The Daily Star over the phone.

Meanwhile, the "chief engineer" of the ship, Moniruzzaman, passed the Intermediate examinations and he too was a labourer of the same port.

His other details were not known immediately, the counsellor added.

While they were working at the port, a broker named Saiful Islam managed them jobs in a Chinese company, the official said.

Surprisingly, the Cambodian ship authorities later on appointed them as captain and chief engineer of Ming Guang. The ship authorities, however, could not be contacted for comments.

After their rescue, the duo failed to produce any valid documents.

"They are now in Japan and we will send them back home soon," Nore-Alam said.

Japanese Coast Guard on Friday rescued 10 crew members, including two Bangladeshis, of a Cambodian cargo vessel after it sank off the northern Japan coast, killing three people.

The seven survivors, including the Bangladeshis, were in a stable condition. They were rescued from the chilly waters of the strait separating Japan's Honshu and northernmost Hokkaido islands. The crew abandoned the ship just before it sank.

The 1,915 tonne Ming Guang was carrying scrap metal from the northern Japanese port of Hakodate to South Korea when it sprang a leak late Thursday.

## North Korea berates

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blows" over the film and accused the US of "disturbing the Internet operation" of North Korean media outlets.

The Internet outage triggered speculation that US authorities may have launched a cyber-attack in retaliation for the hacking of Sony Pictures -- the studio behind madcap North Korea comedy "The Interview".

Washington has said the attack on Sony was carried out by Pyongyang.

The NDC accused Obama of taking the lead in encouraging cinemas to screen "The Interview" on Christmas Day. Sony had initially cancelled its release after major US cinema chains said they would not show it, following threats by hackers aimed at cinemagoers.

"Obama always goes reckless in words and deeds like a monkey in a tropical forest," a spokesman for the NDC's policy department said in a statement published by the North's official KCNA news agency.

"If the US persists in American-style arrogant, high-handed and gangster-like arbitrary practices despite (North Korea's) repeated warnings, the US should bear in mind that its failed political affairs will face inescapable deadly blows," the NDC spokesman said.

He accused Washington of linking the hacking of Sony to North Korea "without clear evidence" and repeated Pyongyang's condemnation of the film, describing it as "a movie for agitating terrorism produced with high-ranking politicians of the US administration involved".

The film took in \$1 million in its limited-release opening day, showing

in around 300 mostly small, independent theatres. It was also released online for rental or purchase.

The film, which has been panned by critics, has become an unlikely symbol of free speech thanks to the hacker threats that nearly scuppered its release.

The low-brow comedy revolving around the fictional assassination of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un played to packed cinemas across the US.

A file sharing website reported the film had been illegally downloaded more than 750,000 times.

Online services for Sony's PlayStation and Microsoft's Xbox gaming consoles, which had decided to release the film online, went down Thursday, apparently attacked by hackers.

Microsoft's online network for its Xbox gaming console was restored to nearly full service Friday but the PlayStation network remained down.

The NDC spokesman called again for a joint investigation into the Sony hack, which has already been rejected by the US, while accusing Washington of "beating air after being hit hard by others".

From Monday night, websites of the North's major state media went dead for hours.

The cause of the outages in North Korea's already limited Internet access has not been confirmed. The US has refused to say whether it was involved in the shutdown.

The North has about one million computers -- mainly available at educational and state institutions -- but most lack any connection to the World Wide Web.

## Chinese minister

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Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali received him at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Wang Yi's visit is considered as another step towards further boosting the bilateral ties between the two countries.

The bilateral talks between the two countries, led by the two foreign ministers, will start at 10:00am at the foreign ministry.

The two countries will discuss programmes to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China in 2015 in a befitting manner, by jointly organising various events and activities throughout the year.

Wang Yi will also meet President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during his visit.

Yi's current Dhaka visit is part of his two-nation south Asia tour that also took him to Nepal.

Wang Yi is scheduled to leave Dhaka at 2:15pm tomorrow.

## Foggy country

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forced to land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka due to blurred visibility, said airport's Information Assistant Moyazzam Hossain.

In Chittagong, flight operations at Shah Amanat International Airport were disrupted for more than an hour due to poor visibility caused by the dense fog, said Noor-E-Alam, the airport manager.

Two domestic flights of Novoair and US-Bangla airlines landed behind schedule, he added.

Ferry services on the Daulatdia-Paturia route in the Padma were suspended for around nine hours till early yesterday because of the thick mist, said Bidyut Kumar Saha, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation at Aricha Ghat.

The fog also led to long tailbacks on both sides of the river near some ferry terminals.

## Cops torment

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They allegedly threatened the worried sick father with dire consequences and asked questions like where he had tucked away his son.

Nasir told The Daily Star that policemen approached him when he was assisting rescuers at Shahjahanpur Railway Colony and sought 15 minutes of his time.

During his detention, he could know nothing about what was going on at the well or what was being done to rescue his little boy trapped at the bottom of a several hundred feet deep well.

Anything he said during the interrogation would be instantly dismissed as lies by the interrogators.

Nasir was released around 3:00pm yesterday, only after the locals did what

the authorities could not, recover Jihad from the well. It was done in just 15 minutes after the official rescue operation was called off with the claim that there was nothing inside the well.

Khadija Begum, mother of Jihad, accused police of torturing Nasir. "I have lost my son, and on the other hand police picked up my husband ... it was simply unbearable," she told The Daily Star at her Shahjahanpur home.

Denying the allegation of torture, Additional Deputy Police Commissioner of Motijheel Division Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star that they had picked up Nasir for interrogation.

He did not reply when asked as to why Nasir was kept in the police station so long.

## Robber killed

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Battalion (Rab)-6, led by Commanding Officer Lt Col Enamul Arif Sumon, raided an area near Suterkhali Forest Station around 9:45pm, said media officer of the battalion Harunur Rashid, who is a senior assistant superintendent of police.

Kashem along with his aides was holding a secret meeting there. Sensing the presence of the elite force personnel, the criminals opened fire, triggering a "gun battle" between the members of the gang and the elite force, the Rab official said.

After half an hour of the "gun-fight", Kashem was found dead. However, his cohorts managed to escape, he added.

Five firearms, three bullets and several sharp weapons were recovered from the spot, the Rab official claimed.

The body was sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said Mizanur Rahman Khan, officer-in-charge of Dakop Police Station.

Kashem was wanted in eight cases, he said.

On October 5 this year, 13 members of Kashem Bahini were killed in "gunfights" with police in Paikgachha and Dakop upazilas in the district.

# No Saradha money in Bangladesh

*Says Muhith in India*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

There is no evidence that money collected by Saradha group was deposited in any of the banks in Bangladesh to fund banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

Muhith told this to reporters in Kolkata on the sidelines of a programme of Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

His statement came after India's Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh on December 3 had told the Lok Sabha that a probe had so far not revealed that Saradha money was used for financing terror in Bangladesh, contradicting BJP Chief Amit Shah's allegation of such a connection.

Addressing a rally in Kolkata on November 30, Shah had alleged that Saradha money was used in the October 2 Burdwan blast, which was being probed for links with the JMB.

Trinamool Congress had hit back strongly at Shah for his comments.

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Enforcement Directorate were probing the trail of money raised by ponzi schemes. The NIA was also probing the Burdwan blast.

## Ill-equipped

FROM PAGE 16

hanging from the beams for days still haunts us.

And now the sad case of Jihad. And once again, it was proved that the authorities were ill-equipped. They managed a camera to sink inside the well, but that was not effective. And unable to do anything, they even called off the rescue operation at one stage.

Finally, it was the volunteers, many of them Rana Plaza veterans, who located the boy and pulled his body up. For long 24 hours, the fire brigade just buzzed around the hole, scratching their heads and then the locals invented their own equipment for the rescue.

And think of a large-scale disaster, an earthquake for one, which could flatten a large part of the city. It is for sure there would be no rescue, no hope and no cohesive action.

This is why it is high time to take lesson from the latest incident of Jihad and prepare the fire department with equipment.

## Shia militia vows to press on with Yemen offensive

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen's Ansarullah Shia militia yesterday vowed to press ahead with an offensive it launched in September to consolidate its grip across Yemen, despite fierce resistance from Sunni tribes and al-Qaeda.

The Arabian Peninsula country has been rocked by instability since the Shiite fighters, also known as Huthis, seized control of Sanaa in September.

They have since expanded their presence in central and western Yemen, but have met fierce resistance from powerful Sunni tribesmen backed by fighters from Al-Qaeda.

# Yangon votes for first time in 60 years

AFP, Yangon

Residents of Myanmar's commercial hub Yangon went to the polls yesterday for the first municipal elections in six decades, with voters hoping for change as the city booms, despite knowing little about the candidates or their policies.

The election will be closely watched as a test of the country's democratic credentials ahead of a landmark nationwide poll slated for November next year.

For many the ballot for the Yangon City Development Committee is the first chance to vote under the country's quasi-civilian government, which replaced outright military rule in 2011.

It is also a rare opportunity to have a say over the future of Myanmar's biggest city, where residents grumble about runaway construction and soaring rents, worsening traffic, poor sanitation and weak pollution control.

"It's very difficult to have big expectations as this is the first YCDC election for 60 years," Khin Maung Tun, 50, a resident in Thaketa township told AFP. "But we came here to vote and show our spirit."

But curbs on who can vote have enfranchised just 400,000 of the city's several million residents, while other clauses have strictly controlled who can stand for the YCDC.

Just under 300 candidates, among them businessmen, retired civil servants and activists, are competing for 115 positions on the committee -- although the top posts will remain largely appointed.

Campaigns were muted -- or non-existent -- in a country where politicians are unused to wooing the electorate, although election officials were on hand to help with the queries over ballot sheets available at polling stations across Yangon early yesterday.

**পুরাতন ঠিকানা**

পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড  
ঘোড়াশাল শাখা, নরসিংদী  
ওয়ার্ড নং-০৭  
পৌরসভা-ঘোড়াশাল  
থানা-পলাশ  
জেলা-নরসিংদী

**বর্তমান ঠিকানা**

পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড  
ঘোড়াশাল শাখা,  
হোন্সিং নং-১০৩, ওয়ার্ড নং-০৭  
ঘোড়াশাল বাজার রোড  
পৌরসভা-ঘোড়াশাল  
থানা-পলাশ  
জেলা-নরসিংদী

**শাখা স্থানান্তর**

**ঘোড়াশাল শাখা, নরসিংদী**

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের আধুনিক ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানের প্রত্যয় নিয়ে আমাদের **ঘোড়াশাল শাখা, নরসিংদী** আজ **২৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৪ রবিবার** নতুন ঠিকানায় স্থানান্তরিত হয়ে নবপর্যায়ে বৃহৎ পরিসরে কার্যক্রম শুরু করতে যাচ্ছে।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের ঘোড়াশাল শাখা, নরসিংদী এর নতুন ঠিকানায় ব্যাংকিং সেবা গ্রহণের সবিনয় আমন্ত্রণ জানানো হচ্ছে।

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