



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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20 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE: Tk 12.00



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXV No. 16 | MAGH 16, 1421 BS | RABIUS SANI 7, 1436 HIJRI

SHOWTIME IN SYLHET
Bangabandhu Gold Cup football tournament kicks off today

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'DON'T FORGET'
Elderly Auschwitz survivors urge the world never to forget death camps

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Do whatever needed to stop violence

PM asks police, says she will take responsibility for their actions

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday ordered the police to take whatever steps necessary to stop the ongoing violence in the country.

"I'll take the responsibility for whatever happens [due to the action]. But you'll have to ensure the security of the common people. You'll take whatever steps necessary against those responsible for burning and attacking people," she said.

Hasina was addressing an evaluation meeting with senior police officials at the International Conference Room of her office, marking the Police Week 2015.

The PM added, "You [police] must accomplish the task without any hesitation and I give you the liberty."

What the BNP-Jamaat has been doing since January 5 in the name of hartal and blockade would never be recognised as a movement in the political history as these are terrorism and militant acts, she noted.



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WHAT THEY SAID

"The paramilitary force deployed to maintain law and order will use lethal weapons if the force or people come under attack."

BGB DG Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed in Dhaka on Jan 15

"We have to eliminate those who are indulging in violence and blasting bombs in the name of democracy."

RAB DG Benazir Ahmed in Rangpur on Jan 16

"Arsonists and saboteurs will be shot on sight. We are going to decide on giving orders to shoot [arsonists] on sight as in wartime."

Social Welfare Minister Syed Mohsin Ali in Dhaka on Jan 20

"To maintain law and order, law enforcers are charging batons first ... If it does not work, they will shoot them in the leg and, when necessary, in the chest."

JSD lawmaker Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal in Dhaka on Jan 13

"Those who are burning people to death and destroying property in the name of hartal and blockade will not be spared. All pro-liberation forces will have to work together with the police to get rid of them."

IGP AKM Shahidul Hoque in Rangpur on Jan 16

Businesses demand security

Submit memos to PM, BNP chief seeking end to impasse

Protesting the ongoing political violence, business leaders and exporters have sought an immediate end to the political impasse to keep the country's economy growing.

The garment makers yesterday submitted memoranda to both the prime minister and the BNP chairperson in this regard.

Before submitting the memoranda, they formed a human chain in front of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Complex in the capital to press home their demands.

A team of businessmen led by BGMEA president Atiqul Islam submitted the memorandum, signed by 10 trade bodies, to the Prime Minister's Office. The trade bodies include Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association

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No progress in economic freedom

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Despite improvements in labour, corruption, and monetary indicators, Bangladesh remains stuck in the category of "mostly unfree" countries in an international survey on economic freedom.

The country's economic freedom score is 53.9, making its economy the 131st freest -- the same as last year's -- among 186 countries in the 2015 Index of Economic Freedom, an annual guide published yesterday by Washington-based Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal.

Bangladesh was ranked 132nd in 2013 and 130th the previous year.

Its position remains unchanged at 27 among 42 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The country's overall score eroded by 0.2 points since last



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Blockade on Hartal called for today in Dhaka, 11 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led alliance today enforces hartal in 11 districts, including the capital, amid its ongoing nonstop blockade.

The 24-hour hartal in the capital would begin from 6:00am while the shutdown in the 11 districts, including Dhaka, would be daylong, the alliance announced yesterday.

The programme was announced to protest filing cases against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and placing her party leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on remand.

The other districts are Gazipur, Tangail, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Kishoreganj and Mymensingh, Natore and Feni.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Truck attacked, helper killed in Chandpur

Injured Ctg Shibir 'bomber' dies

STAR REPORT

With attacks on goods-laden trucks continuing in different parts of the country, a helper died while a driver and his assistant sustained burns yesterday on the 23rd day of the non-stop blockade.

The deceased was Motaleb, 35. He died after jumping off the truck that came under a crude bomb attack at Ghoser Haat in Chandpur, said Abdul Qayyum, officer-in-charge of Chandpur Sadar Police Station.

As the truck driver lost control of the wheel following the bomb attack, he and the helper jumped off to save themselves. But the helper was run over by the rear wheels, he added. The driver however escaped unscathed.

With him the number of truck helpers' death in the ongoing blockade violence stood at five.

In Magura, driver Milon Hossain, 35, and helper Emarul Hossain, 18, suffered burns when alleged blockaders hurled a petrol bomb at their truck at Arpara Bazar of Shalikhha around 4:30am yesterday, reports our Jhenidah correspondent.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE since blockade starts

35 DEAD

23 OF THEM HAD NO POLITICAL LINK

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Sangsad misses serious debates

No boycott in first one year of 10th parliament

SHAKHAWAT LITON

By all means it was a full House. A treasury bench with overwhelming majority was there and so was a government-friendly main opposition, which many dubbed handpicked and ready to please.

There was no boycott of the House proceedings, which is unprecedented in the political culture developed over the last two decades.

The only thing this one-year-old parliament missed out badly was the practice of any serious debate on policy issues that any democratic parliamentary system is expected to have. The reason is known to all, it is all recent history.

The main opposition bench did not cause any trouble for the government and in return the opposition has not faced any verbal attack from the treasury bench. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina even once lauded the performance of the opposition bench and termed it an ideal opposition.

This situation has prompted independent MP Rustam

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Burn victims being treated at Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Most victims of the mindless arson attacks during the nonstop blockade and hartals by the BNP-led combine were from the lower income groups and had no active involvement in politics.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Jamaat leader, 'robber' killed in 'shootouts'

10 killed in similar fashion in 17 days

STAR REPORT

A Jamaat-e-Islami leader in Rajshahi and a suspected robber in Satkhira were gunned down in alleged shootouts with law enforcers yesterday.

With these, 10 people have been killed in so-called shootouts since January 12 amid additional security measures to check violence that has been plaguing the nation since January 5.

Police claimed Jamaat leader Nurul Islam, 45, used to lead an armed group of Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres and "robber" Rafiqul Islam, 38, was a member of an inter-district robbery gang.

Jamaat has called a 36-hour shutdown in Rajshahi division from 6:00am Saturday, to protest the "planned killing" of Nurul Islam, former secretary of the city's Ward-30 unit of the party.

The stories of their killings as narrated by police are just like any other "shootout" stories propagated by the law

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KILLED IN 'SHOOTOUTS' SINCE JAN 12 10 PEOPLE

- JAN 12**
Amir Hossain alias Ranga, Robber, Khulna (With police)
- JAN 16**
Motiur Rahman, JCD leader, Chapainawabganj (With Rab)
- JAN 19**
Imrul Qayes, Jamaat leader, Dhaka (With DB)
- JAN 20**
Nuruzzaman Jonny, JCD leader, Dhaka (With DB)
- JAN 23**
Solaiman Uddin Jisan, JCD leader, Comilla (With Rab)
- JAN 25**
Abul Kalam Azad, driver, Dhaka (With Rab)
- JAN 25**
Sultan Biswas, Mason, Dhaka (Same incident)
- JAN 27**
Mahbubur Rahman Mahbub, 'Robber', Jessore (With Police)
- JAN 28**
Nurul Islam Shahin, Jamaat leader, Rajshahi (With DB)
- JAN 28**
Rafiqul Islam, 'Robber', Satkhira, (With police)