

Shun path of destruction

PM urges BNP-Jamaat

Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her call on BNP-Jamaat to shun destructive acts, asserting that the Bangalee nation would never concede defeat to terrorists.

"We are continuing our efforts so that peace is restored in the country and there is no recurrence of bombings, burning people and such subversive acts.

"I am again urging the BNP-Jamaat to refrain from such kind of subversive acts," she said while addressing the inauguration of Ekushey Book Fair-2015 and International Literary Conference-2015 on the Bangla Academy premises.

People from all strata would have to stand against such heinous acts, she said, adding that if anyone made a wrong decision in politics, he or she would have to pay a political price for that but why the innocent people would have to suffer for his or her mistake?

"This (hurling petrol bombs) could never be a movement, rather it is a terrorist and militant act, and we want such terrorist and militant act be stamped out from the country forever," she said.

Regarding the deferment of SSC exams, Hasina said her government did not want to push the examinees

to risk since the perpetrators and miscreants do not bother about the lives of children.

At the function, the PM distributed Bangla Academy Literary Award-2014 among seven eminent poets, writers and educationists for their contributions to various disciplines.

Shihab Sarkar received the award in poetry while Zakir Talukdar in prose, Shantanu Kaiser in essay and Bhuiyan Iqbal in research.

Among others, Abu Mohammad Delwar Hossain got the award for his work on Liberation War, Bangladeshi expatriate writer Mainus Sultan in the biography and travelogue category and Khaleque Bin Zainuddin for juvenile literature.

A total of 48 poets, writers, linguistics and litterateurs from 11 foreign countries, including the US, France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Malaysia and India alongside the host Bangladesh are joining this year's International Literary Conference.

With Emeritus Prof Dr Anisuzzaman in the chair, the function was addressed, among others, by Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, German Litterateur Dr Hans Hurder and former VC of Rabindra Bharati University Dr Pabitra Sarker.



FUNNY pics

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

THE GOAT IN A COAT ... Well, it's not actually a coat, it's a T-shirt. The free-range animal was seen basking in the sun in the early morning chill, majestically perched on a plant pot near the Dhaka Zoo.



READER'S eye

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Opening deferred

FROM PAGE 1

telephone and cable network services to the BNP chief's Gulshan office were not restored immediately.

"We thank the minister for postponing the exams. But what about the blockade? Should we let our children go to the exam halls amid violence and put their lives at risk?" said Monirul Islam, father of an examinee of the capital.

"Who will take the responsibility if a student gets hurt on the way?" he said.

Meanwhile, teachers said the ongoing political deadlock has been playing havoc with the academic activities from the beginning of the session. It would take long to recover the loss even if the standoff ended today.

"In fact, we doubt whether we could make up for this loss at all," said Shahan Ara Begum, principal of Ideal School and College, Motijheel.

"If the SSC exams are deferred, classes [of other grades] will be deferred. And we won't be able to give classes on Fridays as most of the postponed examinations will be held on weekends," she told The Daily Star.

She added they were already planning to give lessons during the two-week summer vacation.

Education ministry sources said if

the SSC exams continued to be postponed, it would affect the HSC exams, due to begin in the first week of April.

In 2013, the education ministry had to reschedule 37 papers of the SSC exams and 35 of the HSC exams due to shutdowns called by the BNP-led alliance.

This time around, academic activities of all educational institutions have been facing a serious setback since the beginning of the new session. Defying a hartal on the very first day of the year, primary and secondary students collected textbooks from schools. But they could not attend classes properly.

Most schools in the capital are officially open, but turnout is thin. Fearing violence on the streets, many guardians do not send their children to schools.

The unrest is not only putting psychological pressure on the children as their freedom of movement is being restricted, but is also disrupting their everyday life.

"The regular routine of the children has gone haywire," said Rawnak Hasan, a father.

"My son used to get up at 6:30am. Now, he wakes up at 9:00am but finds nothing to do. He spends most of his time playing games on mobile phone and computer or watching

television," he said.

Romana Khan, a mother, said, "Children usually do not like to study if there are no classes. And I cannot press my kids either."

Students of English medium schools are equally affected by the ongoing political unrest. Most schools are not giving classes.

"Since the school is closed, I cannot send my son even to his tutors. He gets bored at home.... Political leaders should understand they are ruining the future of the country," said another mother.

Falu detained

FROM PAGE 1

came out of the office at 7:55pm and boarded his SUV, a DB official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police asked him to go with them.

A number of journalists, including a reporter of The Daily Star, were present there.

The officer, Detective Branch Assistant Commissioner Obaidur Rahman, got into Falu's car and asked a sub-inspector of Gulshan Police Station to sit beside the driver's seat. A police car followed the SUV.

Falu, a former lawmaker, was taken to the DMP's Detective and Criminal Intelligence Division on Minto Road, according to DB sources.

Restore lines or face non-stop hartal

FROM PAGE 1

Salahuddin, who was made the party's spokesperson after the arrest of BNP Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed early Saturday, said: "We humbly call upon the people to make sacrifices for the time being due to the ongoing movement to drive out the killer of democracy and destructive Awami force."

He also said their movement would continue until the "illegal" government stepped down and arrangements were made to hold a free and inclusive election.

The opposition-sponsored countrywide blockade enters 28th day

today. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on January 5 announced the programme after police barred her from coming out of her Gulshan office to attend a planned gathering of the opposition.

In the early hours of Saturday, cable, power and land phone connections to Khaleda's Gulshan office were snapped apparently to put pressure on her to call off the movement.

Besides, mobile phone networks of major operators were suspended within half a kilometre radius of the office, affecting around 10,000 phone users.

Amid widespread criticism, Dhaka

Electric Supply Company Ltd restored power supply to Khaleda's office after over 19 hours of severing the line. But other services remained suspended for the second day.

A reporter of The Daily Star visited different buildings near Khaleda's office yesterday and talked to some residents and office staff. All of them said they had been unable to communicate with anyone over mobile phones since Saturday.

"Why would the government make us suffer when we are involved with neither the government nor the BNP?" asked Md Barek, one of the residents.

Shibir man killed in 'shootout'

FROM PAGE 1

He was the president of ward-93 Shibir unit, said Shibir in a press release.

However, the victim's family claimed that police had called the deceased Emdadullah's brother to verify that he indeed was a leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir before killing him.

Police claimed that Emdad was killed in a "gunfight" during a drive to "recover arms and petrol bombs" after his arrest on Saturday.

Emdad's brother Anwarullah told The Daily Star that a person identifying him as Sub-Inspector Kamal called him over mobile phone around 7:45pm Saturday and asked whether Emdad was his brother. The person also enquired about Anwar's occupation and Emdad's involvement in Shibir.

Anwar said he worked for Islami Bank and denied Emdad being a Shibir activist. The person on the other end of the line took Anwar's occupation as a sign of Emdad being involved in Shibir, said the brother.

"Oh yes! Then it is right [Emdad being involved in Shibir]," was the respond of the "SI" before he hung up, said Anwar. The man did not receive

any calls after that, he said.

"Being confirmed about his identity, police killed him and cooked up the story of a gunfight to cover up the murder," the brother alleged.

Morgue sources said three bullets had pierced through the chest of the body.

POLICE'S VERSION

Mirpur police claimed that Emdad was killed in a "gunfight" between police and his cohorts at Beribadi area in Rupnagar when he was taken there to "recover arms and petrol bombs".

"A team of police, led by SI Kamal Hossain, arrested Emdad at Mirpur-10 area in possession of two petrol bombs and some petrol in a two-litre water bottle around 7:30pm on Saturday. Following his information, the team raided a home at Mirpur-2 and arrested 12 Shibir men an hour later," said SI Minarul Islam of Mirpur Police Station.

When, the team, taking Emdad with them, conducted another drive in Rupnagar area, they came under petrol and crude bomb attack by a group of Jamaat-Shibir men. They also fired



Emdadullah

shots at police sparking a gunfight around 11:15pm, which left Emdad dead, he claimed.

Police said SI Kamal and a constable received shrapnel injuries.

When asked about the phone call to Anwar, SI Kamal said he did not call anyone and could not remember if he had

received any such calls.

With this, 11 people, including three leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and three Jamaat-Shibir men, were killed in such "gunfights" across the country since the BNP-led 20-party alliance started enforcing the nationwide indefinite blockade on January 6.

According to rights body Ain O Salish Kendra, at least 49 people were killed in "gunfights" after their arrests by the law enforcement agencies last year.

Talking to The Daily Star at Dhaka Medical College Morgue, Hedayetullah, brother of the dead, said, "Police picked up and killed him in a planned way. My brother could have been punished under existing laws, if he had committed any crime."

Arson victim dies

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Officer-in-Charge Tajul Huda of Ullapara Police Station sustained shrapnel injuries when alleged Jamaat activists hurled a crude bomb at them.

An alleged Jamaat activist received bullet injuries when police shot at them during the incident, said Ullapara police.

In the district town, police arrested three pickets after they blasted crude bombs targeting law enforcers.

Around 10:00am, police launched a raid in Khokshabari area where pickets had holed up, Habibul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sirajganj Sadar Police Station, told this correspondent.

As the law enforcers reached there, the pickets hurled several crude bombs at them. Police arrested three of the pickets, said the OC.

Law enforcers also arrested eight people in connection with Saturday's attack on a CNG-run three-wheeler which left a man dead and four injured in Sirajganj.

A total of 150 BNP-Jamaat men were sued for their alleged involvement in the incident.

Sporadic violence marked the first day of the BNP-led opposition's 72-hour shutdown yesterday. Alleged activists of the combine torched and vandalised vehicles, and exploded crude bombs in several districts.

Law enforcers arrested more than 100 BNP-Jamaat men for their alleged links with violence.

At least 32 BNP-Jamaat men were detained during a 24-hour drive in different areas of the capital till yesterday morning for plotting subversive activities, said police.

Fire service sources said 11 vehicles were torched across the country yesterday.

Like on previous hartal days, commuters yesterday suffered due to lack of long-route buses to and from Dhaka, while trains ran behind schedules. Launch service, however, was normal.

In the capital's Nilkhet, a Jubo Dal activist received bullet wounds in his legs when police shot him as he was allegedly trying to flee the scene setting a bus on fire in the evening, said New Market police.

In separate bomb blasts, 12-year-old Sabbir was injured in his left leg in Lalbagh and Nurul Amin in his right leg in Begum Bazar.

A few hours before the hartal began, two drivers and a helper suffered burns in Dinajpur and Jessore, as suspected pro-blockade pickets threw petrol bombs at their vehicles.

Yesterday morning, alleged blockaders exploded two crude bombs near the secretariat. None was injured.

Alleged hartal supporters torched four CNG-run auto-rickshaws, and vandalised two trucks and a lorry in Feni, while pickets vandalised a truck and five three-wheelers in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj.

In Bogra town, pickets set afire three trucks, a bus and a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, hurling petrol bombs.

Power supply in the town remained snapped for half-an-hour after a truck, attacked by pickets, hit a roadside power pole.

Meanwhile, law enforcers detained 48 people, including 21 Jamaat men in Satkhira, seven Jamaat-BNP men in Thakurgaon and three in Pirojpur.

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