

No surrender

FROM PAGE 16
killing people by hurling petrol bombs in the name of politics.

Hasina mentioned that the country is now passing through an unbearable situation where more than 50 people have been killed and over a hundred injured in petrol bombs hurled by anarchists.

The air of the burn units at the hospitals turned heavy with the foul smell of the burnt people, she said. "You know who are committing such inhumane acts ... The country's people know it very well."

She compared these killings with what the Pakistani occupational forces did back in 1971. "Again it seems that they have unleashed killings like in 1971," she added.

"When the country's economy was marching ahead recouping the losses of destructive acts by the BNP-Jamaat nexus, they are now again waging war against people and are engaged in killing spree," she said.

Recalling the destructive activities carried out by the BNP-Jamaat alliance before the January-5 election, Hasina said, they committed similar misdeeds at that time leaving over 100 people, including 20 members of police, BGB and army, dead. "Even, mosques, temples and pagodas were vandalised and torched."

Besides, she said, hundreds of copies of the holy Quran were burnt to ashes in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque while railway carriages and locomotives were destroyed or damaged by uprooting fishplates and tracks.

Mentioning Bangladesh's stance against terrorism, the PM said her government is showing zero tolerance to all forms of terrorism and is committed not to sheltering anybody or any organisation to carry out subversive acts against any country using Bangladesh's soil.

She reiterated that the BNP's election boycott was a political mistake. She also asked why the countrymen should pay the price for their political wrong decision. "They're trying to create a horrible situation in the country by killing innocent people," Hasina said.

'Shibir man'

FROM PAGE 16
the rest of the victims had any political affiliations could not be verified.

Law enforcement agencies, however, claimed that all were involved in criminal activities, including robbery, hurling petrol bombs and crude bombs.

"Bachchu was trying to create anarchy in the upazila by throwing petrol bombs at different points of the upazila. Police arrested him with two petrol bombs around 11:00pm on Friday from the upazila town," said Shah Abid Hossain, superintendent of Pirojpur police.

As per his statement during preliminary interrogation, a police team along with Bachchu went for recovering more petrol bombs.

When the team reached Nesarabad bus terminal area around 2:30am, accomplices of Bachchu opened fire on police. The law enforcers also returned fire, triggering a "gunfight" with Bachchu's men. Bachchu was hit by bullets and died on the spot, the police official said.

He also claimed that three policemen, including sub-inspector of Nesarabad Police Station, were also injured during the "gunfight".

During interrogation, Bachchu informed police that he was hired by Jamaat man Delwar Hossain for torching vehicles with petrol bombs. Police also nabbed Delwar.

Alamgir Hossain, secretary of the district unit BNP, claimed that Delwar is the president of ward-7 unit of the Swarupkathi municipality BNP.

Some locals said Bachchu, son of Abdul Jabbar of Auriya village in the upazila, lived with his family in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital. He came to his village on Friday morning.

Twelve migrants missing after boat sinks off Turkey: report

AFP, Istanbul

The Turkish coastguard was yesterday searching for 12 illegal migrants missing after their boat sank off the Turkish Mediterranean town of Marmaris, the Dogan news agency reported.

Six migrants were rescued from the open boat and it was not immediately clear what the chances were of finding the 12 still missing. The nationality and itinerary of the migrants was not given.

Turkey, which already hosts 1.7 million Syrian refugees from the civil war, has become a key transit point for migrants seeking a better life in Europe.



In tears, driver Joyanal holds the photo of his charred car at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The banner hung from his neck says, "I want to live and save my family". His car, with which he earned a living and maintained his family, was destroyed in an arson attack on January 11.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BNP warns 'crossfire'

FROM PAGE 16
action in future," read the statement signed by BNP Vice-Chairman Selima Rahman.

The statement also called upon 20-party men and people to remain vigil on every activity of law enforcers in their respective areas and note down names and identities of those involved in "killings and repression".

It also said members of the law enforcement agencies would be rehabilitated properly with due honour if anyone of them became a victim because he or she did not carry out illegal orders.

The alliance called upon members of police, BGB, Rab and Ansar to be alert.

"Our movement aims at forming a people's government through a fair election. The ongoing movement is against this illegal government, not against the law enforcement agencies," the statement said.

It claimed that more than 17,000 opposition leaders and activists had been arrested so far.

Pointing to the barbaric firebomb

attack in Gaibandha late last night that left seven people dead, BNP strongly criticised the incident and demanded that the government find out the real culprits through a fair investigation and give them exemplary punishment.

The cable, Internet and land and mobile phones connections to BNP chief's Gulshan office remain snapped for eight consecutive day.

WORKERS PROTEST

Pro-Awami League transport workers yesterday continued with their protest near Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office for the second consecutive day. The countrywide nonstop blockade will enter into its 34th day today.

Carrying spades, brooms, baskets and placards, around 50 labourers and transport workers staged the demonstration for around 20 minutes lambasting the BNP chief.

Zahirul Haq Mintu, president of Golkhali union unit AL and Trinomul Dinmojur Samity, said they could not afford to buy bread and rice for their families as they could not find any work.

Stop cycle of violent crimes

FROM PAGE 16
"The violent crimes being committed by some members of the opposition cannot justify the killings, injuries, and wrongful arrests by the government," he said in a statement published in the HRW website.

Over the past month, nearly 60 people have been killed, hundreds injured, and thousands arrested across the country, he said.

All political leaders should give clear statements that their supporters should not use unlawful violence, the statement added.

The violence and clampdown by government security forces began in early January, with protests to mark the first anniversary of the controversial 2014 elections which saw the ruling Awami League win a landslide victory after the BNP-led alliance boycotted the polls.

The current cycle of violence, including deadly arson attacks, follows the same pattern as documented by Human Rights Watch a year ago, when more than 500 people were killed in the election-related violence, the statement said.

It noted that one of the most horrific aspects of the violence in Bangladesh was petrol bomb attacks, often hurled indiscriminately at vehicles attempting to pass through strikes and transport blockades called by the alliance. Since most Bangladeshis rely on daily wages, they end up being at risk of attack while traveling for work.

At least 41 people have died and several hundreds have been injured in

such attacks over the course of the last month.

The leadership of both political parties have repeatedly blamed the other side and denied their parties were responsible.

On February 5, for example, BNP chief Khaleda Zia denounced the violence but continued to pin the blame entirely on members of the Awami League in spite of credible allegations that members of her own party were involved in these attacks, the report said.

An estimated 17 others have died at the hands of security forces, with the majority belonging to the BNP and the Jamaat-e-Islami parties or the student bodies leaning towards the two parties.

As is often the case, some of these deaths were described by police as occurring during "crossfire" or "shoot-outs". In other cases, police simply report finding a dead body with gunshot wounds but family members report that the victim had last been taken into custody by security forces.

The government has taken no action to reign in the excessive use of force, nor to investigate and prosecute those responsible, according to the HRW.

Instead, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was quoted in the media saying that she had authorised the security forces "to take any action whenever and wherever deemed necessary" to stop the arson attacks.

"The abuses in Bangladesh can no longer be ignored by the world," Adams said.

Afghans target Tigers

FROM PAGE 16
targeted Tigers to move into the second round of the mega tournament.

"The main goal is to beat Bangladesh in the first match. I think it's a good start to the tournament if you win in the first match," said Afghanistan skipper Mohammad Nabi, responding to a question about whether the game against Bangladesh is like a little mini-final for his team.

Nabi also said that they were very hopeful about reaching the second round as they prepared well for the tournament.

"We have prepared for the last three months for this World Cup. We will try our best to perform very well. Hopefully we can go to the second round as well. Maybe if we win our first game against Bangladesh, we

can hope to go to the second round.

"If we beat Bangladesh in the first match, then we hope we can win one big match and thus we can advance to the second round. The boys have prepared very well over the last three months," he continued.

Nabi was also optimistic about their group match against hosts Australia; one of the pre-tournament favourites.

"It's totally different condition from Asia and we went to Australia and New Zealand before the World Cup. It's quite a good experience for the boys as well. I think we played well in Perth against Australia. We have a good pace attack in Shapoor Zadran, Hamid Hassan and Najibullah Zadran who can bowl at 140. I hope to bowl well against Australia in Perth," said a hopeful Afghanistan captain.

Cooperate with Hasina govt JP to diplomats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Jatiya Party last night sought diplomatic community's cooperation for the Sheikh Hasina government for the sake of Bangladesh's stability.

"We are a peace-loving nation. We want peace for our children. That's why we want your [diplomats] greater cooperation," opposition leader Raushan Ershad said at a dinner programme hosted by her in honour of foreign diplomats stationed in Dhaka at a city Hotel.

Ambassadors/high commissioners and chiefs of missions or their representatives of European Union and 31 countries including India, US, UK,

France, Russia, Japan, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Vietnam, Morocco, Kuwait, Singapore, Myanmar, Oman and Vatican were present in the two-hour long programme that started at 7:10pm.

The country's latest political situation including the BNP-led 20-party alliance's countrywide nonstop blockade, government's hard stance on them and different other issues were also discussed, JP sources said.

JP chief HM Ershad and other senior leaders of the party were present.

Emerging from the meeting, Ershad told reporters that peace will not prevail until this violence stops.

Exit polls forecast Modi

FROM PAGE 1

"Modi has not done enough since coming to power. He is brilliant at marketing, but he is all talk, no action," said Gurjit Singh, 45, outside a polling booth in south Delhi, adding he had voted for Aam Aadmi.

The BJP is expected to win 29 seats and Congress, the party that has dominated Indian politics over the last century, will win three seats, its worse ever performance, the polls showed.

The BJP's campaign has been marked by infighting with party workers frustrated that Kiran Bedi, the first woman officer in the Indian Police Service, was appointed as the party's chief ministerial candidate, even

though she only became a party member three weeks ago.

Earlier this week, the BJP ordered scores of its top national and state leaders to campaign for this weekend's high-profile election to the Delhi assembly.

Modi took out full-page advertisements on the front of several major newspapers in the capital on Friday in a last-minute effort to sway voters.

The BJP, which under Modi won India's biggest election mandate in three decades last May, has come first in three of four state elections over the past year. It may also form a coalition government in the fourth regional assembly.

Don't operate long route

FROM PAGE 16
however, said they would talk with their district-level leaders about the IGP's request.

At least 19 transport workers have been killed and several hundred vehicles torched and vandalised since the BNP-led 20-party alliance announced a non-stop blockade on January 5.

Most of the major arson attacks took place at night and many of the vehicles attacked were operating under police, Rab and BGB protection.

Khandaker Enayetullah Khan, secretary general of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik Samity, told The Daily Star, "We do not see any reason to suspend transport operation at night. We have requested the law enforcement officials to ensure tight security at risky spots on highways and inside the capital.

"We, however, did not rule out the IGP's proposal out of hand. We have

sought two to three days' time to reach a decision in consultation with the district-level leaders."

He added, "Vehicles were torched even at workshops and while parked in safer places. We have to pay hefty amounts in instalments at the month-end. As our vehicles are safe nowhere and as the government has decided to pay compensation, we want to continue transport operation."

In the wake of the attacks on vehicles, the government has assured the transport owners of compensation for the damaged vehicles. So far, 774 applications have been submitted to the Prime Minister's Office for compensation, he added.

Dozens of top police officials and transport leaders attended the meeting.

Earlier, transport owners held several programmes including demonstrations to protest the ongoing blockade.

Spare education plea goes

FROM PAGE 16
for Saturday (February 14) due to the hartal.

"It was a very good exam routine but the changes in the schedule due to the hartals are seriously hampering her [Antara] preparations. It is also inflicting mental pressure on her which will eventually affect her results," Ishrat said.

Voicing concerns over the fate of the rest of the exams, Ishrat urged the politicians to consider the matter on humanitarian grounds.

Guardians said the thought of reaching the exam hall on time and returning home safe is also weighing them down as arson and crude bomb attacks have become so frequent.

Political instability has escalated in the country in the last one month, and an immediate solution to the crisis seems a far cry at the moment.

However, the Bangla Second Paper of SSC and equivalent examinations was held peacefully yesterday.

Nikhil Chandra Shil, father of another examinee, expressed frustration over the politicians when these correspondents wanted to talk to him.

"It seems that we are hostages. We have to abide by their [politicians] orders," said Nikhil, while waiting for his daughter outside Ideal School and College, Motijheel.

"Please relieve our children of your dirty politics," said Nikhil.

Rokeya Sultana, mother of Shaila Zamin Ila, an examinee of the same centre, said: "I fear that my child will not be able to achieve expected result as she is distressed by the frequent changes in exam schedule."

"The condition of all 15 lakh examinees is the same," she added.

RESCHEDULING OF EXAMS

Today's English First Paper exam will be held on February 13 at 9:00am while Tuesday's English Second Paper exam will be held on February 14 at 10:00am, the education minister said in a briefing at Chittagong Circuit House yesterday.

Arabic First Paper of Madrasa Board and Mathematics-2 of Technical Education Board scheduled for today have been shifted to February 13 (at 9:00am).

Arabic Second Paper and

Introduction to Bangladesh and world/Social Science-2 scheduled for Tuesday will be held on February 14 from 10:00am, said Dr Srikanta Kumar Chanda, examination controller of Dhaka Education Board.

"We have taken the decision of deferring the examination to ensure the security of the examinees," Nahid said.

The minister also urged the BNP to keep at least seven hours (two hours before and two hours after the exam along with the exam hours) of exam days free from shutdown so that children could go to the exam centres and return home safely.

Earlier, the authorities had to reschedule the Bangla First and Second Paper Exams due to hartals.

At least 5,513 students did not attend the examination, while 71 students were expelled for resorting to unfair means yesterday, according to a statement of inter-board coordination committee.

In another incident, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP student body, has called an indefinite strike at Dhaka University from today, demanding resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique.

Abbas orders body to oversee Palestinian ICC cases

AFP, Ramallah

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas yesterday ordered the formation of a committee to oversee cases to lodge with the International Criminal Court, in a move likely to further anger Israel.

The Palestinians formally joined the ICC last month, in a move that will enable them to submit war crimes and crimes against humanity complaints against Israel.

The new committee will be headed by chief negotiator Saeb Erakat and include various figures from the Palestinian political scene, universities and human rights organisations, said the official Wafa news agency.