

Blasts mark hartal

FROM PAGE 16
combine began non-stop country-wide blockade since early last month.

From February 1, the combine has also been enforcing hartals, except on Fridays and Saturdays.

Meanwhile, bus helper Bappi, 25, who sustained burns in a petrol bomb attack in Dhaka on February 12, died at DMCH yesterday morning.

With this, 75 people have been killed, mostly in arson attacks, since the blockade began on January 6.

Over 300 people have been injured in petrol bomb attacks so far. It appears that blockaders have taken a new strategy to create panic among people by hurling crude bombs at them.

Yesterday in Dhaka, a crude bomb went off at TSC of Dhaka University injuring seven people.

Two vehicles were also torched in Malibagh and Savar.

In Keraniganj, Rab detained two brothers -- Noor Hossain, joint convener of Chhatra League Jinjira union unit, and Kamal Hossain, vice-president of Jinjira BNP unit -- with several petrol and crude bombs.

Pro-ruling party Chhatra League

told The Daily Star that the bombs were found in a garage the brothers had leased out.

Police shot Mohammad Nuruzzaman, senior joint-convener of Swecchhasebha Dal's Mymensingh unit, for hurling crude bombs at Jatiya Party leader Rawshan Ershad's ancestral home in Mymensingh early yesterday.

No one was hurt in the blast, but police recovered an unexploded crude bomb from the spot.

Police fired two shots when Nuruzzaman and his gang gathered on the spot after hurling the crude bombs, police claimed, adding that Nuruzzaman sustained bullet wounds in his right leg.

Meanwhile, miscreants blasted two crude bombs near Karwan Bazar underpass around 12:20pm yesterday.

Rapid Action Battalion members arrested Rajib, 28, with nine crude bombs at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital around 11:30pm on Saturday.

The law enforcers arrested Alamgir, a Jamaat leader and chairman of Amanullahpur union parishad of Begumganj in Noakhali, on charge of

setting fire to a truck.

Police said Alamgir patronised the violence in his locality during the ongoing blockade.

Abu Bakkar, 25, president of Dinajpur Govt College unit of Shibir, was arrested soon after he allegedly threw two petrol bombs on a truck in Dinajpur on Saturday night.

In Joypurhat, pro-blockade activists torched a furniture-laden truck after pouring petrol on it around 9:30pm on Saturday.

Shibir activists allegedly hurled four crude bombs at the home of freedom fighter Fahim Uddin at Dakkhin Pahartali in Chittagong around 12:30pm. Police recovered a live bomb from the spot.

On Saturday night, criminals blasted four crude bombs at Chaudanga Bus Stand in Jhenaidah.

Detective police yesterday morning recovered a bomb from Gazipur district office at the Bhawal Rajbari. It was later diffused.

Meanwhile, blockaders destroyed some 5,000 saplings of mango and litchi at the nursery of Mokhlesur Rahman at Kokul Moddhopara in Bogra sadar yesterday morning.

Kuwait jails opposition leader for insulting ruler

AFP, Kuwait City

Kuwait's appeals court sentenced prominent opposition leader Mussallam al-Barrak to two years in jail on charges of insulting the Gulf state's ruler, his group said yesterday.

The charges relate to a speech he gave to tens of thousands of demonstrators in October 2012 protesting changes to the electoral law which he said would allow the ruling Al-Sabah family to manipulate the outcome of elections.

Barrak was a member of parliament at the time but his nationalist Popular Action Movement boycotted December 2012 and July 2013 polls held under the new electoral law.

"The appeals court passed a two-year sentence on Barrak," PAM said on its Twitter account.

It quoted its leader as vowing that the campaign for reform in the oil-rich emirate would go on.

They will be honoured

FROM PAGE 16
be rehabilitated. All of them will be acknowledged as freedom fighters of this generation," the statement reads.

Contacted, two senior BNP leaders who are also freedom fighters, refused to make any comment on the issue.

Speaking anonymously, a senior BNP leader said freedom fighters and the general public might not take such an announcement positively.

Dr MA Hasan, a freedom fighter and researcher of war crimes in 1971 and convener of the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, Bangladesh, said it was nothing but an attempt to politicise the Liberation War.

"This is the work of those who have been engaged in making the Liberation War controversial for long. They did not show any respect to people who died during the war. They have rather encouraged criminals by showing sympathy to their political activists," he observed.

"They have issued such a statement intentionally. They are not following the right path and have no knowledge of history," Hasan added.

The BNP statement, signed by Joint Secretary General Salahuddin Ahmed, claims the government has failed to get sympathy and recognition of the international community and its fall is only a "matter of time" now.

"The illegal government which desperately sought the international community's recognition and sympathy has finally been refused and now awaits a serious fall," it reads.

The statement also says the government has "failed" to present the current political crisis, created from a controversial, voter-less and farcical election, as a militancy-related problem to the international community.

The statement alleges that law enforcers has cooked up a crossfire story after "killing" student leader Tipu and Jashas leader Kabir Hossain at Agoirjhola in Barisal.

It also warns that those who are responsible for these killings would be tried in proper courts including the international crimes tribunal after the change of the government. BNP FORMER MPs OF 8TH SANGSAD

As many as 179 former BNP MPs of the eighth parliament in a joint statement yesterday called upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to sit in a dialogue to resolve the ongoing political impasse.

"Resignation of Sheikh Hasina is the only path to resolving the ongoing crisis. Choose the path of your safe exit through discussion with the BNP chairperson immediately and save the nation from a great crisis," said the statement signed by BNP leader Zainul Abdin Farroque.

Govt asks

FROM PAGE 16

The government made the request through a statement issued by Press Information Department.

"Some activities of the radical ideology-based militant organisation named Hizb-ut-Tahrir have been observed recently. The government banned the organisation in 2009 for carrying out terrorist activities. After remaining dormant for quite some time, the organisation has begun to distribute leaflets and publicity in social media (facebook, twitter, blog etc.) to step up its illegal organisational activities," the PID statement says.

"All print and electronic media are requested to carry out a campaign against the activities of all terrorist organisations including this one [Hizb-ut-Tahrir] to create awareness about their activities that disrupt social peace and stability," the statement reads.

6 injured

FROM PAGE 16

Leaders and activists of the AL-led 14-party combine had earlier brought out a procession in the town protesting the nonstop blockade and hartals enforced by the BNP-led alliance. The meeting was bombed when the 14-party men were holding a meeting in Pachurmoor area after the parade.

The town is tense after the explosion.

Additional police have been deployed in the area, said Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Joypurhat Sadar Police Station.

EU urges Dhaka

FROM PAGE 5

provide assistance in this regard. The minister also mentioned that the EU was interested in creating a skilled Bangladeshi workforce through proper training.

Meanwhile, a six member delegation led by Mosharraf is scheduled to leave for Qatar today to discuss manpower export to the Middle Eastern country.

Blast stunts

FROM PAGE 16

The team also confirmed that these winds blow outwards in every direction, an idea that had been tricky to prove.

The work shows how such black holes can affect the evolution of their galaxies.

It was conducted by an international team of astronomers using the telescopes XMM-Newton and Nustar, run by the European Space Agency (Esa) and Nasa respectively.

"We know that black holes in the centre of galaxies can feed on matter, and this process can produce winds. This is thought to regulate the growth of galaxies," said Prof Fiona Harrison of the California Institute of Technology, Nustar's principal investigator.

The two telescopes simultaneously recorded different wavelengths of light coming from their distant target: a black hole two billion light-years away known as PDS 456. It shines brightly with many types of light, making it a quasar.

Nustar specialises in high-energy X-rays while XMM-Newton views low-energy X-rays.

XMM-Newton had already detected a wind blowing from PDS 456 towards the earth, because iron atoms carried by the huge gusts block X-rays in a characteristic way. It had also allowed astronomers to calculate that the wind was travelling at one third of the speed of light.

"This study provides a unique view of the possible mechanism that links the evolution of the central black holes to that of their host galaxies, over cosmic time," said Dr Emanuele Nardini from Keel University in the UK, the study's lead author.

The research is published in Science magazine.

Indian foreign secy

FROM PAGE 16
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka.

They said if everything was fine, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj would also pay a visit.

"He [Modi] is very keen on visiting Bangladesh at the earliest, and he is looking forward to it," said an Indian diplomat, adding, "Modi has earlier announced his acceptance of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's invitation."

However, a prime ministerial visit could not take place without at least deliverables on the two key issues with Bangladesh, the LBA and Teesta deal.

Given the unanimity among political parties on LBA, the Modi government is expected to face no such difficulty in passing the constitution amendment bill to ratify the LBA in the budget session of Indian parliament that begins today.

A constitution amendment bill is required to be passed by parliament to operationalise the LBA but the problem for Modi's government is that it lacks majority in Rajya Sabha.

However, Teesta water-sharing deal still has to wait for procedures like JRC

meeting and a meeting of water resources ministers of the two countries.

This would be the first official contact between Jaishankar and the Bangladesh government since he assumed the charge of foreign secretary.

He would call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and his Bangladesh counterpart Shahidul Haque.

Dhaka is expected to be Jaishankar's second Saarc destination as part of Modi's fresh South Asia outreach announced on February 13. Jaishankar will first travel to Bhutan.

"We would be sending our new foreign secretary on a Saarc Yatra (visit) soon to further strengthen our ties", the Indian prime minister had said.

The media in India has speculated that Modi could be in Dhaka on March 26.

Turkish territory under a treaty signed with France in 1921, when France ruled Syria.

The Syrian government statement said the fact that Islamic State had not attacked the tomb "confirmed the depth of the ties between the Turkish government and this terrorist organisation".

Syria accuses Turkey of supporting insurgent groups that have seized control of wide areas of northern and eastern Syria, including Islamic State.

Turkish soldiers raised the Turkish flag at the site where the tomb was relocated. Davutoglu said it would be returned to its previous location once conditions allowed.

Islamic State and other Islamist groups, whose strict Salafi interpretation of Islam deems the veneration of tombs to be idolatrous, have destroyed several tombs and mosques in Syria.

Suleyman Shah was the grandfather of Osman I who founded the Ottoman Empire in 1299. Travelling through modern-day Syria, he fell off his horse and drowned in the Euphrates near the site of the mausoleum, according to historians.

But the Turkish government said late last year that Islamic State militants were advancing on the mausoleum, perched on the banks of the Euphrates river and made

Three youths

FROM PAGE 1
took the three injured men to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 1:20am. Doctors at the hospital declared them dead.

The Daily Star could not independently verify how the three men had died.

Meanwhile, Abdul Wadud, convenor of pro-BNP Sramik Dal unit of ward-10, was killed in a "shootout" between police and his alleged associates at Kalyanpur in the capital early today, Moinul said.

He said Wadud, allegedly involved in several arson attacks, was arrested yesterday morning.

Following information from Wadud, a police team taking him with them went to Kalyanpur to arrest another accused around 12:30am today, the OC said.

But when they reached the spot, criminals opened fire on police. The law enforcers also retaliated with gun fire, the police officer claimed.

Moinul said Wadud was caught in the line of fire and injured. When he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, doctors declared him dead at 1:30am today, he claimed.

Bappi loses

FROM PAGE 16
"He was restless and could not talk much. He was repeatedly requesting me to take him home. I asked him to have patience. But his pain was unbearable," said a shell-shocked Alai.

Bappi suffered burns when pickets had hurled a petrol bomb at a bus in the capital's Banasree area on February 12, on the 39th day of the BNP-led 20-party alliance's nonstop blockade.

A correspondent of this newspaper visited him a couple of times at the hospital. Each time, he expressed his worry about his family despite the unbearable pain he had sustained ever since he was taken to the ICU.

He was the breadwinner of his family and used to earn around Tk 350 a day.

"My family will be in deep trouble if I cannot work again," he had said

over a week earlier, lying in a bed at the ICU.

He lived with his wife, two daughters, aged four and two, and mother in the capital's Mirpur. His father Dulal Mia, who is unable to earn money, lives in their village home in Netrakona.

Talking with The Daily Star last week, his mother Halima Khatun sounded worried about her son's health. But she too could not hide her anxiety about the family's dependency on his income.

"My son is my only hope. We will have to starve if his income stops," said the mother, with tear trickling down her cheeks.

His mother-in-law Mansura said the government should take the responsibility of his daughters as they had nothing to do with the country's politics that caused Bappi's death and his family's immense suffering.

Turkey evacuates tomb

FROM PAGE 16
a site within Syria that Ankara considers sovereign territory as agreed in a 1921 treaty, was relocated.

Normally, the detachment is rotated every six months but the last one was trapped there for eight months by Islamic State fighters.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told a news conference that Turkey had not sought permission or assistance for the mission but had informed allies in the coalition against Islamic State once it began.

"This was an extremely successful operation with no loss to our rights under international law," he said, flanked by the chief of the military and the defence minister.

The Syrian government said in a statement that Turkey would be held responsible for its breach of the treaty after failing to wait for an agreement from Damascus before proceeding with the operation.

The Turkish government had informed the Syrian consulate in Istanbul about the operation but had not awaited Syria's agreement, it said, adding that the operation was a violation of the 1921 agreement.

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