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## First day's hartal mostly peaceful

STAR REPORT

Another spell of hartal began in the country yesterday leaving little impact on the day-to-day life.

Normal life and businesses were not affected in the capital and elsewhere in the country on the first day of the BNP-led alliance's 72-hour shutdown. Vehicular movement was normal with a good number of private cars hitting the city streets, creating traffic jam at some key points.

Even commuters were seen waiting for buses to go to their offices and other destinations in the capital yesterday morning.

The combine has been enforcing hartals on all working days since February 1 along with its countrywide indefinite blockade from January 6, demanding a fresh general

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## Riots as Taliban attack Pak churches

**14 killed, dozens wounded**

AFP, Lahore

Fourteen people were killed and more than 70 injured when two Taliban suicide bombers attacked churches in Pakistan's Lahore yesterday, sparking mob violence in which two other suspected militants died.

Up to 4,000 Christians later took to the streets of the eastern city, many armed with clubs as they smashed vehicles and attacked a city bus station in a rare show of anger by the beleaguered minority.

The bombings occurred during prayers at two churches located around half a kilometre apart in the city's Youhanabad neighbourhood that is home to more than 100,000 Christians, officials said.

Doctor Mohammad Saeed Sohbin, medical superintendent of the nearby General Hospital, told AFP: "We have received 14 dead bodies and 70 injured," adding that the figure did not include the suspected militants who were lynched or the bombers.

Zahid Pervez, the top health official in Lahore, confirmed the death toll and told reporters that 78 people were wounded in both attacks.

Broken window panes, blood and shoes were scattered across the blast sites.

Police spokeswoman Nabila Ghazanfar said two policemen guarding the churches were among those killed in the

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PHOTOS: AFP

In the end there was no rain and no upset as both West Indies and Pakistan completed the quarterfinal line-ups without much fuss on what was the final day of the World Cup's group stages yesterday. Here the West Indies players are seen celebrating the fall of yet another UAE wicket at Napier while a Pakistan fan (inset) enjoying his team's dominating display over the Irish at Adelaide.

## Hartal, blockade lose bite

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said hartal and blockade enforced by the BNP-Jamaat alliance had lost the bite, and these were nothing but programmes for killing people.

"[They're] calling hartal every day, enforcing blockade every day, but these are not effective actually, [they're] killing so many people, I don't know why these are being done," she said.



Hasina came up with the remarks in her speech made during a visit to the ICT division of posts, telecommunications and information technology ministry.

She said the government was doing whatever was needed to stop the killing in the name of hartal and blockade, and urged people to stay aware.

The country has achieved enough progress in all sectors. "But, we're experiencing

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## Pakistan, Windies claim last spots

AFP, Sydney

Pakistan and the West Indies secured the two remaining places in the World Cup quarterfinals on Sunday after coming through must-win matches in the last of the tournament's group games.

Pakistan, the 1992 champions, beat Ireland by seven wickets in a winner-takes-all clash in Adelaide.

Earlier in Pool B, the West Indies saw off the United Arab Emirates by six wickets in Napier.

West Indies' win saw the 1975 and 1979 champions edge out Ireland for a last-eight place on net run-rate.

The quarterfinals begin with Sri Lanka's match against South Africa in Sydney on Wednesday, while defending champions India face Bangladesh in Melbourne on Thursday.

Australia take on Pakistan in Adelaide on Friday and fellow tournament co-hosts New Zealand play the West Indies in Wellington on Saturday.

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The Ireland-Pakistan match took place almost eight years to the day since the Irish knocked the Asian giants out of the 2007 World Cup.

That defeat for Pakistan in Jamaica was followed the day after by the death of coach Bob Woolmer.

There was no repeat of Ireland's celebrated victory as Pakistan posted their fourth straight win of this World Cup, including a victory over highly-fancied South Africa, after starting the tournament with two straight losses.

Sarfraz Ahmed scored his maiden one-day international hundred and Pakistan's first of the tournament as they made 241 for three, chasing 238 to win, with 23 balls to spare.

"This was a pressure game," said buoyant Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq. "Of course we can win the World Cup. We have the momentum. The bowling is doing really well, the batting is beginning to do its part."

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Members of joint forces stop a procession of Dighinala Bhumi Rakkha Committee heading towards the Border Guard Bangladesh 51 Battalion in Dighinala of Khagrachhari yesterday. The committee brought out the procession to protest the setting up of the BGB offices which, they claim, were built evicting indigenous families.

PHOTO: KAFIL MAHMUD

## Blogger Rajib killing Tk 5 lakh bounty on Azad Rana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday announced a Tk 5 lakh bounty for the capture of Redwanul Azad Rana, prime accused in the blogger Ahmed Rajib Haidar murder case.

The identity of the informer would not be disclosed, Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP, told The Daily Star.

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## 10 hurt in clash over eviction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least six indigenous people and four members of law enforcement agencies were injured yesterday in a clash when indigenous people brought out a procession in protest at the setting up of BGB battalion offices in Babuchhara of Dighinala.

Indigenous people have demanded over the past few months that the government do not set up the offices in the area, evicting 21 indigenous families from their ancestral land.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when a peaceful procession brought out by Dighinala Bhumi Rakkha Committee was barricaded by joint forces comprising army, police and ansar personnel.

As indigenous people threw brickbats at the joint forces to remove the

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## BIMSTEC OFFICIALS IN CITY Target power deal

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Senior officials meet in Dhaka today to finalise a draft agreement on Bimstec grid interconnections for electricity trade and optimal power transmission among seven South and Southeast Asian countries.

The fifth meeting of the Bimstec Task Force on Trans Power Exchange and Development will hold an in-depth discussion on a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The MoU will provide a broad framework for the implementation of grid interconnections to promote rational and optimal power transmission among the member countries, said a senior official of the foreign ministry yesterday.

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## Top criminal Masud caught in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mollah Masud, a top Bangladeshi criminal for whom Interpol issued red notice, has been arrested in India.

The Criminal Investigation Department of West Bengal arrested Masud on February 8 in a case filed with Barrackpore Police Station under Section 14 of Foreigners Act relating to illegal stay in the country.

"Procedure to bring him back is underway," said a press release of Bangladesh

Police yesterday as Interpol's New Delhi office informed them about the arrest.

Born in Jhalakathi, Masud was the second-in-command of Moghbazar-based "seven star" group led by Subrata Bain. He came to the limelight after several murders in 1992-93.

There are at least eight cases filed against him for murder, possessing illegal firearms and extortion, said Officer-in-Charge Mashiur Rahman of Ramna Police Station.

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## 'Google Kid'

ODDITYCENTRAL.COM

Seven-year-old Kautilya Pandit is what you would call a walking, talking encyclopedia, with the capacity to absorb information ranging from geography to biology and current affairs.

The wonder kid also dabbles in economic statistics, politics and pretty much any other subject you can think of. Within three months, the little kid managed to memorise information about 213 countries, their population, GDP, source of income, currency, religion, culture and heritage.

Kautilya, a resident of Kohand Village in India's Haryana, is now a national celebrity, regularly travelling to schools across India, answering live questions

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**The Daily Star**

Integral Energy Limited

**ONLINE POLL**

Do you agree with BNP chief Khaleda Zia that the government is carrying out a false propaganda to brand people's democratic movement as militant activities?

Yes (59%)

No (41%)

TOTAL VOTES: 116

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you agree with professor Sarwar Jahan of Buet that Dhaka city is sharply divided into the rich and the poor?

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AZAN 5-00 12-45 4-30 6-14 7-45

JAMAAT 5-35 1-15 4-45 6-18 8-15

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