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Hefajat fury rages on

3 killed during daylong hartal enforced by the Islamist group; B'baria again the flashpoint

STAR REPORT

The mayhem by Qawmi madrasa-based organisation Hefajat-e-Islam continued nationwide for the third consecutive day yesterday with Brahmanbaria turning into a battlefield.

Police stations, public offices, offices of the ruling party, and buses have been torched and vandalised. Even a train and a temple where Dol Purnima puja was being held did not escape their wrath.

During yesterday's violence, at least three more people were killed, taking the toll of the violence that began with protests against the Indian prime minister's visit to 13.

Scores of people, including Hefajat supporters, bystanders and law enforcers were wounded and vehicles damaged in different districts.

In Brahmanbaria, public offices set on fire by Hefajat activists kept burning and firefighters did not dare go to the scene before the activists went home after 9:30pm.

Hefajat announced a day of prayers and mourning for today and called for nationwide rallies on April 2.

Clashes also took place in Kishoreganj, Narayanganj, Dhaka, Habiganj, Sylhet, Narsingdi and Mymensingh. Public offices were set on fire while vehicles were vandalised in several districts.

In Brahmanbaria, Hefajat supporters attacked Khatihata Highway Police Station

THE MAYHEM

- > Violence in B'baria, Dhaka, N'ganj, Munshiganj, Kishoreganj, Sylhet, Habiganj
- > Four police stations/outposts attacked
- > Eight public offices torched/vandalised
- > Over a dozen buses torched/vandalised
- > Seven homes/offices of AL men/AL torched/vandalised
- > One Hindu temple, a train vandalised

and as they set the facility on fire, police used firearms, reports our correspondent in the district.

Twenty-three-year-old Kalon Miah and 20-year-old Al Amin, both residents of Brahmanbaria Sadar, died of gunshot wounds after they were taken to Brahmanbaria General Hospital, Medical Officer Syed Ariful Islam said, adding that a third man died at the hospital soon after he was brought there from Pirbari area with gunshot wounds around 2:30pm, but his identity was not known as of last night.

Hefajat activists also attacked the police lines in Pirbari and ransacked

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Hefajat-e-Islam activists set the historic Sur Samrat Alauddin Sangitangan in Brahmanbaria, top, on fire. They hurl brick chunks, left, at law enforcers on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Narayanganj and torch a truck, right, there.

PHOTO: MASHUK HRIDOOY/ RASHED SHUMON



Control surge in Covid infection

PM asks authorities to take prompt measures

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her call to the countrymen to wear facemasks alongside maintaining the health guidelines and she also asked the authorities concerned to take prompt measures to check fresh surges in the Covid-19 infection rate.

"I request all not to go outside without wearing masks. Everyone should ensure that they will wear masks and maintain the health guidelines," she said.

Taking part in a discussion marking the Golden Jubilee of the country's independence, virtually from her official residence the Gono Bhaban, she said that inoculation against the Covid-19 that her government has initiated would be continued as it is their duty to save the lives of the masses alongside ensuring their health protection.

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) organised the discussion at its central office at 23 Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

Referring to the fresh surge of the coronavirus with different variants, the prime minister said, "We have to take prompt measures like the earlier ones to check it."

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NEWS ANALYSIS

MODI'S VISIT: INDO-BANGLA TIES

A warm gesture with connectivity at heart

PORIMOL PALMA

What could be a more momentous event for Indo-Bangla relations than the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh whose birth is historically related to India?

India attached high importance to the celebrations, and this has been reflected through Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit. It was his first foreign visit in 15 months, and it came amid a growing threat of Covid-19 infections.

The celebrations, which also marked 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, saw the inauguration of Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition that showcased the extraordinary lives and legacies of the two iconic leaders who relentlessly fought for democracy, nonviolence and liberation from the occupational or colonial powers.

Both Mahatma Gandhi and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made sacrifices for the greater interest of the people and for establishing equality for all irrespective of caste, creed and ethnicity.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke her feelings in expressing gratitude to India that sheltered one crore refugees from Bangladesh in 1971. India's military assisted the Mujki Bahini in fighting the Pakistan occupation forces by providing arms and training to the freedom fighters.

The years following the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975 saw the relations between the two neighbours becoming cold.

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Shab-e-Barat tonight

PM urges all to reject injustice, violence, superstition

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Shab-e-Barat, known as the night of fortune, will be observed across the country tonight with due religious fervour and devotion.

The Muslim devotees would spend the night at mosques and homes offering prayers, reciting from the holy Quran, and seeking blessings to Allah for long life, peace, progress, and happiness for themselves, their families,

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HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat. Therefore, the newspaper will not be published tomorrow.

Shun violence or face tough action

Govt warns; home boss suspects involvement of banned militant outfits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday warned that anyone involved in the mayhem across the country would not be spared.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday issued separate warnings saying those who spread rumours, disobey the law and are involved in disturbing and sabotaging peace will be brought under the law.

In a statement given by the home ministry, Asaduzzaman called for stopping those who are causing loss of life and destruction of property, including government property, in different parts of the country.

The press release read that some unruly individuals and groups have been destroying government property in Chittagong's Hathazari Upazila, Brahmanbaria Sadar, Sarail and Ashuganj over the last two days.

"Public property, including Upazila Parishad, Thana Bhaban, government land office, police outpost, railway stations, houses of political personalities and press clubs are being damaged," it read.

All those concerned are requested to stop all forms of violence or else stern action will be taken to protect public property, the release added.

On the other hand, the law minister, at a programme, warned that drastic action will be taken against those involved in vandalising, violating the law, attacks and damaging peace and discipline.

Earlier Asaduzzaman, while talking to journalists at his secretariat office, requesting an end to the disorderly situation, said, "We are going to take action as per law."

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Positivity rate jumps to 17.69pc

3,908 Covid cases detected in 24hrs

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

As the positivity rate jumped to 17.69 percent against 22,136 tests in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, there is no alternative to enforce transmission control activities immediately, experts have said.

In the previous day, the positivity rate was 14.90 percent.

The Directorate General of Health Services yesterday reported 3,908 new cases -- the highest single-day record of cases in the last nine months.

On July 2 last year, 4,019 new cases were detected in the country.

With the latest count, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 5,95,714.

In the past 24 hours, 35 Covid-19 patients died in the country.

The death toll caused by the highly contagious virus has risen to 8,904 in the country since the first death was reported on March 18 last year.

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A woman waiting in line to be tested for Covid-19 at the Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday. She had arrived at the hospital at 5:30am and was still wearily waiting when the photo was taken around 8:30am. The counter for sample collection opens at 9:30am.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

I'll pass it all on to young ones

Says Pandit Ajay Chakrabarty about his knowledge on music

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Dreaming of taking this part of the world at the highest echelon in the global stage, Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty plans to pass on his wealth of knowledge to young musicians of Bangladesh and India.

The classical music maestro said music should be taught to every child in schools to help them develop discipline and the sense of humanity.

"At this age, I dream that the people of Bangladesh and India would reach the highest position in the music industry. I want to do something for them in the next 10 years," Ajoy Chakrabarty told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview at a city hotel yesterday.

The famous Patiala-Kasur gharana torch bearer also urged everyone to help achieve this dream, adding that music makes people perfect and pure and helps develop a sense of aesthetic.

Starting his career as a performing artist of the Patiala gharana, Chakrabarty, however, did not confine himself in one particular genre.

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