

East Wing protest continues

Firing in Tongi, Rajshahi Banks open for two hours under Mujib's directive

From MAHBUBUL ALAM

DACCA, MARCH 5: THE MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED TO WITHDRAW THE ARMY TO THE BARRACKS TODAY, ACCORDING TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT THE ACTION FOLLOWS "NO INCIDENT OF LAWLESSNESS SINCE THE LIFTING OF CURFEW ON THURSDAY EVENING".

The announcement further said, "Following Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's appeal for peace, there has been considerable improvement in the general law and order situation during the past 24 hours".

It may be recalled that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in his speech at the public meeting at Raltan Maldan on Wednesday, had demanded immediate withdrawal of forces from the city and transfer of power to the people's representatives. Since then leaders, political parties and other organisations have been demanding the withdrawal of troops.

Meanwhile, complete hartal was observed here as well as other parts of the province today, in response to the call of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Today was the fourth day of the hartal in the capital and its suburbs and the third day in the province. The Awami League Chief has already announced that the hartal will

continue till tomorrow.

Today, however, banks and other offices functioned for two hours in the afternoon for the disbursement of salaries to employees. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had directed yesterday that banks and offices could function today from 2-30 p.m. to 4-30 p.m. for

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Army withdrawn in E. Wing

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for this purpose. He had also exempted certain other institutions and certain types of vehicles from the operation of the hartal.

TONGI FIRING

PPI adds: The known death toll of Tongi firing this morning rose with the death of two more persons in the Dacca Medical College Hospital later today.

Earlier, one dead and 15 injured were brought to Dacca Medical College Hospital after security forces allegedly opened fire on the demonstrating workers of Telephone Industries at Tongi. One injured died soon after admission and the second one succumbed to injuries after operation.

RAJSHAHI FIRING

In Rajshahi one person was killed and four injured in firing during a procession here on Wednesday.

A spokesman of the district administration told PPI this afternoon that trouble took place twice in front of the telephone exchange office at Malopara and once in front of the Medical College on the day.

He said that after the incident curfew was clamped in the town from seven in the evening for 11 hours on Wednesday by the local Martial Law authorities. With a break of three hours, he said, curfew was reimposed from ten in the morning of yesterday to seven in the morning of today.

According to reports reaching here today, complete and peaceful hartal is being observed here since March 3 in response to the call given by the Awami League Chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

CURFEW

A ten-hour curfew was imposed in Rangpur town from this evening. According to reports reaching here, the 21-hour curfew which was clamped there from 5 p.m. yesterday was earlier lifted at 11 a.m. this morning.

A ten-hour curfew was also clamped in Rajshahi beginning from 7 p.m. today.

Hartal

DACCA, March 5: An eight-hour hartal was observed in the city and other parts of Bangladesh today in response to the call of Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, protesting against the sudden postponement of the National Assembly session.

The hartal which was complete and peaceful in Dacca city was

Mujib's presence in talks vital:

Mufti Mahmood

MULTAN, March 5: Mufti Mahmood Ahmed, General Secretary, Jamiatul Ulemae Islam, today said that the President's decision to hold the conference of Parliamentary parties at Dacca was a welcome move, but added that conditions must be created to facilitate participation of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in any such conference.

Addressing a Press conference here this morning, Mufti Mahmood said in principle his party supported the idea of a conference, which should create an atmosphere of understanding and resolve the present constitutional crisis in the country. If such a conference is held, his party would participate in it, he added.

Mufti Mahmood, however, doubted if it was possible to hold this conference without Sheikh Mujibur Rahman participating in

for the fourth consecutive day in the city and its suburbs, and for the third consecutive day in other parts of Bangla Desh.

The eight-hour hartal beginning at 6 a.m. will continue till tomorrow. No untoward incident was reported from any parts of the city today but there was firing by the security forces at Tongi, ten miles off the city.

All Government and non-Government offices, autonomous organisations, mills and factories, banks, insurance companies, educational institutions, courts and other establishments remained completely closed during the hartal in the city. All means of transport except a few doctors'

The Awami League has directed the banks to make payments in respect of cheques drawn for the purpose of disbursement of salaries even if the amount exceeded Rs 1500 provided that the wage register showing the total amount to be drawn as salaries was produced along with the cheque.

According to a Press release of the party, the banks have also been allowed to pay the bill if it was certified by the trade union of the organisation concerned.

According to an earlier directive, the banks had been prohibited from making payment in respect of cheques drawing more than Rs 1500.

Food godowns have also been permitted to remain open beyond 4-30 p.m. if necessary to complete delivery.

cars, Press cars, peace committee cars and ambulances, remained off the roads. Train, steamer, launch and internal plane services also remained suspended during the hartal.

The remarkable feature of today's hartal was that many medicine shops remained open during the hartal period and many Government and non-Government offices functioned for about two hours in the afternoon for disbursing salaries to the employees.

The State Bank and other scheduled banks here also worked for two hours in the afternoon for the purpose of drawing salaries and extending facilities to the ration shop dealers.

BANKS WORK

Ration shops and other food suppliers utilised the banking hours between 2-30 p.m. and 4-30 p.m.

The relaxation after the eight-hour general hartal was made on the directive of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for facilitating the people to draw their salaries and arrange regular food supply.

Unprecedented rush was witnessed in all scheduled banks here long before the opening at 2-30 p.m. People remained in queue for long time to get a chance to withdraw money, mainly salaries.

When a PPI correspondent visited the State Bank here at Motijheel at 4-30 p.m. (the closing time), several hundred people were there in queue for utilising the banking hours. Ration shop dealers and food suppliers mainly crowded the counters at State Bank.

M. S. E. Kabir Director of the Central Board of Directors, were found busy with other officials near the counters in supervising the transactions.

It may be mentioned here that the State Bank has created a new record by transacting cash in the afternoon.

MEETINGS

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MEETINGS

A large number of meetings were held and processions brought out in Dacca and also other cities in the province on the day.

After 2 p.m. life in the city returned to normal. A skeleton bus service puled in the street. Some of the shops and business houses opened after the hartal period.

The Students' League and the Awami League brought out a bamboo procession from the Baitul Mukarram and paraded the city streets. They also held a meeting before the Baitul Mukarram.

The students of East Pakistan University of Engineering held a meeting at the University premises to protest the postponement of "the killings of unarmed civilians". They also paraded the streets in processions.

The Students League, Students Union (Motia group) and Bangla Chatra League have offered prayers for the salvation of the departed souls. They also endorsed the view for the continuation of the struggle for achieving the legitimate rights of the people.

Shops in some of the shopping centres including Jinnah Avenue, Baitul Muharram, Stadium and New Market remained closed even after the hartal hours.

The Pakistan Writers Guild also held a meeting and expressed concern over the postponement of the National Assembly session. They also brought out a procession and paraded the city street.

The Khilgoan Land Distribution Committee also organised a rally in the evening before Baitul Mukarram.

House wives, girl students and teachers of Narayanganj city also held a protest meeting and paraded the streets shouting the demand for immediate withdrawal of Martial Law from the country. They expressed solidarity with the movement launched by the people in response to the call of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The East Pakistan Government College Teachers Association also expressed its strong resentment at the postponement of the Assembly session. In a meeting held here today, the Association said that this would hinder the peaceful transfer of power. They also condemned the killing of unarmed people of Bangla Desh. The meeting also pledged support to the Awami League chief.

According to Jatiyo Sramik League, quite a few factories and mills went into production following a decision of the League.

The members of East Pakistan Union of Journalists (EPUJ) will stage a demonstration tomorrow afternoon to demonstrate solidarity with the people's movement and in protest against recent restriction imposed on the Press.

The General Secretary of EPUJ, Mr Kamal Lohani, today appealed to the members to assemble at the Press Club at 8 p.m. from where a procession will be taken out. The procession will be followed by a mass rally at Baitul Mokarram.—PFI/APP