

City Monitoring Report - 6th July, 2010

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Delhi City Monitoring

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Opposition's Bharat bandh puts India on hold

Opposition parties on Monday joined forces to enforce a countrywide strike against rising prices, in an effective protest that marked the return of a hot-button political issue and is being seen as a wake-up call for the UPA regime.

The success of the bandh varied: from complete shutdown in Opposition-controlled states where official indulgence or indifference encouraged the protesters, to the flop show in Chennai where the DMK government was ultra-zealous in ensuring that normal life was not disrupted. But it was a UPA-ruled state, Maharashtra, that suffered the heaviest economic loss, estimated at Rs 1,000 crore.

In many places, bandh supporters brazenly flexed their muscles as they sought to enforce the "people's bandh".

Still, this was easily the most successful bandh called by the Opposition since UPA took control after the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, and should restore price rise to the political frontburner. Life was disrupted in all the big cities, with the sole exception of the DMK stronghold of Chennai.

In the Capital, protests affected the operations of Delhi Metro -- the first instance of its kind -- and the fleets of thousands of buses of Delhi Transport Corporation as well as private operators were rendered immobile by protesters strategically positioned at important intersections.

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Mumbai City Monitoring

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Law & Order

Mumbai worst-hit as Bharat bandh stops India

The Bharat bandh called by the Opposition to protest against rising prices has put the country on hold. Transport has been hit across states. States ruled by the NDA and the Left are the most affected.

But Mumbai, ruled by the Congress, is also one of the worst hit with normal life disrupted. Security is tight in the city.

In Mumbai, schools and colleges remained closed today; the streets of the city were deserted. (Read and Watch: Streets deserted, flights hit in Mumbai)

Domestic flights were hit hard: 42 arrivals and 47 departures were cancelled. One international flight -Air India's Mumbai-Delhi-Hong Kong- was cancelled.

Local trains are running on time, but are largely empty.

78 buses have been damaged. Taxis and autos are not available for commuters.

Over 1000 people were held as preventive measure in Mumbai. The city's police have said any person or political party indulging in violence and vandalising public property will be made to pay compensation, and about 40,000 policemen have been deployed to maintain law and order.

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Total shutdown in West Bengal

Normal life came to a halt across West Bengal on Monday, as the Left Front and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance separately observed a 12-hour nationwide strike in protest against the Centre's decision to hike fuel prices. However, no major incidents of violence were reported.

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Bandh passes off peacefully

The Bharat Bandh, called by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance and the Left parties to protest the hike in petroleum prices, passed off peacefully in the State with some disruption in vehicular movement and flight schedules. While buses run by the State-run transport corporations and private operators plied as usual within the State, inter-State vehicles bound for Kerala and Karnataka were halted at the border. Five flights were cancelled at the Chennai airport. A senior officer said the number of passengers who booked by various airlines was less.

Industrial operations in Coimbatore, regarded as a major textile city, remained largely unaffected. Production was on at textile mills and engineering units.

In Chennai, BJP leaders Pon Radhakrishnan and L. Ganesan and Communist Party of India (Marxist) MLA S.K. Mahendran led the protest separately. The AIADMK extended support to the bandh but stayed away from protests and demonstrations in Chennai.

The bandh had its impact in some parts of the State. While most shops remained closed in Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Dindigul and Kanyakumari districts, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin saw a poor response. In Madurai city, there was some impact; shops on the outskirts of the city were closed. Members of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam threw stones in a clash in Tirumangalam. There were also instances of DMK men asking shops to remain open and AIADMK men seeking closure.

In Coimbatore, many shops remained closed. In the central parts of the State, there was not much disturbance except in Nagapattinam district and parts of Ariyalur and Perambalur districts where the impact was partial.

In Tiruchi and Nagapattinam districts, agitations were mostly spearheaded by cadres of the Left. The degree of impact was higher in Meensurutti and Pappakudi of Ariyalur district.

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Bangalore City Monitoring

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Bandh: IT firms play it safe, some PSUs remain open

The Bharat bandh, called by non-Congress parties, evoked a mixed response from the industry with a number of Central public sector undertakings remaining open even as industries and private companies, including Information Technology firms, declared a holiday.

Industrial areas like Peenya, housing a number of small and medium industries, remained closed.

Most IT companies like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys decided to play it safe by declaring Monday a holiday; some had asked employees to work on a non-working day instead. Others functioned as usual, only advancing the starting time.

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Bandh partial, peaceful in city

The bandh call evoked mixed response in the State capital on Monday though it affected normal life with bus services being curtailed for a few hours while educational institutions, petrol bunks and entertainment places remained closed.

No untoward incident was reported despite scores of protest demonstrations organised across the city and arrest of political bigwigs like Telugu Desam Party supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu, and State chiefs of the Left parties B.V. Raghavulu and K. Narayana, at different places. Processions and road blockades organised to mark the bandh, however, threw traffic out of gear at several places with hundreds of commuters getting stuck during morning peak hours.

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Swine flu cases in state on the rise, number of deaths down

The number of swine flu cases has increased considerably in the state since the onset of monsoon. As many as 214 cases of H1N1 infection were registered in June alone as against the 143 cases in May. However, the number of deaths due to swine flu has gone down, even though the rate of infection is showing an upward surge.

In July till date, as many as two deaths have occurred in the state while 22 people have tested positive for swine flu. All these cases are primarily from Pune and Mumbai, said Awate.

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Bandh complete in state, passes off peacefully

The state on Monday witnessed total bandh as part of the one-day Bharat Bandh call given by the BJP-led NDA and Left parties separately. The day passed off peacefully, except Khagaria where the police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the CPI-led bandh enforcers.

Train services were disrupted and around a dozen trains were detained at various stations due to the bandh, as the bandh supporters, including women, either squatted on the railway lines or climbed on to their engines. There was no vehicular traffic on the roads in the cities before noon, while the movement of vehicles on the national as well as state highways and other roads was also minimal.

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Law & Order

Partial bandh in city-- Protests peaceful; transport normal

On the nationwide Bharat bandh call given by the BJP against price rise, Chandigarh observed a partial bandh today amid tight security, with a substantial number of shops and commercial establishments closed.

Party workers, led by senior leaders of the party, marched in procession through different areas of the city to urge shopkeepers to down shutters to protest against the 'skyrocketing' prices of oil products and essential commodities.

The protesters also blocked traffic on some busy intersections in the city, including Mauli Jagran, the Chandigarh Housing Board light point, the Transport Chowk, the Tribune roundabout, the Aroma light point and the Mullanpur barrier. There were reports of protesters forcing shopkeepers to close establishments.

While the bandh in sector markets evoked a partial response, public and private transport functioned normally and there was not much inconvenience to commuters.

Flights and trains services to and from the city remained unaffected. Railway and transport authorities had made elaborate arrangements in the city to avert any problem to commuters.

Bid to break open ATM

An unidentified youth made an unsuccessful bid to break open an ATM of the State Bank of India in the Sector-21 market in the wee hours yesterday.

The police said the CCTV footage of the ATM made available by the bank revealed that the youth gained access to the ATM cabin at 4.27 am after swiping his card.

He tried to force open the ATM with a tool he was carrying after checking his balance.

The video footage showed that the miscreant had covered his face and was wearing a black T-shirt with "Rocky" imprinted on it.

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Bandh near-total in Gujarat

The National Democratic Alliance's call for 'Bharat Bandh' on Monday received overwhelming support in Gujarat with almost all the shops and business establishments in Ahmedabad and other parts of the State remaining closed for the day, bringing the normal life to a grinding halt.

Almost all the schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions and most of the offices, except the government offices, remained closed. A few offices which opened in the morning were forced to close down as bandh supporters armed with lathis moved round the areas and threatened to ransack the premises if the shutters were not downed.

In Gujarat, in addition to the fuel price hike, the call for the bandh was also given to protest against the alleged "misuse" of the Central Bureau of Investigation to "harass" the leaders in the BJP government in the state.

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Curfew reimposed in Valley

To foil the proposed march by the separatists to Anantnag, curfew restrictions were reimposed across the capital city and other major towns of the Valley on Monday. The march to Anantnag, about 52 km south of here, was called by the hardline APHC faction led by Syed Ali Geelani to express solidarity with the people of the town where three youths allegedly fell to the bullets of the CRPF during clashes on Tuesday last.

Restrictions remained in force in most of the areas of Srinagar yesterday, a day after the residents of downtown localities got some relief from the week-long restrictions. The roads across the city were deserted as the police and the CRPF had created barricades and razor wire blockades to restrict the movement of people. All offices and educational institutions remained closed.

The Srinagar-Jammu National Highway leading to the south Kashmir district headquarters of Anantnag was blocked on the city outskirts to prevent any march led by the separatists. Mediapersons were also stopped near Pampore township, about 14 km from here, from proceeding towards south Kashmir.

Anantnag town that witnessed the killings of three youths last Tuesday was also under strict curfew restrictions. There was no relaxation in the restrictions today in view of the proposed march by the APHC (Geelani), while the town witnessed clashes during the curfew relaxation for the past two days.

Other major towns in south Kashmir where restrictions were imposed to prevent the proposed march included Pulwama, Shopian, Kakapora and Kulgam.

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Traffic diversions for BSP bandh, Kanpur

After the Opposition's outcry on Monday against hike in prices of petrol, diesel, cooking gas and other domestic items, the Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) has called for a nation-wide bandh on Tuesday. In this context, a massive demonstration will be held from 10 am at Companybagh Crossing, Nawabganj.

In view of the demonstration, certain traffic diversions have been put in place. All vehicles from Rawatpur to VIP Road via Nawabganj will be diverted on GT Road which will move left from Hallet Crossing to Gopala Towers to reach their desired destination. Vehicular movement from Chunniganj towards Rawatpur will be diverted from Gopala Towers towards Hallet Crossing. While vehicles from Chunniganj to Nawabganj will move towards Rajeev Petrol Pump to Ranighat. Similar route will be opted for by the traffic from the other side as well.

In order to avoid traffic snarl-up on VIP Road, vehicles plying on Nawabganj Road towards Colonelganj via Chunniganj will be diverted from Vishnupuri to Wendy School Crossing. Whereas, vehicles movement will be restricted from Vishnupuri to Companybagh Crossing. The traffic will be diverted towards Wendy School Crossing.

For those participating in the demonstration, special parking arrangements have been made. All heavy vehicles like bus, tractor, trucks from Bilhaur, Chaubepur, Kalyanpur via Gurudev Palace Crossing will turn left towards Pahalwanpurwa for parking at Kasturba Gandhi School. Those from Ghatampur will move from Vijay Nagar, Fazalaganj, JK Temple to Benajhbar Crossing for parking at Brijendra Swaroop Park.

Similarly, vehicles from Maharajpur and Narwal will also be parked at Brijendra Swaroop Park. While light-weight vehicles will be parked on both sides of road from Ranighat to Raina Market to VIP Road.

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Crackdown on terror outfits in Pakistan

As political parties attempt at evolving a collective strategy against terror in the wake of the suicide bomb attack on the Sufi shrine, Data Darbar, the Punjab Home Department is reported to have set up task forces to crack down upon 17 banned terror outfits including the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET) and Jama'at-ud-Dawa'h (JUD).

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