

Youths throng concert against corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The young generation at a huge concert yesterday vowed to stand against corruption in all its forms.

Thousands of youths took the vow at the first ever "concert against corruption" organised by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at the Gulshan Youth Club.

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus expressed his solidarity with the TIB movement against corruption.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, head of TIB, said, "We want youths who will think for the society and the country and perform their social duties to establish the values of the country's independence."

Former advisers to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal and Hafiz Uddin, Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Biswa Shahitya Kendra chief Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed

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Cattle prices soar too high this year

14 markets thrive with animals but moderate-earners struggle to make a choice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The price of sacrificial animals has gone beyond the reach of middle class and lower middle class people even though all 14 cattle markets in the capital witnessed a flood of animals.

Many city residents intending to buy cows or goats were seen wandering around in different cattle markets but very few were seen actually buying them.

The 14 Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) cattle markets started selling on Wednesday and those are already filled with a large number of cattle, which most middle class

people cannot afford to buy.

Most of the customers seemed to be waiting for the prices to go down so that they can afford the sacrificial animals.

A large number of the cows were brought in from Kushtia, Thakurgaon, Meherpur, Faridpur, Rajbari, Sirajganj, Mymensingh, Tangail and Manikganj areas of the country. As the price is high this year, many villagers of those areas are selling their livestock to earn some extra money.

"Similar size bullocks of last year and this year have at least TK 10,000 price difference. But it is hard for the middle class people to

manage the extra money," said Iqbal Hashem Khan who was trying to buy a cow at Sayedabad.

Hashem visited Kamalapur, Taltola and Agargaon cattle markets during the last two days. Desperate Hashem finally went to Gabtoli to buy an ox as he could not afford a bullock. He, however, hoped that cattle price would go down in the coming days.

Meanwhile, cattle traders claimed they had to buy cattle at a higher price this year and they had doubts whether the price would go down at all.

The people who farm cattle

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PHOTO: STAR

Ignoring a High Court order, 28 bulldozers have been flattening the hills and destroying the forest at Kalatali in Cox's Bazar since October 27 to build homes for district administration officials and employees.

Iraq mosque attack kills 9

AFP, AP, Baghdad

An attacker detonated an explosive-laden vest in a Shia mosque in the town of Khalis north of Baghdad just after Friday prayers and killed at least nine people, including an imam, officials said.

Police Lieutenant Mohammed Abdulrazak said the suicide bomber had killed nine people and wounded eight in an attack on the mosque, which is in a region plagued by violence between rival Sunni and Shia death squads.

An official at the interior ministry in Baghdad, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the attack had appeared to target the imam of the mosque, Khadum Hamid, whom he said was among the dead.

A defence ministry official

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DMP calls for restraint on 31st night

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has requested people from all walks of life to refrain from any activities that may hurt religious sentiments of different faiths on the night of 31st December.

Ahead of the New Year, people in different parts of the city spontaneously engage in merrymaking and

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Prayer Timing		
December 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

AL leader shot dead, 6 hurt in Cox's Bazar

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A local Awami League (AL) leader was killed and six other party men were injured in an armed attack at Natun Bazar in Ramu upazila early yesterday.

Police and locals said miscreants attacked Jahiruddin Mohammed Babar, 35, president of AL Rashidnagar Union unit, and six others while they were returning home from the bazar at around 1:00am.

The gang shot Babar point blank, stabbed his associates and

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Saddam to hang, doubts over when

REUTERS, Baghdad

An Iraqi official denied yesterday suggestions that Saddam Hussein could be hanged as early as Saturday while lawyers for the ousted dictator said he was preparing for his execution.

As speculation swirled about the timing of the execution, Iraq's Justice Ministry denied a comment from a defence lawyer that it had taken custody of Saddam from the US military.

"It's none of the Americans' business to decide when," a senior

Justice Ministry official said, dismissing a suggestion from a senior US official that Saddam could hang as early as Saturday.

He also said there would be no execution before January 26, 30 days after the sentence was upheld. But ministers say there are conflicting views in cabinet over that timing and whether it requires the president to sign a death warrant.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, in his first comments on the issue, said on Friday there could be no going back on the sentence passed

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Rejoinder, our reply

The Prisons Directorate yesterday protested a report headlined "13 jail officers face authorities' wrath" which was published in The Daily Star on December 24.

Saying that Shaikh Abdul Amik was working as the senior superintendent (current charge) of Kashimpur Central Jail and was transferred as superintendent to Sunamganj district jail, the rejoinder said he was not demoted. The High Court did not stay the transfer order, it said, adding that the prisons authorities are not annoyed with any jail official for any personal matter.

"No departmental proceedings

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Gangsters start to cross border for election job

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the countdown to the parliamentary election has begun, the listed and wanted criminals, who fled abroad fearing arrest, have started returning to the country to work as 'gunmen' for the candidates.

The criminal gangs have already appeared in the fierce competition for securing this type of jobs, which are especially lucrative during the election period. Most of these groups are not yet organised and waiting for their top leaders' return.

Of the criminals hiding in India, several have already come back to the country while some have sent back their sidekicks to organise their groups in Bangladesh before they arrive, sources said.

Those who entered the country have started demonstrating the 'signs' of their return and demanded tolls from various people in the city, even though.

The two most powerful underworld kingpins, Joy and Shuvro, however, are yet to step in the city.

"They have sent their men to work during the election period," said one such operative who came to the city six days back.

Asked, for whom they are working, he named some of the former lawmakers of the immediate past government from the capital.

"It's safer to work with the powerful side. We think the immediate past government is still in the power," he said.

Some, however, decided to work

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PHOTO: STAR

The cattle market in Naya Bazar in the capital occupies the northern end of the Second Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge closing it for traffic yesterday.

Somali PM enters Mogadishu

REUTERS, Mogadishu

Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamad Gedi swept into Mogadishu in an armed convoy yesterday a day after his Ethiopian-backed forces drove Islamist rivals from the city they had ruled for six months.

Gedi's arrival in a 22-car convoy including six pick-up trucks mounted with heavy weaponry symbolically crowned a dramatic turnaround in the Horn of Africa country following the intervention of Ethiopian troops and air force.

Crowds lined the streets as the Western-backed interim government's premier drove into the bullet-scarred capital, where Islamists had tackled political and criminal chaos with the imposition of a strict Sharia law.

Gedi drove to Mogadishu international airport before heading for the city's sea port, where Somali government soldiers stood guard on nearby streets. Six Ethiopian military trucks were positioned inside the port territory.

Somali government troops and their Ethiopian allies earlier took

control of the former US embassy building in the west of Mogadishu, tightening their hold on the capital.

Residents had begun venturing out of their homes as the sporadic gunfire heard through the previous day abated, and there were no further reports of widespread looting seen on Thursday.

"Ethiopian troops and government soldiers have settled in the compound of the former US embassy. I can see more than 30 Russian-made military trucks," said Abdi Hassan, one of hundreds of local residents gathered outside the former US mission.

The embassy compound, in a western neighborhood of the coastal city, was abandoned more than a decade ago after US forces made a humiliating retreat from Somalia following an ill-fated mission depicted in the film "Black Hawk Down."

Government forces took effective control of Mogadishu on Thursday after a 10-day offensive with Ethiopian allies to reclaim

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