

## Nababarsha rally today at Shahbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gonojagoron Mancha is all set to greet Bangla year of 1420 today with a pledge to continue the movement, albeit in a new and strengthened form, to rid the country of war criminals.

As part of Baisakhi celebration, it will hold day-long programmes, including a Nababarsha grand rally at 4:00pm in the capital's Shahbagh, announced Imran H Sarker, the spokesperson for Gonojagoron Mancha, at a press conference yesterday.

The movement has been on for over two months, calling for the capital punishment to all war criminals and a ban on Jamaat-Shibir for their role against the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

Imran yesterday urged people all over the country to participate in solidarity human chain from wherever they are for three minutes from 5:00pm today.

The protesters will also light "mangal pradeep (auspicious lamps)" at 7:30pm as a symbol of eliminating darkness.

"This movement will gain momentum and spread everywhere [in the new year]," Imran said while taking an oath "in the name of Fatikchhari martyrs" who had been killed during hartal violence on Friday.

## Cops raid

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Press, said Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station.

Police also picked up 19 of the Amar Desh press staff from the Sangram office.

Magistrate Nasrin Sultan filed a case with Ramna Police Station last night against the Amar Desh authorities for printing the daily at Al-Falah press without permission.

Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of Bangla daily Amar Desh, was arrested on Thursday and placed on a 13-day remand in three cases.

Later that day, police locked the Amar Desh press and seized a computer and some documents.

In the case he was arrested, Mahmudur faces sedition charge for publishing Skype conversations between Justice Md Nizamul Huq, former chairman of International Crimes Tribunal-1, and Ahmed Ziauddin, an expatriate Bangladeshi legal expert.

He was shown arrested in two other cases, filed last month with Tejgaon Police Station for acts of violence and assaulting police during hartals.

## Polls

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equal number of members from both the ruling and the opposition alliances, to form the polls-time government for holding a free and fair election.

Mosharraf made the comment while addressing as the chief guest a human chain of Keraniganj BNP in front of the Tista Press Club yesterday, demanding unconditional release of party leaders, who were held on March 11.

"Over the last three years, we have repeatedly been telling [the government] the same thing [as the TIB said about a polls-time government]," he mentioned.

He welcomed the TIB proposal but expressed concern over its success as the government is "not sincere about the demand of the opposition".

The proposal will achieve the intended result if the government is sincere and the opposition consents to it."

Mosharraf said every political crisis calls for dialogues but the present situation is not favourable for them as the government arrested opposition men in "false cases".

He asked the government to withdraw the cases and ease the situation for talks with the opposition alliance.

How the government responds to the TIB proposal will determine the BNP's next course of action, said Mosharraf.

## Get rid of impasse

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towards holding of a free and fair election with participation of major political parties.

"If we can achieve progress on these three fronts, we will be able to come of the current volatile situation which is crippling the economy," said the noted economist.

He was speaking at a dialogue styled "Bangladesh 2013: Assessing Economic Implications of the Present Political Shocks" at Hotel Lakeshore in Dhaka.

The CPD came up with the call to get the country out of the current political crisis, and to support the growth prospects of the economy.

Yesterday's dialogue came at a time when the present government, now in its final year of the five-year tenure, faces a tough period as the opposition parties are calling for hartals demanding restoration of caretaker government system and to stop the trials of the war criminals.

Most speakers at the dialogue said that they did not think that the economy could be protected if the current political situation continued.

Rehman Sobhan, chairman of CPD, who chaired the dialogue, said the shutdowns in Bangladesh were being called for at a time when Bangladesh had economic opportunities in the global front.

He said, "These are historic opportunities. But we may miss out on this moment once the industries reposition themselves."

Tofail Ahmed, ruling party lawmaker and veteran politician, said he did not see any possibility of dialogue between the two parties, Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"BNP is saying that it will only take part in the election that is held under a caretaker government system. But it will never be possible as there is no such provision for it in the constitution. The Awami League will never make any compromise on the caretaker government issue."

Tofail claimed that if there were no trials of war criminals, the current situation would not have arisen. "But the trial is one of our election promises. It is not possible to stop it," he said.

Former education minister Osman Faruque said there was time to hold dialogues. "Definitely, the opposition parties have their responsibilities, but it is the government who will

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forest to retain water and protect the wildlife.

Temporary embankments in the streams for five to six months can to some extent meet the wild animals' need for water," he added.

Md Mortuza Ali, range officer of the forest, on Wednesday told The Daily Star that some of the wild animals are being extinct due to shortage of water.

There are only two ponds in the forest, said the district forest officer, adding that more ponds are necessary for providing the animals with enough water.

Three decades ago, the streams in the forest had enough water all the year round. Rampant felling of trees over the years has led to erosion of soil in the forest, said sources in the forest department.

"During the last rainy season, huge amounts of soil eroded and filled up the streams in the forest, reducing their capacity for water retention drastically," said District Forest Officer (Wildlife) Mahbubur Rahman on Wednesday.

Between October and April every year, the streams become dry, he added.

Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon in Sylhet and an environmental activist, said the authorities concerned should dig ponds in the

environmentalists think that the survey has had a long-term adverse impact on the forest.

## Testimony

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had gone to the procession on his friends' request. "If we had known about it, we would not have let him go," he said.

Ferdous Begum is numb to the shock of losing her son Forkan. All she has been saying since Thursday is, "Oh, my son! Where are you? Please come back to me."

Eye witnesses and local administration sources said the three were killed when activists of Hefajat-e Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami, joined in by locals gathered through announcement over loudspeakers, attacked an anti-hartal AL procession with sharp weapons and sticks.

The attack was made around 11:30am as the procession was marching through Kazirhat in Bhujpur.

More than 100 people, including 15 policemen, four firefighters, and two BGB men, were injured. Around 100 vehicles including motorcycles, jeeps, pick-ups, a police van and a fire truck were torched during the mayhem. Some 20 shops were also set ablaze.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday closed the officer-in-charge of Bhujpur Police Station.

Ang Sung Twain, inspector of the station, had been given the charge, said Superintendent of Police in Chittagong AKM Hafiz Akther, adding that they were investigating whether the former OC had neglected his duties during the attack.

As of yesterday, police have arrested 40 suspects.

Additional SP of Chittagong Farid Uddin said law enforcers were looking into the matter and would release the innocent ones after verification. He asked Bhujpur villagers not to be afraid.

On Friday, police filed a case against around 5,000 people, including 100 named, for attacking law enforcers and obstructing their work.

Abdul Awal Mintoo, former president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said with the political situation like this, there could be no progress made in the country. He said no problem could be solved without correcting the main problem regarding the constitution.

Abul Kalam Azad, president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, said Bangladesh had already been included in the red zone by the US and European countries. "They are asking their citizens not to travel to Bangladesh. Buyers are meeting our exporters in third countries."

The owner of Ha-Meem Group said the situation in the country is now worse than that prevailed in the run up to the 1/11 change over in 2007.

Police suspect the attack was planned and inflammatory substances had been used while torching vehicles and shops.

The Chittagong SP said they had found that local Jamaat-Shibir men had instigated the locals to swoop on AL men by spreading a rumour.

Meanwhile, Hefajat-e Islam has denied its involvement in the violence.

## Qawmi Madrasa

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accepting their proposals, which include establishing a Qawmi University.

She instructed Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, who were present on the occasion, to take necessary steps in this regard, he added.

In 2008, the Bangladesh government permitted US-based oil company Chevron Corporation to conduct a 3D seismic exploration in the forest.

According to Gono Bhaban sources, no journalists were invited to the event.

The teachers of Qawmi madrasas, remnants of ages-old Islamic education system, have long been demanding government recognitions and certificates under a single Qawmi education board.

Recently, the education minister said the government wants to upgrade madrasa education so that students who pass from those institutions can also contribute to different fields of national development.

## Unrest to hurt GDP

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caused by shutdowns can be recouped to some extent, but those in the service sector, unfortunately, cannot," Hussain said, while highlighting the damages to the transport sector, termed the lifeline of the economy.

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Meanwhile, the government will be needed along with fiscal and financial controls to maintain public debt sustainability.

The WB in the report

credited the weak exports

and investments resulting from the impact of the Eurozone crisis, domestic supply constraints and intensified strikes and unrests, for the lower growth forecast.

A further deterioration of

the political situation and

weakening of the financial

condition of state-owned

commercial banks (SoCBs)

pose the greatest risk for

growth prospect and public

finances, it added.

While increasing violence and political rivalry is not uncommon in Bangladesh as elections near, the recent protests, mainly by youth demanding capital punishment for persons under trial for war crimes, has added a new dimension to pre-election

dynamics."

"The resistance from the opposition has resulted in intermittent violence together with increased frequency of hartals. Hartals create an unfriendly and unstable environment for investment by disrupting production and trading activities and increasing the cost of doing business."

Should either of the two identified big risks materialize, policy adjustments will be necessary, primarily through exchange rates and fiscal channels, said the WB.

"Stronger economic

governance will be needed

along with fiscal and financial

controls to maintain

public debt sustainability."

The WB also said the recovery in the US and the Eurozone will be critical for the country's economic growth, due to these regions serving as predominant export destinations for Bangladeshi products.

The possible backlash from the recent compliance and labour safety issues at garment factories have also been detected as a risk factor by the WB.

## India rules

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function in Khulna, crude bombs went off approximately 20 metres away from where his car was parked."

Asked if the bomb attack was a matter of concern for the security of Indians, especially officials and diplomats in Bangladesh, he said, "Nobody involved with the High Commission was injured, nor was the car damaged. I may also clarify that it was not the High Commission's vehicle. Rather, it was a local car hired by the High Commission."

"Since the explosions, the Indian envoy has received a large number of calls expressing concern at the attack.

The callers assured him of providing enough security to him and all the officials of the mission. So, we have no cause for concern there," added the spokesperson.

The Indian High Commission, he noted, is in touch with Bangladeshi authorities who are investigating the incident. "Let us wait for the outcome of the investigation before jumping to any conclusion whether this was an attack related to the High Commission at all."

## Mayans

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temple, originally radio-carbon-tested in 1960, scientists believe it shows the Maya culture did collapse a thousand years ago because it failed to cope with climate change - a proposition first suggested last year.

The Central American people had developed a sophisticated society, accurate calendars and complex architecture including pyramids.

They thrived during rainy periods but a prolonged drought somewhere between AD 800 and 1100 is said to have brought about its collapse.

For a long time, experts struggled to match dates from the Mayan Long Count calendar with the modern European calendar.

The Long Count system comprised 20-day cycles made up of k'in, which formed 360-day cycles known as tun.

Another unit, b'ak tun, represented a cycle of 400 years - and it was the ending of one of these that led to the belief of the apocalypse in 2012.

Now, archaeologist Douglas Kennett, from Pennsylvania State University, has applied modern carbon dating methods to a lintel, carved with historical records, found at Tikal, which was a major Mayan city, according to NBC News.

His aim was to confirm the accuracy of the dating: 50 years ago, other researchers at the university reckoned the beam had been carved between AD 695 and 712.

"When looking at how climate affects the rise and fall of the Maya, I began to question how accurately the two calendars correlated using those methods," Kennett said.

As well as using carbon isotopes to establish its age, he and his team looked at the tree rings in the wood.

The date they concluded was around AD 658-696, which backed up the original correlation estimates.

The two estimates match up even more closely after factoring in the removal of ten to 15 years of wood growth while the carving took place, the researchers said in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

The lintel they analysed concerned the defeat of Tick'aak K'ahk', king of the nearby city of Calakmul, by Tikal's leader Jasaw Chan K'awil.

This is turned and confirmed the theory that the victory was in AD 695, 13 years after Jasaw Chan K'awil took to the throne