

Miladunnabi today

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elaborate programmes on this occasion.

The day is a public holiday.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages greeted the countrymen and Muslims across the world on the occasion.

In his message, Hamid said Almighty Allah sent Hazrat Muhammad (SM) to this world as a blessing for the entire mankind.

The overall welfare of mankind could be ensured by following the ideals of Prophet Muhammad (SM), he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in her message, expressed profound respect to the Prophet on the occasion of his birth and death anniversary.

With the advent of the holy Prophet, the

entire mankind received guidance filled with welfare, human values and morality, she said.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, private television channels and radio stations will air special programmes while newspapers will publish supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Meanwhile, Islamic Foundation began a fortnight-long programme including a book fair at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque on this occasion.

The other programmes of the foundation include holding a rally at 10:00am and organising qirat mahfil and hamd-naat competitions for students.

Different mosques, madrasas and various religious organisations in the country will also hold milad mahfil on the occasion.

Verdict on Jan 30

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In 2004, investigators submitted a charge sheet accusing 45 people in the smuggling case and 43 in the arms case. The accused were mostly labourers, truckers and trawler pilots.

In 2008, a Chittagong court ordered further investigation into the cases following which 11 more people, including Babar and Nizami, were accused in June, 2011, through a supplementary charge sheet.

The supplementary charge sheet also accused Ulfah leader Paresh Barua, former director general of NSI Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rahim, the then director (Counter Intelligence Bureau) of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezzakul Haider Chowdhury, former additional secretary of industries ministry Nurul Amin, former NSI director Wing Commander (ret'd) Shahab Uddin, former NSI deputy director Maj (ret'd) Liakat Hossain, former NSI field officer Akbar Hossain Khan, former managing director of CUFL Mohsin Uddin Talukder and former CUFL general manager KM Enamul Hoque.

DEFENCE ARGUMENTS

Nizami's lawyer Kafil Uddin claimed before the court that Nizami was implicated in the cases with political intention. He said the Awami League-led government was trying to eliminate Jamaat-e-Islami and its chief Nizami.

Kafil said the statements and depositions of two prosecution witnesses, former industries secretary Shoaib Ahmad and former chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, did not match.

The two had implicated Nizami in the cases.

Mahmudur Rahman, defence lawyer for prime accused Hafizur Rahman and former CUFL general manager KM Enamul Hoque, said any confessional statement must be recorded before a trial begins.

He said investigation officer of the cases additional superintendent of CID Moniruzzaman had prepared the supplementary charge sheet based on a confessional statement Hafizur had made years after the trial began in 2005.

He claimed that the statement of Hafizur should have no value before the law.

Kamrul Islam Sazzad, lawyer for former DGFI director Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezzakul Haider Chowdhury, said Rezzakul was implicated through the confessional statement of former NSI director Shahab.

He claimed that Shahab was tortured during his seven days in remand and was forced to make the baseless confessional statement, which mentioned links of NSI and DGFI officials with the arms smuggling.

He said none of the previous four investigation officers of the cases or any witness examined prior to the further investigation had mentioned any links of the officials with the arms smuggling.

Lawyers of former managing director of CUFL Mohsin Uddin Talukder, Deen Mohammad, former NSI field officer Akbar Hossain and former NSI director Shahab also placed their arguments.

The defence lawyers claimed that the prosecution could not prove any of the charges against their clients.



BGB members repair shops damaged in the BNP-Jamaat attacks at Kornai Bazaar of Dinajpur.

PHOTO: STAR

Dinajpur SP

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Government Primary School to motivate locals to maintain communal harmony.

On January 5, soon after polling closed, hundreds of Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men rampaged through the village, vandalising and torching more than 150 houses and shops owned by Hindus.

Addressing yesterday's meeting, Deputy Commissioner Ahmed Shamim Al Razi said the administration had already formed a three-member committee to probe the

incident.

Meanwhile, BGB members started to repair the damaged shops and houses in the village following a directive of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The government will rebuild all the Hindu temples and houses that were destroyed in the post-poll attacks. To this end, the prime minister has instructed the officials concerned, PM's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

In another development, the joint forces arrested 11 BNP and 16 Jamaat-Shibir men during raids from Sunday till yesterday morning in Jessore in connection with violence.

Earlier on Saturday night, three BNP activists were caught by villagers red-handed during an attempt at arson in a Hindu locality in Monirampur of the district.

They were handed over to the joint forces, police said, adding that the trio were masked and equipped with sharp weapons.

New Sangsad sits Jan 29

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the new House will elect its speaker and deputy speaker, and they will be sworn in immediately afterwards, officials at the parliament secretariat said.

The sitting will begin with outgoing

speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

Hamid will address the House, outlining the steps the newly formed government would take to make the JS effective and ensure good governance for the welfare of people.

The new parliament was constituted through the January 5 election held amid boycott by the BNP-led opposition alliance. The Awami League won three-fourths majority in the election which was the deadliest in the history of Bangladesh.

Greetings time at secretariat

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The secretariat, which hardly saw any visitor over the past several weeks, took a festive look yesterday as some officials competed against each other to welcome the new ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers.

Since morning, officials and employees of different ministries were ready with flower bouquets. Party supporters and activists and well-wishers also crowded the secretariat throughout the day to greet the ministers, who were sworn in on Sunday.

Food and sweetmeats were distributed in a number of ministries.

"It looks as if the secretariat has got back its usual lively atmosphere today," a health ministry official said sitting at the ministry's packed conference room. Officials were waiting for the new minister, Mohammad Nasim.

There was hardly any room at the conference hall of the LGRD and cooperatives ministry.

Talking to journalists at his ministry, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam said: "The tenure of this government will be five years."

He added that the dialogue with the BNP did not stop and was rather well underway.

Referring to the talks mediated by UN envoy Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Ashraf said they had nearly reached a consensus then. "But our words as negotiators were not final. There are powers above us."

According to Ashraf, also the AL general secretary, the BNP made a mistake by boycotting the election.

If election boycott becomes a culture, it will be impossible to hold any inclusive elections, he said, adding: "I will call on my party not to boycott the election ever."

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said they would try to complete the five-year tenure through good work.

Asked if the government would hold a mid-term election in case a consensus was reached, he said, "If there is a consensus, many things can happen."

About Ershad's Jatiya Party, Tofail said, "The Jatiya Party will play the role of the opposition party and criticise the government in a constructive way."

Mohammad Nasim said the atmosphere for talks would be created only if the BNP severed ties with the Jamaat and other organisations that created unrest.

He also thanked BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for lifting the countrywide blockade, which crippled the country for the last few months.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon said the talks would be hampered if the BNP and Jamaat continue to resort to violence.

He added the January 5 election was a battle, which the AL won.

On the possibility of mid-term polls, he said it would depend on what roles the BNP played.

However, Post and Telecommunications Minister Abdul Latif Siddique said, "The Awami League cannot reach a consensus with those who are autocratic, militant and criminals."

Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, state minister for home, warned that the government would go tough against the troublemakers.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said no law that goes against the interest of the people would be enacted.

Deadly 'email sins' Auto driver hurt in blast

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stress employees out.

Occupational psychologists believe they have identified seven deadly email sins that can lead to 'negative repercussions' if not handled correctly.

Responding to out of hours emails, for instance, may make an employee look keen but it can also mean workers find it difficult to switch off, according to the study.

This puts pressure on staff to be permanently on call and also puts pressure on those they deal with to respond so they are not seen to be outdone.

Email ping pong, where messages are responded to immediately by both sides until a long thread builds up, are particularly hated by many of those involved, it found.

Some workers were so obsessed by email it drives them and their colleagues to distraction, claimed the report to the British Psychological Society's annual conference.

Dr Emma Russell, from Kingston Business School, analysed 28 email users to see which habits had positive and negative influences on their working lives.

She identified seven habits which can be positive if used in moderation but are likely to be negative if not handled correctly.

Some create a problem for the sender rather than the receiver, she said, as they can lead to them giving out the wrong impression or not remaining in control of what they are doing.

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He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he underwent an eye operation immediately.

Bashir had a sense of relief from street violence witnessed in recent spells of hartals and blockades when he hit the road in the morning. But then a crude bomb was thrown at him taking him by surprise.

The bomb blasted smashing the front glass of his vehicle.

Activists of Islami Chhatra

Shibir, student body of the Jamaat-e-Islami, hurled the crude bomb when chased by police, sources in the police said.

Abu Jafar Md Omar Faruk, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said Shibir men had tried to bring out a procession in the area, protesting the murder of a Shibir leader at Chittagong University on Sunday. When police chased them, they blasted the bomb to create panic and fled the scene.

At the hospital, Bashir's wife Bibi Rekha was seen sobbing by the bedside of her unconscious husband.

"What was my husband's fault? There was no blockade or hartal today [yesterday]. Why then did they hurl a cocktail at him?" she said.

Hailing from Bhola, Bashir has been residing in the port city's Badurtala area along with his family, including his two sons and a daughter.

"If we have to face such a fate on a day

with no hartal or blockade, how we will drive vehicles and earn a living?" said Bashir's friends Shahabuddin and Ismail, urging the government to ensure security of vehicle drivers on the roads amid the prevailing political unrest.

In the first ten days of December last year, 12 civilians were killed and more than 30 injured critically in violence during blockades and hartals enforced by the BNP-led alliance.

Administration on promotion spree

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secretary, according to separate gazette notifications.

Sources in the public administration ministry, however, said the process of promoting civil servants to the posts of additional and deputy secretaries was finalised a month before the January 5 elections, apparently to make the civil service happy.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had held the promotions back to avoid potential criticism ahead of the polls, the sources added.

An excessive number of officials have been crowding each tier of the civil administration due to excessive promotions during the tenure of Awami League-led government in 2009-13, turning the bureaucracy top-

heavy.

During the period, more than 2,500 officials were promoted, which pushed the number of OSDs to nearly 600. Officer on Special Duty (OSD) is a position in which an officer has no official duty.

The placement and transfers of officials also became difficult as there were no vacant posts.

Earlier in November, senior secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder said excessive promotions had contributed to the number of OSDs and promotions should be awarded to only those who deserve them and to those who would retire soon.

"Everyone knows there are no vacant posts but the demand for

promotion is there from the officials. The promoted officials will not get new desks. We are promoting them to elevate their status and honour," he added.

Currently, there are 1,316 deputy secretaries against 830 posts, and 928 joint secretaries against 250 posts. Three secretaries are OSD as there are no vacant posts for them.

Thai protesters launch

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Tens or even hundreds of thousands of flag-waving protesters massed at key intersections in the city, setting up rally stages along with tents for sleeping and stalls offering free food.

The well-organised protest movement has vowed to occupy parts of the capital until Yingluck quits, threatening to disrupt a February election which it fears will only return the Shinawatra clan to power.

"Today will be written in Thai history," firebrand protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban told a rally yesterday night, vowing to intensify the shutdown until the government falls.

A hardcore faction of the movement has threatened to besiege the stock exchange and even air traffic control if Yingluck does not quit within days.

The International Crisis Group think-tank warned yesterday of a "potentially catastrophic" situation if people are denied the chance to vote.

"As anti-government protesters intensify actions, the risk of violence across wide swathes of the country is growing and significant," it said in a report.

Within hours of launching the shutdown, the movement succeeded in bringing widespread disruption to Bangkok's central retail and hotel districts, large swathes of which were taken over by whistle-blowing demonstrators.

Many schools were closed and some residents stockpiled food and water, but the city of roughly 12 million people -- which has grown accustomed to large political rallies in recent years -- did not grind to a complete halt.

The city's subway and skytrain were running as usual, shops and restaurants were open and demonstrators promised to leave a lane unblocked at each major intersection to allow ambulances and buses to pass.

While there was the usual Thai carnival atmosphere, protests in the kingdom have a history of suddenly turning bloody, often at night and sometimes involving unidentified gunmen seeking to incite violence.

Eight people, including a policeman, have been killed and dozens injured in street violence since the protests began over two months ago.

Fanning tensions, several shots were fired in a drive-by shooting at the headquarters of the opposition Democrat Party early yesterday, while elsewhere a protest security guard was shot and wounded in a quarrel, police said.

The protests are the latest chapter in a years-old political crisis that has gripped Thailand since Yingluck's older brother, fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, was ousted by royalist generals in 2006.

The recent rallies were triggered by a failed amnesty bill that could have allowed Thaksin to return without going to jail for a past corruption conviction.

The billionaire tycoon-turned-politician has strong electoral support in northern Thailand, but he is reviled by many southerners, Bangkok's middle class and members of the royalist establishment.

Roughly 20,000 police and soldiers were due to be deployed for the shutdown, although there was little sign of them on the streets.

The government has not tried to stop the protests, despite warnings that they could take a heavy toll on the economy and local businesses if they drag on.

"Of course it affects me -- I'm very stressed," said hair salon owner Tong, 69. "No customers are coming now as my regular customers cannot drive here."

Smaller rallies have been held in the capital to back the February election and oppose the shutdown, while thousands of government supporters gathered in various cities in northern Thailand.

The civil strife is the worst since 2010, when more than 90 people were killed in street clashes between pro-Thaksin protesters and armed soldiers.

The military -- traditionally a staunch supporter of the anti-Thaksin royalist establishment -- has said it will not crack down on the latest protests, which come as the country quietly braces for the end of ailing King Bhumibol Adulyadej's more than six-decade reign.