

People are burnt, killed in the name of movement

PM tells int'l sufi conference

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the Alem-Ulema and Sufis to build public opinion, with preaching the essence of Islam, against those who kill and torture people.

She made the call while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the International Sufi Conference 2015 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Bangladesh Tariqat Federation (BTF) arranged the day-long conference, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, with the slogan "Sufi idealism is only way to global peace". Islamic scholars from home and abroad including India, Germany, England, Russia and Bangladesh joined the conference.

Terming Islam the religion of peace and humanity, Hasina said it was a matter of misfortune that in Bangladesh now human beings were killing human beings.

She said the innocent people irrespective of women and children were being burnt to death with petrol bombs in the name of so-called movement.

"I don't know whether those who are unleashing such types of atrocities on the people believe in Islam, or have been derailed from it," she said.

Hasina said BNP-Jamaat does politics in the name of Islam. "But I feel extreme pain when I see that holy mosques were not spared from their destructive acts."

"There is nothing more heinous



than torching a mosque and it is the BNP-Jamaat nexus which dishonoured the holy Quran by torching the holy book. They burnt hundreds of copies of Quran, and there is no instance in the history of Islam that such a huge number of the holy books were torched," she said.

"The screaming and brutality we are seeing at burn units of the hospitals cannot be tolerated.

"I am leaving the matter of justice for the heinous crime before you," she told Alem-Ulema and Sufis.

Hasina said she was always vocal against such brutality not only in Bangladesh but also outside the country. "During my address to the UN General Assembly, I raised the Israeli aggression and atrocities on the innocent Palestinians including women and children," she said.

Hasina said those who were unleashing terrorists and militant acts were terrorists and militants. "They have no religion and border, they are small in number ... image of Islam is being tarnished due to their misdeeds."

She said the Jamaat terrorists were killing the innocent people to save war criminals, who would have been beheaded for their war crimes in any Islamic state.

The prime minister said the BNP-Jamaat killed over 200 people to foil the January 5 polls. "They also killed about 100 people in the last one and a half months in the name of hartal and blockade," she said.



Garment industry associations BGMEA, BKMEA and BTMA organise a hunger strike in front of the BGMEA office in the capital yesterday protesting the ongoing blockade which is hurting the sector.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Resolve crisis now

FROM PAGE 1

One would decide on the business community's next course of action and liaise between business and political leaders, while the other would assess the apparel factories' loss in the current political turmoil.

Business leaders from different sectors along with members of trade unions, trade bodies and chambers took part in yesterday's hunger strike from 11:00am to 6:00pm.

The BGMEA, Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) organised the protest programme.

While the hunger strike was on, unidentified criminals exploded a crude bomb near the venue around 12:30pm. None was hurt.

Witnesses said the crude bomb was thrown from a CNG-run autorickshaw, which then sped away.

Expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers, Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), urged political leaders to resolve the crisis through understanding and cooperation.

"We want peace. Both the political parties have to solve the crisis peacefully."

On February 8, businesspeople observed protest programmes under the FBCCI leadership across the country, demanding an end to the stalemate. But it didn't yield any results, he said.

Referring to political leaders, BTMA President Tapan Chowdhury, "Please

resolve the crisis soon. I hope we will not need to plan for any fresh programme."

More than one crore people directly and over five crore are indirectly involved in the garment sector, he said.

"If the sector is affected, the whole economy will be affected seriously. We cannot be victims of political violence," said Tapan.

Calling upon political leaders to end the stalemate through dialogue, Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, said violent politics is damaging the country's economic potentials.

Former BGMEA president Anwarul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez sought a permanent solution to the crisis.

"Without political stability, we might not achieve our target of export-

ing garments worth \$50 billion by the end of 2021," said Parvez.

Another ex-BGMEA president Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin said, "If you don't practise healthy politics, people will get agitated one day and you [political leaders] will not be able to escape."

Former FBCCI president AK Azad said foreign retailers are sending messages to garment makers every day with warnings of shifting work orders to other destinations.

The retailers, who are to place new orders, are cancelling trips to Bangladesh due to the ongoing political crisis, he said.

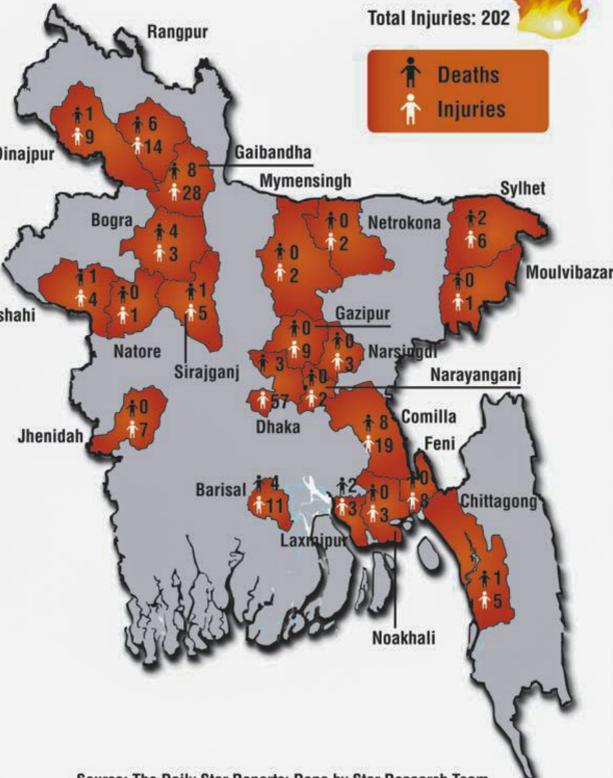
At 6:00pm, business leaders broke their fast with water offered by Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique.

Petrol Bomb Attacks In Bangladesh (Jan 5 - Feb 13)

Total Deaths: 41
Total Injuries: 202



Deaths
Injuries



Source: The Daily Star Reports; Done by Star Research Team

Hosts set the pace

FROM PAGE 1

Melbourne Cricket Ground. Australia opener Aaron Finch, on his home ground, compiled the tournament's first century with a blistering innings of 135, having been dropped before he had scored by Chris Woakes off James Anderson.

Finch's knock, which featured 12 fours and three sixes was the cornerstone of Australia's 342 for nine, with England pacesman Steven Finn's hat-trick -- another first at this World Cup -- all but irrelevant.

Medium-pace Mitchell Marsh, like Finch making his World Cup debut, then starred with the ball to take five for 33 as England were dismissed for 231 despite James Taylor's gutsy 98 not out.

England skipper Eoin Morgan flopped again with the bat as he was out for his fourth duck in five innings.

New Zealand cemented their status as genuine contenders for the World Cup with a comprehensive victory over 1996 champions Sri Lanka, the losing finalists at the last two editions.

Co-hosts New Zealand piled up 331 for six after losing the toss at a chilly Hagley Oval, with skipper Brendon McCullum (65) and Kane Williamson (57) laying the foundations before all-rounder Corey Anderson smashed 75 off just 46 balls at the finish.

The most astonishing feature of the innings, however, was that Sri Lanka spearhead Lasith Malinga, went wicketless in an expensive 10-over

spell costing 84 runs.

Sri Lanka were well-placed at 124 for one but their innings fell away, with all-rounder Anderson taking two for 18.

One highlight for Sri Lanka was that Kumar Sangakkara scored the 12 runs he needed to go into second place on the list of highest one-day international run-scorers, passing Australia's Ricky Ponting, who made 13,704 runs before he retired.

Like the opening day, the second day also features two matches. South Africa, looking to end their World Cup heartache, will launch their quest for the title against Zimbabwe in an all-African clash at Hamilton's Seddon Park.

But what billions of people will be eagerly waiting to witness today is the second match between India and Pakistan, the fiercest of rivals, at the Adelaide oval.

Pakistan, who won their only World Cup in Australia in 1992, will be looking to break their world cup duck against the defending champions India.

This match is expected to be the most watched contest in the history of cricket. When general admission tickets for the match went on sale a year ago, they sold out in 20 minutes. Recent re-releases sold in seconds. That is because this game is not just cricket, it is also conflict, and Bollywood morphed into one. This is the Greatest Show on Turf.

Worries pile up for people

FROM PAGE 1

Like Mizanur and Shahnaz, people in general and the international community are calling for restraint as the blockade violence has already claimed 70 lives. At least a thousand more were injured, mostly in arson.

SSC examinees and their parents are among the worst victims, as the exam schedule has collapsed in frequent shutdowns.

"Now our concern is if exam will be held tomorrow, not that how today's exam went," Shirin Akhter,

homemaker and mother of an SSC examinee, told The Daily Star.

Nobody is taking people's sufferings into account, she said.

"Politics of conflict and violence is pushing the nation backwards," said Shirin, also a political science graduate.

Her daughter Shoily Moni, a student of Holy Cross Girls' School, said frequent changes in exam schedules were seriously hampering her preparations.

Apart from education, the economy is bleeding profusely. The country's

top chambers estimate business has incurred a loss of Tk 2,277 crore a day since the blockade started on January 6.

Farmers are failing to sell their produce while sufferings of low-income groups are far more than they can bear.

Rabiul Islam, 25, a rickshaw puller, whose earnings have dwindled from nearly Tk 700 to less than Tk 300 a day, says he does not bother about who is in power or in the opposition. All he wants is peace.

Shafiq Gazi, a 60-year-old vendor

in the city's Tejgaon area, said his sales now have declined from Tk 8,000 to Tk 2,500 a day.

MA Naser, owner of a shoe store in Farmgate area of the capital, said hartal has turned too violent these days.

"Hartal was always a means of protest but it was never like this."

Both Shafique and Naser say the two leaders -- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia -- have to sit for dialogue for a solution, but the violence must end immediately.

Bahrain police fire tear gas as protests mark uprising

AFP, Dubai

Bahraini police fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of Shia protesters who took to the streets Saturday on the fourth anniversary of an uprising that deeply divided the key US ally.

Police deployed heavily as men and women carrying Bahrain's red and white flag alongside portraits of detained activists chanted "Down Hamad", in reference to the Sunni king, witnesses said.

They fired tear gas and sound bombs after beefing up security around several villages and along major roads across the country, the witnesses said, without reporting any casualties.

The opposition said on Twitter however that the police fired buckshot, and posted pictures of wounded protesters. It also said several activists were arrested.

The security measures were aimed at keeping the demonstrators out of central Manama, where the 2011 uprising was focussed.

Protesters burned tyres and used rocks, garbage containers and branches to block roads in the villages.

The radical February 14 Coalition, a cyber youth group, had urged demonstrations and strikes across the kingdom under the slogan "Strike of Defiance".

But the public security chief, Major-General Tariq al-Hassan, had issued a stern warning against the protests.

"Action will be taken against those who spread terror among citizens or residents, put the safety of others at risk or try to disrupt the nation's security and stability," he said.

Kejriwal swears to end 'VIP culture'

BBC ONLINE

Anti-corruption activist Arvind Kejriwal has vowed to end Delhi's "VIP culture" as he was sworn in as the Indian capital's chief minister.

The ceremony took place at an open ground, the Ramliya Maidan, in front of thousands of cheering supporters.

Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won 67 of 70 seats in the state assembly, trouncing both the mainstream parties.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which won a landslide in last year's general election, was reduced to three seats.

It was a major setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Congress, historically the biggest party in Delhi, was wiped out.

"I knew the people of Delhi love me, but I didn't know they love me so much," Kejriwal reportedly quipped at the ceremony, BBC report.

'CORRUPTION-FREE DELHI'

During his inauguration speech, Kejriwal said he would end the "VIP culture" that privileges politicians above ordinary citizens - for instance, allowing them to bypass the gridlocked city traffic.

"In developed countries, even PMs wait at bus stands. Why can't the same happen here?" he said.

"We want to end the VIP culture in this country."

He pledged to make Delhi "India's first corruption-free state" in five years.

"If somebody asks for a bribe, don't say no. Just take your mobile out of your pocket and record it on your phone," he was quoted as saying by AFP news agency.

He has promised to end corruption and lower electricity and water bills.

Kejriwal invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the ceremony but a spokesman for the chief minister-elect said Modi had turned down the invitation.

Kejriwal was sworn in as chief minister at the same place in 2013, although he resigned after 49 days after failing to pass an anti-corruption bill.

The AAP was born out of an anti-corruption movement that swept India three years ago.

During his last brief tenure as chief minister, Kejriwal famously declared himself an anarchist and staged several street protests outside government offices.

Before last Saturday's election he apologised for leaving voters without an elected government for a year, telling the Times of India daily that he and his party had "evolved".

Kejriwal appears eager to project a more grown-up image this time around, reports AFP.

He arrived at Saturday's swearing-in by car, after famously travelling by metro to his first inauguration.

Posters at the site showed him dressed soberly in a shirt and jacket and without the trademark woolly scarf that earned him the nickname "Muffer Man".

Kejriwal quit his comfortable and highly sought-after government job in 2001 and embarked on a career as an anti-corruption campaigner that led to national fame.

The taxman-turned-politician came to prominence as an adviser to elderly social activist Anna Hazare, whose 2011 anti-graft drive galvanised India.

Jubo League leader killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Unidentified assailants hacked a Jubo League leader to death in Rangunia upazila yesterday evening.

The dead is Md Jasim, 32, vice-president of Pomra union unit Jubo League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League.

Quoting locals, police said some four to five criminals came to Choumahani by a CNG-run autorickshaw around 6:00pm and forced Jasim into the vehicle.

Jasim was sitting at a tea stall. The criminals later chopped the Jubo league leader and left him by the roadside.

Locals rushed Jasim to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

The motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

Chad's ex-president Habre to stand trial for war crimes

AFP, Dakar

Senegalese authorities on Friday ordered former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre to appear before a special tribunal to stand trial for torture, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Once dubbed "Africa's Pinochet", Habre has been in custody in the Senegalese capital Dakar since his arrest in June 2013 at the home he shared with his wife and children.

Rights groups say 40,000 people were killed during the 72-year-old's eight years in power in Chad under a regime marked by fierce repression of his opponents and the targeting of ethnic groups.

The Extraordinary African Chamber, set up by Senegal and the African Union to deal with Habre's case, announced it had made an order of "partial dismissal of proceedings, of impeachment and referral".