



When the guitar weeps for a nation

Bangladeshi musicians unite to aid Gaza

“I don’t know how else we can help a nation that is repeatedly being wronged other than through our art,” said Ahmed Hasan Sunny, a rising star in the music industry. “We’ve remained an audience, helpless after seeing bombs dropped on civilians, hospitals and innocent children in Gaza. We decided to do something about it.” The young artiste took the challenge to organise a concert in support of Gaza’s hand-in-hand with artist Morshed Mishu, who was already planning to make graffiti to speak up for the oppressed people of Gaza.

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ & NAZIBA BASHER

Thus, *To Gaza from Dhaka-Artists Against Genocide* was born. The concert will take place today at the Hatirjheel Amphitheatre. From a seed of hope from the mind of a young singer, the cause has been joined by Maqsood O’ Dhaka, Ark, Nemesis, Meghdol, Karnival, Shohojia, Bangla Five, Shohojia, Highway, Hatirpool Sessions, Firoze Jong, Moruvumi, The Moon Flower Project, Shafayat, Black Zang, Masha Islam, Aseer Arman, Muiz Mahfuz and Avishek Bhattacharjee. Prince Mahmud and Latiful Islam Shibli will be distinguished guests during the event.

In an upstanding display of responsibility, none of the artistes will take any remuneration for their performance. “Why should we?” remarked Jon Kabir. “We have to be united in situations like these. This is the time for solidarity, so we, as musicians, must do anything we can. This is not just about the money; in all honesty, it might not be much in the greater context of the losses that the people of Gaza are seeing every

day – it is about the message, that we are with them and stand by their side.”

Even though the concert is for a good cause, it does not stop netizens from being sceptical about how much a musical programme can help a crisis as serious as the humanitarian one in Gaza.

Nemesis frontman Zohad Reza Chowdhury answered some critics with his statement to The Daily Star, “This is a great initiative. I don’t know why some people are complaining –



PHOTOS: COURTESY

we, musicians, will obviously look to contribute with what we do best – our music. Look at 1971’s concert for Bangladesh; more than the monetary contribution, it played an integral part in letting the world know about our cause in the Liberation War.”

“My upbringing will not allow me to take money for this,” said Masha Islam. “It’s not easy to fight for something like this alone. I’m glad my peers are showing solidarity. It takes courage and bravery to raise a voice against a politically unstable matter

with different minds, religions and morals involved.”

Rapper Black Zang commented that no matter how minimal the contribution is, he is proud to be a part of this noble initiative. “Look, a lot of people have donated directly to the cause. As musicians, we are doing what we can – sending a proper message to the world. Even if it can alleviate 0.01 per cent of someone’s pain, we’ll take it.”

Aseer Arman echoed a similar sentiment, “You wouldn’t sit still if it was your friend/family member in Palestine who lost their parents. You’d send Tk 500 if it meant your friend could have a single meal – that is how we think.”

Through the concert, Funds will be sent to Gaza through NGOs such as Palestine Children’s Relief Fund, Red Crescent, or UNRWA USA – the event spokesperson will release all transaction details to maintain transparency.

“This is not just about a certain race or religion; this is about humanity,” maintained Sunny. “In this humanitarian crisis, we urge everyone to come forward and contribute in whichever way you can.”

NEWS

137 BNP men sentenced

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Defence lawyer Sayed Nazrul Islam expressed his dissatisfaction over the verdict.

He told The Daily Star that only six witnesses testified in court and none mentioned the name of his client, Jahangir.

“But still he was punished ... We’ll challenge the verdict at the higher court.”

On November 26, 2013, police filed a case with Uttara East Police Station, accusing 73 BNP leaders and activists, including Jahangir.

According to the case statement, the accused gathered in front of Azampur Rail Gate area in the capital’s Uttara that day and hurled crude bombs during a blockade called by the BNP-led alliance.

On April 20, 2014, police pressed charges against 77 people.

On Wednesday, another Dhaka

court sentenced SM Jahangir and 10 others to seven years’ rigorous imprisonment in a case filed with the same police station under the Explosive Substances Act.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka tribunal yesterday sentenced 12 leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations to seven years’ rigorous imprisonment each in a case filed with Kotwali Police Station on March 8, 2015, under the Explosive Substances Act.

Jubo Dal’s Central Committee Organising Secretary Ishaq Ali Sarker was among the convicts.

Judge Mamunur Rahman Siddiqui of Dhaka Metropolitan Special Tribunal-10 handed down the sentence in their absence.

In another development, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Syful Islam yesterday sentenced 50 leaders and activists of BNP and its

front organizations to 33 months’ rigorous imprisonment each in a case filed with Lalbagh Police Station for assaulting police personnel on November 26, 2013.

BAIL OF THREE LAWYERS

A Dhaka court yesterday granted three BNP lawyers and leaders ad-interim bail till January 24, 2024, in a case filed over the attack on the chief justice’s residence on October 28.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge’s Court granted them bail after Zainul Abedin, Nitai Roy Chowdhury and AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon surrendered before it and sought bail.

On November 7, the High Court granted them anticipatory bail for three weeks upon surrender and directed them to surrender before the lower court concerned in three weeks.

Stern action

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past, they again became isolated from the people.”

The PM urged the BNP to take part in the January 7 elections. “Awami League also wants to see who has greater strength.”

She said the AL wants democracy to prevail in the country and the political parties to continue their activities freely.

“But the Awami League didn’t have this opportunity when the BNP was in power. Some 21,000 Awami League leaders and activists were killed across the country during their rule.”

The AL chief ruled out any confusion regarding free and fair elections. “There is no doubt about free and fair polls.”

She urged the people to exercise their voting rights with great confidence.

The PM said the AL government enacted a law to make the Election Commission independent, which was once under the Prime Minister’s Office.

Hasina alleged that people were cheated in the name of democracy during the rule of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman.

Criticising the foreign countries that are now talking about Bangladesh, she said, “Where was their conscience when the military dictators violated people’s rights?”

The AL president said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia had to resign as PM on March 30, 1996, over “vote rigging”.

AL tickets for north

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AL candidates for 72 constituencies, the board adjourned the meeting until 10:00am today.

The AL board finalised candidates for 33 constituencies in Rangpur and 39 in Rajshahi divisions.

After the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader told reporters that they prioritised popularity while picking candidates. He said some incumbent MPs were dropped.

The names of those picked were not officially disclosed.

Quader said all the chosen ones would be revealed on Saturday.

Most incumbent MPs of the 72 constituencies have been picked, said sources.

According to AL insiders, former MP of Kurigram-2 and district AL President Zafar Ali has been picked over incumbent lawmaker Panir Uddin Ahamed.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan was picked for Panchagarh-2 and nomination board member and incumbent MP Ramesh Chandra Sen for Thakurgaon-1, according to sources.

There were no changes in six constituencies of Dinajpur – Manoranjan Shil Gopal for Dinajpur-1, incumbent MP and State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury for Dinajpur-2, incumbent whip Iqbalur Rahim for Dinajpur-3, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali for Dinajpur-4, Mostafizur

Rahman for Dinajpur-5 and Shibli-Sadeeq for Dinajpur-6.

Incumbent lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor got the party ticket for Nilphamari-2 and serving lawmaker Motahar Hossain got Lalmonirhat-1.

Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed got the party ticket for Lalmonirhat-2, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi Rangpur-4, MA Matin Kurigram-3, State Minister of Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain Kurigram-4, Mahabub Ara Begum Gini Gaibandha-2, Monowar Hossain Chowdhury Gaibandha-4, and Mahmud Hassan Gaibandha-5.

Whip Abu Sayeed Al Mahmood Swapon was picked for Jaipurhat-2, Samil Uddin Ahmed Shimul Chapainawabganj-1, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder Naogaon-1, Shahiduzzaman Sarker Naogaon-2, Emad Uddin Naogaon-4, Nizam Uddin Jalil John Naogaon-5, Ayeen Uddin Rajshahi-3, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam Rajshahi-6, Shihedul Islam (Bakul) Natore-1, State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak Natore-3, Tanvir Shakil Joy Sirajganj-1, Abdul Aziz Sirajganj-3, Tanveer Imam Sirajganj-4, Abdul Momin Mondol Sirajganj-5, Deputy Speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku Pabna-1, Mokbul Hossain Pabna-3, Nuruzzaman Biswas Pabna-4, and Golam Faruk Khandakar Prince was picked for Pabna-5, according to sources.

War rages on in Gaza

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fighting and release of hostages.

“The pause will begin at 7:00 am on Friday ... and the first batch of civilian hostages will be handed over at approximately 4:00 pm on the same day,” Majed Al-Ansari, Qatar’s foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday, adding that the number of people freed will be thirteen.

Israel has said the truce could last beyond the initial four days as long as Hamas free at least 10 hostages per day. Both sides have said they will go back to fighting once the truce is over, reports Reuters.

“We are not ending the war. We will continue until we are victorious,” the chief of the Israeli general staff, Lieutenant-General Herzi Halevi, told commanders in a video released by the military yesterday.

Since the Israeli offensive began on October 7, more than 14,000 Gazans have been killed by Israeli bombardment, around 40 percent of them children, according to health authorities in the Hamas-ruled territory.

Thousands of children have been killed in Gaza, “the most dangerous place in the world to be a child”, said Catherine Russell, executive director of the UN children’s fund, Unicef.

US interfered in Bangladesh’s internal affairs

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The statement comes when the BNP and Jamaat are enforcing strikes and blockades across the country after the October 28 BNP rally that was mired with clashes.

The US has been calling for holding free, fair, and peaceful elections in Bangladesh. Haas met different political leaders and ministers in recent times.

On November 13, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Donald Lu sent letters to three political parties – the Awami League, BNP, and Jatiya Party – urging them to engage in dialogue without conditions amid escalating political tensions.

Another bout of 48-hr blockade from Sunday

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police clashed during the party’s grand rally in the capital’s Nayapaltan.

The BNP claimed that since then 15,600 party leaders and activists were arrested, including yesterday’s 410.

During this period, 384 cases were filed against party activists, it added.

Rab said it arrested 31 people yesterday, adding that with them, 690 people were held in connection with violence since October 28.

ARSON ATTACKS

In Dhaka, arsonists torched a bus in Bijoynagar area around 12:50pm, said Talha Bin Zasin, an officer of the fire service.

On information, two fire engines

rushed to the spot and doused the fire.

In Gazipur, criminals set two lorries alight on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway around 5:30am yesterday, said Abdus Samad, station officer of Gazipur fire service.

He added that pickets in a car and a motorbike intercepted the cotton-carrying lorries at Salna and set those on fire after pouring petrol on them.

No one was hurt in the attack.

In another incident, two constables were injured in Rajshahi as helmet-wearing criminals hurled a crude bomb at a human haulier carrying police personnel on Wednesday night, said Shakhawat Hossain, a sub-

inspector of Airport Police Station, who was in the vehicle.

The constables – Zahidul Islam and Shamim Haider – were admitted to the police lines hospital in Rajshahi, the SI added.

In Kishoreganj, blockade supporters torched a pickup truck on Choyoti road in Kuliarchar early yesterday, said Golam Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Kuliarchar Police Station.

Pickup owner Abdul Mannan filed a case with the police station against 15-20 unidentified people, said the OC.

[Our correspondents in Gazipur, Rajshahi and Kishoreganj contributed to this report]

CAAB suspends Biman captain

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involvement of Capt Sazid in recruitment-related irregularities.

A Biman internal investigation found that he was involved in creating an “artificial pilot crisis” just to have his wife Sadia Ahmed recruited as a contractual pilot, said sources with knowledge of the probe.

The Daily Star in its report had pointed that Sadia’s Higher Secondary School certificate was forged.

In late March, CAAB suspended her licence after finding that her educational certificate is fake.

A probe was initiated against Sadia but she left the country without appearing before a Biman probe body.

Biman’s probe was abruptly stopped on October 18, according to an office order. Biman said it stopped the probe because the High Court had formed a committee to investigate the matter.

The HC, however, had issued no directives to Biman about stopping its probe.