

'Oligoli Halkhata' to usher in Pahela Baishakh



CITY DESK

The Bangla New Year 1432 will be celebrated in the Dhaka North City Corporation area through a vibrant event titled "Oligoli Halkhata," organised by "Oligoli Borshoboron Bondhugan" and initiated by the Gulshan Society.

The announcement came during a press conference held yesterday at Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed Park in the capital's Gulshan.

The event is being organised to bring together residents and communities through cultural festivities marking Pahela Baishakh.

Barrister Omar Sadat, president of the Gulshan Society; Syed Ahsan Habib, general secretary of the society; its members Srabonti Dutta and Navim Murshid; and Muhammad Tarikul Islam were present during the press conference, among others.

24 years on, justice still eludes

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the hearings and kept the verdict as curia advisari vult - meaning it could be delivered any day.

According to court sources, the case appeared on cause lists 440 times, but hearings were often deferred due to requests from state lawyers.

Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, a defence lawyer, told The Daily Star on April 9 that the verdict might be delivered within this month, once the court reopens on April 20 after its annual vacation.

"The evidence presented by the prosecution was not sufficient to justify sentencing," he claimed.

On April 14, 2001, two bombs went off during Pahela Baishakh 1408 celebrations organised by Chhayanaut at Ramna Batamul in the capital.

On June 23, 2014, a

Dhaka court sentenced eight individuals to death: Mufti Abdul Hannan, Moulana Abkar Hossain alias Helaluddin, Moulana Mohammad Tajuddin, Hafez Jahangir Alam Badar, Moulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Hahlader, Mufti Shafiqur Rahman, Mufti Abdul Hye, and Arif Hasan Suman.

Another six - Moulana Abu Taher, Moulana Sabir alias Abdul Hannan, Moulana Yahya, Moulana Shawkat Osman, Moulana Abdur Rouf, and Shahadat Ullah - were sentenced to life imprisonment.

All convicts were reportedly members of the banned Islamist group Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI).

Mufti Abdul Hannan, one of the country's most notorious militants, who was behind several HuJI-led attacks, was executed

on April 13, 2017, for a separate grenade attack targeting the then British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in Sylhet. Some other accused in that case remain absconding.

During the HC hearings on the death reference and appeals, defence lawyers sought acquittal for the convicts, arguing that although 61 prosecution witnesses testified, none were eyewitnesses or even gave hearsay evidence.

Defence lawyer Shishir Manir also claimed that no circumstantial evidence was found during the nearly eight-year investigation and confessional statements from three accused were obtained under torture and contradicted one another.

On the other hand, Deputy Attorney General Sultana Akter Rubi urged the court to uphold the trial court's verdict.

Dengue risk

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Meanwhile, residents in some areas are already raising concerns. Mizanur Rahman, a resident of Jurain, blamed the city corporation for inaction.

"Several breeding sites, around houses and in the drains, are already active. Soon, these will turn into adult mosquitoes," he said.

He also said elevated roads in parts of Jurain have caused year-round water stagnation in houses and yards, creating ideal conditions for Aedes breeding.

"If the city corporation doesn't act now, Jurain could be one of the worst-affected areas this year," he added.

Contacted, Md Emdadul Hoque, deputy chief health officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, said preparations for the dengue season are underway.

"Along with our regular operations, mosquito control workers are continuing anti-mosquito drives," he said.

An official from Dhaka South City Corporation echoed him.

Time to move

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dependency is contributing to the climate crisis and threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions, particularly in coastal areas.

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), criticised the IEPMP for continuing the previous government's flawed energy planning.

Sohanur Rahman, executive coordinator of YouthNet Global, said youth voices must be meaningfully included in national energy planning processes, including the National Determined Contribution (NDC).

Prof Kamruzzaman Majumder, chairman of the Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS), also highlighted environmental gaps in the plan and called on policymakers to integrate climate considerations.

Potters in Patuakhali

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and household goods," he said. "Clay dinner sets are particularly popular, with a 16-36 piece set priced between Tk 2,000 and Tk 4,500."

"Our products are collected by brands such as Aarong and are sold across the country," Barun added. "Many items are even exported abroad, like to the US, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and Dubai, by both foreign buyers and Bangladeshi expatriates," Barun also said.

Another artisan, Kamal Pal, said government support - especially easy access to bank loans and technical assistance - could help the industry grow further.

Highlighting logistical challenges, Govinda Pal, a trader, said, "Since

Patuakhali produces a large volume of watermelon during this season, it's harder to find trucks for transporting our products. Freight costs have also increased."

"Now the transport cost reaches up to Tk 20,000, which was previously Tk 10,000-15,000," he added.

Contacted, Md Al Amin, sub-assistant general manager of Patuakhali BSCIC, said, "We provide training and low-interest loans to pottery artisans in Baufal. During the pandemic, we provided nearly Tk 50 lakh in bank loans."

"We also help with design innovation and are working to get their products recognised with GI (Geographical Indication) status," he added.

Farmers pay Tk 1,000

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Abdus Samad, gatekeeper of the Teesta Irrigation Project and president of the farmers' association in Dimla village, said farmers pay for irrigation water through the association.

He said the association employs workers to clean and monitor the canals in the irrigation area, which is why farmers are charged extra.

"After paying the government rate, the extra money is spent on the welfare of the association members," he claimed.

The Teesta Barrage, located over the Teesta River in the Doani area of Hatibandha upazila in Lalmonirhat, is the largest irrigation project in the country. The barrage was built in 1990, and the irrigation project was launched in 1992.

There are 78 farmers' associations in the project area, each with a gatekeeper to assist farmers in supplying water to their land.

Amolesh Chandra Roy, sub-extension officer of BWDB in Rangpur, said it is not feasible for the BWDB to monitor such a

large area without forming farmers' associations.

He said the association leaders must pay the irrigation fee on time. "I have not heard of any extra charges, and no farmer has complained in this regard," he added.

Amitav Chowdhury, BWDB executive engineer in Daloa, said he was not aware of any information regarding farmers being charged extra money.

He said he would investigate the matter and take necessary action.

Body of missing

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allegedly beaten until he lost consciousness and later died from his injuries. The group then buried the body in the tea garden hillocks to hide the crime, the OC said.

Md Salimul Haque, assistant superintendent of police (Madhabpur Circle), confirmed that the body had been sent to Habiganj Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

Police said efforts are underway to identify and arrest the other individuals involved.

Accountability key

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the ICC. The ICC prosecutor lauded Bangladesh's unwavering stance for the cause of the international justice system, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The foreign adviser expressed Bangladesh's continued support for the Rome Statute and the ICC.

He said Bangladesh's interest in exploring tangible cooperation with the ICC in training experts, academics, and jurists.

He appreciated the

ICC for its stance vis-a-vis on the situation in the Rohingya crisis and Gaza. Both sides agreed to further enhance the level of existing engagements in the coming days.

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 12. Table with prayer times for Azan, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha, Jumaat, and other times.

451 cases filed in 2024

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Regarding concerns about accused individuals fleeing the country, Abdul Momen acknowledged the ACC's limitations.

Asked whether the ACC would conduct raids, he said, "The commission

is not a law enforcement agency and must rely on support from other institutions. It is known who remains in the country and who has left. Repatriating those abroad requires a complex international process."

Interim govt has no right to stay

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committed to restoring the people's right to vote. "That is why BNP has never craved power. Despite oppression and persecution, not a single activist has fled. The people still have confidence in us," she said.

She also stressed that BNP does not fear elections. "Even in opposition, we have never been afraid. Our goal is to restore people's fundamental rights, and the first step is to hold an election."

Meanwhile, Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Huq also raised concerns over the home adviser's comment, questioning the intention

behind it. Speaking at a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club, he said, "Is this statement a reflection of the government's stance? What is your agenda? What is the real objective?"

He urged the interim government to clarify its position and warned that such statements could undermine political trust and stability.

"If the adviser ignores the true intention of the government, Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus should come forward and state their official position," Saiful said.

"What you are doing in the name of the people will create confusion

between the government and political parties and increase distrust. As a result, whatever progress we could have made may be at risk of being undone," he said.

He also called upon the chief adviser to warn the members of the advisory council of the interim government to refrain from making unguarded comments.

"If they defy the warning, dismiss them. If necessary, appoint new responsible individuals," he said.

On behalf of his party, Saiful also demanded that the government arrange the next parliamentary election by December this year.

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