

Pooja — the Festival

by Waheedul Haque

THE approach of the Pooja is never announced by any human agent. A neighbour doesn't come up to you and help you with the knowledge that the Pooja would commence next fortnight. For you know it by yourself, perhaps told by the sun breaking brilliantly out of an overcast dark sky of the rains and the green around you shimmering in that light making you forget the dank earth and an ambience robbed of colour that tarried beyond their term. When one feels the approaching footsteps of Pooja, does one feel a great event of worshipping nearing? Never. When Tagore rhymes to say when there's chhuti or abandon painted all around, there rises the Pooja sun on a Pooja horizon. It's no worship or religious ritual that he talks of. Pooja is a kind of worship native to this subcontinent for at least four or five thousand years and not at all imported by the so-called Aryans. Pooja is flower-offering as a mark of respect and love. But when we say the Pooja — in English — and Pooja in Bengali with a special accent we do not at all mean worship, whether in the meaning of that which a yajmani Brahmin does on occasion in a house-holder's quarters or the noble girl offers her Shiv-thakur in expect-

tation of the groom of her dream or the women do to the domestic Thakur-asan of the inseparable duo Radha-Krishna. It very precisely means the all-involving social festival that goes into an uproarious five-day session actuated five days before at the Aswin new moon pre-dawn with a very evocative recital of verses from the Chandi. (How nostalgic one feels about this Mahalaya function broadcast over radio by Pankaj Kumar Mallik and Birendra Krishna Bhadra!) The Pooja is very clearly a celebration of nature. The Buddhists do the same thing — marking the end of Adhishthan or rainy season non-movement with a celebration of the rise of the glorious sun and the awaking refulgent nature with the very touching rites of the Kaalin Chatur Daan — presenting the Bhikshus with a yearly apparel of sack-cloth. That Pooja is decidedly more a festival than any religious rite is evident from there being an unsuspected plan behind it. While Pooja particularly means the festival of Durga — the Lady of the Fort — it actually opens a set of three festivals in one lunar cycle — the Aswin new moon to the new moon next.

The Durga Festival is closely followed by the full moon Lakshmi Pooja and next fortnight comes up the Kali Pooja. And Durga, Lakshmi and Kali are all manifestations of the divine goddess — of bliss, of wealth, of relief. So it's a monthful of festivals all celebrating the divine goddess in her divergent aspects of the benign restorer of order and light, the giver of wealth and plenitude and the demonic destroyer of evil. A magic casement of occasions to rejoice with the sunshine in the first of the occasions, with food and art in the second and with light, myriads of them in the dark of a new moon night, in the third. As with all other great human events on the calendar the Pooja can be taken to mean so many different things by different people and only true catholicity of mind can comprehend it from more than one point of view. The Bengali mind has humanised the simhabahini, slayer of the demons Mahisha, Madhu and Kaitabha — a very formidable expression of woman-power indeed — into a most lovable daughter of the house. He was never bothered by the difficulty of equating himself with the Himalaya, the fa-

ther of Uma and was literally gone beside himself with the joys of the daughter come home from her consort's abode in far Kailasa and the sadness of her going back away after all too short a stay at her father's. This is wholly a Bengali perception of Durga shared by no other people of the multinational subcontinent. What can it mean? Not only humanising the deity but investing it with a persona very very dear to the Bengali — that of the daughter's. Doesn't one hear a cry across the Aryanised patriarchal millennia, from our matriarchal ananya days? But it will be foolish to make a stereotype of the Bengali mind. For doesn't the same mind, from amongst the myriad peoples worshipping her, find in the same girl Kali, the revolting manifestation of Shakti — power — and go to inconceivable Tantrik heights of supra-normal, superhuman — almost anti-human — achievements? And through this the Bengali mind reaches up to the Adyashakti — the Primordial mother — or the primacy of the feminine principle as accepted by the very much Aryan Sakya in its conception of Prakriti. But whatever it is, it is Pooja — the festival, to the Bengali mind — to rejoice.

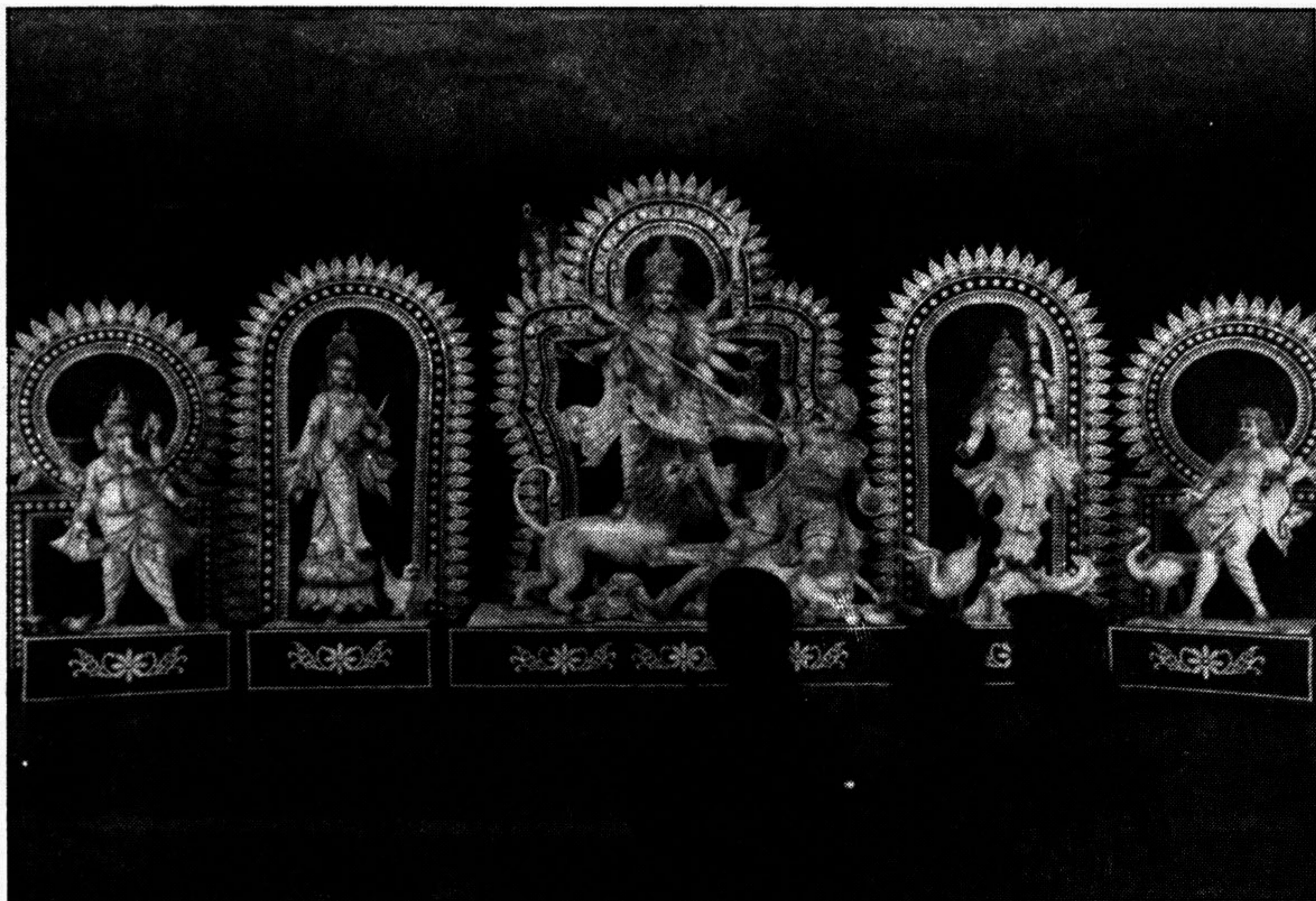


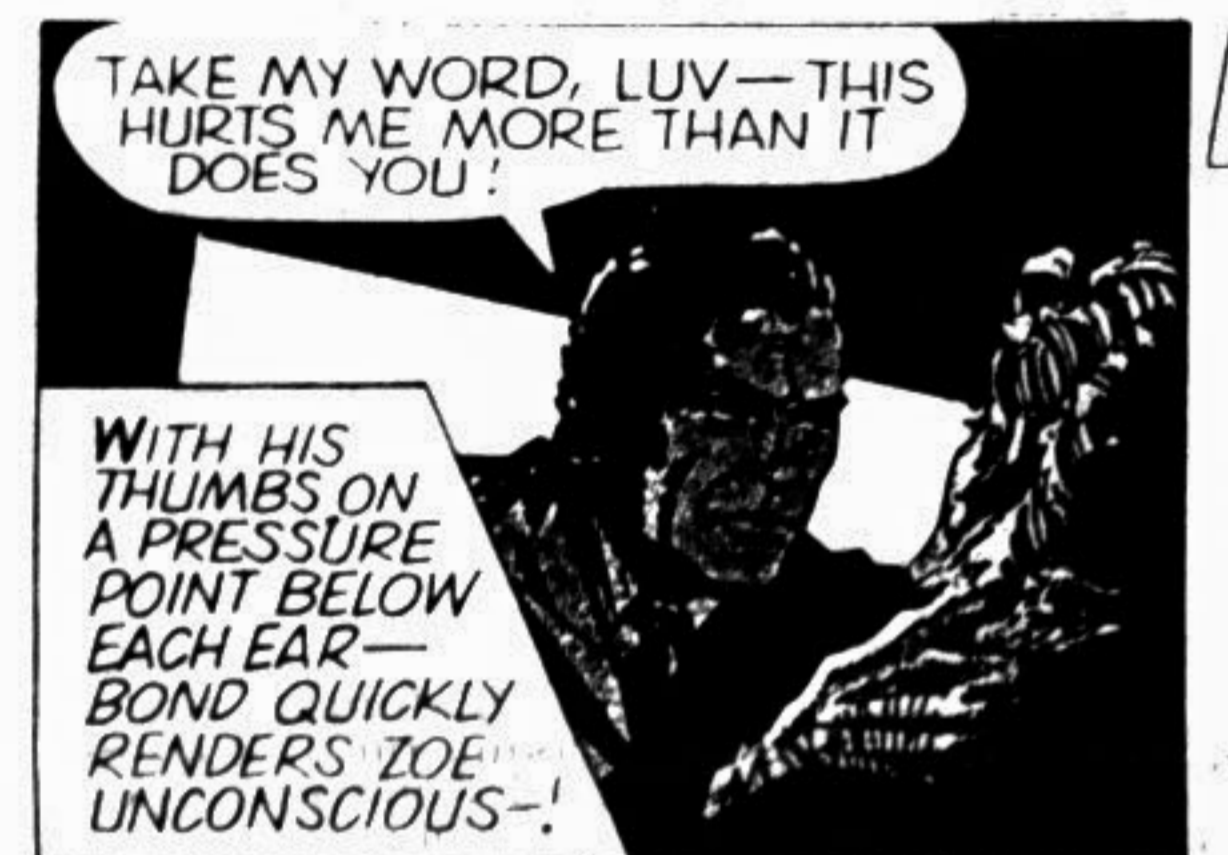
Photo by Zahidul Khan

Tom and Jerry



By Hanna-Barbera

James Bond



Metropolitan

Commander Rouf retired instead of being discharged

By Staff Correspondent
Instructor Commander Abdul Rouf, one of the accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case, has been retired as a naval instructor instead of being discharged. According to a press release yesterday, the President has approved on October 5 a Ministry of Defence proposal to retire him from service. His dismissal order was given on September 26, 1978. A close associate of Bangabandhu and a freedom fighter, Abdul Rouf was the Commanding Officer of BNS Issa Khan in 1975. He was falsely accused by the then military government of failing to control a mutiny in November 1975 in Chittagong naval base, the release said. Commander Rouf expressed his gratitude to the government, defence ministry and naval authorities and called for restoring the freedom fighters and political activists who were subjected to 'repressions' due to political reasons after the 1975 political changeover.

Internet service More involvement of pvt sector urged

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday underscored the need for more private sector involvement in making the internet service cheaper and to help expand its growth in Bangladesh, reports BSS. They also observed that the government should work only as a regulatory body instead of controlling the service. The seminar on 'Internet and its application' was organised by Bangladesh Computer Society at the seminar hall of Civil Engineering Department of BUET. Presided over the vice-president of the society, Prof Dr Aminul Hoque, it was also addressed by Dr Lutfur Rahman of Dhaka University computer department and Tareq Mosaddiq Barkatullah of Bangladesh Computer Council. At present, around 15 private organisations are working as internet service providers in the country. Bangladesh is connected to the global network through communication satellites via Singapore, the seminar was told.

HERE and THERE

VHSS
A discussion meeting was held at the auditorium of Voluntary Health Services Society (VHSS) in the city yesterday on the occasion of World Mental Health Day which will be observed today, reports UNB. Prof Hedayetul Islam was the chief guest at the discussion, organised by VHSS, an NGO. Director Programmes of VHSS Rowshan Rahman made the welcome speech while Mohammad Mahbubul Ashraf of the society presented a paper on mental and emotional health scenario in Bangladesh. Representatives of local and international NGOs participated in the discussion.

Suvechchha Film Society
State Minister for Youth and Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader Wednesday called upon the film-makers to

depict the real life of the people and the rich cultural heritage of Bangladesh in their creations, reports BSS. He said this would expand the way towards producing more and more healthy movies in the country to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people. The state minister was addressing as the chief guest the concluding function of the retrospective of Morshedul Islam's films at the Russian Cultural Centre. Suvechchha Film Society organised the retrospective which was inaugurated by the State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed on October 4. The concluding function was presided over by society's president and director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Azad Rahman. President of Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies and eminent cultural personality Hasan Imam was the special guest.

Ministers' meet party workers programme resumes

By Staff Correspondent
Ministers' meet the party workers programme resumes today after a week's interval, according to sources. Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Minister of State for Jute AKM Faizul Haque are scheduled to listen to the problems of the party workers at Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue this evening, the sources said. The programme was launched on September 15 and continued till October 1. Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina had earlier instructed ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers belonging to her party to make it a practice that everyone visits party's central office regularly and listen to party workers. The initiative was taken to 'bridge the gap between party leaders and workers.' Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad attended the first day's programme on September 15 and Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru met the party workers on October 1 when it was stopped temporarily. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, however, visited the party central office on October 4 last and met some 100 women, most of whom belong to families which suffered in democratic movements in the past.

Cultural team leaves for Islamabad

A 13-member cultural delegation, led by eminent artist Kalim Sharafi, left capital yesterday for Islamabad to attend the Cultural Festival of D-8, reports UNB. The delegation will play an important role in upholding the country's thousand years old cultural heritage and the glorious history of Liberation War in the festival to be organised by Pakistan. Other members of the delegation are: Hamida Haq, Shakila Zafar, Farida Parveen, Ferdous Ara, Rathindra Nath Roy, Tapan Chowdhury, Abida Sultana, Shamim Rahman, Zahid Hossain, Chandan Datta, Mohammad Monwar Hossain and Ishita Shabnam Srabanti.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Dr Bashiruddin Ahmed will be held today at Baitul Aman Housing Society Jame Masjid, Shymol in the city after Aar prayers, says a press release. Dr Ahmed died on October 5 at a hospital in Prague in the Czech Republic. He was 60. He left behind a son and a host of relatives.

The Traditional Ritual

by Gopal Sengupta

THE worship of Goddess Durga, according to mythologies, started from the very beginning, and the ritual is as old as the mythologies are. Originally Durga Puja used to be celebrated in spring season (Basanta) which is now called Basanti Puja. Durga Puja was first performed in Autumn by Ram Chandra in an emergency to secure power from the goddess in his battle against Ravana. Hindu worship Durga as per instructions in the Devi Purana considering Her as the goddess of relief from sorrows and miseries. She is the symbol of power (Shakti), to prevail over evil, and the devotees seek everything from her for happiness and prosperity in the material world. The prayer to the eternal goddess is for reputation and prosperity, for faculty and intelligence, for ushering in of beauty and annihilation of ugliness as described in the Chandi, the scripture. The mythology describes: After conquering the heaven the demon king Mahishasura, being powerful by the boon of Brahma, ruled the three worlds and expelled the gods from heaven. Then all the gods went to Shiva accompanied by Brahma and Vishnu to discuss the outrageous situation. After being informed of the evil activities of Mahishasura, Brahma,

Vishnu and Shiva became agitated and took decision to create a composed power from their energies. All other gods present agreed to contribute their energies too to create the power (Shakti). Thus rays of energies from all gods got compressed and manifested in the form of the Goddess. Her countenance was formed with the radiance from Shiva, radiance from Yama gave her the long dark hairs, from Vishnu's her bosom, from radiance of Indra her torso, her legs formed from the radiance of Varuna, from Prithivi's her back, her feet were formed with the radiance from Brahma, toes from the radiance of Sun, from radiance of Vasus her fingers were made. Her nose formed with the radiance from Kubera, her three eyes from the radiance of Agni. Marut gave her ears and the rest of her person was composed by Vishwakarma. And she appeared with 10 hands. The hands represent the multiplicity of strength during the time of war and peace. The ten main gods gave her their most powerful weapons in ten of her hands. Shiva gave her the Trident, Vishnu gave her the Sudarshan Chakra (cutting wheel), Varuna

gave her the Conch, Marut gave her the Bow and Arrows, Indra gave her the Bajra, (bolt), Yama gave her the Scepter, Brahma gave her the Kamandalu (water carrier). Sun gave radiance to pores of her person. Time gave her the Sword, Vishwakarma gave her his Ax and Armour, Himalaya gave her the Lion to ride in the battle with the demon king Mahishasura. Then she appeared in the battle against the evil. The fury and roar trembled the three worlds. And at the end of the great battle Mahishasura was killed along with his associates by Durga, the composed power of gods. Thus the composed power appeared and carried through the radiance of divinity. The composed force only manifests when evil forces threaten the very existence of the divine forces. Durga is the primordial and power par excellence. Durga is manifested as supreme Goddess — Brahmurupini, and exists as unmanifested absolute Divinity. She is Vishwarupa, Jagannayee, the goddess of the world. Durga symbolizes the non-dualistic existence of energized consciousness. Being the divine mother she destroys the

dis harmony that is creating imbalance in the phenomenal world. She is well-wisher of all even of those she destroys because she is their mother too. After killing of Mahishasura in a battle the gods asked Durga, why she enacted the drama of war instead of killing the demon king and his associates instantly with her supreme power of radiance. The divine mother replied, 'If I had burnt them like that, they would have gone to hell and it would have been difficult for them to evolve. But by fighting with me and getting killed by me, they attain heaven, where they will change their beings. This Durga will help to destroy evil, but to transform it into divine energy. Demon king Mahishasura also achieved heaven as per the boon of Durga and is being worshipped along with her. Durga, the Goddess of power (Shakti) is worshipped across the world by the followers, however, in variation of form. In Bangladesh and West Bengal the deity is with ten hands (Dashabhuja), in other places of India and abroad including Indonesia, Nepal and also in some Buddhist temples in Japan and China, in different names, she is with 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 or 12 hands. But philosophy of the worship is the same: May the divine mother bless us all.

BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Twentieth and Twenty-first Prosecution Witnesses

(Continued from yesterday)
Following are excerpts from incomplete cross-examination of Lance Naik (ret'd) Anuddin Mollah, PW-20, by Khan Saifur Rahman, defence counsel for Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farouq Rahman:
Q: Col Jamil had a military jeep. Were you the driver of his military jeep or of his private car?
A: I was the driver of his official civil jeep.
Q: You were to join as driver for Narayanganj DC from August 16.
A: Yes.
Q: Col Jamil had a driver from military.
A: No.
Q: Col Jamil could drive.
A: Yes.
Q: Going to Ganobhaban, you communicated the order of Col Jamil to the forces of army and police and asked them to move for Bangabandhu's residence with arms and ammunition within five minutes.
A: Yes.
Q: Did all the soldiers leave Ganobhaban?
A: The forces moved, but I can't say whether all of them left Ganobhaban or not.
Q: How far was the Sobhanbagh mosque from the Dhanmondi Boys' School?
A: About 400 to 500 yards.
Q: You did not see the police force of Ganobhaban on your way.
A: No.
Q: Military truck was inside the school gate.
A: No, it was on the roadside in front of the school gate.
Q: Was the Road-32 crossing seen from the Sobhanbagh mosque.
A: Yes.
Q: Did you see any army vehicle near Road-32.
A: Yes.
Q: How far was the Road-32 crossing from Sobhanbagh mosque?
A: About 400 to 500 yards.
Q: Was the vehicle you saw in front of Road-32 crossing from Ganobhaban?
A: No.
Q: Was there any difference between the military truck of Ganobhaban and other military trucks.
A: Yes, by signs.
Q: Was your car halted by military.
A: No.
Q: You were sent by Col Jamil to see who were those soldiers.
A: Yes, to see the position.

Q: No force came out from Ganobhaban following the order.
A: No they came out.
Q: The key was with the car and Col Jamil could leave that place easily if he wished.
A: Yes.
Q: Musallis did not allow you to hide as you were in Rakkhi Bahini's uniform.
A: It is not true.
Q: The front shield and back glass of Col Jamil's car were intact.
Q: Yes.
Q: Did you attend the namaj-e-janaja of Col Jamil.
A: No.
Q: Was Mrs Jamil at home on August 15 day time?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you inform the force at Ganobhaban of the incident.
A: I only went to Col Jamil's residence.
Q: When was the namaj-e-janaja of Col Jamil held?
A: I don't know.
Q: Col Jamil left home alone.
A: It is not true.
Q: You neither drove the car nor was with Col Jamil in the car.
A: I drove the car.
Q: You did not see anything in front of Sobhanbagh mosque.
A: I saw.
Q: You were so scared that you did not see anything.
A: It is not true.
Q: There was Martial Law in the country after August 15.
A: I don't know.

you people after reaching there?
A: No parade was held for us the extra people, there was only discussion.
Q: You boarded trucks. How many trucks were there in total?
A: Approximately three to four.
Q: Did the trucks start with the same mission and at the same time?
A: I was unaware of the mission, but started together.
Q: How many personnel were in your truck?
A: 10/12 personnel.
Q: Did the soldiers of your truck get down at road number 32?
A: No, only five to six of them were dropped at road no-32.
Q: Did you know Major Noor, Huda, Aziz Pasha, Major Mohiuddin (of Lancer), Rashed Chowdhury and Major Dalim from earlier?
A: No, I didn't know them.
Q: What the officer whom you saluted in the morning was wearing?
A: Khaki dress.
Q: Didn't you know him?
A: No, I didn't.
Q: When did you enter the house of Bangabandhu?
A: At about 6 to 7 am.
Q: How long have you stayed at that house?
A: Three to four minutes.
Q: Where were you on duty till the evening?
A: On the same road, where we first performed duty, not at Bangabandhu's house.
Q: Have you performed any duty outside soon after the incident?
A: No, only performed duty at the unit.
Q: How far from the airport was your unit located?
A: Approximately 6 to 7 miles away.
Q: You did not see Major Rashid except when he inspected the parade.
A: No, I didn't see him.
Q: Major Noor was not a regular officer of the Army at that time.
A: I can't say.

Examination of Lance Naik (ret'd) Abdul Khaleque by Advocate TM Akbar, defence counsel for accused Lt Col (LPR) Muihuddin:
Q: What were the trades in regiment?
A: Clerk, TA, Surveyor, OCU, Driver, Gunner, Cook, NCE (sweeper), etc.
Q: Which trade you were in?
A: I was a driver, but being a fresh recruit no vehicle was issued till then in my name.
Q: When did you start towards the airport?
A: After the Magreb prayer, approximately around 6 to 7 pm.
Q: Of which battery was Captain Mostafa?
A: He was in Headquarters Battery and also the Captain Quarter Master of this battery?
Q: When did you come to this battery?
A: I come to Papa Battery in the first part of 1974.
Q: Have you ever come outside the cantonment before August 14 (of 1975)?
A: Yes, I came outside with outpass to watch movies at Ananda cinema hall and also went to Gulistan to buy clothes.
Q: Where did you reside then?
A: At our unit barrack in Kachukhet area inside the Cantonment.
Q: Which way you came from the airport?
A: I could not see as the truck was covered with tarpaulin. But I saw the 3rd gate (of the cantonment) on the right hand side.
Q: How long it took to reach the place of your arrival after starting from the new airport?
A: More than 10 to 15 minutes.
Q: When did you meet Lt Hasan for the last time?
A: I don't remember.
Q: Where you a batman of Muihuddin saheb?
A: Yes, for few days.
Q: Have you suffered punishment for any major or minor faults during your service life?
A: No.
Q: It's a lie that you heard the cannon fire on August 15.
A: I heard the sound, you statement is not true.
Q: During the service life, you misbehaved with Muihuddin and he gave you punishment. For this reason, you gave false statement against him.
A: Not true.
Q: You are an arranged witness.
A: Not true.

Weather Light rain forecast

Light rain or thundershower is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chittagong division in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Met Office says weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country. Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged throughout the country. The sun sets today at 5:37 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:54 am.



Dr SA Samad, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, addressing a discussion on the 'Challenges and Possibilities for the Developing Countries in the Next Century' at the Rotary Club of Dhaka during its weekly meeting recently. Also present were (L to R) club president M A Zaman, Emdadul Haq and M Z Abbasi.

— UNB

Further texts of cross examination will be published as and when received.