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Durga Puja begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advent of autumn with the fragrance of Sheuli heralds her coming from the heavens. The conch shells blow and sounds of bells, metal cymbals and high-pitched ululation are heard when she arrives once a year. Thousands of her zealous devotees long to greet her with the rhythm of 'dhak'.

The countdown for this year is over today and thousands of Hindus begin the great festivity by welcoming goddess Durga, who is worshipped as the goddess of supreme power.

The setting up of 13000 Puja Mandap (arena) across the country, 311 of them in the capital and 1040 in Chittagong district brought a festive mood to the Hindus of Bangladesh. Enter any of these Mandap and the idol of the ten handed fierce but beautiful Durga is found sitting atop a lion flanked by Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and

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PM seeks more time to curb crime



Highlights of PM's speech

- Law and order situation did not improve as expected
- One year not enough, more time, cooperation sought to check crimes
- Crimes sponsored with political ends

REZAUL KARIM

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday admitted law and order did not improve as quickly and as much as was expected in one year of her government and sought more time to check crimes.

"It is not possible to eradicate crimes within a year because it has spread to every sphere of society like cancer due to moral erosions in the five-year Awami League rule," she said.

In her address to the nation on television and radio, the prime minister said her government has undertaken several steps to curb crime and suc-

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Train skids off track at Gazipur, 60 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 60 people were injured, 20 of them seriously, when nine carriages of the Jamuna Express train skidded off the track at Bhawal in Gazipur yesterday morning.

The 20 seriously injured passengers were admitted to the Gazipur Sadar Hospital and 10 of them were

shifted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The rest were treated at the hospital and private clinics in the locality.

Admitted to the DMCH are Mustafa, 26, Mustafa, 40, Mustafa, 25, Raisuddin, 36, Khalil, 30, Masud, 25, Gazi, 30, Hasan Ali, 35, Kanchan, 30 and Abdus Sattar, 50.

The Dhaka-bound train from

Bahadurabad Ghat met with the accident at around 8:00am shortly after it had crossed Bhawal railway station, about 40 kilometres off the city.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) sources said one carriage in the middle derailed and skidded off the track as its 'bride bars' (that keep the car

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Halt oppression, serve people

Hasina urges govt

Highlights of Sheikh Hasina's speech



- Govt should shun tyranny, serve the people
- Take opposition into confidence for stable society
- Govt surrenders to violence, corruption and politicisation
- Govt fails to contain unbridled criminal activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the ruling coalition to put a stop to 'oppression' and devote itself to serve the people.

"Make efforts to do good to the country instead of getting busy in corrupt practices and living in luxury," she urged the government that completed a year in office yesterday.

Hasina, also the Awami League (AL) chief, was delivering a speech at Sheraton Hotel highlighting the 'failures' and 'repression' of the government in last one year. The 40-minute speech was preceded by a half an hour documentary.

Several hundred leaders of the AL and its front organisations, academics, civil society members and journalists attended the programme. The documentary portrayed incidents of repression on the AL leaders and workers, journalists, minority community members and young women who had been subjected to physical assault and violation during the first one year rule of the BNP-led alliance.

Besides, the documentary also highlighted incidents of corruption and breakdown of law and order during the same period.

The Awami League chief expressed her frustration that the government had resorted to violence, corruption and politicisation. She, however, urged the people to stand up to the 'tyranny of the government'. "Awami League is all for truth, beauty and ethics. We want a bright future for Bangladesh and its new generation," Hasina said.

The opposition leader asked the voters, particularly those who had cast

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The derailed carriages lie beside the tracks at Bhawal in Gazipur yesterday. At least 60 people were injured, 20 of them critically, in the accident.

2 killed as PBCP men fire on BNP meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two persons were killed when a group of unidentified men reportedly belonging to the outlawed PBCP fired indiscriminate shots at a BNP public meeting on Wednesday at Rajbangshi para under Monirampur upazila of Jessore district.

The incident happened when BNP leader Altaf Hossain was addressing the public meeting as chief guest at about 8:30pm to announce his decision to run for chairman of Durbapur Union Parishad.

The deceased were identified as Srinibash Biswas, 65, and school-

boy Pijush Kanti, 14, of Bajitpur village. Srinibash died on the spot while Pijush, who was shot in the head, succumbed to his injury at 11:30pm at the Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

Eyewitnesses of the incident said more than 50 bullets were fired by the miscreants who chanted slogans in the name of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) as they left the scene.

Police said the PBCP, over the last one month, had warned BNP leader Altaf Hossain several times against contesting the UP election

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Puja Mandap vandalised in Pabna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants demolished all images of Goddess Durga at the Durga Mandir at Shakharipara under Ataikula Upazila in Pabna yesterday.

In another incident in Pirojpur, an organisation called Al Saidee Mujahid Bahini has sent letters to all Puja committees in Sadar and Nazirpur upazilas, intimidating Hindus not to celebrate Puja this year.

In Pabna, the images at the Durga Mandir at the residence of district Awami League leader Chandan Kumar Chakrabarty were demol-

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Maid strangled in Mohammadpur, couple held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic help was 'strangled' allegedly by her employer at Kazi Nazrul Islam Road in the city's Mohammadpur area Wednesday night.

Mohammadpur police recovered the body of Khaleda alias Rashida, 18, and arrested three people, Shahidul Islam, his wife Piya Islam and a relative, Mansura Begum on the same night.

They were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) court with a prayer for seven-day remand. However, the court placed the women on a day's remand each and Shahidul on two days' remand.

Initially, the inmates claimed that she was beaten as she had tried to flee the house after stealing valuables. Later, they told the police that she died from injuries she sustained when they beat her up.

Family members said one of her distant relatives brought her to the family two and half months back. Other details, except that she hailed from Tangail, could not be known.

The couple said the maid used to get into an argument with the family members at their every request and they would beat her up. But on the night of the incident she collapsed on being beaten up. They thought if they could claim it to be a case of theft, they could dodge charges.

Police said quoting the inquest report that there were marks of injuries on her left cheek and on the toes of both her feet. Police suspected that she might have been strangled following the altercation.

Sub-inspector Noor Mohammad filed a case with the Mohammadpur Police Station in this regard.

It was the second such incident to have occurred within a week. Earlier, another domestic help, Masuda Begum 45, died after the landlady, Ishrat Jahan Ivy, kicked her in the abdomen following an altercation on October 4.

2'x2 Col
Lucas

ANNOUNCEMENT
In today's issue of The Daily Star, a full page has been dedicated to readers' assessment of one year of coalition rule. See page 7.

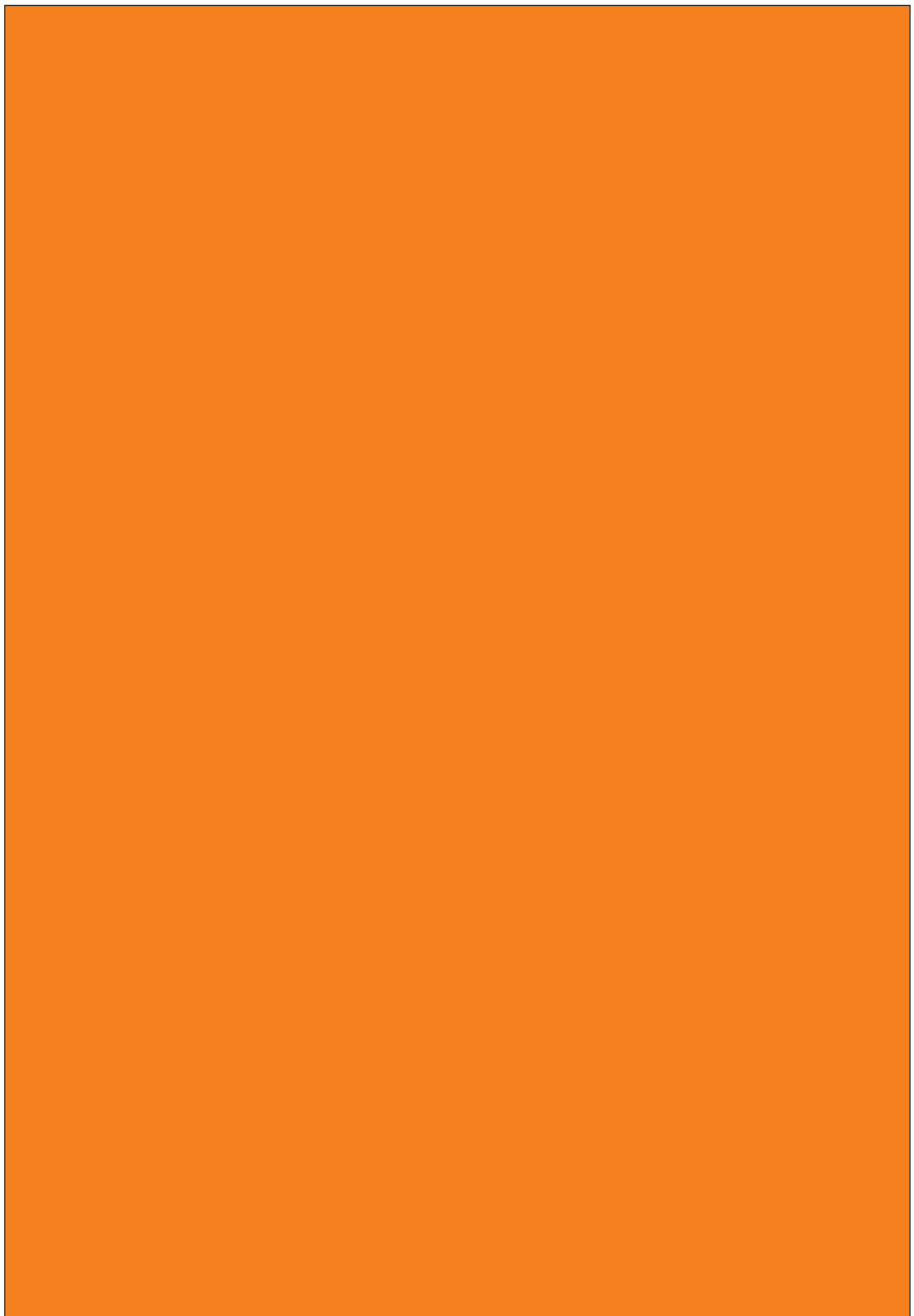


PHOTO: STAR

Vision of a jam-free urban life

Construction of the flyover at the Khilgaon crossing is going on in earnest. To ease traffic jam in the city, the government initiated construction of another flyover at Mohakhali.

8'x3 col
Mouchak Jewellery