



PHOTO: STAR

A man puts finishing touches to the idol of Goddess Durga at Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University yesterday. Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, begins tomorrow.

Import bill for oil doubles this year

High price in world market leads to Tk 3,000 crore expenditure in extra

BSS, Dhaka

The import bill for fuel may shoot up by at least 50 percent in the current fiscal because of the phenomenal rise in oil prices in the international market.

The oil bill was about to double this year as light crude extended record-setting highs, which is twice the price of \$25-30 a barrel.

But the funding requirement may, however, remain at about 50 per cent because of the government decision to keep the import duty unchanged.

The initial import bill was estimated at \$900 million, but an additional \$500 million (about Tk 3,000 crore) will be required for the volatility in the world market, sources said.

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Hasina asks govt to quit for price hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition to resign immediately for the government's 'absolute failure to control price spiral of essentials'.

"Commerce minister had pledged to control the market and bring the prices within the limits of common people by three days. But, during these three days the situation has worsened," said Hasina, while addressing a delegation of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parisad, an organisation of doctors, at her Sudha Sadan residence.

Expressing grave concern over the skyrocketing of essentials in Ramadan, she said, "The government is totally indifferent to the situation as ministers and ruling

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Asians want Bush ouster

NY Times, 3 other US dailies endorse Kerry

AFP, Hong Kong

Most Asians want George W. Bush voted out of office in next month's US presidential election, even though many are unaware who his challengers are.

But many of the region's business leaders would prefer it if John Kerry were kept out of the White House and are particularly put off by the Democrat's more protectionist trade stance.

"Bush and who? John who?" asked Desy Darman, a civil servant in the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

"(Bush) is maybe too arrogant

toward the less developed countries. It's probably better to replace him," Darman said, reflecting strong anti-Bush sentiment among Asian people which, more than Kerry's policies, colours views of the US election in this vast region.

Nearly everyone has an opinion, mostly negative, of Bush's US-led war on Iraq and not just in Muslim-dominated Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan.

Surveys in Japan, which has sent troops to the war-torn country, show

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Durga Puja starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The five-day Durga Puja, the greatest extravaganza of Hindus, begins tomorrow amid fanfare.

Preparations of Puja Mandaps are complete to let hundreds and thousands of devotees across the country set off on festive celebrations from October 19 to 23.

The first chapter of the five-day festival, the Bodhon ritual, opens tomorrow at 7.34am.

The Adhibash of goddess Durga will also be held in the evening in

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F-28 CRASH

Biman to get \$2.65m from insurer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines will receive \$2.65 million in cash towards insurance coverage for its crashed F-28 aircraft, according to a settlement reached with Lloyds Aviation Insurance Company.

Under the settlement, the national flag carrier, which started salvage operation of the F-28 near Sylhet airport five days back, will also retain the aeroplane.

A Biman official said the insurance company has assessed the value of the crashed aircraft at \$0.35 million and the amount of insurance coverage at \$3 million.

The official speaking anonymously said the value of the plane is \$1 million according to a Biman

estimate. The insurance company could have taken the plane and sold it, he said, adding that it did not do so probably considering salvage and carrying costs.

Biman will use its engines and parts as backups for the other four F-28s in its fleet, he said, adding, many parts are still usable.

The salvage operation lingers since the rescue team is trying to keep the parts usable and recovering the valuable components first. Spares of F-28 have become very rare in world market, the official said.

He said the UK-based insurance company wants quick settlement and will pay the amount very soon. Biman procured the 1979-model F-28 in 1981.

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Thousands march London streets demanding Iraq pullout

AFP, London

Tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of central London yesterday to protest against the Iraq war as Prime Minister Tony Blair struggled to shake-off fierce criticism of the invasion back home.

An AFP reporter at the scene said tens of thousands of demonstrators had taken to the streets for the march, which began at Russell Square, close to the British museum.

The Stop The War Coalition, organisers of the march, said they believed 30,000 protesters, down from an initial estimate of 50,000, were expected to take to the streets to demand the withdrawal of all troops from Iraq.

"We are expecting 30,000 people,"

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Rejoinder

Golam Rasul and Sons has protested a photograph published in The Daily Star on page 12 on October regarding encroachment of the Turag river at Tongi.

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PHOTO: STAR

A shop-owner removes goods of his makeshift shop on the walkway adjacent to bustling Gausia Market in the city yesterday as the Dhaka City Corporation launched an eviction drive to clear the footpaths.

21 trainee cops dismissed for 'opposition links'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Allegations of past links to opposition political parties were cited to dismiss 21 trainee police sub-inspectors (SIs) at Sardah Police Academy here on Thursday, 15 days before they were expected to graduate.

The axe fell on the 21 apprentices after a fax from the Police Headquarters ordered their dismissal 'for breach of rules'.

A highly placed source said the 21 SIs were dismissed on allegations of their affiliation with opposition parties in the past.

The SIs had been in training for the last 11 months and were expected to join new postings after their graduation on October 31.

"Some of them had links to leftist politics during their student days

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Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
3	18		5-33
4	19	4-38	5-33

Prayer Timing		
October 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-37	4-43
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-34	5-39
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

