



THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XV No. 36

DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 14, 2005

FALGUN 20, 1411 BS

MOHARRAM 22, 1426 HIJRI

20 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE: TK. 12.00

www.dailystarnews.com

Durga Puja ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The five-day Durga Puja, the greatest festivities for the Hindus, ended yesterday with the immersion of Durga idols in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

Hundreds of devotees joined in a long procession and paraded the city streets with idols of deity Durga and her children Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh.

Authorities took tight security measures and escorted the procession till immersion of the idols in river Buriganga. A total of 231 teams of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), including seven special striking forces, stood guard over the puja mandaps in the capital and places across the country.

Mahanagar Sarbajaneen Puja Committee's Organising Secretary Nirmal Chatterjee said idols from around 30 puja mandaps were gathered at the Dhakeswari Temple for the procession. The parade started from Palashi Crossing and marched to Waisghat in old town. In the evening, the idols were immersed in Buriganga amid sadness and tears.

Hindu community leader CR SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Gas rationing to tackle crisis from Monday

High-powered body to submit emergency plan Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A high-level emergency meeting yesterday could not reach any decision on the introduction of a rationing system for gas in a bid to meet the existing energy crisis.

The meeting, chaired by prime minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddiqui and attended by top officials of the energy and mineral resources division, power division and industries ministry, formed a five-member working committee to chalk out the plans to this end.

The meeting reviewed the overall

situation of gas and power and asked the working committee, comprising the secretaries of power and energy division, chairmen of the Power Development Board, Petrobangla and Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), to submit its report by Sunday.

"The rationing system of gas distribution will be introduced from Monday if the report of the working committee gets prime minister's nod on Sunday," Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman told reporters after the meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has initiated the plan following concerns of the business community over the acute gas crisis, especially faced recently by the Tongi-Savar belt.

Mahmudur said gas production has exceeded previous records of 1500 million cubic feet per day (mmcf), with the highest ever production of 1512mmcf recorded on Tuesday.

Still there remains a shortage of 100mmcf gas, which is worsening the situation, he said, adding that the crisis is not likely to end before 2007. SEE PAGE 19 COL 4



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Lights illuminate the home ministry where the government at a recent meeting asked traders to refrain from illuminations of shopping malls to conserve electricity. The photo was snapped yesterday.

Wanted person seen in commerce minister's car

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Jubo Dal leader, who escaped arrest when the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) raided his house only four days ago, was seen travelling in the car of the commerce minister in Patuakhali town on Wednesday.

The Rab-8 unit raided the house of Mashiur Rahman Khan, district unit president of Jubo Dal, on October 8 and 9 and nabbed nine people including one wanted criminal from the house. Mashiur, however, escaped arrest.

Sources said the elite force has been on a hunt for Mashiur as there are many allegations of extortion and other criminal activities against the Jubo Dal leader. However, nobody dared to file any case against him. SEE PAGE 19 COL 3



REPORT CARD ON MINISTERS

4 years in office

Dubious leaderships, graft led to gas crisis

Energy sector slow on development, quick on questionable dealings

SHARIER KHAN

One indication of the performance of AKM Mosharraf Hossain as the state minister for energy between October 2001 and June 2005 is his ouster from the cabinet on grounds of taking benefits from controversial Canadian company Niko.

Mosharraf Hossain was one of the two ministers who were convicted in graft cases during the previous BNP regime. He was also a key player in negotiations for the Kafco deal, in which



AKM Mosharraf Hossain

the interest of Bangladesh was undermined. There are allegations of bribery in this deal. As a civil servant, Mosharraf served the autocratic Ershad government to the point that his integrity and moral character were always in question.

With such a background, the appointment of Mosharraf as the state minister for energy was a surprise—especially when the country's energy sector had become a vital area for investment. SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY JCD, BCL join hands to resist Shibir

DU CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wings of BNP and Awami League, along with left leaning student organisations have decided to resist the Islamic Chhatra Shibir on the Jagannath University campus.

JCD and BCL sources said they will keep vigil on the campus to prevent the activities of Shibir, the student wing of the ruling BNP's coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami.

Meanwhile, the Shibir filed a case with the Kotwali Police Station against 15 BCL leaders and activists including the university unit BCL President Kamrul Hasan Ripon for beating the Shibir men up on Wednesday.

Ripon however told The Daily SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Militants plan to carry out blasts again after Ramadan

JMB leader reveals

STAR REPORT

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) have plans to stage another bout of blasts across the country after Ramadan, said a JMB leader arrested Wednesday in Netrakona.

In another development, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has finalised a charge sheet, accusing Abdur Rahman, Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai (JMB operations commander), Rahman's brother Ataur Rahman alias Sunny, and 12 other JMB members of exploding bombs at seven points across Kushtia town on August 17.

It would be the first-ever charge

sheet to accuse top militants like Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai.

In the capital, Abu Taleb alias Babul Ansari, assistant security officer of the parliament secretariat, and four others of his organisation 'Allahr Dal' were taken on a five-day remand each yesterday.

Earlier on Wednesday night, two more members of the organisation were arrested in Meherpur.

Our correspondent from Netrakona reports: Netrakona police arrested Sumon, 27, at his brother-in-law's house in Netrakona town round about midnight Wednesday.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Floods improve in north

BDNEWS, Naogaon

The flood situation in the north and northwestern districts of the country has improved, while the situation in Noagaon district remained unchanged.

About 14,000 flood-affected people in Noagaon are still at 180 flood shelters. The situation of the district is likely to improve today, as the Jamuna registered fall by 9cm yesterday.

Meanwhile, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the Brahmaputra-Jamuna and Ganges-Padma registered fall at all points. Most of the rivers in the Meghna and the southeastern hill basin also recorded fall.

The FFWC also reported that out of 86 monitoring points, water level showed rise at 6 points, recorded fall at 55 points and steady at 2 points.

Karatoa at Chakrahimpur registered fall by 8 cm, but is still flowing 80 cm above the danger level.

