



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits the puja mandap at Dhakeshwari Temple in the city yesterday on Mahanavami, the fourth day of Durga puja.

Work unitedly to build modern Bangladesh

PM urges all irrespective of religion, caste and creed

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the countrymen irrespective of religion, caste and creed to work unitedly for building a modern, illiteracy-free and digital Bangladesh.

She made the call during her visit to Dhakeshwari Temple in the city on the occasion of Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community.

Hasina reiterated her determination to maintain the socio-economic security and dignity for all citizens of the country.

She also called upon all citizens to maintain communal harmony in the country.

Hasina felicitated the people of the Hindu community on the occasion of Durga Puja.

"We are working so people could celebrate their festivals in a peaceful and harmonious environment", she said.

Hasina mentioned that in 1971 people of all faiths - Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist -- worked unitedly for freeing the country from the invading forces.

"In this independent Bangladesh, the people of all religions will live with honour," she said.

"Bangladesh is a secular country. Secularism doesn't mean absence of religion; it means people of all religions are free to practise their own religion, which has also been mentioned in the holy Quran."

Hasina mentioned that the countrymen celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr in a peaceful way. People of the Hindu community will also be able to celebrate puja in a secure environment with peace.

She thanked the law enforcers, including police, Ansar and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), for successfully maintaining law and order.

Hasina mentioned that 27,000 'puja mandaps' have been erected across the country and such a large number of mandaps were never erected before.

She also mentioned that the number of Hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh has been increasing day by day.

The prime minister, however, lamented that the country has not yet

been freed from illiteracy. "Our government is working for building up an illiteracy-free Bangladesh," she said.

Local lawmaker Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Pradip Chakravorty, priest of the temple, received the prime minister at the Dhakeshwari Temple and greeted her with flowers.

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, State Minister for Home Shamsul Haq Tuku, PM's Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Tareq Ahmed Siddique and Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present.

Chief patron of Sarbojanin Puja Committee Haj Gen (Retd) CR Dutta, its President Bijesh Chandra Saha and General Secretary Babul Devnath also spoke on the occasion.

Later, the prime minister visited Ram Krishna Mission in the city where she urged all to build Bangladesh as the most peaceful country in South Asia.

She said everybody has equal rights to live with freedom and peace in Bangladesh, which emerged through the War of Liberation.



M A Samad's anniversary of death today

METRO DESK

Today is the 5th death anniversary of M A Samad, founder of Bangladesh General Insurance Company Limited (BGIC), says a press release.

His family members and BGIC family have requested all friends, well-wishers and relatives to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Samad was associated with the insurance industry since 1946 and established BGIC after his retirement as managing director of Jiban Bima Corporation.

Samad, an honours graduate from Presidency College in Kolkata with a brilliant academic career all through, was also the founder director of Bangladesh Insurance Academy, an institution established by the government for professional training.

He wrote two books in Bengali, one on life insurance and another on general insurance, and two more English textbooks on life insurance. These received high appreciation from renowned insurance organisations abroad.

Samad was enlisted as an international expert in the Technical Assistance Programme on Trade and Development of the United Nations. He was also a former chairman of Bangladesh Insurance Association, the country's apex insurance entity.

He was born at Kulaura in Moulvibazar in a respectable Muslim family in 1923.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Aziz Uddin Ahmed, former deputy commissioner and a resident of Muradia village under Dumki upazila in Patuakhali district, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Comfort Hospital in Dhaka on Friday at the age of 90, says a press release.

He left behind his three sons and one daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard yesterday after namaz-e-janaza at his native

Syed Fazlun Nahar

METRO DESK



Syed Fazlun Nahar Choudhury, wife of late Lutful Haider Choudhury, former chairman of National Curriculum and Textbook Board, passed away at about 7:30pm on October 14, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at her Banani residence after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

8 faulty bridges may cause fatal accidents

BSS, Savar

Eight faulty bridges on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway might lead to a more fatal accidents in near future, speakers told a rally near Salehpur Bridge yesterday.

The bridges are Jorepool, Bank Town, Kohinor Mill Gate, Kamalpur, Sutipara, Nayadingi, Uthuli and Salehpur Bridge, a place where a bus plunged into the River Turag last week, killing more than a dozen of people.

Save Environment Movement and Save Savar Movement jointly organised the citizens' rally near the bridge, the faulty construction of which has been blamed for the recent road accident.

A number of people, who attended the rally

to draw attention of the government, demanded reconstruction of the bridge with enough space for easy vehicular movement to and from Dhaka city.

More than 21 people were killed in a separate road accident near the Salehpur Bridge in 2006, the organisers said in a press release.

They also urged the government to widen the Salehpur Bridge and remove other narrow bridges on the highway immediately to save lives from further accidents.

According to a recent study, more than 12,000 people are killed in road accidents each year in Bangladesh. Much of the accidents are attributed to faulty road and bridge constructions, reckless driving and huge traffic movement in narrow highways.

2 'robbers' beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mob beat to death two alleged thieves at Amtal in Chittagong city early yesterday.

The victims were identified as Babul, 30, and Khokon, 35.

Witnesses said a security guard of Safina Market with the help of locals caught three people when they were fleeing after stealing from a toyshop around 6:00am. The mob severely beat up the men leaving

Babul dead on the spot and injuring the other two.

Khokon died at Chittagong Medical College Hospital around 10:00am. The accomplice of the deceased, however, managed to escape.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shahnewaz Khaled of Kotwali zone said they had detained five people, including the toyshop owner and the security guard of the market for interrogation.



Nagorik Sanghati stages a demonstration in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday demanding free agricultural necessities for affected farmers of the haor areas, an effective haor development board and an independent haor ministry.



Winners of the Prothom Alo-The Daily Star-Rajuk College Debate Festival 2010 pose for photograph with State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan at Rajuk Uttara Model College in the city yesterday.

Ershad killed Zia

Says Nasim Osman

UNB, Narayanganj

Jatiya Party lawmaker Nasim Osman has evoked a controversy with his remark that it was General (rt) Ershad who killed ex-president Ziaur Rahman in 1981.

"Zia was killed by General Ershad, the then army chief, and not by former general Manzu," said Nasim while speaking as the chief guest at a reception programme in Narayanganj yesterday.

Nasim who was elected member of the parliament (MP) from Narayanganj-5 explained his involvement in Jatiya Party. "Do you know why I'm with Jatiya Party of Ershad? It's because the work I was to do was done by Ershad by killing Zia."

Today Discussion Bangladesh Awami Ulama League will arrange a discussion. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity, Time: 11:00am. Meeting Sri Sri Ram-Sita Mandir will organise a meeting on the occasion of Durga Puja. Venue: 19, Jay Kali Mandir, Time: 11:00am.

PROTHOM ALO-THE DAILY STAR-RAJUK COLLEGE DEBATE ENDS 'Find truth thru' logic'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three-day Prothom Alo-The Daily Star-Rajuk College Debate Festival 2010 for school and college students ended at Rajuk Uttara Model College in the city yesterday.

In Bangla medium debate, the champions were Motijheel Ideal School and College in school category and Dhaka College in college category.

The runners-up were Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in school category and Residential Model School and College in college category.

In English medium debate, Manarat International School became the champion while Mastermind School became the runner-up.

With the slogan of Jukti Hok Muktir Sopan (let the logic be the stairs of freedom), the debate competition began on October 14.

A total of 48 teams from 19 schools and colleges participated in the Bangla medium debate while 48 teams from 24 schools participated in the English medium.

The Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Rajuk Uttara Model College jointly organised the festival.

Enayet Chowdhury of Motijheel Ideal School and College and Nahian Bin Khaled of Dhaka College became the best debaters

in Bangla medium debate while Sayed Morshed Razi of Manarat International School became the best debater in English medium.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan distributed prizes among the winners at Rajuk Uttara Model College in Uttara in the city.

Speaking at the concluding ceremony, he called on debaters to find the truth through logic, as logic never supports lies.

The minister announced to allot a piece of government land to Rajuk Uttara Model College.

Additional Secretary of the health ministry Mainuddin Khandaker said democracy and justice can be established through logic and the country can be built through the process too.

Feature Editor of Prothom Alo Sumana Sharmeen said logic is better than argument and it needs to come from the mind. She said students can learn the real history of the country through logic.

Rajuk Uttara Model College Principal ASM Mushfiqur Rahman was also present at the concluding session. Sharmin Rahman, assistant professor of the college, moderated the competition.

WEATHER icon and text.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, Sylhet, Rangpur and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital at 5:31pm today and rises at 5:57am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chandpur and lowest 23.5 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening).

The leaders' role while train burns

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN, back from Sirajganj

BNP leaders were engaged in a loud anti-government tirade at their Sirajganj rally on Monday while passenger train Drutajan Express was in flames hardly 150 yards away.

They made no efforts to protect state property from the blaze.

And BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was reportedly taking rest some 10 kilometres away from the rally venue while her party supporters went unruly.

All the 11 compartments of the Dhaka-bound inter-city train were set alight by a mob soon after it ran through a crowd spilling onto the rail track from the very rally killing six.

Many of the passengers alleged the mob had looted their luggage and other valuables.

No leaders had asked the agitated supporters to refrain from damaging the state property and looting the passengers belongings.

The party men looked nonchalant even though one of the bodies was lying only 35-40 yards off the rally dais.

took no time claim that the victims were its supporters.

Khaleda reached Jamuna Resort around 2:00pm on Monday and was resting there while the train came under attack around 3:10pm.

Party sources said the BNP chief was contacted soon after the train disaster but she gave no directive in this regard.

The leader of the opposition in parliament arrived at the rally venue around 4:00pm. The train was burnt by that time.

In her 40-minute speech, the former prime minister accused the government of killing BNP supporters but kept mum as to who torched the train and looted the valuables of passengers.

She neither the damaged train nor those injured in the accident and admitted to different health centres in Sirajganj.

A BNP leader however said the party chief couldn't do so as was rushing to Natore.

The mob also did some highway buses throwing stones and brickbats.

But private cars of BNP leaders and buses that brought party supporters to the rally, and cars of the chairperson's motorcade remained untouched.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal organised

the rally to mark the Shaheed Jihad Day.

But the party made no arrangement to ensure safety of the rally participants.

Asked, district BNP President Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, also an adviser to the party chairperson, said, "How could our volunteers control a meeting that had turned into a human sea?"

The role of the civil administration, Bangabandhu Bridge authority and railway authorities was also questioned as all of them later claimed they didn't give permission to hold the rally on the rail line or in nearby areas.

But they kept mum when asked why they didn't bar holding a rally without permission.

Mosharrif Hossain, Sirajganj superintendent of police, however said he warned the district BNP general secretary about the dangers the rally venue might cause, but didn't prevent the former premier's rally considering its possible political impact.

Contacted, General Secretary Mokaddes Ali said police had started arranging security for the rally at least three days ago.

No opposition leader replied when asked why they did not keep the rail track free for movement of trains.

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot a Bangladeshi citizen dead in Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Jashimuddin, 37, son of late Hafijuddin of Sannyasipara in the upazila.

Anisar Rahaman Khan Pathan, upazila parishad chairman of Rangchati, said BSF shot Jashim near Boruakona border in Rangchati while he was working in his paddy field around 8:00am.

Khan Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Kalmakanda Police Station, said police recovered the victim's body from a paddy field on information.

No case was filed in this connection till filing of this report.