

Durga Puja ends with idol immersion in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Durga Puja, the largest festival of the Hindu community, culminated in Bijoya Dashami yesterday with the immersion of idols of the goddess Durga.

In Chittagong, nearly 250 idols were immersed in the river Karnaphuli and Bay of Bengal at spots like Kalurghat, Southkattoli, Pathor Ghata Gongabari, Enayet Bazar Goal Para Pond and Patenga Sea Beach, which saw the highest number of immersions as usual.

Nearly 150 idols of the puja mandaps of the port city were immersed at Patenga beach, which is the main immersion centre. Nearly one lakh Hindu devotees thronged the Patenga beach to see off the goddess this year, said Suman Debnath, general secretary of Chittagong City Puja Udjapon Parishad.

The immersion process started from moon with idols of Durga and her children -- Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesha -- being carried in trucks, along with Hindu devotees of all ages, to the immersion points.

The parting ceremony was filled with unbridled dancing with the beat of drums and chanting of the goddess Durga's name. The dance continued until the

immersion of the idols, which the devotees carried out with heavy heart and tearful eyes.

Sanjay Majumder, a devotee from Gosaildanga Sarbojonin Puja Udjapon Parishad, waded his way back to shore after immersing Durga in the sea. He said, "We are sad that mother Durga is leaving us for a year after days of fanfare and festivities."

"I hope she returns next year with more joy and peace," he said hopefully.

Like Sanjay, it was a bittersweet experience for all Hindu devotees who came to the immersion points to witness the departure of the goddess Durga after days of fervent excitement and joy.

Chittagong City Puja Udjapon Parishad, this year, has awarded 18 puja mandaps of the city in 18 different categories including the best puja mandap of the year, said Suman, the parishad's general secretary.

This year Ekota Gosthi Puja Udjapon Parishad of Gosaildanga, South Nalapara Puja Udjapon Parishad and Hazari Goli Puja Udjapon Parishad were placed first, second and third respectively in the best puja mandap category, the general secretary said.



Devotees immerse an idol of goddess Durga in the Bay of Bengal at Patenga of Chittagong yesterday during Bijoya Dashami marking the end of Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



A fire rages in Kholipha Patti, an area populated by tailors and their shops, in Dewanbazar area of Chittagong city yesterday. Some 40 bamboo-made houses were gutted in the fire. PHOTO: STAR

Another RU BCL activist stabbed

RU CORRESPONDENT

An activist of pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Rajshahi University (RU) unit was stabbed by some unidentified miscreants in Rajshahi city yesterday, four days after another BCL activist had been stabbed.

The victim this time was Mahabubul Islam Ratan, a fourth year student of Arabic department.

He was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with injuries in the back and stomach.

Earlier on Saturday, some miscreants stabbed BCL activist Imran Hossain alias David in Binodpur Bazar area near the university campus.

Police said some armed men stabbed Ratan in Rajshahi city's RDA Market premises around 2:00pm when he went there for Eid shopping.

BCL RU unit president Ahmed Ali claimed that activists of pro-Jamaat Islami Chhatra Shibir were involved in the incident.

"Shibir men attacked Ratan as a sequel of the recent clashes with BCL to establish supremacy on the campus," he said.

Shibir RU unit president Ashrafal Alam Emon denied their involvement in the attacks. RU Proctor Chowdhury Mohammad Zakaria said he will look into the matter.

India reaches out to Khaleda Zia

Says The Times of India

STAR REPORT

With Bangladesh set to go to polls next year, India has reached out to the opposition leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia by inviting her to visit New Delhi next week, reported The Times of India yesterday.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pankaj Saran met Khaleda in Dhaka to discuss her engagements for the visit.

Khaleda is expected to meet President Pranab Mukherjee on October 28. The date for her meeting with PM Manmohan Singh is being finalised. She is also expected to

visit Ajmer, it said.

While BNP has always been known for its anti-India stance, New Delhi knows that it is imperative to at least make an attempt to mend fences with her in the run up to the general elections.

BNP, known for its links with Pakistan, has of late been looking to make new friends in the region, it said.

India has managed to add some substance to its relations with Bangladesh during the ongoing tenure of the government led by Awami League's Sheikh Hasina but it knows that ties with BNP are crucial to make this process irreversible.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abu Zafar Mohammad Abdul Mukit, a retired rear admiral of Bangladesh Navy, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the capital on Tuesday. He was 60.

His namaz-e-janaza was held yesterday after Zohr prayers at the naval head office and he was buried at military graveyard in Banani, said an ISPR press release.

Born in Tulachara village of Noakhali, Abu Zafar joined the navy in 1972 and retired in 2003.

Ctg city looks desolate as vacationers leave

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, Ctg

The port city of Chittagong looked deserted yesterday as many of its residents left early to celebrate Durga Puja, Eid-ul Azha and Shubho Probarona Purnima, the dates of which fell in succession this year.

Yesterday was a general holiday for Durga Puja, the biggest festival of the Hindu community. The Eid-ul Azha holiday begins tomorrow and ends on October 28.

Shubho Probarona Purnima, the second largest festival of the Buddhist community, will be celebrated on October 29.

The only working day in between is today. As many jobholders took the day off to keep to the spell of holidays, presence in the government, autonomous and private offices is expected to be thin today.

Chittagong Railway Station, bus stands in Kadamtoli, Station Road, Dampara and Oxygen, shopping malls and kitchen markets, crowded with people only a few days ago, looked desolate.

The presence of vehicles on the roads was thin while passenger numbers on the local buses and minibuses were also low.

Those selling tickets of long-distance buses at Dampara said there was no rush of passengers.

A visit to Kadamtoli Bus Terminal around 12:00 noon revealed that most of the inter-district buses were empty while the conductors were calling out for passengers.

Mamunul Huq, a compressed natural gas-run auto-rickshaw driver, said he could not earn much in the last two or three days due to a lack of passengers.

theSTAR
Don't miss this Friday's (October 26) special Eid Satire Special from *the Star*. What would be the perfect retirement plan for our favourite newsmakers? How do you qualify to be a VIP or a Dhaliwood Director? Also in this issue - the latest status symbols, how to make your ordinary car look like a Mercedes, a day in the life of a land grabber, going to your own funeral, Benglish words and expressions every foreigner must know, how to do anything and get away with it and much more. If you want a good dose of laughter to chase away the blues be sure to get this fun-filled issue.

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