

Ten temples attacked elsewhere

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Yesterday, unidentified criminals damaged the idols of goddess Kali and Shitola at Fulkochha Kundupara Kali Mondir in Songasa area of Sirajganj Sadar upazila, said police and locals.
When Hindu devotees went to the temple early yesterday, they found the idols badly damaged, Adhir Chandra Kundu, president of the temple committee, told Our Pabna Correspondent.
Basudeb Sinha, officer-in-charge of Sirajganj Police Station, said the criminals would be arrested soon. "They vandalised the idols at the temple in a planned way."

Top government and police officials visited the spot.
In a separate incident, unknown criminals damaged an idol of Kali at a temple at Ponabalia Bazar in Jhalakathi Sadar Upazila on Saturday night.
Materials used for performing prayers were thrown into a pond near the temple, Anil Chandra Das, president of the temple committee, told Our Jhalakathi Correspondent.
The criminals carried out the attack in the dead of night, he added.
The attacks took place despite the police headquarters' instructions on Thursday to all its units to stay alert. It issued a six-point directive, including one for taking prompt steps against whoever instigates violence to harm communal harmony.
Asked about the recent attacks, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said his ministry has taken all necessary steps to prevent this type of incidents and alerted the police, the BGB and Rab.
"The situation is under control," claimed the Home boss.
On the steps taken to check attacks on the minority community, Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, senior secretary to the public administration ministry, said,

"Directives have already been given in this regard. The administration is alert."
Meanwhile, representatives of the Hindu community alleged that the failure of the administration and the police, and the culture of impunity were the reasons behind repeated attacks on the community.
At a meeting with Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque at the police headquarters, they demanded trial of the cases filed over such attacks.
They voiced concern over the prevailing situation and demanded tough action against the culprits.
The minority community representatives also sought investigation into the role of local Awami League leaders and activists as well as police in the Nasirnagar incident.
They called for forming a cell at the police headquarters to look into the attacks on the minority community.
The IGP assured them of setting up a cell, and said that he himself would oversee it, according to a press release.
Shahidul also told them that he had already given directives to form "harmony committees" with representatives of all religious communities in every division, district and upazila to maintain communal harmony.
OTHER ATTACKS
In Netrakona, police arrested a person for allegedly torching Ekota Sangha Kali Mondir in Satpai area on Saturday.
The arrestee was identified as Sumon Islam, 40, son of Nurul Islam of Singapur village in Narsingdi's Rayerpur upazila, police said.
Bhajan Das, president of the temple committee, said they caught Sumon red-handed at the temple. The idols there were damaged partially by the time they brought the fire under control.
Yesterday, a Netrakona court placed Sumon on a two-day remand.

In Thakurgaon, criminals set fire to a temple and vandalised a Kali idol at Pokati Paschimpara village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on November 4.
Banaripara police in Barisal arrested a person, Babul Howlader, for vandalising idols of goddess Durga and other deities at a temple in Banaripara Bazar on Thursday.
Ziaul Ahsan, officer-in-charge of Banaripara Police Station, said Babul was arrested from his house at the upazila's Narottampur village.
During primary interrogation, Babul confessed to his involvement in the attack, said the police officer.
In Gopalganj, a temple came under attack in Raghunathpur on October 31.
The same day, unknown criminals vandalised an idol of goddess Durga and looted valuables from a temple in Chittagong's Hathazari upazila.
The criminals looted gold jewellery and cash from the temple's vault, said Rimon Muhuri, general secretary of Hathazari upazila Puja Udjapon Committee.
Also on October 31, a group of 50 criminals attacked a Kali temple and a Shree Chaitanya temple in Sunamganj under the pretext that some Hindus set off firecrackers near a mosque that evening.
They, however, could not enter the temples as those were locked.
The mob then hurled brickbats at two Hindu houses.
On October 30, when religious bigots carried out attacks on the Hindus in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar upazila, violence spilled over into neighbouring Habiganj district where a Kali temple came under attack in Madhabpur bus stand area.
The attackers vandalised a Kali idol there when Hindu devotees were offering prayers on the occasion of Diwali.

EU parliament 25 wounded as police

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delegation.
During the visit, the EU delegation will visit a few leading garment factories to see workplace safety and labour rights situation. The delegation will hold a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) on November 15.
After the Rana Plaza building collapse in April 2013, Bangladesh has signed the Sustainability Compact, an agreement with the EU for committing improvements in workplace safety and labour rights through practising responsible business behaviour.
The delegation is expected to call on Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and other government officials.
The EU parliamentary delegation is also scheduled to meet BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on November 17 prior to warping up its visit.
Highly-placed official sources said the delegation has sought an appointment with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina but the appointment has not been confirmed yet since Hasina might be abroad then.
The delegation is due to leave Dhaka on November 17 night, but some important members will extend their stay if they get an appointment with the PM, the sources said.
The delegation is also yet to get an appointment with the foreign minister or state minister for foreign affairs.

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The deputy commissioner's (DC) office acquired the land for then Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, which established Rangpur (Mahimaganj) Sugar Mills between 1954 and 1957. The original land owners were given only Tk 8.07 lakh for the vast land. Later in 1962, the DC office, on behalf of the land owners, signed an agreement with the corporation.
The deal stated that the land was acquired for cultivation of sugarcane by the mill authorities. If the land is used for farming any other crops, the corporation shall surrender the land to the government (the DC office).
However, the agreement was violated as the mill authorities leased out most of the land for cultivation of crops like rice, wheat, mustard, tobacco, and maize.
Four months ago, indigenous people occupied around 100 acres of land and built makeshift sheds on the plea that the land belonged to their forefathers.
Several clashes have meanwhile taken place over eviction of the indigenous people from the land.
Contacted, Gaibandha Superintendent of Police Ashraful Islam said police would launch a massive drive to evict illegal occupants by night to recover the government land.
Communist Party of Bangladesh has, meanwhile, condemned the police attack on indigenous people. In a state-

ment, party chief Mujahidul Islam Selim and Secretary General Syed Abu Zafar Ahmed alleged that a conspiracy to evict indigenous people has been going on for long in the name of protecting government property.
"We have taken possession of our forefathers' property at Shahebganj sugarcane farm, as the mill authorities are no longer cultivating sugarcane," said Sofen Hasbrone.
"We have appealed to the authorities concerned to get back our forefathers' property acquired by the then government on condition that if the mill was shut down, the property would be handed over to the original owners," said Sreemona Basthe.
Santal people have been peacefully staging demonstrations, including forming human chains and submitting memorandum, to get back their land in vein and were eventually compelled to take possession of their land, said Shahjahan Ali, secretary, Bhumi Uddhar Committee, Shahebganj.
"Several of my men were pierced by arrows and are now undergoing treatment at Gobindaganj Health Complex," said Subrota Kumar Sarker, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj police.
Talking to The Daily Star, Abdul Awal, managing director of Rangpur Sugar Mills, said, "We have made several requests to the indigenous people to vacate the mill's land, but no one paid any heed."

'Rasraj did not upload the image on FB'

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said attributing the info to an "intelligence report".
"Rasraj Das didn't upload that image [demeaning religion in Facebook]. According to an intelligence report, it was posted from Dhaka. The image is now in a forensic lab," the minister told a press conference at a Nasirnagar school.
Rasraj is a fisherman and an illiterate person and he doesn't know how to upload an image, Sayedul also said, adding investigation is on to identify who had posted it.
He claimed that nobody else but a few people from Nasirnagar were involved in the conspiracy. Asked for names, Sayedul only said, "I have all along been facing them."
This was the first time Sayedul, also the lawmaker from Nasirnagar, talked to the media since he went to the upazila from Dhaka three days after the October 30 attacks.
He drew a lot of flak for playing it down by saying the hate attacks were "not that serious" and that "only one or two incidents of looting took place".
Besides, there was allegation that he used abusive words against Hindus.
Mobs, including religious zealots and local goons, vandalised and looted over a hundred houses of Hindus and temples in Nasirnagar upazila headquarters and Haripur union during the three-hour mayhem.
It was over a Facebook image, purportedly in the account of Rasraj, "hurting the religious sentiment" of the Muslims.
Before his arrest, the 27-year-old claimed that he had nothing to do with the upload. He apologised for it anyway while relatives said the account might have been hacked.
The minister at the press conference trashed reports that the local administra-

tion and police had failed to tackle the Nasirnagar incidents. He claimed that they had taken necessary measures and brought the situation under control quickly.
He even said only two to three houses were torched.
But the administration itself in a survey found at least 58 families were affected and 17 temples were either damaged or looted when the mobs went berserk in at least eight Hindu-dominated areas that day.
Hours after the minister's statement defending the local administration and police, the public administration ministry issued a circular transferring Nasirnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Choudhury Muazzam Ahmed and attaching him to the ministry before further appointment.
Later, UNO Muazzam told this correspondent that the transfer actually came as a blessing for him. He, however, did not say why.
On Thursday, the Police Headquarters withdrew the officer-in-charge of Nasirnagar Police Station, Abdul Kadir, following widespread criticism for failing to ensure security of the Hindus.
Local Hindu leaders have been demanding resignation of the UNO and the OC, alleging that both assisted in the organising of two protest rallies from where zealots and local goons carried out the attacks. Besides, the two didn't take proper precautionary measures to save Hindus.
Asked about the officials giving the two Islamist groups permission to hold the rallies, Sayedul said, "They [local administration and police] had tackled the incident very well at the beginning. The OC even suffered injuries."
Protesting the Facebook post, one

rally was staged by Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat at Nasirnagar College intersection, while the other by Towhid Janata at Ashutosh Pilot High School.
Both the rallies began around 10:00am and continued till 2:00pm. Many participants left midway through the rallies and took part in the three-hour attack starting from 11:00am, according to locals, police and sources in the administration.
Sayedul also denied the allegation that he made "derogatory remarks" on Hindus while meeting local minority leaders at the Zila Parishad Dak Bungalow after the attacks.
"I'll quit right now if any Hindu in the upazila can prove that I uttered abusive words against the community. I'm shocked over the allegation brought against me by the Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikkyo Parishad and Puja Udjapon Parishad," he said.
"Even a child wouldn't believe that I will instigate communal violence by hurling abuse at Hindus in my own constituency instead of tackling the situation."
The allegation, however, triggered a firestorm of protests in social media.
Controversy centring him reached such a level that top leaders of the ruling Awami League formally said the party will take organisational measures against the minister if anybody comes up with proof supporting the allegation.
Asked whether the attacks were the result of internal conflict of the local AL, Sayedul replied in the negative. "There's no conflict within the Awami League. A vested quarter carried out the attacks to demean me."
The BNP-Jamaat men are involved in these incidents to create obstructions to the country's development, he added.
On Health Minister Mohammad

Nasim's comment at a media briefing in the capital yesterday that local administration failed to tackle the incident, Sayedul said, "Mr Nasim has been wrongly briefed about the incident."
"Not Mr Nasim, I am at the spot."
Syedul lambasted AL's Brahmanbaria district leader for expelling three local AL men, known as his close aides, from the party for alleged involvement in the attacks.
He also claimed that journalists from Dhaka after the violence stayed at the name-only press club of Nasirnagar which used to remain closed for 24 hours.
"Who had provided the journalists with food and shelter?"
When journalists protested his statement, the minister said he was talking about "just some newsmen".
NINE MORE ARRESTED
Police after overnight drives arrested nine more people for suspected involvement in the Nasirnagar attacks. With this, the number of arrestees in that connection stood at 53 yesterday.
The arrests were made based on several video clips of the incidents, Abu Zafar, newly appointed OC of Nasirnagar Police Station told The Daily Star.
The identities of the arrestees could not be known immediately.
Nasirnagar police also filed two cases over another attack -- torching of five Hindu houses in the wee hours of Saturday.
Also yesterday, Minister Nasim at a press briefing after a meeting of the AL-led 14-party alliance at the AL president's Dhanmondi office urged the local administration to take steps to ensure security of minorities.
The meeting decided to send a delegation of the alliance to visit Nasirnagar on November 9, he said.

8-lane road
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were just parked while others were being repaired.
Besides, buses were seen stopping even on middle lanes to pick up or drop off passengers.
Trucks were seen loading and unloading goods like bamboos, motor parts and scrap metals, occupying part of the road.
The spots where the occupancy was most prevalent include Dania, Shanir Akhra, Matuail, Rayerbagh, Sanarpar, Signboard and Sirmail.
"We have no parking lot. That's why we park our buses here because most of the owners live in this locality," said Akash, a helper of a minibus that was parked occupying the road at Dania, on August 15.
Around 30 buses were also seen parked in a row in the area. Some of them were on the road.
Visiting the same spot on October 4, around a dozen buses were seen parked there in a similar way.
At different points along the highway, buses, trucks and pick-up trucks were being repaired and painted, taking up a part of the road.
"Whenever there is a minor problem in our bus, we come here [Rayerbagh] at the roadside garages for a quick fix," said Abdullah Halim, a driver of a local bus plying Dhaka-Narayanganj route, at Rayerbagh.
A staff of Abdullah Motors at Sonir Akhra said, "We have been running this garage here for the last couple of years. As there is a shortage of space, vehicles are often parked on parts of the road."
In Matuail, some people were seen unloading steel sheets from a pickup-truck, which was parked on the road.
There are around a dozen shops along the highway that sell bamboos, and most of the time, traders keep their trucks on a lane of the road and then load the vehicles or unload the bamboos on to the soft shoulder.
A good number of local buses were also seen parked on a lane of the highway at Sanarpar and Signboard areas.
"This is our last stop [Sanarpar] ... We keep our buses here for some time until the next trip," a driver told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

However, drives to remove illegal structures on both sides of the highway were on and the rubble of the temporary shops and other establishments were seen scattered beside the road.
"We had a garage here. But the administration had demolished it," said Matin Miah at Rayerbagh.
Talking to The Daily Star, Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary MAN Siddique said, "We have already conducted drives against illegal occupiers of the eight-lane highway. We will continue drives on a regular basis."
Gobinda Chandra Paul, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (traffic, Demra zone), said, "We conduct regular drives against vehicles parked on the road. But we need more people to keep the road completely free from illegal occupiers."
Eminent road transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque stressed the need for a comprehensive plan to address the issue. Apart from maintenance of highways, steps should be taken so that illegal occupiers cannot use the roadside land, he added.
IED explosion
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Nau Mro, of Remakri Prangsha, and Aung Ney Khumi, of Tong Pu para, of Ruma upazila in Bandarban.
Though Bandarban army said the incident took place in Jarulchhari area, locals said the incident spot was in remote Remakri Prangsha area under Ruma upazila.
The three entered Myanmar territory through Rangamati on Saturday noon to bring a stray cow (locally called goyal) and they were wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED) blast, said Bandarban Brigade Maj Touhidul Islam.
Condition of one of the injured was critical. The three were on the way to Ruma Upazila Health Complex, the army official added.
Contacted, Syed Tariqul Islam superintendent of Rangamati police, said the incident of the explosion occurred in a remote area along Bandarban-Myanmar border.

India tells Dhaka

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Dhaka to call on the Prime Minister and express our grave concern about the safety and wellbeing of Hindus in Bangladesh," Swaraj Tweeted yesterday.
Asked whether the High Commissioner had got an appointment with Sheikh Hasina, an Indian diplomat in Dhaka yesterday told The Daily Star that "the High Commission of India has already conveyed the concern of the government of India to the government of Bangladesh appropriately."
Criminals a few days ago set ablaze houses of members of the Hindu faith and

also damaged two temples in Brahmanbaria where several places of worship of the minority community were vandalised.
Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup had said three days ago that New Delhi has asked Dhaka to ensure safety of people belonging to the Hindu faith and their properties.
Bangladesh's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had said the attacks on several Hindu temples in Bangladesh were carried out under a well orchestrated plan aimed at grabbing land belonging to the minority community.

Ads push kids to eat

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advertising messages on networking sites, games - known as "advergaming" - and other social media.
"Our governments have given the prevention of childhood obesity the highest political priority, (yet) we consistently find that children - our most vulnerable group - are exposed to countless numbers of hidden digital marketing techniques promoting foods high in fat, sugar and salt," said Zsuzsanna Jakab, the WHO's regional director for Europe.
She said in the absence of effective regulation of digital media in many countries, children are increasingly exposed to persuasive, individually tailored marketing techniques that parents may underestimate, or be unaware of.
"Often, parents do not see the same advertisements, nor do they observe the online activities of their children; many therefore underestimate the scale of the problem," said the WHO.
About two-thirds of children who are overweight before puberty will be overweight in early

adulthood, and an estimated 25 percent of school-aged children in Europe are already overweight or obese, said the report.
Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease and cancer at a younger age.
Gauden Galea, a WHO Europe expert on chronic disease and health promotion, said allowing advertisers and the food industry to target children like this could have "huge health and economic consequences".
The WHO Europe report said that since there is little effective regulation or control over of digital marketing, children are often exposed to powerful and targeted online marketing via digital platforms that collect personal data.
Digital marketing can engage children in emotional, entertaining experiences and encourage them to share these experiences with their friends, it said, describing this as "a dubious cocktail when used to promote unhealthy foods".

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