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DUSSEHRA FESTIVAL IN INDIA

Sixty feared dead as train hits crowd

At least 60 are feared killed after a train ran into dozens of people standing on a railway track in India's Amritsar, watching the burning of Ravana's effigy yesterday evening.

The people who were hit reportedly could not hear the train-travelling from Jalandhar to Amritsar - due to the exploding crackers. Reports suggest the Ravana effigy was erected very close to the railway tracks at Joda Phatak in Amritsar.

"There are more than 50 casualties. We are evacuating people, injured taken to the hospital", said SS Shrivastava, Commissioner of Police, Amritsar.

Witnesses said the dead included children. There were reportedly around 700 people at the accident spot, according to news agency IANS.

An eyewitness said no alarm was raised when the train was approaching and blamed the administration. "The administration and the Dussehra committee are at fault... they should have made sure that the train halts or slows down," the eyewitness told ANI.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has said he is rushing to Amritsar to personally supervise relief and rescue efforts. He has asked all government and private hospitals to stay open. "My government will give Rs 5 lakh to kin of each deceased and free treatment to injured in government and private hospitals. District authorities have been mobilised on war footing," he tweeted.

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Devotees bid farewell to the Goddess Durga, the mother deity, with the immersion of the idols on the beach of Patenga in Chattogram. The picture was taken yesterday evening as the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community ended.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Hindus say goodbye to Devi Durga

UNB, Dhaka

Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, ended yesterday with the immersion of idols of Goddess Durga across the country.

Devotees in tearful eyes bade farewell to the mother deity and her children -- Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh -- wishing Durga's return next year.

The ceremonial worship of the goddess ended with the celebrations of Bijoya Dashami and immersion of the idols of the deity and her children in rivers and other water bodies.

Durga Puja is the worship of "Shakti" (divine force) embodied in goddess Durga. It symbolises the battle between good and evil where the dark forces eventually succumb to the divine forces.

The annual religious festival began on October 15 with incarnation (Bodhon) of goddess Durga marking Mahashashthi.

Durga Puja was celebrated in over 31,000 mandaps across the country this year.

B Chy, Mahi 'relieved' of party posts

Expelled Bikalpadhara leader forms new committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new committee of Bikalpadhara Bangladesh was announced yesterday "relieving" its President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Secretary General Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan and Joint Secretary General Mahi B Chowdhury of their posts.

Shah Alam Badol, who was expelled from the party's vice-president post a few days ago, announced the committee.

Nurul Amin Bepari, a presidium member of the party, was made the new president and Badol the new secretary general of the party.

"Following the party charter, we have decided to relieve AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan and Mahi B Chowdhury of their party posts. We want to say that we are the party's main part," Nurul said at a press conference in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

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Turkey widens journo search

Denies giving US audio tape of torture; Trump warns of 'very severe' response if Saudi proven responsible

AGENCIES

Turkey yesterday widened the investigation into the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi after his visit to the Saudi consulate, searching a forest in the city.

Ankara also denied giving any audio recording to US officials from the investigation about Khashoggi, a former royal insider who moved to the United States after becoming a critic of the current House of Saud leadership.

US President Donald Trump acknowledged that Khashoggi was likely dead even as his fate remained unclear 17 days after he vanished.

Pro-government Turkish media have provided a steady stream of claims that Khashoggi was tortured and decapitated by a Saudi hit squad inside the consulate, although Turkey has yet to divulge details about the investigation.

But the controversy has already put the kingdom -- for decades a key Western ally and bulwark against Iran in the Middle East -- under unprecedented pressure amid reports it is scrambling to provide an explanation to take the heat off its rulers.

It is also a major crisis for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a favourite of the Trump administration who has portrayed himself as a modernising Arab reformer, but whose image and even position at home could



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JP gets nod for today's Dhaka rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has given main opposition Jatiya Party permission to hold a public meeting at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan this morning.

The party's top leaders had a meeting with DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia at his office last week on how to assist the JP in organising the rally, JP insiders told The Daily Star last night.

The DMP had earlier imposed 22 conditions on the BNP for holding the party's September 30 rally at the same venue. But it did not attach any condition to the JP's rally.

A day before the rally, the DMP had instructed the BNP to abide by all the conditions, including the party's own arrangement of security to get permission for the meeting.

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Meet Hyperion

Astronomers find giant galaxy supercluster in early universe



AFP, Paris

Scientists have discovered a primitive "supercluster" of galaxies forming in the early universe, just 2.3 billion years after the Big Bang.

The structure, nicknamed Hyperion, is the largest and most massive to be found so early in the formation of the universe, which sprang into existence around 13.7 billion years ago.

Its titanic mass is one million billion times that of the Sun.

"This is the first time that such a large structure has been identified at such a high redshift, just over two billion years after the Big Bang," said Olga Cucciati, a researcher at the Astrophysics and Space Sciences Observatory in Bologna and lead author of a study detailing the discovery.

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SURVEILLANCE HRW worried at govt move

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh government has embarked upon an intensive and intrusive surveillance and monitoring of social media ahead of the national election, raising concern over a chilling effect on speech, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

Draconian new laws and policies are being used to target political opponents, journalists, internet commentators, and broadcasters, it said.

As the national election approaches, opposition parties and independent observers fear that the increasing crackdown on privacy and free expression is an attempt to limit speech and criticism of the government in the election period, the HRW said in a statement.

The government claims these efforts are to stem harmful rumours, false

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Fire kills six at Rohingya camp in Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

Six Rohingyas were killed early yesterday after a blaze tore through an overcrowded camp for the persecuted minority in Myanmar's Rakhine state, the local fire service said.

Global attention has focused on the 720,000 Rohingya Muslims forced from the state's north into Bangladesh last year by a brutal military crackdown.

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A sweet yam, weighing almost 8kg, has taken its grower Belayet Hossain by surprise. The farmer of Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan upazila didn't expect to see the yam grow about seven times larger than the average size. The picture was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

ATROCITIES ON ROHINGYA UNSC to meet on Myanmar inquiry report on Oct 24

AFP, United Nations

The UN Security Council is scheduled to hear a briefing next week from the head of a UN fact-finding mission that has accused Myanmar's military of atrocities against Muslim Rohingya, diplomats said Thursday.

Nine countries including the United States, Britain and France requested the briefing that is likely to be opposed by China, which has friendly ties with Myanmar's military.

The meeting was scheduled for October 24 despite objections from Myanmar, which has rejected the findings of the UN inquiry.

The fact-finding mission released an explosive report last month that called on the council to refer the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, or to create an ad hoc international criminal tribunal, as was done with the former Yugoslavia.

The report said that Myanmar's top generals, including Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing, must be investigated and prosecuted for genocide in Rakhine State.

Myanmar has rejected accusations that its military committed atrocities in the crackdown last year that forced more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee over the border to Bangladesh.

Myanmar's Ambassador Hau Do Suan said in a letter to the Security Council this week that his government "strongly objects" to the request to hear the chairman of the mission.

Britain, France, Peru, Sweden, Ivory Coast, the Netherlands, Poland, Kuwait and the United States

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SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION