

# Puja mandaps with a point of view



Sree Sree Laxmi Narayan Dev Bigraha Thakur temple at the city's Malopara area protested ongoing land grabbing attempts on it by depicting a giant attacking a temple, while fists are raised in unison to protest it (left). Meanwhile, Sagarpara's Shibalay temple (right) protested the continued attack on Rajshahi city's cinema hall culture.

PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

In an effort to symbolically represent its struggles against land grabbing, a temple in Rajshahi has decorated its mandap in the theme of good vs evil.

While a giant is about to swallow a temple with a huge gape, some united fists are trying to raise a protest, while a symbol of justice is trying to portray its light.

This depiction at the entrance of the mandap reveals the temple's ongoing saga against land grabbers, and it has drawn the attention of

the city's residents.

"This is our way of protesting against evil forces - the land grabbers who are constantly threatening our temple," said Ratan Kumar Pal, president of the Sree Sree Laxmi Narayan Dev Bigraha Thakur temple's governing committee.

The temple is located at the city's Malopara area.

"We're tired of fighting them [the grabbers]. It never feels like our voices are being heard," he said, adding that the issue is under trial at the High Court.

He also said the grabbers have the support of communal forces

operating from the back.

Beside the Laxmi Narayan temple, Shibalay temple of the city's Sagarpara area also drew attention by mixing Durga puja festivities with a message of denouncing communal forces.

At Shibalay, the protest is directed at the destruction of the city's cinema halls. One of its banners say it is the evil power of communal forces that instigated the demolition of the halls.

Rajshahi used to have at least five popular cinema halls -- Kolpona, Aloka, Upohar Bornali, and Lili. By October 2018, none of

them were standing anymore.

Meanwhile, other banners put up at the temple say cinema is a part of the country's independence and culture.

As a show of protest and solidarity with the halls, Shibalay temple authorities decided to decorate their puja mandap replicating the design of Kolpona Cinema Hall.

The temple authority also informed this correspondent that around 1,200 cinema halls were destroyed all over the country in the last one decade, all in the name of development.

# Bangladesh seeks greater trade ties with Serbia

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen has sought Bangladesh's stronger trade and investment ties with Serbia and close cooperation in addressing global issues.

On the sidelines of the 60th commemorative events of the non-aligned movement recently, Dr Momen held meetings with Nikola Selakovic, minister of foreign affairs; Dr Daria Kisc Tepavcevic, minister of labour, employment, veteran and social affairs; and Tatjana Matic, minister for trade, tourism and telecommunication of Serbia.

During the meeting with the Serbian foreign minister, Dr Momen highlighted Bangladesh's non-aligned foreign policy as envisioned by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

While recalling with profound gratitude that former Yugoslavia was one of the first European countries to have recognised Bangladesh immediately after its independence, Momen stressed the need for further strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The whole gamut of trade, investment and labour were discussed during the meeting.

Dr Momen informed his Serbian counterpart about Bangladesh's achievements in containing the Covid-19 pandemic as well as its impacts on the economy of the country through early intervention and effective action.

He also mentioned the massive vaccination programme, which was highly lauded by the Serbian side.

On the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Dr Momen emphasised rejuvenation of the relationship between the two friendly countries.

He proposed holding a Foreign Office Consultation which the Serbian minister gladly welcomed. Both sides stressed the early signing of two MoUs on Visa Waiver

in respect of Diplomatic and Official Passports and Defence Cooperation.

They also discussed the possibility of hosting joint celebratory events marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

The Bangladesh foreign minister sought support of Serbia for the early repatriation of Rohingyas, temporarily sheltered in Bangladesh, to their homeland Myanmar.

During the meeting with Serbian Labour Minister Dr Daria Kisc Tepavcevic, the possibility of engaging Bangladeshi workforce in the development work of Serbia was discussed.

The Bangladesh foreign minister informed the Serbian minister about the hardworking workforce of Bangladesh who are contributing to the infra-structure development of many countries, including the Middle East.

He proposed that Serbia can be benefited from the expertise of Bangladeshi workforce, especially in infrastructure development, health and tourism sectors.

The Serbian minister welcomed the idea and recommended to work closely towards the conclusion of a cooperation agreement in the field of labour and employment.

The meeting also featured discussion on different socio-economic issues.

The foreign minister held a meeting with Tatjana Matic, Serbian minister for trade, tourism and telecommunication.

Terming Bangladesh "a land of opportunities", Dr Momen highlighted the huge potentials to increase trade relations between the two countries.

He informed the minister about the generous incentives offered by the government of Bangladesh to foreign investors and invited Serbian business delegation to visit Bangladesh. Dr Momen also invited the Serbian ministers to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time.

## Friends became

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Lama upazila chairperson Mostafa Jamal said, "A group carried out the attack as planned."

"As soon as the meeting ended, a lot of people joined the procession. We had nothing to do by then," said Bandarban Additional District Magistrate Suraya Akter Sweetey.

Ashok Kumar Paul, additional superintendent of police (DSB) Bandarban, said about 25 people, including the officer-in-charge of Lama Police Station and about 10 members of the police, were injured in yesterday's attack.

"No case has been filed so far and no arrests have been made in connection with the attacks on police, demolition of Hindu temples, vandalism of their shops and looting," said Bandarban Superintendent of Police Jerin Akther.

"We are still investigating who were behind the attack and who were involved," the police superintendent said.



Madhu's shop after the attack. It was among 30 Hindu-owned shops that were vandalised and looted on October 14.

PHOTO: STAR

## Municipality mayor

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"Now that the canal is complete, they came to me and I had to follow up on my promise," he said.

"Local traders are paying for the buildings. Once they're operational, the traders will pay monthly rents to the municipality as well," he said.

The AC Land said they visited the spot after coming to know of the ongoing construction in early September. He said they then sent a letter to BMDA to notify about the situation and ask whether the construction would affect the canal's flow.

A week ago, BMDA replied that the buildings would not affect the canal's water flow as they were being constructed above the canal, the AC Land said.

However, in another twist, when contacted, BMDA superintending engineer Nazirul Islam said he doesn't know anything about any such letter. "Any construction on a canal can affect its flow," he said, adding that the markets would generate waste, most of which would get thrown into the canal.

BMDA assistant engineer Kamrul Alam said he has visited the spot after receiving the AC Land's letter. "I saw that parts of the buildings' structure were already constructed," he said, adding that the AC Land's office was responsible for protecting the government land, not BMDA.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives has sent a letter to Rajshahi district commissioner in this regard.

In the letter, a recently published news report is cited, with directives to carry out an investigation and submit a report on an emergency basis.



Family members paid tribute to those who lost their lives in Jagannath Hall tragedy 36 years ago, at a memorial in front of the dormitory at Dhaka University yesterday. On October 15 in 1985, the dorm's roof collapsed, leaving as many as 40 people -- including 26 students and 14 guests -- dead. Since then, the day is observed as a day of mourning for the university.

PHOTO: STAR

## Lifebuoy starts handwashing campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hygiene soap brand Lifebuoy, in partnership with Brac, has launched a weeklong "H for Handwashing" campaign to teach effective handwashing techniques to more than 3.5 lakh students across 700 schools in Bangladesh on Thursday.

The campaign aims to instil the importance of handwashing as a habit in children from an early age, says a press release.

Every year, Lifebuoy celebrates "Global Handwashing Day" on October 15 to motivate and mobilise people across the globe to improve their handwashing habits, says the release.

As part of the campaign, an event was held at Porabari High School in Trishal of Mymensingh. At the event, six simple steps of effective handwashing was shown to 500 students.

Afzal Khan, marketing director for Beauty and Personal Care Division, Unilever Bangladesh Limited, said, "Lifebuoy is on a mission to change handwashing behaviour for more than a century. This partnership with Brac reaffirms our commitment."

# An ancestral profession lives on

Fishing rod makers from Mymensingh share their aspirations and challenges

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Some 200 families of Bade Majhira village in Muktagacha upazila of Mymensingh have been making a living by making fishing rods. This has been an ancestral profession of these families for around a century.

The housewives and the teenagers are also involved with the work to support their families. On the side, the artists are involved in agriculture as well.

The makers have a steady supply of a special variety of bamboo collected from local agents in Sunamganj. The preliminary work includes cleaning the bamboos, which is done by female workers.

Khadija, 30, said they can easily clean 200-300 bamboos per day and get one buck for cleaning each.

Rubi Akter, a school-going girl, said they do the cleaning work in their free times.

"The income helps me to support my family," she said.

The male workers, however, mostly do the baking of the fishing sticks to straighten them.

Alal Uddin, 40, said he has been in this profession for 25 years.

"This is an ancestral profession and the earning is good. A male worker can easily earn Tk 500 to Tk 600, baking 50-70 sticks per day," he said.

Traders from Mymensingh and other districts buy these fishing rods from the makers and supply them



The process of making fishing rods includes cleaning and baking the bamboo sticks, supplied to the makers by local agents from Sunamganj.

PHOTO: STAR

in different areas of the country. The products are in demand in northern districts, according to the makers.

Liton Mia, 20, of the same locality said if they got the opportunity to supply the sticks to different destinations, they could earn better. Buyers from different areas of the country, mainly from northern districts, visit the village to buy fishing rods.

The makers only need coal dust from local brick kilns and they buy every sack of coal dust at Tk 1200. They can bake 300 to 400 fishing rods burning one sack of coal dust, said a 27-year-old worker Rubel Mia.

Rubel also said they have the opportunity to continue their work

all through the year. The monsoon is the busiest time of the year, as the demands are higher. Professional fishermen become more active than the any other season, and demands from amateurs also increase.

The profit is also better during this season, and the workers enjoy a good return for their job, said Aminul Islam, a businessman, who has already engaged 15 workers, including women for this season's production.

"I started this business 11 years ago when I used to work as a day labourer. Now I earn a good amount from this business every month to support my four-member family, including two school going children," said Aminul.



According to Aminul, the suppliers need financial assistance from the government with loan on soft terms, to recover from the losses the businesses faced during the pandemic.

"Due to the country-wide lockdown amid coronavirus fallout last year, we could not run the business smoothly as the supply of raw bamboos from Sunamganj almost stopped. We could not even deliver the fishing rods to the desired destinations during the pandemic," he said.

The rod makers hope that if the business gears back up again, income opportunities will open up for hundreds of rural people, especially women and girls.

## Dengue cases cross

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A total of 82 people have died of dengue in the country this year, all who died in July, August, September and October.

Twelve people died in July while 34 in August, 23 in September and 13 in October so far, says DGHS.

Among the deaths, 76 have died in Dhaka division, two in Chattogram division and Khulna, and one each in Rajshahi and Mymensingh divisions. Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 846 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 161 outside the capital, the DGHS data shows.

## Account of

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They started the scan and soon pushed a radioactive isotope into the vein though the cannula. The table moved under the gamma camera. I continued my keen observation on his breathing and incrementally provide sedative drugs to keep him in a desired state of sleep.

The tense 30 minutes passed uneventfully, and the scan was about to finish. As I turned the baby to his side, he started to move his tiny arms and legs. It brought joy and relief to me -- he was fully awake in due time.

I called in the anxious mother, and I could see the tears of relief in her eyes. Parents are often fearful about any anaesthesia or sedation for their children. So an anaesthesiologist has the scope of compassionately assuring the worrying parents by providing a safe anaesthesia or sedation.

People often have no clue of what an anaesthesiologist does. Some think they only render a patient unconscious during surgery. But they do much more than just providing anaesthesia for surgery.

The above account is just another aspect of their vital service. Their work is not merely confined to the operation theatre (OT). They also play a major role outside the OT by providing sedation, resuscitation, ICU management, pain management and administrative services.

October 16th is celebrated worldwide as "World Anaesthesia Day" to commemorate the first successful demonstration of ether anaesthesia on this day in 1846.

(The author is a senior specialist-anaesthesia and pain medicine at Evercare Hospital Dhaka)