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SECOND EDITION



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"The government will not give her [Khaleda Zia] the scope for receiving better treatment as its goal is to kill her slowly and gradually."
BNP STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER MIRZA ABBAS

"A syndicate of businessmen has been hiking the prices of essentials due to a lack of monitoring and control of markets by the government."
COMMUNIST PARTY OF BANGLADESH PRESIDENT MUJAHIDUL ISLAM SELIM

"We live in an open society, a democracy. We cannot be cowed by any individual."
BRITISH HOME SECRETARY PRITI PATEL AFTER A LAWMAKER WAS STABBED TO DEATH IN A "TERRORIST" ATTACK

Hate spiral must end

Protesters urge; anger in social media over attacks on Hindus

STAR REPORT

Protests denouncing the communal attacks on Hindu temples, idols and properties during the Durga Puja celebrations gained momentum as the call for punishing the perpetrators got louder yesterday.

People, including members of the Hindu community, demonstrated in different parts of the country, demanding immediate arrest of the culprits. The protesters enforced a half-day hartal in Chattogram and defied section 144 -- ban on gatherings -- in Noakhali.

Different political and social organisations also joined the chorus in seeking justice for the victims.

Social media was flooded with posts slamming the communal attacks as many netizens said hatred must stop and called for maintaining religious harmony.

The protests were organised following the recent spate of violence in several districts after words spread that "the Holy Quran was demeaned" in Cumilla.

Zealots ran amok, vandalising Hindu idols, temples and shops in Chandpur, Chattogram, Noakhali, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Kurigram and other districts.

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- » Countrywide mass fasting on Oct 23
- » Minorities' leaders to visit Noakhali today
- » At least 80 makeshift temples attacked, according to AFP report



Holding posters, demonstrators denounce the communal attacks carried out in different places during the Durga Puja celebrations, at a programme in the capital's Shahbagh yesterday. Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad held similar programmes across the country demanding those behind the attacks be identified and punished.

PHOTO: STAR



Attacks on minorities part of a blueprint

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CIG

The attacks on religious minorities, their temples, houses and businesses are parts of a blueprint to force them to leave the country, said Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said the ideological ancestors of the defeated forces in the Liberation War were behind the attacks.

The religious fundamentalists, who failed to create a country

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Tigers ready for Scottish hurdle

MAZHAR UDDIN from Muscat

The reason Bangladesh are playing the qualifying round of the ICC T20 World Cup this time around can be explained by the Tigers' below-par record in the shortest format of the game over the years. So, it is imperative that Bangladesh begin their World Cup campaign on a positive note when they meet Scotland in the opening game of the qualifying round at the Al Amerat Cricket Stadium in Muscat today.

The match, scheduled to begin at 8:00pm local time, will be a challenge for the Tigers and both the small ground and unknown territory can prove tricky propositions, so it will be important for Mahmudullah Riyad and Co. to adopt a clear mindset and set the tone.

Bangladesh will be favorites against Scotland, having gained in confidence after two home series wins against Australia and New Zealand. But the momentum has shifted in recent times as the Tigers succumbed to defeats in warm-up games against Sri Lanka and Ireland.

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INT'L DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Fight steeper due to food price hike

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The poor, pummeled the most by the pandemic, just can't catch a break, it seems.

With Bangladesh getting back to its pre-pandemic daily rhythms after continued low test positivity rate and ramping up of vaccination, the reopening was supposed to be their ticket out of the 18-month-long extreme economic woes.

But the spiralling food prices mean their vicissitude has been reinforced -- lending added significance to this year's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, meant to honour the victims of poverty and hunger.

In Bangladesh, the pandemic has unraveled decades of progress made in poverty eradication.

As many as 2.45 crore people have been pushed into poverty by the public health crisis, according to a survey by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) in April.

In short, as much as 40 percent of the population is possibly living in poverty now, up from 20.5 percent before the pandemic.

The new poor includes faces like Arju Begum, a maid in the capital's Runagar area, and Akkas Mia, a peanut vendor in Mirpur.

Arju struggled to buy essentials before the pandemic, when the prices of commodities were lower. After months of unemployment, she managed to get her old job back but the runaway food price level is overwhelming her.

"We have forgotten how meat and fish taste like -- we are living on rice, lentil and potatoes," she said.

Like her, Akkas and his family are surviving by eating the bare minimum as most of the food items have become unaffordable for him.

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Please don't waste food

PM urges, warns crisis looms over many countries

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to stop wasting food as many countries in the world are going to face a famine-like situation.

"Wasting food has to be reduced. There's a scarcity of food on one side of the world and heavy wasting on the other... there shouldn't be any food-wasting," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said this while addressing the World Food Day held at Hotel InterContinental joining from her official residence the Gano Bhaban.

The theme of this year is "Our actions are our future -- Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life."

The prime minister urged scientists to think about the reuse of excess

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

A social system underestimating the value of teaching harmony; an inequitable education system that does not economically empower the youth; and a political system that silences all voices, giving rise to radical collectives, now have led the country to witness a scale of violence unseen before during the final days of the Durga Puja.

The Daily Star asks three eminent social commentators one fundamental question: how did society get here?

Cultural vacuum is why we're here



SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

The violence was so spontaneous, it could not be controlled and before you know it, a man is dead. This violence was not instigated by the state, which means the violence has now seeped into society. However, the reasons are political -- these

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SALIMULLAH KHAN

The violence is unconditionally condemnable. Everybody knows the situation is volatile because of the political volatility. Instability is political -- it does not stem from religion. We are taking a law-and-order approach to

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SYED MANZOORUL ISLAM

The most important thing is that violence has become endemic -- from domestic to national -- to a point that people do not have the same intense feelings of denouncing violence. We are not reacting as strongly and I am worried. It is not

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Biggest haul of ice seized in Dhaka

Rab arrests two smugglers of a Teknaf-based syndicate with 5kg crystal meth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab officers yesterday seized 5kg of crystal meth, worth an estimated Tk 12.5 crore in Dhaka, in the biggest haul of the drug in the country, said a spokesperson of the force.



Rab-15 officers arrested two men in possession of the drug during a raid in Jatrabari, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director (legal and media) of Rab, told a press briefing at Rab Media Centre in Karwan Bazar.

The arrestees, Mohammad Hossain alias Khokon, 33, suspected to be the ringleader, and Mohamamd Rafique, 32, are from Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, Moin said.

Bangladeshi traffickers used to bring stashes of ice from Myanmar without paying any money. And they didn't have to pay the Myanmar sellers for hauls that got busted on the way, Moin said.

The local drug dealers only paid the meth lab owners in Myanmar once they managed to bring the drug to Dhaka, the commander added.

Each gram of ice costs Tk 1,500-2,000 in Myanmar, but in Dhaka, the same amount can cost up to Tk 10,000-15,000, he added.

They used to smuggle the drugs across the border on boats that also carried clothes and other Burmese goods, he said. To evade detection, they used Myanmar SIM cards on their phones when they were near the border.

The arrestees were also in possession of a pistol, five bullets, two mobile phones, three SIM cards including a Myanmar one, and Tk 20,000 in cash.

During primary interrogation, they told officers that some 20-25 people were involved in the racket.

After getting hauls of ice and yaba across the border, they stored them in several houses in Teknaf and later brought those to Chattogram by road. The drugs are then brought to the capital, the commander said.

"Demand of ice is increasing these days. The gang has members operating in

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