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Your Right to Know

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"Why do you [businessmen] have to make so much profit? Make a profit, but why this much?"
FBCCI PRESIDENT MD JASHIM UDDIN AS PRICE OF EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS CONTINUE TO RISE



"The Awami League benefited from these incidents [of attacks on Hindu temples]. If they can evict the Hindus, they get the lands. If the Hindus stay in the country, they [the AL] get their votes."
BNP STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER GOYESHWAR CHANDRA ROY



"As it is now, this COP [26] will not lead to any big changes, we're going to have to continue pushing."
CLIMATE ACTIVIST GRETA THUNBERG

A chronicle of HATE UNLEASHED

MOSTAFA YOUSUF and KHALID BIN NAZRUL

Around 7:00am on October 13, a 30-year-old Ekram Hossain dialled 999 and reported to the police about an alleged defamation of the Holy Quran at Nanua Dighir Par puja mandap in Cumilla city.

Within minutes, the officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station showed up at the mandap in plainclothes. He went there alone.

Sometime between 7:00am and 7:30am, a man named Foyez Ahmed went live on Facebook from the site and urged people to wake up and protest the alleged defamation. He also showed OC Anwarul Azim in his 56-second live video.

Soon a few groups of young men got into the act. They started sharing the video on Facebook. By around 8:00am, people started streaming into the mandap. And within the next hour, the crowds swelled to their hundreds.

Meantime, Ward Councillor Emran Bachchu erected a bamboo fence around the mandap to keep the crowds from entering.

As the situation threatened to spiral out of control, Deputy Commissioner Md Kamrul Hasan and Superintendent of Police Faruk Ahmed arrived at the spot with 40 to 50 policemen sometime between 10:00am and 10:30am.

Monirul Haque Sakku, the mayor of Cumilla, who lives only 300 yards away from the mandap, was conspicuously absent at the site. Although people of the Hindu community implored him to visit the site and officials called him, he didn't arrive until around 10:00am.

The DC, SP, the councillor, a panel mayor named Syed Ahmed Sohel, and several imams of local mosques were trying to calm things down. But a group of six to seven young men, some wearing red

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CUMILLA MAYHEM



"Hindus are the majority in our neighbourhood. But that never caused any problem for us. We have been living in harmony for over 100 years. In my entire life, I did not see any such incident in Cumilla."

AMANAT MAJUMDAR, A RESIDENT OF NANUA DIGHIR PAR, CUMILLA



Bangladesh batsman Mahedi Hasan (C) departs with his head down as Scotland players celebrate their six-run victory in their first ICC Twenty20 World Cup match at the Al Amerat Cricket Stadium in Muscat yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Scotland stun Tigers

MAZHAR UDDIN from Muscat

The majority of the crowd supporting Bangladesh at the Al Amerat Cricket Stadium in Muscat yesterday were stunned as Bangladesh made a disastrous start to their ICC World T20 Round 1 campaign, losing against Scotland by six runs.

Needing 24 runs off the last over, Mahedi Hasan gave the Bangladesh fans some sort of hope by smashing a boundary and a six off the first four balls against pacer Safyan Sharif as the equation went down to twelve off the last two deliveries.

But it was always going to be a tough ask for Mahedi, who fetched a boundary off the fifth ball, setting the Scotland players in celebration as Bangladesh needed eight runs off the final delivery. The all-rounder could only manage as single as Scotland kept their hundred percent record against Bangladesh in the shortest format of the game after having beaten the Tigers by 34 runs back in 2012.

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Fresh attack in Rangpur

FB post incited arson; home boss pledges fair probe into violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When Hindus across the country were still reeling from the shock of communal attacks during the Durga Puja, miscreants reportedly set fire to some houses of the community in at least three villages of Rangpur last night.

Local sources said the arson took place in Majhipara, Bottola and Hatibandha villages of Ramnathpur union of the district's Pirganj upazila centring on a Facebook post.

However, Md Mahbub, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Pirganj Police Station, could only confirm the attacks in Hatibandha village while talking to The Daily Star around midnight.

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25 cases filed, 143 arrested

In Cumilla, man who uploaded video to incite attack, 3 Jamaat-backed councillors sued

STAR REPORT

Five cases have so far been filed in connection with Wednesday's communal attacks in Nanua Dighir Par area of Cumilla.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Mofizul Islam Khan filed a case under the Digital Security Act against one Mohammad Foyez and multiple unnamed people with Kotwali Model Police Station.

Foyez was sued on charges of uploading a video on social media, inciting the violence, said police. He is now behind bars.

Cases have also been filed against three Jamaat-backed councillors of Cumilla City Corporation for vandalism of Hindu temples. They are Golam Kibria, 42, councillor of ward No 1; Ikram Hossain Babu, 44, councillor of ward No 8 and Mossarraf Hossain, 52, councillor of ward No 6.

Besides, around 20 cases have been filed in three other districts.

Some 535 named and over 6,000 unnamed persons have been made accused in these 25 cases, including

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Dhaka-Ctg expressway project shelved

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The government has officially abandoned its decade-long plan to build an expressway on the Dhaka-Chattogram corridor, a crucial cog for the Bangladesh economy, under public-private partnership -- after shelling out Tk 100 crore on a feasibility study and getting a detailed design.

The prime minister is in favour of building a high-speed railway along the corridor instead, Abdus Sabur, the chief engineer of the roads and highways department (RHD), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The 224.64-kilometre-long rail route of Dhaka-Narayanganj-Cumilla-Feni-Chattogram route, expected to cost Tk 93,350.93 crore, has already been approved by the prime minister.

The Bangladesh Railway has completed the feasibility study and the detailed design for the country's first high-speed rail, which will bring down the journey time from the capital to the port city to just 55-73 minutes.

But the dropping of the expressway project is set to cost the government

upwards of Tk 100 crore: it has to pay back the Asian Development Bank, which funded the feasibility study.

"The feasibility study saved us from wasting huge sums of money, so the amount spent on it was not a waste entirely," Shamsul Arefin, additional secretary of cabinet division, told reporters after the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, where the decision to drop the project was taken.

The government for now will construct a service lane on the existing four-lane Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, Arefin added. Considering the fast-growing traffic on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, the government in 2004 took the initiative to build a road with access control.

In 2008, the ADB financed a feasibility study and a conceptual design for a four-lane Dhaka-Chattogram highway as well as an access-controlled expressway, shows documents from the Manila-based multilateral lender.

In 2009, the daily traffic volume on the highway was between 20,000 and 25,000, 40 percent of which were trucks.

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COMMODITY PRICE SPIRAL 'Don't exploit the situation'

FBCCI warns traders off extreme profiteering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's apex trade body yesterday came down hard on traders of daily commodities for the abnormal price spiral in recent weeks.

"Why do you have to make so much profit? Don't exploit the situation," Md. Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told a gathering of commodities traders.

With the skyrocketing prices of essential commodities like onion, vegetables, rice, edible oil and sugar, the FBCCI summoned the traders to its headquarters in Dhaka to take stock of the situation, which has seen large swathes of the population go hungry in recent weeks.

However, the price spiral of onion was the main topic of the discussion held at the FBCCI headquarters in the capital, which was attended by onion importers, traders, stockists, leaders of different kitchen markets and wholesalers.

While the importers and wholesalers of onion were trying to pin the blame of the price hike on disruptive weather in India, Uddin rather quizzed them how the

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Joyous reunion at DU after 18 months

In-person classes resume

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

The Dhaka University campus was abuzz with students as face-to-face teaching resumed yesterday after 18 months of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The institution that remained empty for a year and half now had students rushing to classrooms, libraries, seminars and cafeterias. Classmates were seen catching up after being separated for long.

Madhur's canteen was full of student activists, some of whom brought a procession and paraded the campus.

Upon entering, students had to wear their masks and show proof of at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. The attendance rate in some departments was 80 to 90 percent, teachers said.

"We were eagerly waiting for this day. We were bored at home for so long. We missed the campus and our friends," said Thofael Ahmed Tarun, a third-year student of the philosophy department.

Students began entering the premises since 8:00am, while university staffers and teachers were stationed at the gate to check temperatures, distribute masks and help sanitise the hands of everyone who entered.

Authorities divided each class into two or groups to maintain physical distancing

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The Dhaka University campus has come back to life as classrooms reopened yesterday after 18 months of closure due to coronavirus restrictions.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Eight more dead in J&K violence

AGENCIES

Clashes between rebels and government forces as well as street killings left eight more dead in Indian Kashmir, officials said, as the disputed Himalayan region battles a worsening wave of violence.

At least 30 people, including eleven civilians, have been gunned down in the past two weeks -- the victims of a deadly resurgence in a three-decade-old insurgency in the Muslim-majority region, which is also claimed by Pakistan.

Saturday saw two militants from The Resistance Front (TRF) rebel group killed outside the main city of Srinagar, police inspector general Vijay Kumar said.

One of them was top rebel commander Umer Mushtaq Khanday, Kumar added.

Hours later, gunmen shot dead a street vendor and a labourer from outside Kashmir in separate shootings, police said.

Two soldiers also died in a "fierce firefight" near the highly militarised ceasefire line between Indian and Pakistani controlled Kashmir, a military statement said.

They had been involved in a week-long hunt for rebels that had already seen seven troops killed in the forested border area of Mendhar.

Meanwhile, two non-locals were shot dead and another injured in Wanpoh area of Kulgam yesterday, when gunmen

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