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DURGA PUJA  
Law enforcers to be deployed from Sept 24  
Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said deployment of law enforcement agencies will begin from September 24 to ensure peaceful celebration of Durga Puja.

He was briefing reporters at the Secretariat following the 13th meeting on law and order, which discussed preparations for the upcoming national election, Durga Puja celebrations, and overall security situation.

Jahangir said puja committees have already agreed to keep seven guards at each mandap, while police, Rab, border guards, and Ansars will patrol ahead of the festival starting from September 28.

The women and children affairs ministry would deploy around 80,000 women volunteers to assist security efforts, he said.

Many mandaps now have video surveillance, helping to identify perpetrators quickly, he said.

He dismissed claims that 29 districts were at risk, saying, “This year puja will be celebrated peacefully across the country...”



Suspend highway project at Chunti wildlife sanctuary

BELA serves legal notice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) yesterday served a legal notice on the government, asking it to immediately suspend all activities of the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway improvement (Phase-II) project at Chunti Wildlife Sanctuary in order to properly protect its forests, wildlife, and biodiversity.

Advocate Zakia Sultana sent the legal notice on behalf of BELA to the officials concerned, saying that it is imperative to take acceptable alternative measures – including flyovers, overpasses, and underpasses – by seeking expert opinions and assessing the environmental impact impartially.

In the legal notice, BELA requested the officials to formulate a time-bound action plan for conservation and management of the sanctuary. It also said no new development projects should be undertaken in the sanctuary, and corrective measures should be taken after examining the project impact.



Police face resistance from locals during an eviction drive at Bastuhara Colony in Khulna's Mujgunni area yesterday. Inset, the law enforcers in action during a clash with the residents.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



BASTUHARA COLONY  
Eviction drive turns violent as locals clash with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Several people were injured in a clash between police and locals during an eviction drive at Bastuhara Colony in Khulna city's Mujgunni area yesterday.

According to locals, the eviction was scheduled to begin at 9:00am to hand over possession of plots to their rightful owners. However, resistance from nearly 200 families currently residing on the two-acre colony land delayed the drive.

The situation escalated around 10:00am when police baton-charged residents attempting to block the eviction. In retaliation, the protesters threw brickbats, forcing law enforcers to retreat temporarily. Police later fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd, prompting residents to flee.

During the clash, agitated locals vandalised a bulldozer brought for the drive.

Police said the eviction was carried out on the instructions of a magistrate but was suspended after the violence. “We are following court orders. But the drive has been halted temporarily due to the situation,” said Mir Atahar Ali, officer-in-charge of Khalishpur Police Station. “Six police members were injured,” he added.

The land in question has been at the centre of disputes for decades. In 1987, the government's housing authority sold the plots in Mujgunni through a lottery to 42 allottees. Despite purchasing the plots, the owners are yet to receive possession, said officials.

On the other hand, nearly 200 low-income families, many identifying as displaced, have been living in the Bastuhara Colony for years. They argue that any eviction without rehabilitation would render them homeless.

“We have nowhere else to go. The government must ensure rehabilitation before eviction,” said Nazrin Begum, one of the residents.

Nazmul Karim, a local resident, said several of the wounded were taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital for treatment.

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Following a long 35-year wait, the Rucsu election is finally set to take place on September 25. In the run-up to the polls, the RU campus is abuzz with anticipation as candidates put forward their pledges. The Daily Star spoke with two such aspirants -- VP candidate Nur Uddin Abir and GS candidate Salauddin Ammar -- to gain insight into their thoughts and aspirations.

Will work to ensure students' rights

Says VP candidate Nur Uddin Abir

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

for Rajshahi University students to finally elect their representatives in a festive environment.

“Students demanded Rucsu polls many times in the past, but now finally it is happening. We are now reaching out to voters, and they are welcoming us with enthusiasm,” he said.

Abir, who has been active in campus politics since his admission in 2018, said, “From the beginning, I worked for students' rights. I

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Quick response team for students

Vows GS candidate Salauddin Ammar

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Salauddin Ammar, who is contesting for the general secretary post in the upcoming Rucsu elections from the “Adhipottobirodhi Oikya” panel, has pledged to form a quick response team on campus to address students' problems.

A m m a r is former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination (SAD).

“From the very beginning of my campus life, I have

always been involved in movements and struggles for students' rights, speaking out and fighting against injustice. I am running in this election because I want to work for the students.”

“When it comes to students' rights, I have never made the slightest compromise. If the students choose me as their representative, I will certainly do whatever is necessary for their rights,” he told The Daily Star.

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Students to get new textbooks in January

Says finance adviser



STAR ONLINE REPORT

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday said students will get new textbooks in January, even though the purchase proposal was withdrawn for further scrutiny.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat after a meeting of the Advisory Council's committee on public purchase, Salehuddin said some printing orders had already been issued, but approvals for books for several classes were held back.

“We want to verify the quality of books printed earlier -- the paper used, and whether some firms are monopolising multiple contracts,” he said. “That is why today's purchase proposal was withdrawn. The list will be reviewed and brought back, possibly next week.”

“Reports of malpractice surface from time to time. We want to ensure no such firms are awarded work this year,” he said.

While work orders were issued in November last year, the government is taking steps to finalise them in September this time so that books are delivered on January 1, he said.

Mokhles Ur Rahman transferred from MoPA

STAR REPORT

Senior Secretary Mokhles Ur Rahman has been transferred from the Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA) and appointed as a member of the Planning Commission.

The Ministry of Public Administration issued a gazette notification in this regard yesterday.

Mokhles Ur Rahman, an officer of BCS administration cadre from batch 82, was appointed senior secretary of the ministry in August 2024 following the fall of the Awami League government.

While speaking to The Daily Star, he said, “The government has done what it deemed best. In line with that decision, I have already joined my new workplace.”

Meanwhile, an additional secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration Abu Shahin M Ashaduzzaman has been given the charge (present duty) of the ministry's secretary.



Workers at a Ludo (Snakes and Ladders) factory near Bongshal Bangladesh Maath in Dhaka dry freshly painted boards under the sun. The factory, which once employed 40 workers, now operates with only a handful of staff due to the growing popularity of mobile board games. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON