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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 Chungi 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 Chungi 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.

Another local Nazmul Karim said several of the wounded were taken to KMCH for treatment.

Students' Union elections

Following a long 35-year wait, the Rucus 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

Sheikh Nur Uddin Abir, vice-president candidate of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, has pledged to work for ensuring students' rights so they are not subjected to deprivation or exploitation.

Talking to The Daily Star, Abir said the Rucus elections being held after 35 years is a historic opportunity for Rajshahi University students to finally elect their representatives in a festive environment.



"Students demanded Rucus 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 SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

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 Rucus elections from the "Adhijottobirodh Oikya" panel, has pledged to form a quick response team on the campus to address students' problems.

Ammar 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 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.

Ctg, Naogaon, Narsingdi get new DCs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed new deputy commissioners (DCs) in three districts -- Chattogram, Naogaon and Narsingdi.

Mohammad Abdul Awal, currently serving as DC of Naogaon, has been made the new DC of Chattogram, replacing Farida Khanom.

Monira Haque, deputy secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division, has been appointed as the new DC of Naogaon.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Anwar Hossain, deputy secretary of the Health Education and Family Welfare Division, will serve as the new DC of Narsingdi, replacing Mohammad Rashed Hossain Chowdhury.

A notification confirming the appointments was issued yesterday, signed by Aminul Islam, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration.



Political leaders accompanying Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus at the United Nations General Assembly await at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport VVIP lounge in Dhaka before their flight to New York early today.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK/CHIEF ADVISER GOB