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## Bijoya Dashami today



STAR REPORT

The five-day Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, ends today with the immersion of the Goddess Durga in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

Devotees will throng Puja mandaps to celebrate Bijoya Dashami, the last day of the festival.

Bijoya Dashami is the special ceremony of reaffirming peace and good relations among people.

On this day, families visit each other to share sweetmeats.

Devotees will bid farewell to the mother deity and her children – Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, and Ganesh – through the immersion of their idols in the water wishing Durga's return next year.

Today is a public holiday.



The family of a Palestinian man killed in an Israeli strike mourn over his body outside al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Israel intercepts Gaza flotilla

Shahidul Alam, aboard a boat, says 'all of Bangladesh with me'

AGENCIES

Activists aboard a Gaza-bound aid flotilla yesterday said Israeli warships surrounded several of its boats and that the interception of the main vessels was underway.

A statement from the Global Sumud Flotilla's official channels said the mission's "vessels are being illegally intercepted".

"Cameras are offline, and vessels have been boarded by military personnel. We are actively working to confirm the safety and status of all participants on board," the statement said.

"The warships are moving in to intercept the flotilla – only 81 nautical miles remain to Gaza," said the Maghreb contingent of the Global Sumud Flotilla in a statement.

French politician Marie Mesmeur and Franco-Palestinian MEP Rima Hassan also reported that their boats were being intercepted.

The Global Sumud Flotilla – around 45 vessels carrying activists and politicians, including Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg – left Spain last month, aiming to break Israel's blockade of the Palestinian territory, where the UN says famine has set in.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry released a video purportedly showing an Israeli navy officer telling the flotilla to change its course to the Israeli port of Ashdod, "where the aid will undergo a security inspection" before being transferred to Gaza.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot posted on X that Israeli authorities were "currently boarding" the flotilla.

Earlier, the Israeli navy warned the flotilla against entering waters under its blockade.

## COX'S BAZAR INT'L AIRPORT Launch blows past deadline

CAAB waiting for govt nod for inauguration; work on new terminal, runway yet to be finished



RASHIDUL HASAN and MOKAMMEL SHUVO

The upgrade of Cox's Bazar airfield to an international airport has been delayed by about a week as it awaits government approval.

"We wrote to the government for getting approval for turning the Cox's Bazar domestic airport into an international airport. But we are yet to get the approval," Air Commodore Abu Sayeed Mehboob Khan, member (Ops and Planning) of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), told The Daily Star.

"We are expecting to obtain the approval on October 5 following the return of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus from New York," he said.

International flight operations from the airport were scheduled to be inaugurated today.

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## Man beaten to death on suspicion of robbery

Mobs killed 3 in Araihaazar in less than a month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanjanj

A man was beaten to death on suspicion of being a robber in Narayanjanj's Araihaazar upazila early yesterday.

The victim was Nabi Hossain, 32, of Pashchim Agukandi village.

Tarek Al Mehdi, additional superintendent of police (crime), said some robbers attempted to break into a house at Dari Bishnandi village around 2:30am, injuring at least four people with sharp weapons.

The injured are Kulsum Begum, 40, her son Nayem, 18, relatives Faruk Mia, 45, and Abul Hossain, 28. Kulsum was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Citing a preliminary investigation, Md

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## US government shuts down

Trump and Congress fail to reach deal on funding; analysts warn of prolonged crisis

AFP, Washington

The United States entered a government shutdown yesterday with President Donald Trump and Democrats in an acrimonious stand-off and banking on the other side to blink first in what could be a prolonged crisis.

With the government out of money after Trump and Congress failed to agree on a funding deal, federal agencies – except for essential services – stopped work from midnight.

Around 750,000 public sector workers are expected to be placed on furlough – a kind of enforced leave, with pay withheld until they return to work.

Essential workers such as the military may be forced to work without pay and some will likely begin noticing missing checks by next week.

Shutdowns are a periodic feature of gridlocked Washington, although this is the first since a record 35-day pause in 2019, when Trump was in his first term. They are unpopular because multiple services used by ordinary voters, from national parks to permit applications, become unavailable.

This time, the shutdown comes against a darker backdrop, with Trump racing to enact hard-right policies, including slashing entire government departments.

The White House is threatening to turn many of the furloughs into mass firings.

"A lot of good can come down from shutdowns," Trump told reporters Tuesday. "We can get rid of a lot of things that we didn't want. They'd be Democrat things."

Democrats – motivated by grassroots anger over expiring health care subsidies and Trump's dismantling of government agencies – are withholding Senate votes to fund the government as leverage to try and force negotiations.

Republicans in the House of Representative have already passed a stop-gap funding fix to keep the lights on through late November while a longer-term plan is thrashed out.

But the 100-member Senate does not have the 60 votes required to send it to Trump's desk and Democrats say they won't help unless Republicans compromise on their planned spending cuts – especially in health care.



"The Israeli Navy has reached out to the... flotilla and asked them to change course," the French foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Israel has informed the flotilla that it is approaching an active combat zone and violating a lawful naval blockade." Spain and Italy, which both sent naval escorts, had urged the ships to halt before entering Israel's declared exclusion zone off Gaza.

Italy's foreign minister yesterday said that his Israeli counterpart had assured him the Israeli armed forces would not use violence against activists on board the flotilla of ships sailing towards Gaza.

"The boarding was planned, we are talking about it ... with Minister Saar so that there would be no violent actions on the part of the Tel Aviv armed forces, and this has been assured to me," Antonio Tajani said to Italian TV broadcaster Rai.

SHAHIDUL ALAM'S CALL

Among the activists is Bangladesh's internationally renowned photographer and activist Shahidul Alam, who yesterday accused world leaders of being complicit in

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## Crushing debt forces mother to sell newborn

Clinic sealed; staffer who arranged sale held

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

A private clinic was raided and its owner arrested yesterday after a staffer arranged for a widowed patient to sell her newborn to pay off debts and hospital bills in Jhenaidah's Maheshpur upazila on Tuesday.

The incident took place at Pearlless Private Clinic, located in the upazila's Nepa Mor area. Later, the upazila health department has sealed off the clinic.

The woman, in her early 30s, whose husband passed away when she was four months pregnant, said she was not accepted in her in-laws' or her father's home after her husband's death. "I eventually had to leave and stay at my maternal grandfather's house..."

The Daily Star is withholding the name of the woman.

As she struggled financially with two other children, she had to borrow money for basic needs. She had racked up Tk 40,000 in loans from several NGOs.

Before her C-section on Tuesday, clinic staffer

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

THE FACE OF STRUGGLE ... For two decades, Firoza Begum has sustained her family by separating iron from re-rolling mill scraps with a magnet. Widowed and now earning only Tk 300 a day, she bears all household expenses alone. Scorching sun, dust and heat from the metals have darkened her face to a copper hue. The photo was taken recently in Dhaka's Shyampur area.

## For the wild, unto death

Revered primatologist Dame Jane Goodall dies at 91



REUTERS

Scientist and global activist Jane Goodall, who turned a childhood love of primates into a lifelong mission to protect the environment, died yesterday, the Jane Goodall Institute said.

The 91-year-old was on a speaking tour in California when she passed from natural causes, it said.

"Dr Goodall's discoveries as an ethologist revolutionised science, and she was a tireless advocate for the protection and restoration of our natural world."

The primatologist-turned-conservationist carried her love of wildlife from a seaside English village to

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