



## NEWS

## Pandals, Dhak, Festivity Or Fear? How Bangladesh Is Preparing For Durga Puja Amid Atrocities On Hindus

*Durga Puja 2025 in Bangladesh: This year, the festival arrives with an essence of anxiety, as minorities brace for another year of insecurity in the aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's fall and a spree of communal violence. Following the August 5 collapse of the Awami League government, minority communities faced over 2,000 attacks in just two weeks, including 69 assaults on temples.*

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As the sacred sarodutsav nears, artisans paint the goddess's eyes | Credit: The Daily Jagran

By **Supratik Das**

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**Durga Puja in Bangladesh:** Durga Puja, the grand festival that brings colour, devotion and festivities to Bangladesh, is once again at the centre of the nation's cultural calendar. For the country's nearly 13 million Hindus, it is not merely a religious occasion but the most vibrant expression of identity, tradition, and resilience. From Dhaka to Sylhet and Rajshahi to Chattogram, idols of Goddess Durga are being sculpted, pandals decorated, and families prepare for rituals and feasts. The sound of dhak, incense, and mantras usually creates an atmosphere of unity and festivities.

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But this year, the festival arrives with an essence of anxiety, as minorities brace for another year of insecurity in the aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's fall and a spree of communal violence.

## Fear Lingers After Hasina's Exit

The anxiety dates back to August 2024, when Hasina, who ruled Bangladesh for nearly 15 years, was forced out amid unrest led by students. Her exit brought an interim administration led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. But the transition opened a dangerous chapter for minorities.

- Following the August 5 collapse of the Awami League government, minority communities faced over 2,000 attacks in just two weeks, including 69 assaults on temples.
- Five Hindus were killed, and many women suffered abuse; vandalism and looting were widespread.
- Idols were vandalized in Pabna and other districts in September and October.
- Extortion letters and threats in Khulna forced some puja committees to cancel celebrations.
- Petrol bombs were hurled at puja pandals in Old Dhaka, resulting in stampedes.
- The crown of goddess Kali, gifted by Prime Minister Modi, was stolen from the Jeshoreshwari temple in Satkhira.
- ISKCON monk Chinmoy Krishna Das was arrested in 2024 on sedition charges after hoisting a saffron flag, widely condemned as an attack on religious


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35,000 mandaps are being built, with Rajshahi hosting several hundred. Deputy Commissioner Afia Akhtar assured every measure for safety, with CCTV, police, RAB, Ansar and 80,000 volunteers deployed nationwide. However, fear lingers among the minorities given the recent incident of communal violence and attacks on temples and desecration of idols. Some instances in the recent past are:



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- Days before 2025 Durga Puja, miscreants vandalised the Sri Sri **Rakha Kali temple in Kushtia**'s Mirpur upazila during a blackout. Idols of Kartik and Saraswati were desecrated, and temple security was destroyed.
- Earlier, in June, Dhaka's Khilkhet area saw a Durga temple demolished by authorities, prompting mass protests and condemnation from minority groups.

 WhatsApp Image 2025-09-26 at 6.31.47 PM


- A shocking rape case in Comilla, where five men were arrested after mutilating and humiliating a Hindu woman.

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recent victim of the escalating violence, attacked by a mob on August 15 while paying respects to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on his martyrdom day. Prachy described the atmosphere as "more dangerous than 1971," noting that Hindus and other minorities were being targeted, and national symbols like the Bangabandhu legacy were under threat.


"Since Sheikh Hasina came to power, a political vacuum has been created, the effects of which have impacted Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. Violence has ranged from women's oppression to temple destruction, continuing from August 5th to the present day," she said.

"Chinmoy Prabhu was harassed to silence the Sanatan community. Even defenders in court were persecuted. These events seem planned to stop voices against injustice," Prachy added, warning the country was drifting toward a "Taliban-like state" aligned with BNP forces.

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However, Narendra Majumder, General Secretary of Vivekananda Research Centre, said that the atrocities against Hindus are not new in Bangladesh and the minority community has faced similar mistreatment during Sheikh Hasina's tenure also.

"Hindus face oppression, which is sometimes exaggerated, despite some improvement, Durga puja is still far from ideal under the Yunus government. I urge the police and government to take strict action against perpetrators and ensure justice."

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Sucheta Das Chakraborty, a renowned Indian painter, observed, "I have traveled extensively in Bangladesh and seen growing fear. Participation in

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The festival, once purely a celebration of faith and community, now carries the burden of vigilance, resilience, and a plea for unity. Citizens, particularly youth and minorities, are urged to remain steadfast, ensuring that Durga Puja remains a symbol not just of devotion, but of courage in adversity.

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