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Janmastami today

STAR REPORT

The Hindu community will celebrate Janmastami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, today amid festivity and religious fervour.

In Hindu mythology Krishna is regarded as the epitome of transcendental qualities. His mission was to free the earth from evil and wrongdoing.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in separate messages greeted the Hindu community on the occasion of Janmastami.

Meanwhile, leaders of Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad yesterday urged all to join hands in building a peaceful, repression-free and enlightened society by following the spirit of Janmastami.

Nizami says innocents shouldn't be harassed

UNB, Dhaka

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Industries Minister Matiur Rahman Nizami yesterday said the investigation into the August 17 blasts should be carried out carefully so innocent people are not harassed.

"If there is any specific information...

Prayer Timing		
August 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:05
Juma	12:30	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:33	6:36
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Civil society role in policy debates vital for credible polls

CPD dialogue told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The civil society can play an important role by stimulating policy debates on different development issues prior to the next general elections to help hold it in a credible manner, said the participants at a discussion yesterday.

The discussants suggested spreading the policy debate at rural level in order to build up public

opinion through open discussion.

The political parties must also be included in the debate to make it more effective and conclusive, they said at the discussion on "Upcoming national election: Planning the role of civil society" organised yesterday at city's Brac Centre Inn by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

While presenting a draft proposal on the topics for the discussion chaired by CPD Chairman Prof

Rehman Sobhan, CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said holding an election must be credible and perceived to be free and fair by the broad mainstream.

He said in light of the debates held earlier in 2001 and 2003, the CPD is going to hold similar policy debates on important development issues prior to the next general elections.

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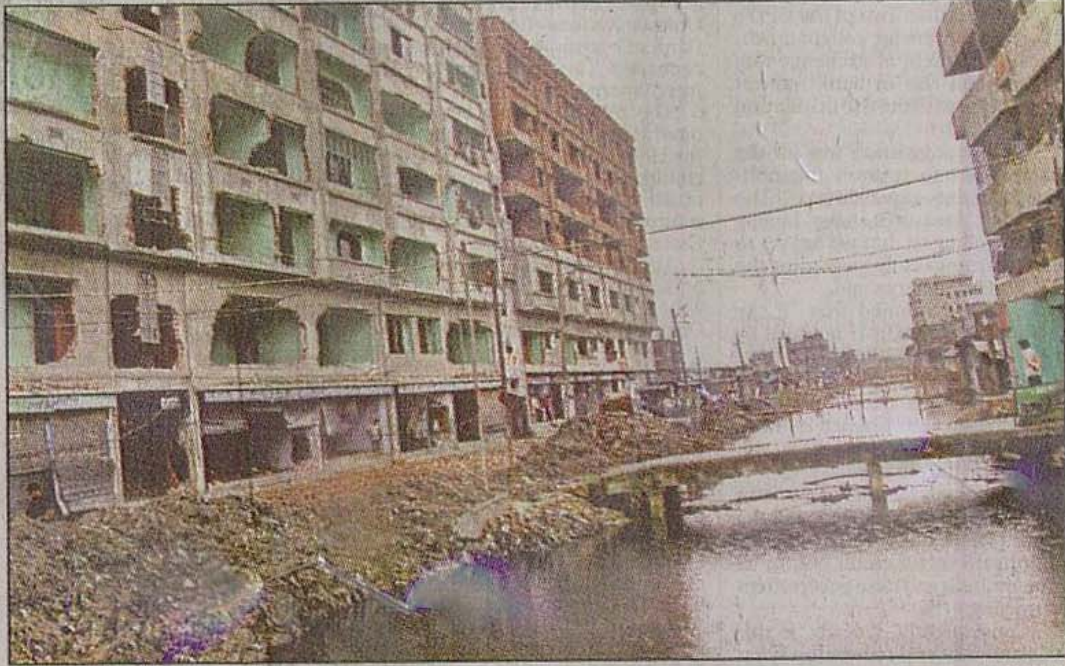


PHOTO: STAR

A seven-storey building squatting on Zia Sarani at Demra is being demolished under a Water Development Board eviction drive to ensure smooth drainage in the area inside the DND embankment.

Indian petroleum minister due on Sept 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mani Shankar Aiyar, Indian minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj, is set to arrive in Dhaka on September 5 for a two-day visit.

Sources said Aiyar will visit Dhaka to discuss the proposed \$1 billion tri-nation gas pipeline project which will tie Myanmar and India through Bangladesh.

Aiyar was due to arrive on August 27 but his arrival has been delayed following extension of the parliament session in India.

"He is coming to Dhaka at the invitation of Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan," Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin told The Daily Star

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Agriculture wing's 50 vehicles untraced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around one third of the vehicles of different organisations under the agriculture ministry are out of order while the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), another wing under the ministry, failed to trace its 50 vehicles.

The agriculture ministry yesterday revealed the fact in a report submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry.

According to the report, a total of 468 vehicles out of 1,344 under the ministry are now out of order. "They are repairing some vehicles and also planning to sell some of them on auction," the report said referring to the statements of the organisations.

The DAE failed to provide information about 50 vehicles among its total 153. Of the rest, 99 are now out of order, said the report.

Members of the parliamentary body strongly criticised the DAE officials for their failure to provide information about the missing vehicles and asked them to inform the committee in this regard at its next meeting after an enquiry.

Besides, 167 out of 310 vehicles under different development projects of DAE are now out of order, said the report.

The parliamentary body also discussed the agriculture ministry initiatives on soil testing programme across the country. The committee members decided to visit China to gather knowledge about agricultural technology.

Criminal killed in 'shootout' with Rab

UNB, Savar

A listed criminal was killed in a 'shootout' between the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices on Turag-Morogakanda road near Aminbazaar early yesterday.

Rab sources said they arrested Mozammel alias Mozam, 32, along with 62 bottles of phensidyl in Pirebag area of Mirpur Wednesday morning.

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BLUE FOR PEACE Asma Kibria calls for people's unity against bombing

DU CORRESPONDENT

Asma Kibria, widow of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, yesterday urged the countrymen to unite under the umbrella of their 'Blue for Peace' programme to resist all kinds of bomb attacks in the country.

She demanded impartial investigation into all bomb attacks and

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Bearded men are not target in manhunt

Govt asserts

UNB, Dhaka

The government is determined to unearth the crime and the forces behind the August 17 bombings and punish them, said a statement.

It said a number of people were arrested and concrete evidence was available of their involvement.

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