

Janmastami celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Janmastami, one of the biggest religious festivals of Hindus, was celebrated amid festivities and much enthusiasm across the country yesterday to mark the birthday of Lord Krishna.

According to Hindu mythology, Lord Krishna is regarded as the epitome of transcendental qualities, which made him the most loved one.

Religious organisations held various programmes, including prayers, Geeta Jagna, discussion, devotional songs and cultural functions, at temples as part of the festival.

The major attraction of the festival was a historic Janmastami procession that started from Dhakeshwari Temple in the capital at 4:30pm.

Thousands of men, women and children joined the huge colourful procession that paraded through main thoroughfares before ending at the Bahadur Shah Park.

Religious Adviser Maj Gen (retd) ASM Matiur Rahman formally inaugurated the festival at Dhakeshwari Temple at 12:30pm where the devotees prayed for peace and prosperity of the country.

The adviser called on all to come forward to ensure socio-economic development and welfare of the people by strengthening the bond of brotherhood and affection with each other.

The day was a public holiday.

Security was tightened at the festival venues and temples in the capital. Members of intelligent agencies, plainclothes and uniformed police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were deployed and metal detectors were used as part of beefed up security measures.

Inaugurating the historic procession at Palashi near Dhakeshwari Temple, Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said people of all faiths in Bangladesh have equal rights to celebrate their religious festivals.

He hoped that this celebration would help further consolidate the peace and discipline in social and national life.

Maj Gen (retd) CR Dutt, Prof Nim Chandra Bhoomik of Dhaka University and Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee General Secretary Jayanta Kumar Deb and Joint Secretary Nirmal Chatarjee were also present.

Nearly 50,000 devotees joined the procession, Nirmal told The Daily Star.

Sri Sri Geeta Sangha held Mangalacharan and Sri Krishna Lila Kirtan at Bholananda Giri Ashram.

Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee arranged two-day programmes, including discussion, cultural function and kirtan, to mark the day.

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Iskcon) has also taken up three-day programmes, including Pradabali Kirtan, recitation from the Geeta, prayers, Bhogarati kirtan and cultural function.



PHOTO: STAR

Children draw posters on the Shishu Academy premises yesterday. Unicef and Shishu Council organised the inter-school poster competition on the occasion of the World Children's Day 2007.



PHOTO: PID

Dr Craig Barreit, chairman of Board of Intel Corporation, calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office in the city yesterday.

'Implement agreement signed with people of Phulbari'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port yesterday demanded immediate implementation of all the conditions of Phulbari agreement signed between the four-party alliance government and the people of Phulbari.

In a statement, committee Convener Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah and Member-Secretary Anu Muhammad said the statement of the law ministry over the Phulbari agreement is an insult to people's verdict.

They said it is irrelevant to raise question about the legitimacy of the agreement as people's verdict is the highest law.

Though some conditions the agreement have already been implemented formal announcement to oust the Asia Energy and cancel the open-pit method is yet to be made, reads the statement signed by Ruhin Hossain Prince.

They said the law ministry's statement that there is no legitimacy of Phulbari agreement is not only undermining the peo-

ple's verdict but also helping Asia Energy's corruption, fraudulence and anti-national activities.

Demanding immediate ouster of Asia Energy from the country and cancellation of Phulbari Coal Mining Project through open-pit method, they urged the government to finalise a policy ensuring 100 percent ownership of the nation over the coalmine.

Rajshahi BNP demands release of Khaleda

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi BNP leaders yesterday congratulated the party's new Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain and expressed satisfaction with the decision to expel Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan from the party.

In a joint statement, Rajshahi BNP President Azizur Rahman and Organising Secretary Alauddin Ahmed also expressed deep concern at the arrest of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and urged the caretaker government to release her immediately.

They also expressed satisfaction with the decision of expulsion of Mannan Bhuiyan and Ashraf Hossain from the party and alleged that both the leaders were trying to break up the organisation.

They said the Rajshahi BNP will now follow the directions of the new secretary general.