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Janmashtami today

BSS, Dhaka

Janmashtami, one of the major religious festivals of the Hindu community commemorating the birth of Lord Sri Krishna, will be celebrated across the country today with due religious fervour and gaiety.

According to Hindu mythology, Sri Krishna was born on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the Bangla month of Bhadra. It is believed that he incarnates in every age to protect the virtuous from the wicked and to establish truth, justice, and beauty in society.

The festival is usually observed on the eighth day (Ashtami) of the Krishna Paksha in the month of Shraban or Bhadra.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus greeted the

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Stones previously looted from Sylhet's Jafflong are being returned after they were recovered by the district administration and police. The illegal extraction, which was already there, surged after August 5 last year. The photo was taken in the Zero Point area yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Amid the Sada Pathor outcry, Jaflong reels too

Stone, sand looting wrecks havoc on another tourist spot in Sylhet

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Amid an outcry over the ruin of Sada Pathor in Sylhet's Bholaganj, another popular tourist spot in the district has similarly been ravaged by a syndicate of plunderers.

Jaflong in Sylhet's Gowainghat, an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) since 2015, was meant to be off-limits to quarrying. Instead, relentless illegal mining for stones and sand extraction, driven by politically-backed syndicates, coupled with systemic enforcement failures, has left the area in disarray.

Locals and experts say the assault on Jaflong, once a pristine area with the Khasi hills in the backdrop, has worsened since the fall of the Awami League government.

Locals say the resources of the area have been plundered for decades with heavy machinery, including dredgers and 'boma' rigs. The situation improved a bit after the government imposed a complete ban on stone lifting in 2020. However, illegal extraction continued without heavy machinery till the AL regime collapsed on August 5 last year.

The next week, according to locals, was catastrophic for Jaflong due to massive looting. The district administration estimated that stones worth at least Tk 300 crore were looted during that week.

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Veggie prices soar in Dhaka kitchen markets

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

Abdul Malek went to Sukrabad kitchen market to buy vegetables, only to be shocked to find that a kilogramme of both okra and pointed gourd was selling for Tk 100.

Frustrated, he dropped both items from his shopping list.

"I bought each kilogramme of okra and pointed gourd for Tk 40-50 just two weeks ago," he told the shopkeepers angrily before leaving.

Sumaiya Begum, a small clothing shop owner, said she could afford only low-quality vegetables because of the recent price hikes.



"We are eating degraded vegetables. My children complain that I am not feeding them fresh ones, but I have nothing to say to them," she told this newspaper at the Shewrapara kitchen market.

The prices of low-grade vegetables have also risen, leaving her struggling to put food on the table.

"We are living on papaya and potatoes, which are still reasonably priced. I don't know what I will do next," she said.

Like them, many low- and middle-income residents expressed frustration over the rising prices, questioning

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'Mujib not Father of the Nation'

Says Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While acknowledging his role in the struggle for independence, National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam said yesterday that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is not the Father of the Nation, accusing him of laying the foundation for "one-party BAKSAL dictatorship" and turning Bangladesh into a "tributary state of India".

In a Facebook post titled, "Bangladesh Belongs to the People," he wrote, "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is not the Father of the Nation. We acknowledge his role, sacrifices in gaining independence, but we also remember the national tragedy that unfolded under his rule. Through his leadership, Bangladesh

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OCCUPIED WEST BANK

Halt new settlement construction plan

UN chief calls on Israel; 21 Palestinians, including seven aid seekers, killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza

AGENCIES

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on Israeli authorities to immediately halt the advancement of plans of settlement construction in the EI area of the occupied West Bank, said the UN chief's spokesperson.

"Our position is clear – the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the regime associated with them, have been established and are being maintained in violation of international law," said Stephane Dujarric in a note to correspondents on Thursday evening.

"Settlements further entrench the occupation, fuel tensions, and systematically erode the viability of a Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution," the note said.

Construction in the EI area would sever the northern and southern West Bank, severely undermining the prospects for the realization of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State, the note added.

The EI area, a stretch of land east of Jerusalem between the city and the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, is regarded as especially contentious because construction there would effectively cut off East Jerusalem from the northern West Bank.

Plans for building in the area have been frozen for years, largely due to international opposition, reports Anadolu Agency.

In the Gaza Strip, at least 21 Palestinians, including seven aid seekers, were killed in Israeli strikes, according to medical sources speaking

to Al Jazeera.

Four more hunger-related deaths were confirmed in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of Palestinians who have starved to death during Israel's offensive in Gaza to 239, including 106 children.

Meanwhile, a severe heatwave is compounding the suffering of Palestinians in

» Four more hunger-related deaths confirmed in Gaza

» Heatwave in enclave turning makeshift 'homes into ovens'

» 20 Palestinians arrested during West Bank raids

Gaza, where communities have endured nearly two years of relentless Israeli bombardment, forced displacement, and widespread hunger.

The makeshift shelters housing displaced Palestinians have no electricity, no air conditioning, no fans and no escape from the heat.

"These shelters trap the hot air, turning homes into ovens. Inside, families struggle to breathe, stay hydrated and survive," a resident said.

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Nearly 200 killed in Pakistan flash floods

AFP, Bajaur

Landslides and flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains across northern Pakistan have killed at least 199 people in the past 24 hours, national and local officials said yesterday.

Of those killed, 180 were recorded in the mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where one resident likened the disaster to "doomsday".

Another nine people were killed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, along with five in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region, the National Disaster Management Authority said.

Most were killed in flash floods and collapsing houses, with the dead including 19 women and 17 children. At least 28 others were injured.

Another five people, including two pilots, were killed when a Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government helicopter crashed due to bad weather during a relief mission, the province's chief minister, Ali Amin Gandapur, said in a statement.

The provincial government has declared the severely affected mountainous districts of Buner, Bajaur, Mansehra and Battagram disaster-hit areas.

In Bajaur, a tribal district abutting Afghanistan, a crowd gathered around an excavator digging through

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Geneva makes public transport free to combat pollution spike

REUTERS, Geneva



Public transport will be temporarily free of charge in Geneva, in a first for Switzerland, as part of a series of measures aimed at tackling a spike in pollution in the city.

Geneva, in the western French-speaking part of Switzerland, is experiencing a severe peak of ozone pollution – a harmful gas that can cause problems breathing and can trigger headaches and asthma attacks, according to the World Health Organization.

The city's anti-smog system showed that ozone concentrations had exceeded an environmental health safety threshold of 180 micrograms per cubic metre over 24 hours, according to a statement by the Canton of Geneva.

On Tuesday, temperatures hit 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 Fahrenheit) with the government issuing heat warnings for western and southern parts of Switzerland.

High temperatures and low cloud cover mean ozone pollutants accumulate and take longer to be dispersed, the Environment Office for the Canton of Geneva told Reuters.



A Palestinian couple mourn the death of their son, Kanan Bakr, who was killed in an early morning Israeli strike on a tent in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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Plastic pollution treaty stalled

Geneva talks end as oil-producing nations oppose ambitious deal

REUTERS, Geneva

Delegates discussing the world's first legally binding treaty to tackle plastic pollution failed to reach consensus, diplomats said yesterday, voicing disappointment and even rage that the 10-day talks produced no deal.

Delegates had been seeking a breakthrough in the deadlocked United Nations' talks in Geneva, but states pushing for an ambitious treaty said that the latest text released overnight failed to meet their expectations.

The chair of the negotiations Ecuador's Luis Vayas Valdivieso adjourned the session with a pledge to resume talks at an undetermined later date, drawing weak applause from exhausted delegates who had worked into the early hours.

French Ecology Minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher told the meeting's closing session that she was "enraged because despite genuine efforts by many, and real progress in discussions, no tangible results have been obtained."