

Shahabuddin hosts reception

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Begum Shahabuddin hosted a reception for the members of the Christian community at Bangabhaban yesterday evening on the eve of Christmas Day, reports UNB.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Nurul Islam, British High Commissioner in Dhaka David C Walker, Vatican Ambassador to Bangladesh Rev Edward Joseph Adams, MPs, religious personalities, senior lawyers, social workers, doctors, members of business community, educationists, journalists and artists attended the reception.

Child artists rendered a carol on the occasion.

Arch Bishop Michael Rozario, on behalf of the Christian community, thanked the President for the reception.

Earlier, President Shahabuddin and Begum Shahabuddin welcomed the guests and enquired about their welfare, said an official handout.



President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Begum Shahabuddin hosted a reception to the members of the country's Christian community at Bangabhaban yesterday evening. —PID photo

Algerian envoy calls on PM

Newly accredited ambassador of Algeria to Bangladesh Asma Ferdjeli yesterday called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office here, reports BSS.

Algeria is one of the first countries to recognise Bangladesh. The ambassador observed that Algeria's long struggle for independence is almost similar to that of Bangladesh. He decried violence, saying that this can destabilise economy and politics. He observed that there is a wide scope of development of relations between Algeria and Bangladesh in different fields.

The Prime Minister welcomed the ambassador, who is based in Islamabad and said there can be the beginning of a wide range of relations in social and development fields.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister S A Samad was present on the occasion.

Gold ornaments worth Tk 28 lakh seized at ZIA

Customs authorities of Zia International Airport (ZIA) recovered about three and a half kilograms of gold ornaments worth Taka 28 lakh from a transit passenger in the early hours of yesterday, reports BSS.

According to a press release, the ZIA Customs Surveillance Team challenged the Karachi-bound transit passenger who arrived at ZIA by Biman Bangladesh Airlines Flight No BG 085 from Singapore and recovered 3450 grams of gold ornaments from his pocket in three separate packets.

The passenger, after his arrival from Singapore, reported to the transit desk and straightaway went to the mosque located at second floor. Finding the passenger's movements suspicious, the Customs Surveillance Team followed him and challenged him soon after he came out of the mosque, the press release added.

The passenger took the ornaments to second floor with an intention of smuggling them out.

A departmental case was lodged in this regard.

Ex-student leaders for trial of war criminals on spl tribunal

Some ex-student leaders urged the government to put all the war criminals of 1971 on trial, including Gulam Azam, at a special tribunal, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, they also asked the government to bring back the accused who are leaving abroad and put them in the dock for killing the unarmed people, including intellectuals of the country, during the Liberation War.

The signatories are Muniruddin Ahmed, Fazley Hossain Badsha, Abul Hasib Khan, Shirin Akhter, Mustake Hossain, Nazmul Haque Prodhan, Noor Ahmad Bakul, Ruhul Kuddus Babu, Akter Sobhan Masrur, Syed Jahangir, Moshrefa Mishu and Abdullahil Quayum.

Relations with neighbouring states discussed

A meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Foreign Minister yesterday discussed the country's relations with its neighbouring states, reports UNB.

Presided over by committee chairman Dr Mohammad Selim, the meeting was held at Sangsad Bhaban.

Committee members Foreign Minister Abul Hasan Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hassan Nahid, Moryam Begum, Deputy Leader of the opposition A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, M Morshed Khan, M Shamsul Islam and officials concerned were present.

Agri khas land to be allocated among the landless

The government has taken steps to allocate agricultural khas land among landless people across the country, reports UNB.

The landless people, including distressed freedom fighters, widows and the women abandoned by their husbands, have been asked to apply in prescribed form for the khas land, said an official handout yesterday.

Death anniversary of Chunu today

BNP and its cultural front Jasas have chalked out various programmes to observe the 3rd death anniversary of its leader late Zahid Hossain Chunu today.

The programmes, include milad mahfil, offering of fataha and placing of wreaths at the grave of Chunu.

Leaders and activists of BNP and Jasas or the Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangkritik Sangstha will visit the Banani graveyard at 11 am today and offer fataha and place wreaths.

Meanwhile, a discussion meeting and milad mahfil were held at BNP central office at Nayapalton yesterday afternoon. The discussion meeting was addressed by Rezabudulh Chowdhury, Haris Chowdhury, Shamsuzzaman Dudu, Emran Seleh Prince, Khairul Kabir Khokon and Dr Rezwana Siddique.

Three women arrested with phensidyl

SATKHIRA, Dec 24: The BDR arrested three women smugglers from a passenger minibus at Bakal checkpoint under Sadar thana and recovered one hundred ten bottles of phensidyl syrup from their possession on Tuesday, reports BSS.

The arrested three women are identified as Muni Begum, 35, Rija Begum, 55, and Monira Khatun, 30, of Shibbari and Rupsha area of Khulna district.

The BDR arrested them during a routine checking of the bus and recovered 110 bottles of phensidyl syrup from their possession.

Ctg city AL leader dies

CHITTAGONG, Dec 24: Chittagong City Awami League leader Abdul Hye died of prolonged illness at his Nasirabad residence here this morning. He was 60, family and party sources said, reports BSS.

Abdul Hye, a leading member of Chittagong City Awami League advisory committee left behind his wife, four daughters, one son, relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

The namaz-e-janaza of Abdul Hye was held at Cosmopolitan Housing Society Masjid premises at Sholoshahar after Jehr prayers. Later he was buried at his village Goira of Raojan thana this evening.

Hye, who was the president of Bishwa Shanti Parishad, Chittagong district chapter also played pioneering role in the Language Movement in 1952.

Meanwhile, Minister for Labour and Employment M A Mannan and City Mayor A B M Mahiuddin Chowdhury visited the residence of Hye and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

In a separate messages, Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Engineer Mosharrar Hossain and M A Salim, president and general secretary respectively of Chittagong North district Awami League also condoled the death.

Awami League leaders expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

What's on today . . .

Painting exhibition: A two week-long painting exhibition by late Kazi Hasan Habib begins today to commemorate the artist's 50th birth anniversary and 10th death anniversary. Venue: Shilpakala Academy. Time: 10 am.

Discussion meeting: A discussion meeting will be held to celebrate the 2nd founding anniversary of Noakhali Chhatra Kalyan Samity (Dhaka). The programme will be followed by a *milad mahfil*. Venue: Paltan Community Centre. Time: 3 pm.

Weather

Night temperature may fall

Dry weather is likely to prevail over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Slight fall in night temperature is expected across the country during the period, according to Met Office forecast.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 30 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 10 degree Celsius at Srimangal.

The sun sets today at 5:18 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:39 am. Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.0	12.1	83	75
Chittagong	29.5	15.0	77	75
Khulna	26.6	13.0	79	75
Rajshahi	26.3	13.7	79	76
Barisal	27.0	12.3	88	85
Sylhet	27.7	12.5	73	70
Cox's Bazar	30.0	17.5	67	61

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Buyers seen purchasing rice under Open Market Sale (OMS) in the city yesterday.

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Steps being taken to check road accidents

The government has decided to enforce the traffic rules more strictly to check incidents of road accidents across the country, said an official press release, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting yesterday with Home Minister Rafiqul Islam in the chair.

The meeting also decided to gear up police patrol on the highways to control the movement of risky vehicles.

Besides, the meeting decided to take up training programme and publicity campaign to educate the drivers and helpers.

The meeting instructed the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to identify the forged licence.

The meeting was attended by Home Secretary Safiur Rahman, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Burhan Siddique, BRTA Chairman, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Communication and some senior officials of the police.

DCC launches mosquito eradication drive

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has launched a clean-up drive in the city to eradicate mosquito, reports UNB.

City Mayor Mohammad Hanif yesterday inspected the mosquito-control drive in the city's Khilgaon and Shahjahanpur areas.

He urged all to keep their respective areas clean and sought their aloof cooperation to gear up the drive.

Ward commissioners Kamal Chowdhury, Humayun Kabir, Enamul Haq Sardar, DCC chief health officer Dr Ashraf Uddin and other senior officials accompanied the Mayor.

Poet Munir made member of Edgar Allan Poe Society

The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore has accepted poet Munir Siraj as a member of the organisation, says a press release.

Jeffry A Savoye, Secretary of the organisation, through a welcome letter, recently informed Munir Siraj about the award of this membership.

Munir Siraj is the author of seven books, six of which are books of poetry.

Munir Siraj was awarded the prestigious Humayun Kabir Smriti Puraskar for his first book of poetry, 'Birudhe Srote Jatra' in 1976 by the Bangladesh Lekhak Sibir.

Bastuhara Samity meet held

A national representatives meeting of Bangladesh Bastuhara Samity was held at the Awami League central office in the city yesterday to make the fifth conference of the samity a success, reports BSS.

Presided over by president of the samity Engr. Lutfar Rahman, it was addressed by joint secretary of city Awami League Faizuddin Mia, office secretary Abdul Huq Sabuj, Krishak League central leader M A Karim and Bastuhara Samity leaders — Abdul Karim, Abul Kashem, Talukdar Mohammad Jahangir, Mohammad Ibrahim Mia, Mohammad Ruhul Amin and Jalil Chisti.

Speakers at the meeting said the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been working hard to change the lot of the poor and downtrodden, while the rejected anti-people forces are hatching conspiracy to foil it.

The leaders called for launching an united movement to resist the anti-people forces.

They also called for strengthening the hands of the Prime Minister by making the Bastuhara Samity stronger.

Scouts team to attend World Jamboree

An eight-member delegation of Bangladesh Scouts yesterday left for Chile to attend the 19th World Scout Jamboree scheduled for December 27 to January 6, reports BSS.

Aminul Ehsan Khan, Regional Deputy Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts, Dhaka region, is leading the delegation, a press release said.

National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts Afzal Hussain is attending the Jamboree as a member of the international service team.

Autorickshaw driver mugged

A group of muggers snatched money, wrist watch, and tool box from an autorickshaw driver at Uttara in the early hours of Tuesday.

The autorickshaw was engaged in transporting newsmen of The Daily Star to their homes. The incident took place when driver Abdur Razzak was returning from Uttara Sector No 6.

The muggers stopped his vehicle when he reached the premium bus stand. They also took away his driving licence, Route permit, insurance cover note and other documents related to the vehicle.

An FIR was lodged with Uttara thana.

Concern over sexual abuses in edn institutions

By DU Correspondent

Speakers at an open discussion yesterday expressed grave concern over recent rise in the incidents of sexual abuses in different educational institutions including the universities.

The incidents of sexual offences in the universities are not new and it happened in the past, but we come to know about it only when a victim complains," Anu Muhammad, a teacher of Jahangirnagar University, said.

The meeting on "Terrorism and sexual repression: Safety and security on the campus" was held in front of the DUCSU cafeteria in the Dhaka University campus.

Organised by the Tattya Parjalochana O Sammannay Parishad (TPOSP), the programme was attended by Prof H K S Arefin, Chairman of Department of Anthropology, DU, Dr Mahbuba Begum of Sociology, DU, Sayeed Ferdous, Mirza Taslima Luna and Manash Chowdhury of the Anthropology Department of JU.

The meeting was also participated by students and different professionals.

JS body discusses two bills

A meeting of the parliamentary committee on "private members' bill and private members' resolutions" was held yesterday at the Sangsad Bhaban with its Chairman Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali presiding, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed the Constitution (fourteenth amendment) (reservation of women seats) Bill, 1998, and the Constitution (fourteenth amendment) Bill, 1998.

Iranian team meets Nurul Islam

A six-member parliamentary delegation of Iran called on State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Nurul Islam at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

Chairman of Iranian Cultural, Educational and Religious Commission Dr Bag Baniun led the delegation.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to exchange religious, educational and cultural programmes between the two countries.

Trader missing

By Staff Correspondent

A businessman at city's Mitford area has been missing since Monday night.

Mohammad Abul Hossain 40, an aluminium trader at Mitford is yet to return home since that date.

According to a GD filed by Hossain's brother, he (the trader) closed his shop at about 8 pm on Monday and left for his father-in-law's house at Shewrapara. But since then he is still missing. The relatives have contacted all possible places but could not trace his whereabouts.

Five asked to show cause for violation of HC order

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court directed the proposed contempters Secretary for Land Md Omar Faruque, DC of Jamalpur Achyutapada Goswami, ADC (Revenue) of Jamalpur Meshahul Alam, Dewanganj TNO Mohibul Hossain and AC (Land) of Dewanganj Mahbubul Alam Talukder to show cause as to why they allegedly violated the order of the HC Division, said a press release.

A Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice A M Mahmudur Rahman and Justice Mohammad Muzammel Hossain issued the order on December 3, the release said.

Dr M Shahdat Hossain, Managing Director of Rupali Fish and Duck Producers Marketing Services Ltd filed the contempt of court petition, it said.

It was alleged in the contempt petition that despite receiving the lawyer's certificate on the order of the HC Division passed in Writ Petition No 2307 of 1998 the proposed contempters took over the possession of "Turba Brahmaputra Jalmahal Dewanganj Bazar Koal" and "Kalapara Doba" *Jalmahal*.

The HC Division by an order dated August 4, 1998 stayed operation of the government order cancelling the 10-year lease of the two *Jalmahals*, the release said.

Advocate Abdul Baset Moudjef, Subrata Chowdhury, Promila Biswas and S M Asadullah Tarique moved for the petition, the press release said.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent

Nazrul Islam, 56, a former Senior Executive (Superintendent) of The Dainik Bangla died of cardiac arrest at the city's BIRDEM Hospital at around 11 pm Tuesday, says a press release.

He was laid to rest at the Gopibagh graveyard. His qukhwan will be held at his residence at 45/1 Ramkrishna Mission Road after Asr prayers today.

Late Nazrul Islam, who hailed from village Bhitargarh under Pancharag, has left behind his wife, two sons and a number of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Minibus owners demand action against extortionists

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 24: Minibus owners of Narayanganj has threatened to stop Dhaka-Narayanganj bus service indefinitely if action is not taken against the "terrorists and extortionists" who are dominating the Ekota Seating Service Minibus Stand with muscle power.

The bus stand is located near the Joykali Mandir Road in the city.

Urging the government to immediately take action against these elements, the Minibus Malik Okkiya Jote said that it has become risky for them to continue services along the route.

The Okkiya Jote in a statement yesterday said that the extortionists along with some so-called workers' leaders were holding the bus owners to ransom. "It has been a regular practice that the terrorists commit dacoity in the buses in broad daylight, loot motor parts, and even threaten to kill bus owners over telephone if they fail to give toll," the release said.

"We had to keep the bus service suspended on December 18 in the face of attack on transport workers but the terrorists again attacked the workers and collected tolls on December 20," they said.

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'Bangladeshis don't want to depend on foreign aid'

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA K M Shehabuddin has said Bangladesh needs the support of the US government and the private sector to march ahead steadily to forge an economic partnership that goes beyond aid and development assistance, a message received from Washington said, reports BSS.

He said Bangladeshi people do not want to depend on foreign aid and grants, they want to fend for themselves and the best way to do it is through the development and careful utilisation of its available resources.

Speaking as guest of honour on 'Bangladesh-US relations' at the US-Bangladesh Business Council recently, Ambassador Shehabuddin said "we need economic partnership more than aid and grants to develop ourselves as an economically stable and prosperous country for the benefit of all."

He hoped the council will not only promote economic and commercial relations between the two countries but also contribute towards further development of bilateral relations.

He said the recent exploration of gas fields have rekindled a hope for a bright future for the Bangladeshi people. He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government was mindful of this and has taken

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Two held with arms in city

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested two persons and recovered three revolvers and one sawed-off rifle from their possession in the city on Wednesday.

The arrested were identified as Anwar Hossain and Jahurul Islam alias Biplob.

Police acting on a tip-off came to know that an organised gang was engaged in trading of foreign-made illegal arms in border areas.

A team of Detective Branch of police led by Deputy Police Commissioner Altaf Hossain Mollah raided different areas in the city and arrested one Anwar Hossain from Uttar Bashabo under Sabujbagh thana and recovered a revolver from his possession.

Later, police recovered two more revolvers which were kept at a city hotel in Fakirapool, following the confessional statement of the arrested.

Anwar, is a member of an organised arms trader, police added.

Police, however, is trying to nab other criminals and recover arms, if any.

Separate cases were lodged with Motijheel and Sabujbagh thanas in this connection.

In another incident, Mirpur police arrested one alleged hoodlum, toll collector and a wanted criminal named Jahurul Islam from West Shewrapara area and recovered a foreign-made sawed-off rifle.

Two held with arms in city

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested two persons and recovered three revolvers and one sawed-off rifle from their possession in the city on Wednesday.

The arrested were identified as Anwar Hossain and Jahurul Islam alias Biplob.

Police acting on a tip-off came to know that an organised gang was engaged in trading of foreign-made illegal arms in border areas.

A team of Detective Branch of police led by Deputy Police Commissioner Altaf Hossain Mollah raided different areas in the city and arrested one Anwar Hossain from Uttar Bashabo under Sabujbagh thana and recovered a revolver from his possession.

Later, police recovered two more revolvers which were kept at a city hotel in Fakirapool, following the confessional statement of the arrested.

Anwar, is a member of an organised arms trader, police added.

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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia hosted an iftar party in honour of journalists and editors of national dailies at her official residence at Minto Road yesterday. —Star photo

Concern over sexual abuses in edn institutions

By DU Correspondent

Speakers at an open discussion yesterday expressed grave concern over recent rise in the incidents of sexual abuses in different educational institutions including the universities.

The incidents of