



**New CEO of StanChart**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

David Fletcher has taken over as the new chief executive officer, Bangladesh of Standard Chartered Bank with immediate effect.

A British national by birth, Fletcher started his career in 1985 with the Corporate Banking Group of Citibank, where he held various responsible positions until joining Standard Chartered Bank in 1995 as corporate banking director heading the bank's energy group.

Prior to his appointment as the CEO, Bangladesh of Standard Chartered Bank, Fletcher worked for the bank in the UK, China, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

He was the senior credit officer of Standard Chartered Bank in China, head of trade risk, International Trade Management Group in Hong Kong, regional credit officer of Southeast Asia, India and Australia, and head of group portfolio management, Wholesale Bank of Standard Chartered Bank in Singapore.

Educated in modern history at Durham University, David is married to Sharron Fletcher and they have two daughters.

**Cinema blasts Judicial body starts functioning**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, chairman of the one-member judicial probe body, yesterday started his work to investigate the bomb blast incidents in four cinema halls in Mymensingh on December 7.

In the morning, he visited the four cinema halls -- Aloka, Ajanta, Purabi and Chhayabani -- in the district town and the victims of the bomb blasts at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) and Mymensingh Combined Military Hospital (CMH). He was accompanied by additional inspector general (AIG) of police Hasan Ahmed Khondoker, superintendent of police (SP) of Mymensingh Md. Motiur Rahman, public prosecutor (PP) Firozuddin Ahmed, additional district magistrate (ADM) Asoke

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People wait for their turn outside the Mymensingh Circuit House (right) as the one-member judicial probe commission of Justice Sultan Hossain Khan records witness account of the December 7 blasts in four cinemas yesterday.

**Two killed in Feni road accident**

BSS, Feni

Two persons were killed and another was injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Mohipal here yesterday morning.

Police said the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound truck collided with a fish laden pick-up van.

An unidentified pedestrian aged about 30 died on the spot and two others, including driver of the pick-up, were critically injured.

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**PM lures Thai investors**

UNB, Bangkok

Offering an attractive package, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the Thai business community to invest in Bangladesh for mutual benefits.

"My government offers total international guarantee against any kind of expropriation of revenue or assets of any foreign enterprise operating in our country. We promote both direct and portfolio investment through attractive incentive packages," she said.

The package includes foreign ownership without limit, either wholly owned or in joint collaboration with local partners, a sound legal and fiscal regime for foreign investors, unrestricted repatriation of invested capital and profits along with capital gains and tax exemption on royalties.

Welcoming the captains and patrons of Thai enterprise and Industry, the PM said, "We will help you secure profit and dividends."

Termining Thailand as the most trusted and a close friend of Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia said, "We are building with Thailand very close relations of active cooperation in economic and trade fields."

She was addressing a reception accorded to her at Hotel Regent by the Joint Standing committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking.

Explaining the objective of the BNP-led four-party government, the prime

minister said, "I am clear about our objective -- we want to translate people's trust and mandate into jobs, incomes and opportunities for all. So our priority efforts are directed towards bringing in foreign investment to generate production, employment and income for our people."

She apprised the Thai business community that the main attractions of foreign investment in Bangladesh are cheap labour and easy availability of skilled labour.

"Indeed, we have a vast reservoir of skilled managers and technicians. Our added strength is our political stability and the open, friendly and hospitable attitude of our people towards foreigners," she added.

In Bangladesh, she said, top priority is being given to investment in RMG, agrobased industries, ceramics, electronics, frozen food, leather, light engineering, natural gas-based industries and the textile sector.

"We also attach high importance to power generation and oil and gas exploration. We are getting favourable response from leading international firms in these areas," she said.

Earlier, welcoming the distinguished guests from Bangladesh, Dr Ajva Talulanda, chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking, said a concrete mechanism should be developed to

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Members of the joint forces search the office of Wisdom Attires, a Fatullah-based garment manufacturing unit owned by Selim Osman, brother of former Awami League lawmaker Shamim Osman, during a raid yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

**15 AL men held from central office in city**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested 15 workers of the Awami League from its central party office at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday evening.

Witnesses said police cordoned off the Awami League office soon after AL chief Sheikh Hasina left the party office at about 5:15pm. He was presiding over a discussion meeting to mark the Martyred Intellectuals' Day.

Sources said a huge contingent of police was guarding the Bangabandhu Avenue since noon. Police made several attempts to arrest Awami League activists while the discussion meeting was going on.

The arrested were taken to the Motijheel Police Station. Police said they were preparing to file a case against them.

**SC hearing on share scam begins**

STAR REPORT

The Appellate Division yesterday began hearing 11 petitions filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) challenging a High Court judgement delivered on June 23, 1999.

The petitions are against Nurunnabi of Rupon Oil and Feeds, Intiyaz Husain of Intiyaz Husain & Company, Rijwan Bin Faruk of First Capital Securities, three directors of Chittagong Cement and five directors of HMMS Financial Consulting & Securities Ltd.

The SEC filed appeal petitions after the High Court set aside orders passed by lower court in cases involving Rupon Oil & Feeds Ltd, Intiyaz Husain & Company and the First Capital Securities.

The lower court had framed charges against all the companies except Chittagong Cement.

The High Court in its judgement said that it set aside the lower court's judgement under Section 265 B of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

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**Tinni murder Piyal placed on fresh remand**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shafkat Hossain Piyal, husband of murdered model and actress Tania Mahbub Tinni, was placed on a day's fresh remand yesterday for interrogation regarding her murder.

He will be produced in court again today. His bail petition be heard on December 17 at the Judge Court, sources said.

The CID quizzed Abdul Latif, personal secretary of Jatya Party (Monju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Monju, from 11 am to 4 pm yesterday at the CID office to know whereabouts of former lawmaker Golam Faruk Ovi, absconding since the murder.

CID police said they have so far raided many possible hideouts to nab Ovi.

Police said Abdul Latif knew Ovi for a long time as Ovi had frequented Monju's office.

When contacted last night, additional Inspector General of Police (CID) Ashraf Huda said, "We called him (Latif) just to know whether he knew whereabouts of

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PHOTO: STAR

Some devotees cook in a makeshift kitchen under the open sky on the second day of the Bishwa Jtama on the eastern bank of the Turag on the outskirts of the capital yesterday. Food, cooked in unhygienic conditions, is believed to be behind the prevalence of intestinal disorder among the Jtama participants.

**VoIP by next year**

**Recommendation to be sent to PM this month**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The telecom regulators plan to award Internet telephony licences to all Internet Service Providers (ISPs), mobile operators and the fixed-line operator by next year.

The plan was disclosed yesterday after a consultative workshop jointly organised by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Centre (IIFC) at the BRAC Centre in the city.

"We have decided to award licences to all operators and ISPs

who will fulfil certain criteria," BTRC Chairman Syed Marghub Morshed told The Daily Star on the sidelines of the workshop on 'Introduction of VoIP in Bangladesh'.

Margub Morshed said a recommendation in this regard would be submitted to the prime minister by the yearend.

He said the IIFC has set criteria for legalising Internet telephony in the country and most of the stakeholders have agreed on the issue.

"The licences will be awarded as early as possible as we should not hold back technological advancement," he added.

Telecom experts at the workshop strongly recommended legalisation of Internet telephony to increase telecom reach and telecom density.

They also recommended setting criteria and a study on spectrum management prior to awarding licences.

Private sector representatives identified the state-run fixed-phone operator, the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB), as the main obstacle to the growth of

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PHOTO: STAR

**Pilferers on the prowl**

**Gas condensate stealing on despite upped security**

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Organised gangs continue stealing huge quantities of condensate from the 178-kilometre North-South Gas Grid Pipeline at more than 50 points.

None of the culprits could be arrested though security guards were deployed and at least 50 such incidents were detected in the last four years. Over 40 theft cases were filed with police during the period, sources said.

A government intelligence agency also submitted a detailed report to the authorities on the large-scale pilferage of condensate by organised inter-district gangs.

About one lakh litres of condensate produced daily as a by-product at Kailashtila, Rashidpur and Beanibazar gas fields under Sylhet Gas Field Company Limited (GTSL) is transmitted through the pipeline from Kailashtila to the condensate storage station at Ashuganj. From

there, it is transported to Eastern Refinery in Chittagong for processing and fractionation.

The gangs, by using sophisticated equipment, perforate the six-inch steel pipeline passing through eight to 10 feet under the ground and five to six feet under water or marshy lands at places.

Oil tankers (lorries) of some oil companies are used in stealing of the condensate, which is sold to

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**Why opposition street agitation not allowed?**

**Hasina urges international community to look into it**

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday appealed to international forums, including the Commonwealth, to look into why the government here "obstructs" the opposition from speaking in parliament or carrying out political activities on the street.

"How the image of the country would be protected if this government does not allow the opposition to perform their political programmes and continue torture and repression," she said at a discussion on Martyred Intellectuals Day at the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

Hasina felt that the present government itself is enough to destroy the image of the nation;

"poor image" of the country will not change if the government does not stop torture.

Witnesses said the meeting was interrupted several times as riot police did not allow Awami League workers to gather on the avenue in front of the Awami League office. "Police wielding sticks and blowing whistles chased the crowd, creating panic," said a spot report.

But Sheikh Hasina asked people not to leave the venue and continue sitting on the road. However, the meeting ended without any major trouble.

The Awami League president warned that the international community had already "rejected this government...the days of this government is numbered; curse will

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**Two suspected Pak militants killed in Delhi shootout**

AFP, New Delhi

Police early yesterday gunned down two suspected armed Pakistani militants at a roadblock on the outskirts of the Indian capital, while a third escaped, a senior police officer said.

The two rebels were killed in a shootout with Delhi police in the Tughlakabad area, near the homes of some officers of the Indian Air Force and the paramilitary Border Security Force, the officer told the news agency.

The three rebels were travelling by car towards New Delhi from neighbouring Faridabad when they were stopped at a police check post at 6:05 am local time.

"On being stopped at our checkpoint the militants fled," police officer Neeraj Kumar told the Star News channel.

"We chased them and two were killed. We believe they are Pakistani nationals... the third managed to escape," he said.

The shootout lasted about 40 minutes, Kumar said.

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**Jobs given, why ask for a seat?**

SABRINA KARIM AND AMINUL ISLAM

If, per chance, you are thinking of joining the police force, you had better be prepared to spend a handsome amount of money to make your workplace workable.

Not even a chair is provided to a law enforcer, which is true of most police stations. Be it a chair to sit on or a table to work at, the police officers are to buy it on their own.

The police station at Tejgaon has only one chair provided by the government for 25 sub-inspectors (SI). "We have to buy the basic furniture ourselves," grumbled SI Mizan of Tejgaon Police Station. "We cannot wait for long for a chair from the government," he said.

"Sometimes, previous officers leave tables and chairs behind upon transfer to other stations," said a sub-inspector. But the bulk of the furniture has to be bought, he added.

Well, not always is one so fortunate as to inherit a predecessor's leftovers. There are people, like second officer Bashar at Dhanmondi Police Station, who found his office room totally bare when he was transferred from Comilla.

"The officer who worked here took all the furniture with him to Kotwali Police Station as he purchased them himself," he said. Bashar had to furnish his office room with a carpet, a table and chairs.

Assistant sub-inspectors in most police stations need not burden themselves to buy chairs. This is because there is no space to place them! They may get to have a seat only when their senior officers are out of station.

However, these are not the only difficulties police officers confront. They have to deal with other disadvantages as well. The police stations are not provided with sufficient stationery and the rundown lockups are crammed with arrested people. "There is not even adequate paper for a person to file a general diary," said SI Mamun of Mohammadpur Police

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 15		5-14 pm
Dec 16	6-34 am	
Prayer Timings		
Dec 15		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-20	5-25
Esha	7-30	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		