

# Move to hold credible polls at final stage: CA

UNB, Ctg

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said his caretaker government is at final stage of attaining the main goal of holding a free, fair, neutral and credible general election with the participation of all political parties.

At this final stage, he alerted government officials to the importance of making all-out efforts with utmost neutrality for holding the polls on December 29 peacefully.

The head of the caretaker government gave the directives at a meeting with the government officials of 11 districts of Chittagong division at Theater Institute auditorium in the city.

He also asked for intelligence watch over infiltration of fugitive terrorists while the nation is going to the crucial elections after painstaking preparations for two years against the backdrop of past

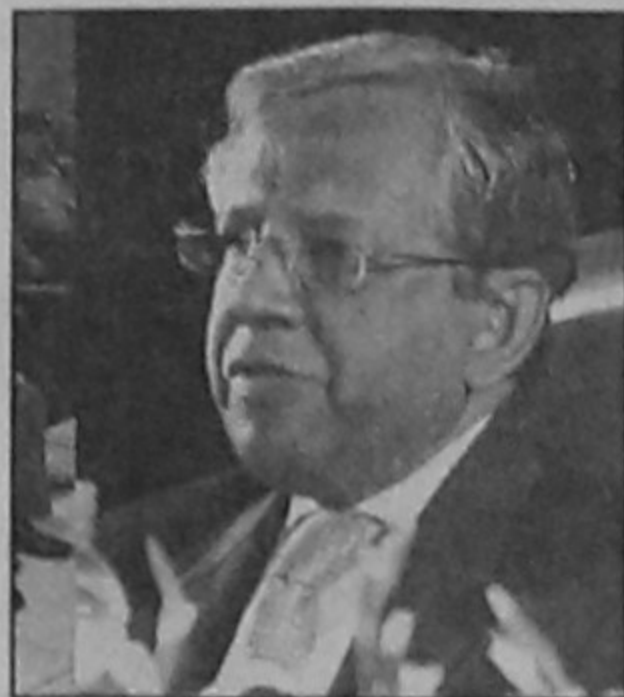


PHOTO: PID  
Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed speaks at a meeting in Chittagong yesterday.

problems. The CA asked the officials and the law enforcing agencies to take necessary measures to avert possible pre-and post-election violence.

He said paramilitary BDR and other law enforcing agencies will have to remain vigilant so that absconding terrorists cannot enter the country.

The CA advised the field-level government officials to take all necessary preparations in advance so that the voters can cast their votes without fear and return home safely.

This was the last such preparatory meeting after the first one held in Khulna on December 1 followed by Rangpur (Rajshahi division), Sylhet, Barisal and Dhaka.

DCs, SPs, ADCs, UNOs, DIG of police, Chittagong range, CMP commissioner, senior officials of BDR, Ansar and VDP were present at the meeting.

Home Adviser Major general (ret'd) MA Matin, Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz, Home Secretary Abdul Karim, some DCs, SPs, ADCs, UNOs, DIG (police) and CMP commissioner also spoke. Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil conducted the meeting.

The CA told the government officials once more that there is no room for any bias to anyone or to bow to any influence or pressure in accomplishing this onerous national task.

"Any willful negligence of election responsibilities and duties cannot be tolerated at all," he told them.

He urged the field-level government officials to follow the directives of the Election Commission in discharging their election duties.

He asked them to ensure hundred percent neutrality and transparency in the whole process of counting votes and announcing election results. "There is no scope for deviation," he said.

He further instructed the authorities concerned to take all necessary steps with utmost importance so that nobody becomes victim of attack by opponents after the polls.



PHOTO: STAR  
BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia introduces 4-party alliance candidate Zakaria Sumon at an electoral meeting at Boira College ground in Comilla yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## ELECTION MANIFESTOES

# Nominal inclusion of women's issues criticised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of women rights organisations yesterday decried the marginal inclusion of empowerment and equality issues of women in politics in the manifestoes of the political parties.

They said this at a press conference on 'The marginality of equality and development of women at the manifestoes of the political parties' organised by Women for Women, a research and study group, and Pathchakra at the National Press Club.

Members of these organisations demanded the political party, which would assume power after the elections, withdraw all gender-sensitive, discriminatory and anti-constitutional laws and policies, take initiative to reform family law to establish equality of women, increase reserve seats for women in parliament beside taking initiative for direct election of women and withdraw reservations from Cewad.

Other demands include ensuring 30 percent inclusion of women in appointive position and increasing quota for them in policymaking level in government services, taking legal action for ensuring equal wage in non-government sectors, initiative to ensure

better quality of women's education and reproductive health, introducing law to resist domestic violence against them and raise social awareness and materialisation of constitutional pledges to ensure gender equality in socio-economic context by 2021.

President of the organisation Salma Khan said, "90 percent credit of our major achievements after the country's independence goes to women who constitute half of the total population and women voters are more in number than male voters in the elections."

The sectors which earned major achievements include education, reduction in fertility and maternal mortality rates and micro-credit sectors.

Presenting a keynote paper, Prof Sadeka Halim of Dhaka University said, "All the major political parties have avoided the political empowerment of women, but Workers' Party of Bangladesh have mentioned this issue in its election manifesto."

General Secretary of Women for Women Prof Shawkat Ara Hossain and its member barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan also spoke.

# 'Polarised politics gives way to terrorism'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Polarised politics gives way to terrorism, which cannot be contained successfully unless true democracy is established in a country, speakers said at a book launching ceremony yesterday.

They called upon the government to be more creative and intelligent in taking strategy to cope with terrorism and called for forging a united effort involving NGOs and other government law enforcing agencies in containing terrorism.

"From the perspective of Bangladesh, if you have polarisation in politics it creates way for the perpetrators to carry out terrorist activities," said Prof Imtiaz Ahmed at the launching of the book titled 'Terrorism in the 21st Century: Perspectives from Bangladesh' at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) yesterday.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed edited the book that has seven chap-

ters authored by six writers -- Imtiaz Ahmed, Abul Kalam Azad, Lailufar Yasmin, ATM Amin, Shahedul Anam Khan and ABM Ziaur Rahman.

The programme was organised by BEI.

The speakers also said investment should be made on human rights issues to check state terrorism.

"We must, indeed, take a

holistic approach in checking terrorism. Civil society in South Asia can help a lot in containing terrorism," said Communications Adviser Major General (Ret'd) Ghulam Quader in his speech as the chief guest.

Prof Amena Mohosin also spoke at the programme moderated by BEI President Farooq Sobhan.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH DOT COM  
Prof Imtiaz Ahmed speaks at the launching ceremony of a book titled 'Terrorism in the 21st Century: Perspectives from Bangladesh' at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) conference room in the city yesterday. On his left are Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Ghulam Quader and BEI President Farooq Sobhan.

## Varsity teachers for electing non-communal forces in polls

UNB, Dhaka

Some 501 teachers of different public universities, known as pro-Awami League, yesterday urged the people to vote for non-communal pro-liberation forces in the ensuing parliamentary election.

In a joint statement they said corrupts, looters, terrorists, patrons of militants and war criminals do not have the right to demand vote from people. "Casting vote for them is tantamount to suicide".

Directing mainly at Jamaat, an ally in the BNP led 4-party alliance, the teachers termed them 'evil' and urged the people to reject them in the polls.

The signatories to the statement include Dr Harun-Rashid, Dr Anwar Hossain, Dr M Ohiduzzaman, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Abdul Khaleque and Prof AK Azad Chowdhury.

## MEDICAL ADMISSION

# 215 from waiting list to get chance

BSS, Dhaka

A total of 215 students from the waiting lists of the MBBS admission test results for 2008-09 have been allowed to get admission to government medical colleges, including newly established Noakhali and Cox's Bazar ones.

A total of 215 seats remain vacant as the same number of students did not get admission by the deadline of November 30, said a Health Directorate press release on Monday.

The students have been asked to complete admission procedures after contacting with offices of college principals by January 10, the release added.



Mugdapara Samity executives

METRO DESK

Kazi Jamal Uddin Raja and Nasim Al-Rashid were re-elected president and general secretary of 'Mugdapara Adarsha Samaj Kalyan Samity', a non-political organisation of the landlords of Mugdapara for 2008-2010, says a press release.

Other office-bearers are: Senior Vice-president: Advocate Abdul Maleq Talukder, Vice-president: Md Taleb Ali, Joint Secretary: Alhaj Md Aminul Islam Sarker Babul, Joint Secretary-2: Kazi Nur Ahmed Shafiq, Assistant General Secretary: Rokan Uddin Helal, Treasurer: Md Abdur Rahim, Organising Secretary: Md Anisur Rahman, Publicity Secretary: Md Shafiuddin Mia, Office Secretary: Md Shahadat Hossain, Cultural Secretary: Md Mamunur Rashid and Public Relations Secretary: Kazi Jahangir Kabir Babar.

Executive committee members are Md Nurul Huq, Alhaj Md Abdul Kalam, Md Shah Alam Sarker, Md Nesar Ahmed, Nazrul Karim Sentu, Md Shahidul Islam Babul, Mrs Kazi Abul Hashem, Md Shahidul Huq, Md Lokman Hossain and Engr Anwar Hossain Arif.

## CASE AGAINST MANJU

# Witness withdraws deposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A witness in a corruption case against former communications minister Anwar Hossain Manju and two others has withdrawn the deposition he gave during the trial at a special court in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case against Manju, Taslima Hossain and Mahmud Hossain with Dhanmendi Police Station on July 25 last year.

In a press statement on Sunday, witness Amin Ahmed Bhuiyan, former managing director of Al-Amin Construction Co. Ltd., said he was forced to give the deposition against his will because of unfavourable situation.

He said that he withdrew his deposition for the sake of fair justice.

Amin Ahmed also said that the case statement is not true. The transaction of Tk one crore, which was mentioned in the case statement, never took place between him and the former minister, he added.

"But it is not unusual to have transactions with Mahmud and Taslima who are noted businesspersons, as I am also a businessman," he added.

# '2008 a year of tragedies, triumphs for children in South Asia'

METRO DESK

For many of South Asia's children, 2008 will go down as a year of triumphs and tragedies -- a year in which children continued to be recruited in conflicts, yet a year when conflicts were briefly halted for the sake of children's health; and a year when the food, fuel and financial crises threatened to worsen child malnutrition, yet triggered off important new thinking on protection for the most vulnerable, said UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia Dan Toole in a statement yesterday, says a press release.

In early winter, UNICEF responded to these emergencies by working with governments and partners to distrib-

ute safe drinking water, providing latrines, blankets, first aid kits, rehydration salts, temporary shelter plastic sheeting and other essential utensils and school kits.

"For us it is a particularly tragedy when schools are attacked. These are places where young minds are being formed and where children rightly feel protected and cared for. There can never be 'enemy children' or 'terrorist children'. No one can ever gain from such attacks but all should learn from them so that 2009 is a year where all sides in all conflicts put children first."

This year, however, was marked by some triumphs too -- in Afghanistan, UNICEF and partners negotiated with warring parties to conduct

Days of Tranquility in September when 1.8 million children were vaccinated against polio and given Vitamin A capsules to boost their immune systems.

Global Hand Washing Day in October saw some 100 million children across South Asia wash their hands with soap the simplest, cheapest way of reducing diarrhoea and pneumonia, the biggest killers of children in the region. Infant mortality rates are also coming down in the region.

"These achievements give us much cause for hope, that even in the face of the finance, food and fuel crisis, together with our partners in government and NGOs, we can make a difference for South Asia's children," said Toole.

## 68000 prisoners to exercise voting rights

BSS, Dhaka

The jail authorities yesterday handed over a list of some 68,000 prisoners to the Election Commission (EC) to take steps so that they can cast their votes.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG-prison) Commander Zakaria Khan handed over the list to Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain at the latter's office in the city.

Zakaria said around 68,000 convicts and under-trial prisoners are now living in 68 prisons of the country. As per the law, they are supposed to cast their votes through postal.

Election Commissioner Sakhawat Hossain said the commission is actively considering the matter of allowing the prisoners to exercise their voting rights.

Meanwhile, the EC has asked the postal department to keep all post offices open for the whole day and night on December 29 to facilitate the presiding officers to send copies of the results of the election of polling centres to the commission in a special cover as per the rule.

## One shot, robbed of Tk 1 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers snatched Tk 1 lakh from a sales representative of a cell phone operator after shooting and injuring him in the city's Rampura area yesterday.

The victim, Mohammad Salauddin, 26, a sales representative of Banglalink, was shot in his left leg around 1:00pm. Local people rushed him to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Salauddin said four muggers attacked him when he was collecting money in sales bills from different shops.

## Attack on 'Bagdi Adivashi' condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Adivashi Odhikar Andolon condemned the attack on 'Bagdi Adivashi' of Mohammadpur upazila in Magura.

Some identified miscreants on December 20 started felling trees from the land of indigenous people in Rajapur village to erect a market for a local BNP leader. The indigenous people resisted their effort. Then the miscreants attacked on them and damaged their houses.

In a statement, Bangladesh Adivashi Odhikar Andolon expressed concern that such attack on indigenous people ahead of parliamentary elections may uncertain their voting rights.

They also demanded investigation into the attack and punishment to the criminals.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



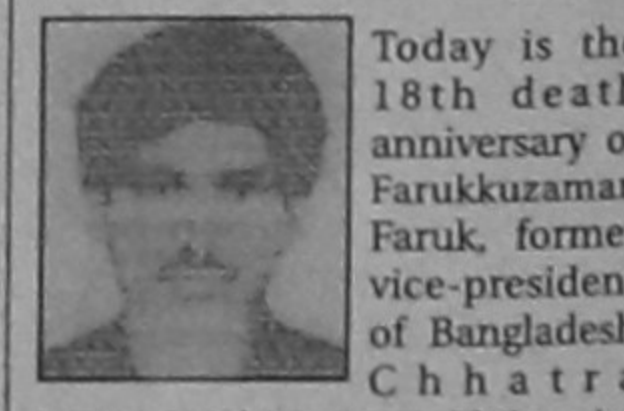
Md Hashem, former senior officer of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSSRS), passed away due to prolonged illness at his Begum Bazar residence in the city on Monday at the age of 70, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters to mourn his death.

His quikhani will be held at Hossaini Dalan Imambara after Asr prayers tomorrow.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Maitree Chittagong University unit, says a press release.

On the occasion, a discussion in memory of Farukuzzaman will be held at 3:00pm at the central office of the organisation. Other programmes include hoisting of black flag at central office and wearing of black badge at 7:30am and placing of wreaths and students' rally at the central Shaheed Minar at 9:00am.

## Vote for Iqbal Sobhan

Journalist leaders urge Feni people

BSS, Feni

Awami League-led grand alliance candidate for Feni-2 constituency Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury yesterday exchanged views with journalists of the national and local media at a restaurant in Feni town.

Former president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Habibur Rahman Milon, former president of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) M Shahjahan Miah, BFUJ General Secretary Altaf Mahmud, DUJ General Secretary Omar Faruque, Senior Vice-President of Jatiya Press Club Syed Akhtar Yousuf, BFUJ Joint Secretary Molla Jalal, DUJ leaders Karim Chatterjee, Kazi Rafique, Shaheb Ali, Jahariel Chandra Das, Gazi Zaheer and Saiful Islam Talukder and other local journalists spoke on the occasion.

The speakers sought votes for journalist leader Iqbal Sobhan saying he will be the right person to speak in parliament in favour of the journalist community.

Iqbal Sobhan has assured the local people of all out efforts for the development of Feni.

After the meeting, the journalist leaders along with Iqbal Sobhan met the people and urged them to vote in favour of the 'boat' symbol.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

# Appointment of special envoy stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next government should take the climate change issue very seriously and appoint a permanent special envoy on climate change to bargain with the developed countries in international forums.

Special Assistant to the chief adviser on environment and forest Raja Devasish Roy, who led the 15-member Bangladesh delegation in Poznan Climate Change Summit recently, said this at a press meet on the summit at PID auditorium in the city yesterday.

He said Bangladesh has been playing a key role in climate change conferences on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Several important conferences will also be held next year.

"An experienced and permanent envoy on climate change is necessary to play a key role during negotiations. Many countries have taken the issue very seriously and already created special ministerial post on climate change," said Raja

Devasish.

Describing operationalisation of Adaptation Fund as the biggest success of the Poznan conference, he said Bangladesh presented several proposals in different sessions of the summit on behalf of LDCs.

Beside, Bangladesh raised the issue of legal status of climate migrants in the high segment part of the meeting.

A 15-member Bangladesh team comprising government and non-government officials attended the 14th conference of parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Poznan, Poland from December 1 to 12.

Secretary of the environment ministry AKM Rezaul Kabir, Dr Selimul Haque, chief of climate change cell, International Institute Environment and Development (IIED), Dr Asaduzzaman of BIDS, and Dr Khandakar Rashedul Haque, director general of Department of Environment, were present at the press conference.



## Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during mid night till morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

Night temperature may fall slightly over Rajshahi, Sylhet and northern part of Dhaka division and remain nearly unchanged over the country, it said.

Highest temperature 27.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 13.0 degrees Celsius at Ishwardi and Satkhira.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:18pm today and rises at 6:39am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	24.0	18.0
Chittagong	24.5	17.4
Rajshahi	23.3	14.5
Khulna	24.5	16.0
Barisal	25.2	14.5
Sylhet	26.0	18.3
Cox's Bazar	27.5	17.7

DHAKA TODAY

**Lecture**

Dr Shafique uz Zaman will deliver Prof Shafiqur Rahman Memorial Lecture 2008 on dimensions of industrialisation and Bangladesh perspectives. Venue: Asiatic Society auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

**Discussion**

International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) organises a discussion on 'Bangladesh-Japan cooperation'. Venue: IBFB conference room. Time: 2:30pm.

**Roundtable**

South Asia Partnership Bangladesh organises a roundtable on peaceful and violence free election. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.