

## NEWS IN *brief*

### Hasina wishes early recovery of Saudi king

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her happiness as Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud has been released from a hospital in New York. In a message to the Saudi King, Hasina said, "I am relieved to learn that you have been released from the hospital in New York. I pray to Allahu Rabbul Al Amin for your speedy recovery."

### Khaleda distributes blankets

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia distributed blankets among the poor and homeless people in various parts of the city in the early hours yesterday.

At around 12:45 am, Khaleda started the humanitarian aid distribution near Banani field by distributing blankets among about 600 poor people sleeping on footpaths.

Later, she distributed more blankets at Sonargaon Hotel crossing, Panthapath, Green Road and Tejgaon till about 2:45am.

### Samsung refurbishes schools

METRO DESK

Twenty-eight visiting members from Samsung Headquarter based in Korea and officials from Samsung Electronics Dhaka Branch Office visited Khulna from January 9 to 15 and refurbished a number of educational institutions there.

As a part of its corporate social responsibility, the visit titled 'voluntour', in partnership with World Vision, a non-government organisation, is a support to School Improvement Programme of World Vision.

Beneficiaries are T&T School, Khalishpur National Maddhomik Bidyalay, Khulna College and Rayermohol Maddhomik Bidyalay.

### SC clears way for holding Feni polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for holding election to Feni municipality, scheduled to be held on January 18.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice SK Sinha yesterday stayed for two weeks a High Court order that halted the process of holding the elections to this municipality.

### Pakistani arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-1) arrested a Pakistani citizen with 97.39 lakh Indian rupees at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the city yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Abdulla Ali, 38, who was born in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh and got citizenship of Pakistan and stays at Karachi in Pakistan.

Rab-1 personnel arrested him from the airport after searching a private car and recovered Indian rupees of 97.39 lakh.

### Abdus Samad Azad trust formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdus Samad Azad Foundation has established Abdus Samad Azad Trust at the department of International Relations of Dhaka University.

The trust will award a gold medal every year to the student who will top at the four-year integrated bachelor in International Relations.

Vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique formally inaugurated the trust at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and Azzizus Samad Azad, son of former foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad were also present at the programme.

### CONTEMPT OF COURT Establishment secy exonerated from charges

UNB, Dhaka

Establishment Secretary Iqbal Mahmud has been exonerated from charges of contempt of court, after he admitted his misdemeanor and prayed for unequivocal apology in black and white before the High Court yesterday.

Appearing in person, the establishment secretary informed the two-judge bench headed by Justice A H M S h a m s u d d i n Chowdhury that he had already complied with the court order and provided the job to M Reaz Uddin, son of a martyred freedom fighter.

Iqbal appeared before the bench 48 hours ahead of the deadline.

On January 6, the HC asked Mahmud to appear in person before it by January 18, to face the charges of contempt of court.

M Reaz Uddin had filed the contempt petition after he did not get appointed to the vacant post of Health Assistant for Kamolnagar upazila in Laxmipur district, despite a High Court directive.

On June 10 last year, the HC, while resolving a writ petition, directed the respondents, including the establishment secretary, to consider the appointment of the petitioner as part of the reserve quota of 30% for the freedom fighters and their wards, within 30 days of the date of receipt of the judgment.



The city faced severe gridlock throughout the day yesterday. The photo was taken from Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

PHOTO: STAR

## MoU signed to import gas from Qatar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and the State of Qatar yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar to meet the growing demand of gas in the country.

Secretary of Energy and Mineral Resources Division Mohammad Mejbahuddin and Minister of State for Energy and Industrial Affairs of Qatar Dr Mohammed Saleh Al-Sada signed the MoU on behalf of their respective governments.

With the signing, Bangladesh has taken the first step towards realisation of import of four million tonnes of LNG per year, according to a message received here from Bangladesh embassy in Doha.

"The door is now open for Bangladesh to import liquefied natural gas from Qatar," said the State Minister of Qatar Saleh Al-Sada at the signing ceremony.

"Qatar is a major LNG producing country in the world and is happy to co-operate with Bangladesh in energy sector," he added.

Prior to signing the MoU, a bilateral meeting was held in Qatar Petroleum Doha between the two countries.

Bangladesh side delegates included Bangladesh Ambassador to Qatar Md Shahdat Hossain, former Chairman and head of LNG Petrobangla Md Muqtadir Ali, Counsellor Mohammad Nasir Uddin and First Secretary Muhammad Maqsoodur Rahman of Bangladesh Embassy.

Qatari side included Executive Director Down Stream of Qatar Petroleum International Mohammed Al- Hitmi, Manager, Gas Development of Qatar Petroleum (QP) Khalid Al- Hitmi and Head Expert of LNG of QP Taib Balmahdi.

*State Minister of Qatar Saleh Al-Sada said, "The door is now open for Bangladesh to import liquefied natural gas from Qatar"*

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES' WORK PLAN

# Stopping illicit drug trade gets top priority this year

KAILASH SARKAR

Law enforcement and intelligence agencies have sketched a work plan for this year's law and order management giving top priority on tackling trading of illicit drugs and its widespread usages, said sources.

According to the sources, the illicit drugs drew the highest attention superseding militancy as the law enforcers and intelligence personnel held the illicit drugs responsible for most of the criminal activities.

The work plan was projected through a series of meetings during this year's police week programme where personnel from the field level to top ranks reviewed the existing crime trends and observed that most of the crimes happen due to reckless trading of illegal drugs and its widespread usage.

Apart from incidents of stalking and repression against women and children, militancy, extremism, terrorism, illegal arms trade, robbery, extortion, mugging, theft and activities of "malam" and "ogyan" parties were also given importance at the discussion of the police week.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Hassan Mahmood Khandker told The Daily Star, "As militancy have come very much under our control from the point of law and order situation, we have

given top priority on fighting against illegal drugs as it is the main source of crimes deteriorating law and order situation."

"Although, we did not prepare a complete list, we have decided to prioritise respectively to fight against illicit drugs, militancy, terrorism, extremism, illegal arms, robbery, mugging and activities of malam parties," said the IGP adding, "Stalking

*Incidents of stalking and repression against women and children, militancy, extremism, terrorism, illegal arms trade, robbery, extortion, mugging and theft also get importance*

and repression against women and children will also be given special consideration."

The crime statistics of last 25 years say the number of cases in connection with illegal drugs always remains on top among all crimes.

Sources from police and the Directorate of Narcotic Control (DNC) said the introduction of new brands and items of illicit drugs started from 1985.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) Legal and Media Wing Director Commander M Sohail said among the illicit drugs items, Yaba tablets, phensidyl and heroin respectively are the main threat to the law and order situation.

Sources said heroin was introduced first after 1985 and phensidyl in late nineties while Yaba tablet is the latest drug item, said DNC and police officials.

The law-enforcers and intelligence personnel also discussed the increasing trend of killing, robbery, mugging, abduction, extortion and stalking as well as their failure and lack to combat such crimes like illegal drug trading, militancy, extremism, extortion, abduction, mugging and repression against women and children.

The senior officials, however, held responsible the inadequate number of manpower, shortages of vehicles and other logistic supports for their failure.

Moreover, the law enforcement and intelligence agencies have also been directed to remain on high alert to deal with various sensational issues like the trial of war criminals so that those involved in the war crimes can not take attempt to deteriorate law and order situation, said the sources.

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

## HC clears way for functioning new body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for functioning the newly elected National Press Club (NPC) managing committee.

An HC bench stayed a Dhaka court order on January 10 that halted the functioning of the newly elected committee and directed to hand over the charges of the club to its outgoing committee within seven days.

The bench of Justice Mir Hasmat Ali passed the order following a revision petition filed by the new committee challenging the lower court order.

Advocate Afzal H Khan, a counsel for the petitioner, told reporters that there is no bar to discharge the function of NPC by its new committee elected on December 31 following the HC order.

Newly elected President Kamal Uddin Sabuj yesterday filed the revision petition against the Dhaka court order.



## Mild cold wave likely

UNB, Dhaka

Mild to moderate cold wave is likely to over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Comilla and Noakhali in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light rain or drizzle is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the river basins of the country and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning.

Night temperature may fall by 1-2 degrees Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:34pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 28.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 08.2 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

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	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.6	12.0	78	73
Chittagong	26.6	12.4	66	54
Rajshahi	23.4	09.2	97	78
Rangpur	20.5	08.2	99	63
Khulna	26.5	13.0	86	74
Barisal	27.4	11.5	89	80
Sylhet	19.5	12.3	90	79



President Zillur Rahman gives away gold medal to a successful graduate of Eastern University at its second convocation in Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Publish merit list of class three admission seekers

### Guardians urge Motijheel Girls School authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called on the authorities of Motijheel Government Girls High School to publish merit list with marks of admission test of class three candidates.

Alleging that the school authority took bribe for admission, they also asked the authority to present the answer sheet.

Guardians of candidates failing on admission tests held the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city.

Azizul Islam, a guardian, said when they went to the school Headmistress Parvin Fazila and requested to see the answer sheet, she refused.

The guardians sought interference of prime minister, education minister and concerned officials in this regard.

## MURDER OF TRUCK DRIVER, HELPER

# 2 gang members held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested two gang members who allegedly killed the driver and the helper of a rice-laden truck after hijacking it on January 2.

The arrestees at a press briefing at the Detective Branch of Police office yesterday confessed to both the crimes, and said they dumped the two bodies into a ditch at Banani in the capital.

Abu Salam, 48, of Shariatpur and Hashem Gazi, 58, of Sunamganj were arrested on Saturday night.

Police said they also seized the hijacked truck and the truck used to commit the crime.

On January 9, police recovered the decomposed bodies of the deceased driver and helper from a ditch near Dhaka Gate at Banani. The victims were later identified as Nurul Islam, 32, and Mithu, 30.

Mahbubur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DB police (North), said the gang used to rob rice-laden vehicles on different highways and sell the rice to some particular wholesalers in the city.

Police identified them all, he said, adding, they are trying to arrest them.

Abu Salam told reporters that he and his cohorts including Chandu, Jalal, Awal and Abu Taleb were waiting with an empty truck at a filling station at Tongi, on the outskirts of the capital, on January 2.

They stopped the Dhaka-bound rice-laden truck by putting up a barricade on road at House Building area of Uttara.

"We reached Banani around 4:00am and they (cohorts) threw the victims in the ditch," said Abu.

Hashem Gazi, the alleged ringleader of the gang, said he bought the truck recently for use in robberies. "I gave each of them Tk 3,000 before the incident," said Hashem, who planned the robbery at his shop at Faridabad of Shyampur in the capital.