

NEWS IN *brief*

**Khaleda seeks another chance to govern country**

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night sought support from all the communities to give her party another chance to govern to take the country forward ensuring the dignity of all.

"Let's come forward and work together to take the country forward as BNP will ensure the equal dignity of all, irrespective of religion," she said.

The leader of the opposition came up with the remarks while exchanging greetings with a delegation of Bangladesh Christian Association at her Gulshan office ahead of Christmas and

**Ctg Samity mejban tomorrow**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chattagram Samity- Dhaka will hold its annual "Chittagong Festival and Mejban" at Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in the capital's Dhanmondi tomorrow.

Some eminent personalities of Chittagong will be accorded honorary awards at the programme in recognition of their contributions to their respective fields.

They are Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim (social welfare and judicial administration); former cabinet secretary Md Abu Solaiman Chowdhury (public administration); the daily Azadi founder editor Engr Mohammad Abdul Khaleque (posthumous); Sukumar Barua (children's literature); and Abdul Gafur Hali (music).

The day-long programme, including a cultural programme and a discussion, will start at 9:00am,

**US embassy closed today, tomorrow, January 1**

METRO DESK

The American embassy in Dhaka, including the Consular Section and the American Center with the Archer K Blood American Center Library and the Student Advising Center, will remain closed today and tomorrow (December 24 and 25), and on January 1, 2013, on the occasion of Christmas Day and New Year's Day. These days are American holidays.

Emergency services for American citizens will be available. They are requested to call at 885-5500 and ask for the duty officer, said a press release

**British High Commission, DFID closed December 25-27**

METRO DESK

The British High Commission in Dhaka, its office in Sylhet, and DFID Bangladesh will remain closed to the public from tomorrow until Thursday (December 25-27) for Christmas. The office will reopen on December 30, 2012, said a press release



Prof Emeritus Dr Anisuzzaman addresses a national anti-communal conference convened by 15 eminent citizens in the capital's Mohanagar Natya Mancha yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

**Anti-communal confce calls for resisting anti-liberation forces**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens and leaders of social organisations and political parties yesterday called upon all non-communal, progressive and democratic forces to awaken and unite the country's people to build a national resistance against the communal and anti-liberation forces.

At a national anti-communal conference, they demanded banning the use of religion in politics, excluding religious elements from the constitution, completing the war crimes trial and ensuring due punishment of the war crimes accused.

They urged all to boycott political parties that are allied with the communal and anti-liberation forces, and stressed the need for infusing non-communal values and spirit of the Liberation War among the young generation to nip communalism in the bud.

Fifteen eminent citizens convened the conference, held in Kazi

Bashir auditorium of the capital's Mahanagar Natya Mancha. Leaders of different political parties and socio-political organisations joined the conference to express solidarity.

Explaining the reason for holding the conference, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddique, one of the organisers, said, "Some recent incidents including violence in Ramu worried us. These incidents have shown how wrong we were when we thought that we had ousted communalism from the country."

These incidents also show that there is no scope to keep mum, he said, adding that, "We have to find out who are nurturing the communal forces and what we should do to ward off those forces."

"We have to tell the history of Bangladesh to all, we have to tell them that there is no place for communalism in our country as the basis of the country was non-communalism," he said.

Prof MM Akash of Dhaka

University read out a declaration paper on behalf of the organisers, urging all to establish an equal democratic culture defeating all communal, fundamentalist and militant forces, ensuring equal rights of citizens and creating opportunities for them, and moving the four basic principles of the Liberation War forward in every sphere of life.

Another organiser and noted theatre personality, Ramendu Majumdar, said the seed of communalism has been deeply planted in the society and communalism cannot be eliminated until the use of religion in politics is banned.

Emphasising chalking out a long-term plan to get rid of communalism, he said the Razakars and Al-Badr were able to show their strength in this very month of victory as some political parties backed them up.

Sultana Kamal, former adviser to a caretaker government, said, "From this platform we have to

announce that we want to see proper trial of the war crimes accused and the trial has to be completed."

"We have to take clear stance here and speak out. A country may have thousands of good people, but if they keep mum then even a few criminals can fulfil their motives. We have to say that we want to see a Bangladesh where there will be no differences," she further said.

Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed said there is a lack of unity among the pro-liberation war forces.

JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu said, "We have to boycott the communal and militant forces and say that we would not make any alliance with those forces."

Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, journalist Abul Momen, playwright Syed Shamsul Haq, Prof Anisuzzaman and historian Muntassir Mamoon, among others, also spoke.

**Next general polls will be held on time**

Says Faruk Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next general election will be held in between October 25, 2013 and January 25, 2014 as per the constitution, said Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Faruk Khan yesterday.

The election will be held under the Election Commission while an interim government will conduct the country's routine works during the period, he also said while addressing as chief guest at a discussion at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Coalition of Local NGOs, Bangladesh (CLNB) held the discussion observing "Benin Peacekeeping Force Day."

Faruk said the caretaker government system is a weak system for which every time "extra forces" tried to come into power under this system and coups were orchestrated.

Explaining that holding of free and fair election under the ruling Awami League government is possible, the minister said around 80,000 different kinds of elections, including mayoral elections, conducted by the incumbent government in the last four years were free and fair and so will be the next general election.

He further said, in the last three general elections held under the caretaker government system, the opposition parties had rejected the election results.

CLNB has been observing the "Benin Peacekeeping Force Day" every year in remembrance of the fifteen Bangladeshi army officials who were killed in a plane crash on December 25, 2003 while they were returning home after completing their peace keeping mission of UN in Benin, South Africa.

**State, govt bound to try war criminals**

Says human rights chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state and government are bound to try war criminals to ensure justice in the country, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman told a seminar yesterday.

"But the trial of war criminals is facing threats through different ways. Different subterfuges are being shown, after hacking into a judge's personal conversation, to halt the trial," he said.

The seminar, "World Human Rights Day and the Human Rights of the Marginal People", was organised by Research and Development Collective and Oxfam in the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Mizanur said the hackers should be tried for personal privacy violation.

Criticising political parties for resorting to confrontations only for state power and without ensuring citizen's human rights, he said the state failed to establish human rights for all communities.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan said it was essential to establish the rule of law to establish human rights.

Law Commission acting chairman Prof Shah Alam and Prof Meshbah Kamal of Dhaka University also spoke at the programme.



MV Khatun-1 lies stranded after running aground on hitting boulders of an embankment near the mouth of Karnaphuli river at Chittagong early yesterday. Workers, inset, unload fertiliser that the lighter vessel was carrying as a crack developed during the collision, causing water to rush into the vessel.

PHOTO: STAR

**Muggers shoot dead trader in capital**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two muggers shot dead a local trader on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Kutubkhali area of Jatrabari yesterday afternoon.

The dead, Rafiqul Islam Rafiq, 40, lived at Bibir Bagicha in Jatrabari. Rafiq ran a tea and cigarette stall in Baro Bazar. He also worked as treasurer at Jatrabari Baro Bazar Small Traders' Association.

A witness, Alek Dewan, a vegetable trader, said he saw locals chasing two people who were speeding away on a motorcycle. When he followed the locals, he found Rafiq lying on the ground with a bullet wound in his head. Alek recognised the victim as he was Rafiq's regular customer.

Alek took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Amir Hossain, president of the association, said around 1:30pm Rafiq was on his way to the Jatrabari branch of Al-Arafah Islami Bank to deposit over Tk 1 lakh of the association. But, the muggers shot him dead and snatched the money.

Rafiq also had a cheque of Tk 1.5 lakh with him to withdraw the amount from the bank, he added.

Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station, said they recovered the cheque from the pocket of the dead but the motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

**MONEY LAUNDERING CASE**

**Hafiz, wife express no-trust in judge**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP lawmaker Hafiz Ibrahim and his wife Mafruzat Sultana yesterday expressed no-confidence in a judge of the Special Judge Court-6 after she rejected their two adjournment petitions in a money laundering case.

The case was filed against them for laundering \$1.75 lakh to Singapore.

The couple filed the petition against Judge Fozila Begum. In the petition, Hafiz's lawyer told the court that his clients had earlier filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of the case proceedings. However, the HC gave a dissenting order on the writ.

Later, the matter was sent to the Chief Justice for the next course of action but the issue remains pending. So, the lawyer prayed for adjournment of the hearing.

But the trial court rejected the adjournment petitions as the HC had not given a stay on the writ. The court also fixed January 10, 2013 for next hearing of the case.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Discussion**  
Association for Community Development (ACD) will hold a discussion on safety for children; Venue: Biam Foundation, Eskaton; Time: 9:30am.

**National consultation**  
Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training will organise a national consultation "Reintegration of Returnee Woman Migrant Workers"; Venue: Jatiya Mahila Sangstha; Time: 9:30am.

**Roundtable**  
National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled will hold a roundtable "Social rehabilitation of challenged persons in Bangladesh: Practices and prospects"; Venue: Biam Foundation; Time: 1:00pm.

**Discussion**  
Amader Ain will organise a discussion "The rule of law and development of

**WEATHER TODAY**

**Thick fog likely**

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Thick fog may occur over the river basins and moderate to thick fog elsewhere over the country during midnight till noon, said Met Office.

Night temperature may fall slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

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

Country's highest temperature 24.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sandip and lowest 10.5 degrees at Chuadanga.

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

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	21.6	13.6	89	74
Chittagong	22.4	12.5	95	77
Rajshahi	14.2	11.5	100	97
Rangpur	22.8	12.0	99	83
Khulna	19.8	12.5	91	98
Barisal	22.7	12.3	83	89