

NEWS IN *brief*

**PM directs district admins to provide help to cold-hit poor**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the local administrations of the country's 64 districts to stand beside the cold-hit poor people.

She also urged the well off people of the society to come forward to help the cold victims.

A total of 435,500 blankets, 17,200 shawls and 3,600 warm clothes have been sent from Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and disaster and relief affairs ministry for distribution among the poor this winter, said a PMO press release.

Local administrations and army have been

**Woman 'commits suicide'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan in the capital's Turag yesterday.

The dead, Taslima Akhter Dolly, 20, lived in Ahalia Dakhin Para with her husband Mosharraf Hossain.

Quoting Mosharraf, Turag police said the couple went to sleep together on Tuesday night but in the morning Mosharraf found Dolly hanging from the fan with a scarf in the same room.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Mosharraf claimed that Dolly committed suicide as she could not bear her prolonged chest pain.

Dolly's relatives alleged that she killed herself

**Stabbed sweeper dies**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sweeper who was injured in a fight with another sweeper in the capital's Shahajahanpur died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

The dead, Sohel Das, 42, lived at Gopibagh Sweeper Colony.

On Monday night, he and his co-worker Delu both in intoxicated state locked in a scuffle in the colony when Delu stabbed him, said Sohel's family.

Shahajahanpur police said Sohel's brother, Sabir Das, filed a murder case against Delu yesterday.

**PM gives cheques to families of Ctg girder collapse victims**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday handed over cheques of Tk 2 lakh each to the families of nine people who died when a flyover partially collapsed in Bahaddarhat of Chittagong.

Hasina handed over the cheques at BMA Officer's Mess.

Earlier, on November 24, three concrete girders of the flyover collapsed on a makeshift kitchen market killing 12 people while injuring 15 others.

Over 100 people were also injured, many of them in a clash between police and protesters

**Worker falls to death**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker fell down from a four-storey under-construction building in the capital's Fakirapool yesterday.

The victim, Mansur Ahmed, 32, was clinging onto a safety rope and painting the building's outer wall when the rope tore and he fell down, said his cousin Akbar Hossain and Motijheel police.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.



Rival factions of BNP become rowdy and start throwing chairs at each other just 15 to 20 minutes prior to the appearance of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a roadside rally in the capital's Jatrabari yesterday around 1:00pm. The BNP-led 18-party alliance held daylong mass contact programmes yesterday demanding restoration of the caretaker government system.

PHOTO: STAR

SKYPE SCANDAL

**Hackers to be punished**

Says Hasanul Haq Inu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take action against persons involved in hacking the Skype conversations of the former International Crimes Tribunal-1 chairman as leaking someone's personal conversation is a punishable offence, said Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday.

"Investigation is going on to identify the persons," he said at a press briefing organised at the Secretariat to "dispel confusion and controversy created" by opposition parties following the publication of Justice Md Nizamul Huq's Skype conversation.

Justice Huq resigned from the chairman post of ICT-1 on December 11 following an Amar Dosh report on his Skype conversations with Dr Ahmed Ziauddin, an expatriate Bangladeshi legal expert.

The daily newspaper said it had collected the records of the conversation from a source abroad. The government

appointed another justice to the post on December 12.

Inu said if the post of chairman or any member of ICT fell vacant, there was no bar in continuing the trial by reconstituting the Tribunal, just as in the code of criminal procedure.

BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, with a number of leaders facing war crimes trial, had accused the government of interfering with the trial and victimising political opponents in the name of the trial and demanded a retrial and Justice Huq's resignation.

Inu claimed that the government "did not have any headache" over the hacking and Skype conversation's publication. "The government rather is so strong that it is determined to bring every persons involved in war crimes to book."

He said none was being tried based on their political affiliation and war criminals, whether belonging to Awami League, JSD, BNP or Jamaat, would be tried.

PUBLISHING JUDGE'S SKYPE TALKS

**SC stays HC bar**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The SC yesterday stayed for six weeks an HC order that barred the daily Amar Dosh from publishing reports related to Justice Md Nizamul Huq's Skype conversations with an expatriate Bangladeshi legal expert.

Justice Huq resigned from the chairman post of International Crimes Tribunal-1 on December 11 following an Amar Dosh report on his Skype conversations with Dr Ahmed Ziauddin.

The SC also stayed the HC order that directed the Dhaka district magistrate to inquire whether the conversation's publication violated the press and publication law.

The SC orders came following a December 24 petition, submitted by Amar Dosh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman, seeking the stay. The judge also asked Mahmudur to file a leave to appeal petition with the SC against the HC order within six weeks.

The HC on December 13, following a petition filed by an SC lawyer Azher Ullah Bhuiyan, passed the two orders and issued a rule upon the government to explain why it should not be directed to apprehend and prosecute Mahmudur for the publication.

Azher's lawyer said the HC rule will remain in force as the SC order stayed only the two HC orders while Mahmudur's lawyer said both were stayed.



Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding capital punishment for persons who committed war crimes during the 1971 Liberation War.

PHOTO: STAR

POLITICAL PARTY REGISTRATION  
**HC questions RPO provisions**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of amended provisions, introducing preconditions for registration of political parties, of the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

In response to a writ petition, the court also issued a rule upon the Election Commission and the government to explain in three weeks why the provisions should not be declared unconstitutional and illegal.

One precondition, among others, states that any political party must have at least one member who has been elected with the party's symbol once or at least got five percent votes of a constituency in an election after the country's independence.

The petition stated that the EC, through an October 23 circular, brought about the amendments and asked political parties to apply with it for registration by December 31 with documents fulfilling the preconditions.

The petition was recently filed by Democratic League's General Secretary Safiuddin Ahmed Moni challenging the legality of the amended provisions and stating that fulfilling such precondition in such a short time was not possible for his party.

**Waterway workers threaten strike**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water transport workers yesterday threatened to go on a strike for an indefinite period from the early hours of January 9 across the country, if their 16-point demand, including further revision of their wage structure, is not met by that time.

Bangladesh Noutjan Sramik Federation leaders told a press conference in Dhaka Reporters Unity.

"Despite repeated requests, the government did not pay heed to our demands. So, there is no alternative to observing work abstention," said Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, general secretary of the federation.

Their other demands include ensuring the workers' security on waterways, maintaining navigability of rivers and a diplomatic initiative for permission to land on Indian territory.

Following the workers' strikes three between November 8, 2009 and May 15, 2010, the government on June 28, 2010, revised the wage scales for water transport workers, fixing Tk 2,190 as minimum basic wage and Tk 6,720 as maximum.

**No alternative to democracy despite two top leaders' failure**

Roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no alternative to a democratic ruling system though the heads of the two major political parties have failed to nurture democracy in the country, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They also blamed the top-level leaders of the Awami League and the BNP, saying the leaders did not play due roles to point out the mistakes and wrong decisions of their chiefs.

The civil society members are also failing to play their roles in assisting politicians to flourish democracy, they told the roundtable on "Will democracy be protected if the two leaders are blamed?" organised by

New York-based Bangla weekly Ajkal at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Eminent journalist ABM Musa said the two leaders of the AL and the BNP were doing dynastic politics, and they were ruling the nation being guided by others rather than being driven by their own judgment.

He said it would not bring any good to rely on Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, as they were not wise enough to show the nation the right way. The journalist called on the people to give up worshipping individuals.

Nagorik Oikya convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna said the

two parties' undemocratic practices would plunge the nation into chaos and that the two leaders must understand it.

Columnist Syed Abul Moksud said new political leadership was stuck due to the control of the two leaders. He said the current politics had become media-centred, so the politicians were not getting close to the masses.

Journalist Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul said there was no scope of any non-political or evil-political forces in the name of a third force in democracy.

Ajkal Publisher and Chief Editor Jakaria Masud moderated the roundtable.

**Primary, junior school exam results today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Results of this year's primary and ebtedai (madrasa) terminal examinations and Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations will be published today.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen will formally announce the results of the terminal examinations at a press conference at 11:00am in his secretariat office.

On the other hand, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will announce the results of Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations at a press conference at noon.

Prior to that, copies of the results will be handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The examinees can get their results from their respective schools.

Besides, the results will also be available at the websites of respective boards and directorates and through short messaging service (SMS).

The examinees of primary schools can get their results on the websites of Directorate of Primary Education (DPE):

www.dpe.gov.bd and http://dpe.teletalk.com.bd while the JSC and JDC examinees can get their results on www.educationboardresults.gov.bd.

Both the ministries are publishing the results in one day as per directives of Prime Minister's Office because of the prime minister's prescheduled programme, said sources.

**WEATHER TODAY**

**Mild cold wave may continue**

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Mild cold wave is sweeping over the Rajshahi division and the regions of Madaripur, Faridpur, Mymensingh, Kushtia and Srimangal and it may spread over Barisal division and the rest part of Khulna division and it may continue.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:20pm and rises tomorrow at 6:40am.

Country's highest temperature 23.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 08.8 degrees at Rajshahi.

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	20.8	12.4	82	61
Chittagong	21.2	13.5	73	73
Rajshahi	16.2	08.8	95	81
Rangpur	14.6	11.8	90	88
Khulna	20.0	11.0	94	89
Barisal	20.0	10.2	91	86