

**PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
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FROM: PIO, PID, DHAKA
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: piddhaka@gmail.com
piddhaka@yahoo.com
Web: www.pressinform.portal.gov.bd

News brief

President Abdul Hamid will hold discussions with Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) today as part of his move to take opinion of registered political parties over the formation of new Election Commission (EC).

President Abdul Hamid yesterday underscored the need for playing an effective role by all in further strengthening the existing communal harmony. President said this while exchanging greetings with members of the Christian community at Bangabhaban on the occasion of Christmas Day.

The Christian community celebrated Christmas Day in Bangladesh yesterday commemorating the birthday of Jesus Christ as elsewhere in the world.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to attend the 47th annual meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland. The 5-day meeting will begin on January 17, 2017.

The Power Development Board has taken a move to replace its three-to-four decade old power plants located in Ghorashal of Narsingdi and Khulna with new ones. A 330MW combined cycle power plant will replace furnace oil-fired power units with a combined power generation capacity of 170MW in Khulna.

Japan has come forward to support the government in implementing another metro rail project. A fact-finding mission of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) during its visit to Dhaka last month, gave Bangladesh hints of giving loan for implementing the mass rapid transit line-1 (MRT-1) project.

To improve infrastructural and operational efficiency of the country's gas sector, the government will sign a loan agreement of \$67 million with the Asian Development (ADB) for financing a project on Wednesday.

Bangladesh Bank is implementing a 'remediation plan' to build a fool-proof security system to prevent any further breaches in its overseas transactions, following the \$81 million heist incident in February 2016. Bangladesh Bank, Federal Reserve Bank of New York and The Swift authorities have taken some short and long term measures to check any further fraud.

For the first time, there are now more Bangladeshis in Oman than any other nationals who work in the Sultanate, according to the Times of Oman yesterday.

A part of government target to distribute 30 million improved cook stoves by 2030, some 70,000 improved stoves have been installed in the country's coastal region, aiming to reduce household air pollution and cope with climate change impacts.

The shut Ashulia Garment factories will reopen today, apparel makers said following backstage maneuverings to resolve the crisis stemming from labor unrest.

The government is set to spend Tk 809 crore to establish distilleries, cogeneration and biogas plants in Thakurgaon Sugar Mills and North Bengal Sugar Mills in Natore with the view to turning the loss-making entities into profitable ones.

The water taxi service on the Hatirjheel Lake has been a big draw and is attracting a significant number of commuters from nearby areas. The government introduced this service on the lake aiming at an exciting way of traveling around the lake.

The government has decided to increase manpower for Tourist Police and open five new officers for the unit in the country's most popular five tourist destinations with an aim to ensure security of local and foreign tourists. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Tourist Police informed this.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Dr Helal Uddin Khan Shamsul Arefin, a professor of Anthropology at University of Dhaka.

A K M Shameem Chowdhuri
Principal Information Officer
Ph: 02-9546091