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**News Brief**

The holy Christmas, the biggest religious festival of the Christian community, was celebrated yesterday in the country as elsewhere in the world with festivity and enthusiasm commemorating the birthday of Jesus Christ. On the occasion, President Md. Abdul Hamid exchanged greetings with Christian community members at Bangabhabanin Dhaka yesterday. The Head of the Statespeaking at the function called upon thepeople irrespective of religion, caste and creed, to remain alert so thatnone can create anarchy in society misguide youths using religion.Calling Jesus Christ as an ambassador of emancipation and beacon thePresident said, Jesus Christ had preached the sermons of peace in the world as his philosophy was to establish a peaceful society with full of love, services, forgiveness, compassion and justice. He called upon the countrymen to celebrate “Mujib Year”, the birthcentenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 2020and Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh Independence in 2021 enthusiastically.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister ObaidulQuaderhas said, democracy is established in the country but there is no democracy in BNP. He said this while responding to a query of a reporter in Cumilla yesterday.About the use of Electronic Voting Machine in the Dhaka city polls, he said the EVM is well-recognised modern system, which helps make elections free, fair and credible.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan has said, measures will be taken after analysing surveillance camera footage of the attack on Ducsu Vice-President NurulHaqueNur and his followers. He gave the assurance while replying a query of journalists at the golden jubilee programme of Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Government Boys' High School in Dhaka yesterday.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud has said, BNP is creating political terrorism and anarchy across the country over the treatment of its Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia. He said this while talking to media in Chattogram yesterday.Khaleda Zia discharged responsibilities as the Prime Minister for two terms and the leader of the oppositions in parliament for two times, with her prolonged arthritics pains, he added. The Information Minister inaugurated “TirjokNatyaMela” at MuktaManchha of Theatre Institute, Chattogramyesterday. The Minister at his speech at the function called upon dramatists to convey constructive messages to the people of the society through their dramas.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen has said, those who have entered Bangladesh from India in recent weeks will be sent back if they are not Bangladeshis.He said this while inaugurating the ‘Nagar Express,’ bus services in Sylhet yesterday. He said, Bangladeshis found to be living illegally in India will be taken back after proper verification.

Bangladesh and India have planned to strengthen relationship between the two countries through exchange of ideas involving youths. The Indian cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday approved a MoU between Bangladesh and India on cooperation over youth matters.The MoU on cooperation over youth affairs was one of the bilateral documents signed on October 5 in New Delhi during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s visit.

The Bangladesh-India joint boundary conference endedin Dhaka yesterday leaving dispute on the boundary line on the River Kushiara that entered Bangladesh through Zakiganj of Sylhet from the Indian state of Assam.The Indian delegation led by Surveyor General of India Lieutenant General Girish Kumar demanded fresh survey before fixing the international boundary line on the trans-border river.Department of Land Records and Survey DG Taslimul Islam who attended the meeting on the Bangladesh side from December 23

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to 25 at the state guesthouse Meghna said, they would continue negotiation with the Indian survey office on the Kushiara River, and four other trans-border rivers of the southwest regions named Ichhamati, Kalindi, Raiganga and Haribhanga. He expected to solve the disputes in the upcoming fourth joint boundary conference scheduled in next August in Delhi.

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda has instructed election officials to perform their duties neutrally in the upcoming polls of both Dhaka South and North City Corporations.The CEC gave the directive while speaking at the inaugural session of a training programmeorganised for the returning officers of two city corporations at the Election Training Institute in Dhaka yesterday. KM Nurul Huda also said,the commission has got positive results from the use of EVMs in national and local elections and it will continue to use the polling device. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Awami League has starteddistribution of nomination forms among the party’s aspirant mayoralcandidates for the polls to the Dhaka North and South City Corporations yesterday.The forms distribution will be continued till 5pm on December 27.Incumbent Mayor M Atiqul Islam collected nomination form for Dhaka North City Corporation while lawmakers – FazleNurTapash and Haji Selim bought nomination papers for Dhaka South City Corporation.

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun has directed National Productivity Organization to telecast time befitting documentary on productivity in television to aware grass-roots people. He came up with the directives while chairing a meeting ofNational Productivity Council at his ministry in Dhaka on Tuesday.

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder has said, the government has taken hugeinitiatives to expand cultural activities in order to make the country free from militancy, terrorism, eve teasing and drugs. He said this while speaking at a function organisedby BangladeshShilpakala Academy in Dhaka yesterday.

The Asian Development Bank is expected to help Bangladesh ease transborder and regional trade through facilitating infrastructural development and regulatory reforms.Under the South Asia Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation, the Manila-based lender has assured Dhaka of its technical and financial support to this effect.Economic Relations Division officials said an ADB team on a recent mission in Dhaka sat with public agencies and ministries concerned to prepare a project on the issue.

The government is planning to undertake a bullet train project on Dhaka-Cox’s Bazar route via Chattogram city involving US$12-16 billion, Senior RailwaySecretaryMofazzel Hossain told the reporters yesterday. The feasibility study of the project is expected to be completed by April, 2020, he added.

At least fifty percent construction work of much-awaited dream Bangabandhu Tunnel under Karnaphuli River has so far been completed.The total project works is expected to be completed by 2022.The tunnel will connect Chattogram Port and AnowaraUpazila and isexpected to make communication between Chittagong and Cox’s Bazar easier withreducing traffic congestion on two bridges over the Karnaphuli River.

The country's lowest temperature was recorded at 6.2 degree Celsius at Tentulia in Panchagarh district yesterday. On the other hand, the highest temperature of 25 degrees Celsius was recorded in Chattaogram while Dhaka witnessed the lowest 13 degrees Celsius. Yet another cold wave has gripped the country with dense fog disrupting the normal life and communication by road, air, rail and waterways.

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