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KAMAL FOR ICC HOT SEAT

BCB nominates its president for ICC vice-presidency

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BANKS FOR SME

More focus on untapped small and medium enterprises

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"CITIZEN KANE" OSCAR SOLD

The best screenplay award for the classic made the day for auctioneers

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JOYDEVPUR-MAWNA ROAD UPGRADE

Contract suspended hrs after resumption

Communications minister was in the dark about fraud charges against contractor

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and HASAN JAHIH TUSHER

Hours after making a decision of allowing a private firm to resume upgrading a part of the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday retracted from it, as he did not know about the allegation of document forgery against the firm.

Five months ago, when Syed Abul Hossain was the communications minister, his ministry cancelled the deal with Intraco (BD) Associates Ltd on charge of fraudulence. The firm later went to the High Court challenging the ministry's decision.

Quader, who replaced Abul on December 5, yesterday went to look over the state of the highway and came to know that the upgrading work of the 30km Joydevpur-Mawna part has been held up due to the cancellation of the contract and Intraco's subsequent petition.

He then held a meeting with the firm's officials at a rest house in Rajendrapur around 3:00pm. Chief Engineer (current charge) Abdul Quddus, Joint Secretary of the communications ministry Farid Uddin Ahmed and Project Director Firoz Iqbal were among the senior officials present in the meeting.

However, none of the officials briefed the minister about the background of the Intraco petition. So without knowing the case of document forgery, Quader asked Intraco to withdraw the petition and resume the work.

Intraco as well assured the minister of withdrawing the case by Sunday and resume work from January 15 next year.

Meanwhile, The Daily Star around 7:45pm contacted the communications minister to know about the grounds of awarding the firm the job without settling the legal issues and the allegation against

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Concrete blocks are placed on the road near the city's Kakrail intersection to divide it into two lanes, leaving the zebra crossing there useless.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BNP procession foiled by cops

Central office cordoned off; 8 activists held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A BNP move to bring out a mass procession in the city's Nayapaltan area to protest the "government's repression and police attack" on opposition activists and secret killings was foiled by the law enforcers yesterday.

The police made sure that the BNP men, except for some senior leaders, could not gather at their central office in the area.

Though the procession was scheduled

for 3:00pm, the law enforcers cordoned off the office in the morning, well before party activists started gathering there at around 9:00am. A three-tier police barricade prevented them from entering the office.

At about 3:30pm, police fired tear gas shells, let water cannons loose and baton-charged pro-opposition lawyers to disperse a procession they attempted to organise at Nightingale intersection near the party office.

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Police prevent BNP activists led by former Dhaka City Corporation mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka from bringing out a procession from the party's Naya Paltan office yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

TRANSIT FEES Final report next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's committee on transit will submit its final report to the commerce ministry next month seeking formal concurrence to its recommendations.

The decision came from a meeting between Commerce Minister GM Quader and the committee on transit led by Tariff

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FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

When the Mujibnagar govt came home

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The Mujibnagar government came home on December 22, 1971. It was one of the more momentous events in the nine-month saga of freedom, all of which had been spent in ensuring that liberty came to define the condition of the Bangalee nation through a spirited War of Liberation.

That war commenced on March 26,

1971, moments after the Pakistan occupation forces, having scuttled the political negotiations then going on towards a resolution of the crisis earlier engendered by it and self-serving political leaders from West Pakistan, cracked down on an unarmed Bangalee population. Operation Search Light, as the inauguration of the genocide was euphemistically put across, swiftly put an end to the lives of

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Power tariff at retail level to go up again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power tariff will be raised at retail level for the second time this year.

Chairman of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission Syed Yusuf Hossain will announce the hike today at a press conference at his office in the city.

Contacted yesterday, he however declined to give details.

On Feb 8, the energy

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Muhith now tells of hurdles to 7pc growth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Achieving the projected 7 percent economic growth might not be possible in the current fiscal year due to high import cost, spiralling inflation, downward investment flow and excessive subsidies in public spending, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday.

Earlier on many occasions, including in his budget speech in parliament, the minister termed the target realistic and attainable.

But speaking at a programme yesterday, he said factors like excessive bank borrowing by the government and high inflation rate are hindering the targeted growth. Muhith was addressing the inaugural session of the two-day 11th annual SANEI (South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes) at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the capital.

"Commodity price is totally upset," he said, adding that subsidies in petroleum products and other commodities contributed to a soaring inflation. "We're in a very difficult situation with inflation. The inflation has

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AMA Muhith

NEW ELECTION COMMISSION President's talks begin today

JP, JSD to join first day's dialogue; BNP may boycott

SHAKHAWAT LITON

With uncertainty looming large over the success of talks, President Zillur Rahman today opens dialogues with political parties seeking their opinion on the formation of a new Election Commission.

The current commission's tenure expires in early February.

On the first day, he will consult with senior leaders of Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, two components of Awami League-led ruling alliance that elected Zillur to presidency in 2009.

Senior leaders of the main opposition BNP have already taken a stance against joining the talks. The party may reply to the president's invitation once it gets it and then urge him to open a dialogue on restoration of the caretaker government system, which is the party's all-important issue now, sources in the party said.

BNP insiders say that the Bangabhaban's decision not to invite Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, a key ally of the BNP-led alliance, has pushed BNP more towards not

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