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Your Right to Know

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## INDIA'S LOKPAL BILL

Anna Hazare challenges Sonia Gandhi to a public debate

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## ANDHO NIRANGOM

A film tries to define Bauls and unravel the mystery of Lalon's doctrine

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## AT THE TOP OF THE TREE

Tigers star Shakib Al Hasan becomes the number one Test all-rounder

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# Power tariff hiked again

Retail level users to pay 13pc higher effective from Dec 1, another 7pc hike from Feb 1; rise draws flak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electricity price has gone up by Tk 0.55 per unit from December 1 for all retail customers across the country, dealing a blow to general users who consume less.

The price of per kilowatt hour electricity has soared by 13.24 percent to Tk 4.71 in the first phase of the two-stage increment, said Syed Yusuf Hossain, chairman of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

The energy regulator will again increase the retail tariff by 7.09 percent on February 1 next year, taking the per unit price to Tk 5.02, which is 21.28 percent up from last month's Tk 4.16.

Yusuf, who announced the hike at a press conference at his office in the city yesterday, also said the authori-

### TAKA PER KILOWATT HOUR

Before increase

Tk 4.16

From December 1, 2011

Tk 4.71

From February 1, 2012

Tk 5.02

Tariff up by 5pc for charities, religious institutions, irrigation pumps

ties had increased power tariff by 5 percent for charities, irrigation pumps and religious institutions.

This is the second rise in retail power tariff this year. On February 8, BERC increased the average retail

electricity tariff by 5 percent.

Yusuf said the increase in electricity price would help the government save about Tk 1,000 crore in annual subsidies. He, however, said the estimate was not final.

"The government is paying a huge amount of money for energy subsidies, contributing to rising inflation and higher bank borrowing. This price hike will ease the pressure on government coffers."

The former bureaucrat said although the authorities were increasing power tariff for such users as agricultural pumps, religious institutions, charities and the rural poor, the commission has tried to keep the hike within tolerable levels.

"Although these are sensitive areas, we have to increase their tariff as we cannot forget that electricity

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## SURVIVING THROUGH THIS WINTER



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Tiny birds, freezing in the cold, bunch together to share body heat as a way of keeping themselves warm. A cold blast has been sweeping across the country, leaving the homeless, elderly and babies vulnerable to the ravages of the winds and quite unable to cope with the calling of daily life. The photo was taken on Batali Road in Chittagong yesterday.

## BNP rejects talks bypassing caretaker issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday termed "meaningless and ill-motivated" the president's dialogue with the political parties on the formation of the next Election Commission through bypassing the caretaker government issue.

"The dialogue has to be on the issue of the caretaker government," said a standing committee member of BNP after a meeting

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# JP, JSD propose search committee

President opens dialogue on new Election Commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Participating in the talks with President Zillur Rahman, Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal yesterday proposed formation of a committee to search for eligible and acceptable individuals to constitute a new Election Commission.

Both the parties' suggestions are almost identical to the present EC's proposals in this regard, and they also sought

curtailing the government's unilateral authority to form Election Commission.

The current EC had earlier suggested making a law providing for an independent search committee for selecting persons subject to parliamentary scrutiny to man a new EC.

The government had also repeatedly announced earlier that it would go for

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## TIB for special JS body to form new EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday proposed to the president that a parliamentary special committee comprising members of both the ruling and opposition parties be constituted to find candidates eligible to be chief election commissioner and commissioners.

The committee could be made up of five to

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

FROM DENIAL TO RECOGNITION

# Now time for action

INAM AHMED

Even in the grim news there was something welcoming when Finance Minister AMA Muhith finally said achieving the targeted 7 percent growth might not be possible.

Not that Muhith said anything that we had not perceived earlier. The way the economy was rolling, it was evident that not all was going well and that we would end up with a low growth scenario.

But till now he was steadfastly denying anything wrong in the economy. With him

all the cabinet ministers including the prime minister herself jumped on the bandwagon of denial. They drew a rosy picture of the economy while wiser heads cringed.

But finally the finance minister admitted, or should we rather say recognised, that the economy is on a downslide.

This is a relief statement not because "bad news is good news". But because we have a proper and official assessment of the situation. We are no longer acting the

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## Hasina alerts AL men to 'subversive activities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed her party men to remain alert to any subversive activities in the country aimed at foiling the war crimes trial.

The people of Bangladesh now want the trial of war criminals and the government will do it, she told Bandarban district Awami League leaders at a meeting at her Gono Bhaban residence. She complained that

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## SUNDAY'S VIOLENCE Plot hatched in Nepal, says AL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sunday's street violence in and outside the capital was part of a Tk 30-crore deal signed by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders with a foreign intelligence agency in Nepal "to destabilise the country," Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed alleged yesterday.

Two groups of opposition leaders have met the intelligence agency officials several times in Nepal recently, he claimed.

Tofail was speaking at a

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Unlawfully piled up construction materials have caused a narrowing of Pragati Sarani, a road in the capital's Baridhara. The image was shot yesterday.

# Iraq attacks kill 67

Coordinated blasts rock capital

AFP, Baghdad

A wave of attacks across Iraq killed 67 people yesterday as it faced a political crisis, with its vice president accused of running death squads and the premier warning he could break off power-sharing.

Apparently coordinated blasts in the capital and the slaughter of a family of five in restive Diyala province were the first major sign of vio-

lence in a row that has threatened Iraq's fragile political truce and heightened sectarian tensions just days after US forces completed their withdrawal.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki vowed that the bombers would not be allowed to have any impact on the political process, while parliament speaker Osama al-Nujaifi condemned the attacks, which he said

"threaten national unity."

"The timing of these crimes and their locations confirm once again to any doubters the political nature of the goals that those criminals want to achieve," Maliki said in a statement.

"The criminals and those who stand behind them will not succeed in changing events or the political process, or in escaping punishment."

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## SAHR worried over secret killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) yesterday condemned and expressed its deep concern on the rise of incidents of enforced disappearances and secret killings in the country.

In a press statement SAHR said enforced disappearance and subsequent killings of the victims is the worst form of violation of human rights.

The international rights body termed it frustrating that the government fails to give acceptable explanations when witnesses and victims' family members pointed their fingers at the law enforcement agencies.

Urging the government to take immediate steps to

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# GRATITUDE

On receiving the National Export Trophy in Textile Sector for the Year 2009-2010



A. RAZZAK SATTAR, Managing Director of Utah Group of Companies receiving the National Export Trophy from the Honorable Prime Minister SHEIKH HASINA.

On this happy occasion of our achievement we offer our sincere gratitude to all our family members of Utah Group, Officers, Staff, Workers and most importantly our valued Buyers and Bankers with whom we are working over the years for mutual benefit.

UTAH GROUP

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