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Their profit soars despite stockmarket heartbreak

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NEW YEAR'S OPEN LETTERS

New generation stars in arts and entertainment arena write to fans

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NEW IRAN SANCTIONS

Obama signs a bill into law targeting Tehran's financial sector

PAGE 7

Minister, adviser differ on power price hike plan

Muhith: Gradual rise in 3yrs
Tawfiq: It may rise or fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith and prime minister's energy adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury yesterday differed on the issue of possible power price hikes in the next three years.

"Power prices will have to be increased bit by bit in the next three years to reduce the subsidy burden on the government," Muhith said at a news briefing at the capital's Bidyut Bhaban.

"By that time, we will strike a balance and won't have to subsidise power prices," he said.

However, after Muhith left the briefing, Tawfiq-e-Elahi asked the media not to take the minister's comments literally.

"I disagree with the finance minister's remark that electricity prices will go up over the next three years.

"Fixing power prices is a continuous process. It cannot

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Students of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College are ecstatic and cheering wildly as they get new textbooks yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Children get New Year gift

Textbook distribution begins at schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The New Year of school children began with smells of new books.

As the students of primary and secondary grades went to schools in the first morning of 2012, they were handed over a new set of textbooks. Some started jumping in joy; some were flipping through the pages.

There was a carnival atmosphere in schools all over the country yesterday, the first day of the new academic session and the much-awaited "Textbook Festival Day".

This year, the government plans to give out

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

Dr Kamal seeks caretaker for next 2 polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday suggested restoring the caretaker government system and holding the next two parliamentary elections under this system as per the Supreme Court verdict.

The eminent jurist came up with this suggestion at talks with President Zillur Rahman at the Bangabhaban on the formation of a new Election Commission.

The talks with different political parties on this issue, initiated by the president, began on December 22. The tenure of the incumbent chief

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Caretaker must be on agenda

Says Khaleda about president's dialogue on EC formation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The issue of caretaker government must be kept in the agenda for making fruitful the dialogue initiated by President Zillur Rahman, said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday.

"We respect the president and that is why we will attend the dialogue. But the caretaker government issue has to be discussed before talking about the Election Commission, as no election commission will be able to work neutrally under the Awami League government," she said while addressing a rally of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital.

The pro-BNP student organisation organised the rally

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Buet erupts in protests

Students lay siege to administrative building after BCL men beat up student; 3 expelled from university; academic activities suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Buet students and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League were suspended from the institute yesterday for beating up a senior student on Saturday.

The assault on Tousif Ahmed Eshan, student of the computer science and technology department,

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ANOTHER PHOTO ON PAGE 20



Tousif Ahmed Eshan

Run business without fear

PM tells businesspeople, pledges to restore their confidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government will do what it takes to bring back confidence among the businessmen who were harassed during the last caretaker government's tenure.

Businessmen were in panic during the two-year rule.

PM TAKES A SWIPE AT NEWSPAPERS PAGE 20 SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Sayedee accused of looting, arson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reinforcing the testimonies of two previous witnesses, prosecution witness Mostafa Hawlader yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal that he saw Sayedee along with other collaborators looting and burning a number of shops in Parerhaat Bazar in 1971.

Mostafa said he saw Delawar Hossain Sikder (he kept referring to Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee as Delawar Hossain Sikder) direct Pakistani soldiers to the houses of Hindus and Awami League supporters in Parerhaat Bazar during the Liberation War.

"The Pakistan army then ordered a looting of the

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