



THE ROCKY YEAR

Stocks pass 2012 in the red, as the market fails to retrieve lost glory

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FLASHBACK 2012

Star Arts & Entertainment takes a look back at the year

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SYRIA SOLUTION?

Brahimi has "crafted a plan" that world powers may support

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EVENTFUL 2012

Upsets eclipse successes

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

2012 has been a nerve-racking year for the country.

Words like "uncertainty", "unwillingness", "unexpected" and "unwanted" kept cropping up with frustrating developments in the areas of governance, law and order, judiciary, human rights, politics and diplomacy hitting the headlines throughout the outgoing year.

The nation plumbed the depths of despair because of stalemate over Padma bridge project, political volatility over caretaker government issue, forced disappearances, financial scams, violence by Jamaat-Shibir, death of 112 garment workers in a factory blaze and many other disappointing developments.

However, it's not been all doom and gloom. The long chain of unpleasant happenings was interspersed with some good news.

Among the things that gave the people enormous joy and satisfaction were the triumph in the legal battle over maritime boundary with Myanmar; Bangladeshi researchers' success in decoding the genome of a fungus that cause havoc in jute and soybean productions; conquest of Everest by two Bangladeshi women; and the national cricket team's victory in the one-day series against West Indies and finishing the Asia Cup as runners-up for the first time.

A steady 6 percent economic growth despite many hurdles was lauded by global bodies.

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The picture taken recently depicts the poor condition of a footbridge at Tikatuli in the capital. An accident can occur anytime here but the authority has turned a blind eye to this.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Don't favour war crimes accused

Dipu Moni urges int'l community

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka yesterday called upon the international community not to make any request in favour of the war crimes accused who are now under trial in the International Crimes Tribunal.

"Bangladesh wants nobody to make any request or recommendation for the persons who are accused of war crimes or who might be convicted in trial," said Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, talking to media at her office yesterday.

Referring to a letter to President Zillur Rahman from his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul calling

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Power tariff hike on cards

BERC technical panel suggests 4.84pc rise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The technical evaluation committee of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission yesterday recommended increasing power prices by 4.84 percent at retail level to reduce subsidy burden on the state-run electricity distribution company.

The recommendation came after a public hearing on Power Development Board's November 11 proposal to the commission for hiking electricity prices by 9.59 percent.

"The technical committee

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Empowerment beyond charter

AL national council authorises Hasina to change party constitution and declaration

STAR REPORT

In yet another violation of party constitution, the Awami League national council has empowered newly elected AL President Sheikh Hasina to bring changes, if necessary, in the charter and declaration.

As per the party charter, the national council can exercise its powers to amend the constitution

and manifesto.

Held on Saturday, the council approved some proposals placed by Hasina, also the prime minister, to bring changes in the declaration and constitution.

The councillors then mandated Hasina to bring further changes, if needed, sources said.

"The council gives the authority to Sheikh Hasina alone as the

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AL COMMITTEE Lobbying on for vital posts

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Hectic lobbying for a place in the next central committee of ruling Awami League has started with the close circles of re-elected party chief Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

At the same time, apprehension of being dropped from the committee prevails among many leaders ranking from outgoing joint general secretaries to central committee members,

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PADMA GRAFT CONSPIRACY

Mosharraf points finger at his boss

M RAHMAN

Retracting from his earlier statement, ex-secretary of Bridges Division Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan has told the ACC in custody that he made all decisions on the Padma bridge project in consultation with "higher authorities" in an oblique reference to ex-minister Syed Abul Hossain.

But long before his arrest on December 26 in the Padma bridge corruption case, Mosharraf had claimed that he took the decisions on his own without consulting his then boss.

Former communications minister Abul Hossain also made similar claims before a team of the Anti-Corruption Commission, which was conducting enquiry into corruption allegations in the project.

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Hartal, if fuel price hiked

Threatens 18-party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led 18-party alliance last night decided to call hartal if the government increases fuel prices.

The alliance also drew up a month-long programme, including formation of human walls on January 15, to demand the restoration of the caretaker government system and protest the killings and disappearance of political leaders.

"We will enforce hartal

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Bus crash kills 12

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

At least 12 people were killed and 18 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a microbus on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Shibpur upazila in Narsingdi yesterday.

The accident occurred around 12:30pm in Chaitanya area when a Dhaka-bound bus of Haor Bilas Paribahan, taking the wrong side of the road, rammed the microbus carrying 13 passengers, police quoted witnesses as saying.



The wreckage of a microbus that collided head-on with a bus on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

All the dead were microbus passengers while the injured were passengers of the bus.

The microbus passengers were going to the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (R) in Sylhet from their Mirpur home in Dhaka, police quoted family members as saying.

Ten of the deceased are microbus driver Faruk Hossain, 30, passengers Arif, 8, Safiullah, 65, Rafique, 40, Moyez Uddin, 42, Anik, 8, Ibrahim Miah, 70, Nannu Mia, 45, Masudur Rahman, 45, and Solaiman, 40.

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Five to die for Khalaf murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced five people to death for killing Saudi Embassy official Khalaf Ali in March this year.

They are Mohammad Al Amin, Saiful Islam Mamun, Rafiqul Islam Khokon, Akbar Ali Lahu and Selim Chowdhury.

Of them, Selim, who is on the run, would face

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MEGHNA BRIDGES 4-day closure from Jan 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vehicular movement on two key bridges -- Meghna and Meghna-Gumti -- on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway will remain suspended for four days from 6:00am Friday due to their repair works.

The bridges will be off-limits to all kinds of vehicles to facilitate repairs to the damaged expansion joints and hinge bearings,

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