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JSC, JCD EXAMS
This year's results are symptoms of a troubled future
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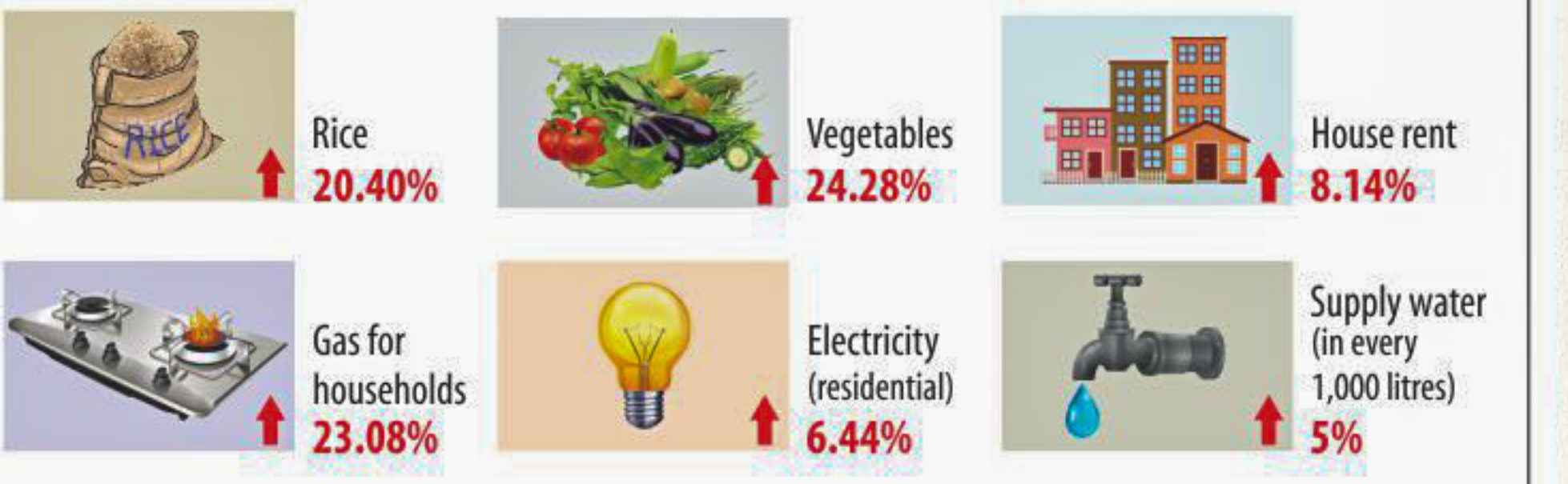
'OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE'
South Korea offers talks with North to discuss the Winter Olympic participation
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'DON'T NEED TO CHANGE'
ODI skipper Mashrafe urges team to play as before in absence of coach
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DHAKA CITY IN 2017

Rise in living cost highest in 4yrs

Last year saw 8.44pc increase, says CAB analysis



STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The cost of living in the capital hit a four-year high in 2017 due to spiralling prices of rice, vegetables, electricity, gas and other services as well as rising house rent, the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) said yesterday.
The city residents saw their living costs go up by 8.44 percent last year compared to that in the previous year, it said.
The voluntary organisation urged the government to form a separate wing or division under the Prime Minister's Office or the commerce ministry to keep prices of

12-15 essentials within the reach of the low-income and poor families.
"Most of the people were deprived of the fruits of the country's overall development because of the price hike of essentials, including rice, in 2017. Many people are suffering due to high food prices. Savings of many families are falling. An urgent remedy is necessary," CAB President Ghulam Rahman said while presenting the CAB report on living cost in 2017 at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.
Living cost of the two crore city dwellers hit the highest since 2014 when it rose by 6.82 percent, according to the CAB.
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President for unity among 3 state organs

BSS, Dhaka
President Abdul Hamid yesterday asked the three state organs -- executive, legislature and judiciary -- to work in unison giving priority to the welfare of the country and its people.
He was speaking at a function on the Supreme Court premises marking the first-ever Supreme Court Day.
"We have to bear in mind that no activity of any state organ hampers the function of others or hinders national interest," he told the event hosted by Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, who is performing functions of chief justice.
The president urged the Supreme Court judges to deliver their tasks with utmost caution as they hold the crucial authority of "judicial review".
He said the higher judiciary role was very important in flourishing democracy, ensuring socio-cultural progress and consolidating the rule of law. He also lauded
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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Three new faces sworn in

State minister gets cabinet berth

Narayon Chandra **Shahjahan Kamal** **Mostafa Jabbar** **Kazi Keramat Ali**

RASHIDUL HASAN
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expanded her council of ministers, inducting three new faces into it and promoting a state minister to a full minister.
Of the new faces, AKM Shahjahan Kamal, an MP from Laxmipur-3 constituency, and IT expert Mustafa Jabbar were sworn in as ministers while Rajbari-1 MP Kazi Keramat Ali was sworn in as state minister.
The Cabinet Division has not announced their portfolios, but sources said Shahjahan would get the social welfare ministry, Jabbar the ICT ministry and Narayon Chandra Chanda, now state minister for fisheries and livestock, will be in charge of the ministry.
After the oath taking ceremony, Keramat Ali told reporters that he would join the education ministry as its state minister.
With them, the number of council
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STUDENTS-LOCALS CLASH

16 students hurt as cops open fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
At least 16 students of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute were injured last night when police opened fire to quell a clash between the students and locals of Begumbari slum in the capital.
The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where three were admitted and the rest released after primary treatment, said Bachchu Miah, a sub-inspector at the hospital's police camp.
He said quoting other students that several other bullet-hit students were taken to different city hospitals.
Saiful Alam Mollah,
SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

BNP to take part in polls no matter what

Says Khaleda, reiterates demand for non-partisan interim government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday categorically said her party would contest the national elections, but the polls must be held under an interim non-partisan administration.
"BNP is a pro-election political party. We will contest the election even if you [government] want to keep us out of it. We will contest the polls and you must make arrangements to that end," Khaleda told a programme at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB).
There has been uncertainty in and outside the party as BNP boycotted the last parliamentary polls demanding election under a non-partisan caretaker administration.
However, the government is yet to meet the demand. In addition, Khaleda has been facing corruption charges and the trial is at the final stage.
BNP leaders repeatedly alleged that "false, fabricated and politically motivated" cases were filed against her to keep her away from the next national polls.
The programme at IEB did not begin well for the former premier after she was forced to stay in front of the institute for nearly one hour.
Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), a pro-BNP student body, was scheduled
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2.30cr new voters added

EC discloses draft voter list; total voters 10.40cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The next parliamentary election will have 2.30 crore more voters than the election in 2008 had.
The current number of electorate is 10.40 crore, according to the draft voter list.
The Election Commission disclosed the draft voter list yesterday and said the final voter list would be published on January 31.
The data shows 2.30 crore people have been registered since the December 29, 2008, parliamentary election when 8.10 crore voters were eligible.
The country had 9.19 crore voters during the 10th national election held on January 5, 2014. Most of the political parties boycotted that polls and 153 lawmakers were elected uncontested.
Experts said the fresh voters will have an impact on the next parliamentary election and they could be the deciding factor.
Former election commissioner
SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Teachers continue their fast unto death well into the night, demanding their institutions be given the Monthly Pay Order benefits. The photo was taken around 9:00pm last night.

Minister's word just won't do

Teachers on hunger strike for MPO facilities say they want a timeframe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Teachers who are on a hunger strike unto death rejected the education minister's assurances yesterday, announcing to continue their agitation until they get a specific timeframe for inclusion into the government's Monthly Pay Order (MPO) system.
The minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, met the teachers on the third day of their hunger-strike in front of Jatiya Press Club at around 11:30am in an attempt to break the impasse, and urged them to return to their homes.
"We've long been fighting for you. Every year before formulation of the budget, I raise the issue [MPO]. You are the main driving force in our education sector and if you think our ministry is not paying importance to your demand, then that would be an injustice to us," he said.
The minister said they have for long been putting pressure on the finance minister and trying to convince him regarding the matter.
Nahid said that even last Monday they submitted a copy of the existing policy on MPO to the finance ministry, requesting them to come up with a solution by bringing some amendments and changes if needed.
"The secretary [of the education ministry] and I had talks with him [finance minister] till 1:30am last night. We went to his home early in the morning as he will be going abroad and told him not to leave the country without providing us with a solution."
He then agreed that measures will be taken to bring the teachers of the educational institutions which are not
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