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NEWS BRIEF

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved eight projects, including one for increasing strength of existing runway and taxiway of Sylhet Osmani International Airport, at a total cost of Tk 2,071.80 crore. The ECNEC gave the approval in its 18th meeting for the current fiscal year held at the NEC conference room here with ECNEC Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has been working tirelessly to change the lot of the mass people. She said this when a three-member Swedish Left Party delegation led by Jens Holm, MP, called on her at her Jatiya Sangsad Office yesterday evening. The prime minister said the government has been providing various allowances to distressed people under the social safety net programs. The premier said her government has ensured women participation in all spheres of the state.

President Md. Abdul Hamid yesterday said the cooperation from all political parties and general people to hold free, fair and credible elections in the country is a must. He said this at a meeting with outgoing election commissioners at Bangabhaban. The outgoing election commissioners, led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, made the farewell call on the President yesterday afternoon.

Newly-appointed Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda has said that he would be working with respect to the constitution with honesty and neutrality. He said, he and his colleagues would be making the best of their efforts to work properly without fears or favors to ensure free and fair polls with participation of all political parties, while expressing his views after being appointed for this vital post.

The agreement between Bangladesh and Russia on visa-free visit of persons of the two countries holding diplomatic and official (service) passports will come into force on 12 February for a period not exceeding 30 days from the date of entry.

Bangladesh will start bandwidth export to Bhutan within a month. State-owned Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL) would establish linkage with Bhutan using network of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) through Akhaura-Tripura frontier, said officials.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday said duty and quota free market access being provided by European Union (EU) under everything but arms (EBA) facilities is rendering positive contribution to employment and socioeconomic development of Bangladesh. The minister was addressing as chief guest at the opening session of a day-long workshop organized by EU Trade Division at a city hotel.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury in Parliament yesterday said some 2.8 lakh homeless families will be rehabilitated across the country by 2019 as per the Prime Minister's announcement. She said the government has taken decision to provide homes to all homeless people in the country by 2019.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Engineer Khandker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday in Parliament said the 'Ekti Bari Ekti Khamar (One House, One Farm) project has created scopes for employment and poverty alleviation of three crore people across the country. The minister said a total of 1.20 crore people from 40,527 wards in 4,503 unions of the country were added to the project through 40,213 village associations from 2011 to June 30, 2016.

Bangladesh has urged BIMSTEC member states to conclude the Bimstec Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations as early as possible. Bangladesh conveyed its position at the seventeenth session of the Bimstec Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held yesterday in Kathmandu. Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque led the six-member Bangladesh delegation at the meeting

Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka Nur Ashikin Mohd Taib has said Bangladesh and Malaysia can grow together by strengthening ties between the two countries in all aspects. High Commissioner Nur Ashikin was addressing at a function in the city.

DSEX, the prime index of the DSE, settled yesterday at 5392.10 points.

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