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**NEWS BRIEF**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved six projects involving a cost of Tk 2,474.65 crore. The projects included a significant one for the procurement of equipment and machinery for repairing and maintenance and road infrastructure construction at an estimated cost of Tk 585.88 crore. Roads and Highways Department will implement the project by December 2017. Of the total project cost of Tk 585.88 crore, the government will provide Tk 113.58 crore while the rest of Tk 472.30 crore will come as project assistance from the Indian Line of Credit (LoC).

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will pay a week-long visit to Switzerland to attend the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. The meeting would be held on January 17-20 in Davos-Klosters under the theme "Responsive and Responsible Leadership".

During a meeting with President Abdul Hamid yesterday over the formation of new Election Commission (EC), Bangladesh Jatiya Party made a proposal to include a representative from the business community both in the search committee and the EC each.

The 10th Jatiya Sangsad will go into its 14th session on January 22, says a parliament secretariat press release.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court upheld a High Court order that directed the government to recognize 2,367 members of the 'guerrilla force' who participated in the 1971 Liberation War as freedom fighters. A four-member bench led by Chief Justice SK Sinha passed the order.

The country witnessed the lowest inflation rate in 53 months, as it stood at 5.03 percent in December this fiscal year, according to the latest data from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). The rate of inflation in the month of December in current fiscal eased by 0.35 percent compared to the previous month.

Bangladesh is one of the top performers in ensuring nutrition and basic medical care, and health and wellness, according to the Social Progress Index 2016 prepared on a study on 133 countries. The country's score is 52.73. The Index measures social progress in three broad areas: basic human needs, foundation of well-being and opportunity.

The government will build Bangabandhu Silicon City, a hi-tech park in Rajshahi to implement the project for socio-economic development of the region. The hi-tech park will be established on 31 acres of land at Bulanpur under Rajpara Police Station in the city at the cost of Taka 238 crore.

Bangladesh EPZ Authority is going to set up economic zone on 1150 acres of land at Mirsarai upazila under Chittagong district. Prime Minister and Chairman of BEPZA Governor Board Sheikh Hasina has given approval for setting up 'BEPZA Economic Zone'.

The number of Bangladeshi workers getting jobs abroad increased by more than 36 per cent to 757,731 in 2016 compared to that of the previous year, according to the statistics of the manpower bureau.

The much-awaited 350MW power plant on 350 acres of farmland in Gazaria Upazila of Munshiganj is going to be built through a deal with Chinese companies. The deal might be closed by the end of January. Managing Director of the Rural Power Company Limited (RPCL) informed this.

The government has ordered the directorate general of food to resume open market sale of rice in the labour-intensive areas of Dhaka from January 8 after an interval of over three weeks in the wake of soaring prices of the staple.

DSEX, the prime index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) settled yesterday at 5,137.74 points.

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