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## Govt plans to crush street agitation

### Reshuffle in police, cases against opposition leaders in pipeline

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

The government is planning crack-down on street demonstrations by the opposition, a home ministry official said.

"We have specific information that the opposition parties will stage demonstrations from January and authorities are ready to crack down on anti-government agitation on the street," a home ministry official said, on condition that he not be named.

"A set of steps has been taken to ward off the opposition movement,"

another official of the ministry admitted. The government would have the streets occupied by pro-coalition activists when the opposition would stage agitation and other programmes, he elaborated.

Filing of cases against opposition leaders and activists will be another strategy. A list of activists and leaders organising anti-government agitation has been made to charge them, sources said.

Previous cases against opposition leaders may be revived as well, the home ministry official went on.

A reshuffle in the police adminis-

tration is also on the cards to take the opposition head on in the city. New police personnel loyal to the ruling coalition will be drafted in Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) from outside, the sources added.

"We no longer can go soft on the opposition since they are involved in subversive activities," another home ministry official said, preferring to remain unnamed. There are scores of instances that the opposition is trying to create anarchy for political mileage, government sources alleged.

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## JAIL KILLING CASE

### Four special prosecutors appointed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed four special public prosecutors (SPPs) to conduct the trial in the historic jail killing case.

Headed by Advocate Anisul Haq, the team comprises Advocate Shahara Khatun, Mosharaf Hossain Kajol and Kamrul Islam.

Driven by four SPPs, the 1975 case took effect in 1996 after the Awami League came to power but had none for nearly the last one year.

The BNP-Jamaat led government in December last year cancelled the four SPPs. Ever since, the AL has been demanding appointment of new SPPs, as the jail killing case is a special one.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday told newsmen that the government made them SPPs on the

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## STOCK MARKET UPSWING

# Trading of 16 firms suspended

STAR REPORT

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) yesterday suspended trading of 16 companies with weak fundamentals following an abnormal surge in their share prices.

The companies, dubbed as Z Group for failing to declare dividend or hold regular annual general meetings, are Bengal Steel Ltd., Karim Pipe Ltd., AB Biscuit Ltd., Dhaka Vegetable Ltd., Paragon Leather, Rupan Oil Ltd., National Oxygen Ltd., STM, Gem Knitwear, Bangla Process, TBL, JH Chemical, Mark Bd Shilpa, Texpic Industries Ltd., Highspeed Ship and Meghna

Vegetable.

Following the move, the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) General Index that had been on a sudden and 'abnormal' bull-run since Saturday lost 9.23 points to close at 973.88. However, the DSE-20, an index of blue chip companies, gained 42.06 points yesterday to close at 1300.52.

Since Saturday, the stock market started running uphill when the DSE General Index was 881.736 points and the DSE-20 Index 1133.

The SEC found no logic in the price wildfire, as the financial health of many weak companies does not support the swing.

Analysts Tuesday cautioned

investors as they found no rationale behind the price run.

"Investors are requested to make investment decisions after considering both fundamental and technical analysis of securities. They are also requested not to invest in securities whimsically," the SEC advised.

Welcoming the SEC move, Yawer Sayeed, chief executive officer of Asset & Investment Management Services (AIMS) of Bangladesh Ltd., said: "The market correction was overdue. There was a lot of selling pressure which pushed the turn-over up."

Despite the SEC move, share

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## Sircar-Siddiqui rift on despite Khaleda's Rx

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days after a prime ministerial intervention to clear the bad blood between the speaker and his deputy, no rapprochement seems to take hold.

Following exchange of salvos by Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar and Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui over each other's role in parliament, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tried to mend their ties on Sunday and asked them to keep calm.

But parliament sources said a communication cut between the pair was still in force.

It was third such prime ministerial intervention to improve the festering ties between the two after first in 2002 over exercise of power and then over the hosting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference in this

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## Cops to change colour for credibility

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will soon shrug off the all too familiar blue shirt and khaki trousers -- one of the last vestiges of the old colonial era -- and switch to a light grey shirt and navy blue trousers from next month.

They said the move is aimed at giving police 'more credibility'. But the stain of perennial corruption that has come to be long associated with the old uniform, a stain that has earned police the dubious distinction of being the world's most corrupt organisation, will linger on in all likelihood, giving corruption an all new colour, sources observed.

The home ministry recently gave directives for the change considering the fact that the colour combination of the police uniform is being widely used by private citizens as well as security firms, making it difficult for police to stand out from others.

As for all metropolitan police departments, their forces will wear short-sleeved olive shirts and navy blue trousers.

A paramilitary combat dress easily distinguishable from Army and Bangladesh Rifles uniforms will also replace the khaki of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), a home ministry official said.

The new dresses have already been ordered and should be available

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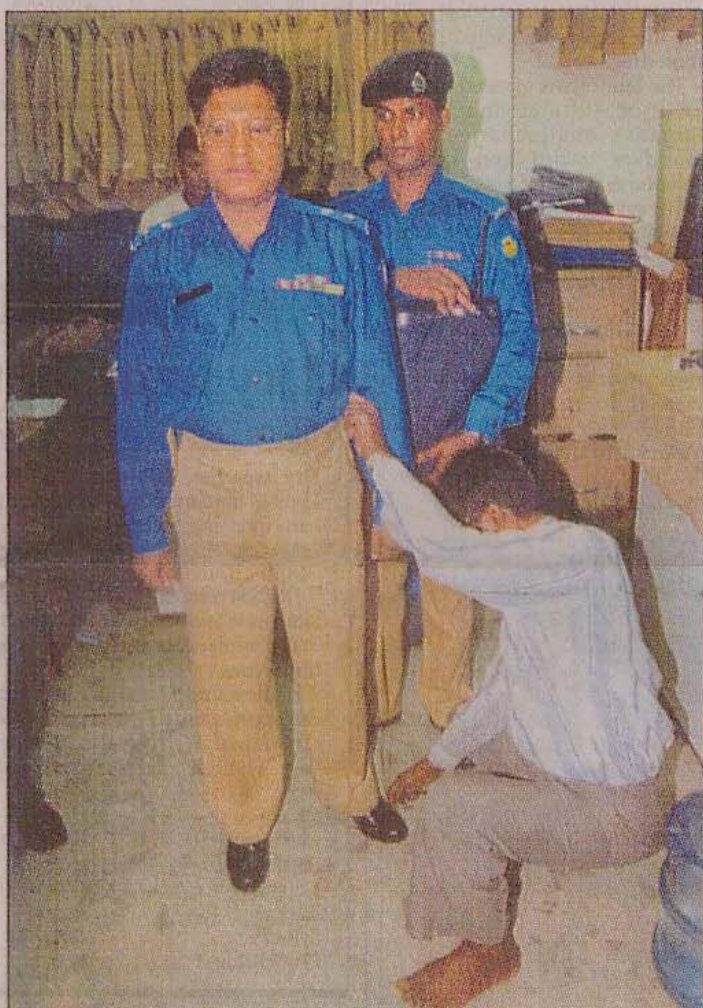


PHOTO: STAR

A police officer gives his measurements to a tailor at Polwell Supermarket in Dhaka yesterday to fit into the force's new uniform.

## Disparate agendas hold back plan for opposition unity

REAZ AHMAD

Opposition political parties are discussing a raft of points to fashion a unity, but key ideological and policy issues are holding back their plans for the launch of a unified anti-government movement.

For over six months now, the main opposition Awami League (AL) held a string of formal and informal talks with other opposition parties, particularly with the leftists, for what it says freeing the nation from the four-party coalition misrule.

Parties both within and outside the left 11-party grouping, have come up with different agendas for AL's consideration before they join hands with the former ruling party.

In recent months, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) have illustrated different 'talking points' which they think would pave the way for a greater unity among themselves.

The 11 points of the JSD and six points of the CPB have one demand in common -- banning the Jamaat-e-Islami and religion-based politics. But the AL, which joined forces with the Jamaat against Khaleda Zia's

previous government, is yet to respond to the talking points.

The CPB put forward its six points to the AL on August 10, asking the main opposition to agree on issues like reviving the four original state principles, trying war criminals, banning Jamaat, waging a movement against the US-led war and gas export and protesting divestment of state-owned enterprises and layoffs.

Similarly, the JSD submitted its 11 points to the AL, also in August, laying out a formula for the formation of a national government after unseating the BNP-led alliance government.

To share its views with other parties, the JSD circulated the points to the CPB, Workers Party, Samyabadi Dal and Gono Forum also.

Other salient features of the points are formation of a bicameral parliament, strong local government bodies, abolition of Article 70 of the constitution (that bars one from speaking against party-line in parliament) and amendment to Article 118 to give greater powers to

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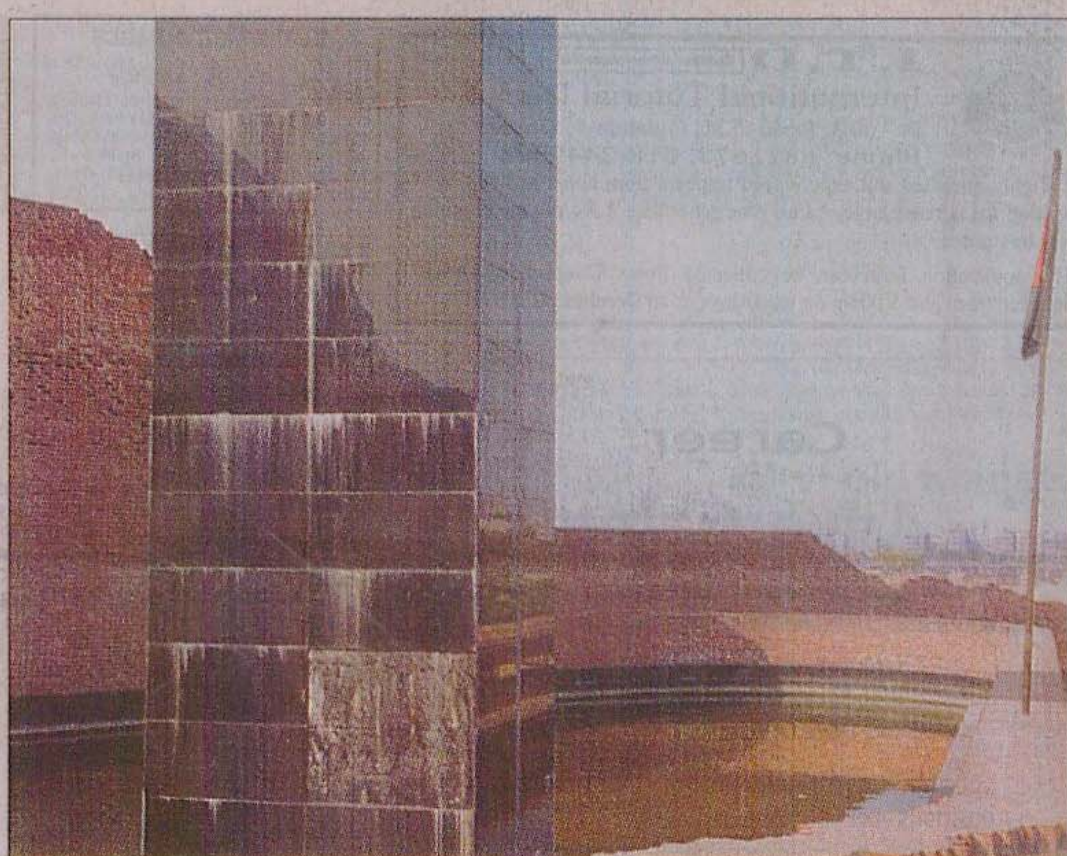


PHOTO: STAR

The Martyred Intellectuals' Monument at Rayer Bazar in Dhaka bears the hallmarks of neglect, ahead of December 14 when the nation remembers carnage of intellectuals by Pakistani occupation forces in 1971.

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## Firms catch clients on DoE premises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of some environment-related consulting firms have set up shop in a first-floor reception room at the Department of Environment (DoE) Dhaka office from where they solicit business.

The consulting firms try to catch those clients who come to the DoE for the environmental clearance that is required to set up any industry or other important establish-

ment.

Soliciting business from those seeking DoE clearance for their projects has become a common practice under the present government, department sources said. The consulting firms are well connected to the ruling BNP high command and other sectors of the government, the sources added.

DoE officials are often disturbed by the representatives of the consulting firms but do not have the

power to act against them due to their political connections, according to sources.

"One official tried to have them removed a few days ago but he did not succeed. Rather he was threatened with transfer from the Dhaka office," said a DoE official. "So nobody tells them anything now."

Last Sunday this correspondent found around 10 consulting firm representatives in the first floor

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## AI urges PM to probe 'torture' of Nuruzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Amnesty International (AI) yesterday appealed to the prime minister to probe the alleged torture on a Srimongol businessman at a local police station on November 20.

The AI, in a letter to the Prime Minister's Office and home ministry, asked the PM to ensure businessman Nuruzzaman's safety who is now in police custody at Moulvibazar jail without any formal charge.

Following a complaint filed by the local MP, police arrested Nuruzzaman on November 18, the letters said.

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## Dr Kamal eyes unity for anti-govt movement in Jan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called for a broad unity ahead of a programme to be set against the government in January to press it to cut corruption and violence.

Other areas of the movement to be launched from a national convention will focus on the governance of the country in line with the constitution and separation of the judiciary.

Now forging a wide platform



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