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## Repatriation of Rohingyas stalled again

From Our Correspondent  
COX'S BAZAR, Dec 23: Repatriation of Rohingyas has become uncertain once again after Myanmar's unilateral suspension of the process today.

The suspension came at a time when some 50 Rohingyas from Kutupalong refugee camp were scheduled to go back home today. Myanmar showed Ramadan as a pretext for unilateral suspension of the mutually agreed repatriation that began on November 25 after a respite of 16 months, sources said.

Bangladesh immediately responded to Myanmar's decision and asked for an official level meeting on the issue at the bordering township of Mongdu in Myanmar on December 28, said Md Borhanuddin, Refugee and Repatriation Commissioner stationed in Cox's Bazar.

Only 106 refugees could go back home since the current phase of repatriation began. Some 21,305 Rohingyas are still living in two refugee camps—Kutupalong and Nayapara—in the district.

## Three officials kidnapped in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, Dec 23: Three officials were abducted allegedly by armed tribals from a bus at Baghaichhari in Baghaichhari thana today, reports APB.

Local sources said 15-20 masked gunmen waylaid the Khagrachhari-bound bus, dragged out the three officials said to be Bengalees, and took them away at about 4:30 pm. The kidnappers also damaged the bus.

When contacted, both Rangamati and Baghaichhari police confirmed the incident. The identity of the victims could not be known till filing of the report at 8:30 pm.

## Incinerators

### BELA serves legal notice

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) yesterday sent a legal notice to the secretaries of the ministries of health and family welfare, local government, rural development and co-operatives, environment and forest, and the directors of the department of health services and the department of environment and the directors of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Chittagong Medical College for using hazardous incineration technology for disposal of hospital waste.

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## Noor Uddin's new portfolio

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has allocated the Ministry of Science and Technology to Minister Lt Gen (Retd) Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan. Cabinet division announced here yesterday, reports BSS.

## Rabindranath Tribedi Press Secy to President

Rabindranath Tribedi has been appointed the press secretary to President Shahabuddin Ahmed, an official handout said here yesterday, reports BSS.

Prior to his new assignment, Tribedi was an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Establishment Ministry (attached to Prime Minister's office).

## Inside Today

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## Syria also denies clearance

# Iraq bans all UN flights to Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Dec 23: Iraq today banned all United Nations flights into the country, report agencies.

Iraq ordered the UN to cancel a scheduled flight of military observers headed to Baghdad to monitor the cease-fire and demilitarized zone on the Iraq-Kuwait border. AP quoting a UN official said.

Baghdad offered no explanation for its decision, which was likely to increase tensions with the United Nations.

The UN official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he hoped the measure was temporary and that the UN is pursuing the matter with Iraq.

The flight had been scheduled to carry members of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission from Amman, Jordan, to Habaniya air base outside Baghdad, the official said.

The force was set up after the 1991 Gulf War which evicted Iraqi forces from Kuwait following their seven-month occupation of the tiny oil-rich emirate.

Another UN official said Syria also denied clearance for the flight, whose planned route would have carried it over Syrian air space.

UNIKOM has offices in Baghdad and Kuwait and its officials regularly visit both places for consultations.

UNIKOM flights, routinely scheduled for Sundays and Wednesdays, were halted last week due to the US-British military airstrikes on Iraq. The four nights of bombardment, aimed at forcing Iraq to comply with UN resolutions to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction, ended Saturday.

Iraqi air defences are still on alert for further possible attacks, and the cancellation of the UN flight may be the result of Iraq's fears that it could have come in harm's way.

Iraq had warned yesterday that it won't forgive Kuwait for allowing the United States and Britain to use its military bases to mount last week's airstrikes against the country.

The latest development came while US Defence Secretary

William Cohen and the commander of US forces in the Gulf, Marine Gen Anthony Zinni, were in the Gulf region for a morale-boosting pre-Christmas visit with US troops. They visited an air base in Saudi Arabia and Cohen headed for the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise in the Gulf.

Meanwhile, UN humanitarian workers resumed their normal duties today after returning from Jordan.

Their first task will be to judge the impact of the bombing campaign on the UN-approved oil-for-food programme and other international efforts to help the 22 million Iraqis, said UN officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, US defence secretary William Cohen said today up to 9,000 troops and vital aircraft will be withdrawn from the Gulf, but warned that US forces could still strike Iraq hard at any time.

He said US forces in the region would be cut to between 21,000 and 22,000 from the

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## Rival interns reject deal with minister

By Staff Correspondent

The indefinite strike called by the Young Doctors Movement Council (YDMC) ran into rough weather as one faction called off the strike late Tuesday night only to be rejected by another.

The faction, which rejected the settlement with the health minister accepting his proposal to raise the remuneration of interns to TK 5,000 per month, said they would continue their strike for 48 hours ending today.

General secretary of YDMC Dr Hayat Mahmud Russel in a statement last night, said they would 'suspend' their movement from Friday in view of the Ramadan and sufferings of patients.

Later, he told BBC radio that after the Eid-ul-Fitr they would go for further movement to realise their six-point demand that include raising the remuneration to TK 8,000 from TK 4,000 fixed in 1991.

He said he was not consulted by those who gave the statement on Tuesday night calling off the strike. They stabbed the movement, he accused his rivals.

The rival faction led by Dr Nurul Anwar, co-chairman of

the YDMC, said they reached a deal with the government following negotiations at the residence of health minister Salahuddin Yusuf, mediated by Bangladesh Medical Association leaders.

Earlier, a group of interns at Dhaka Medical College Hospital staged demonstrations at the hospital protesting the withdrawal of strike by a section of interns.

But the group was chased by rivals, some hospital staff and attendants of patients. During the melee, the two sides hurled flower pots at each other in the corridor of the DMCH director's office.

Police were called in by the DMCH authorities to restore order. Brigadier Badrul Munir, director of DMCH, told The Daily Star that the situation was under control.

At about noon, a small crowd of patients gathered at the Out Patient Department (OPD) which was closed until an hour ago. Other wards and departments of the hospital were also preparing to resume normal operation.

At ward No 25, only seven

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## Sexual abuse: DU students to stage sit-in in front of VC's office today

General students of Dhaka University united under the banner of 'Students Protest Sexual Harassment', will stage a sit-in demonstration in front of the VC's office at 11 am today, reports UNB.

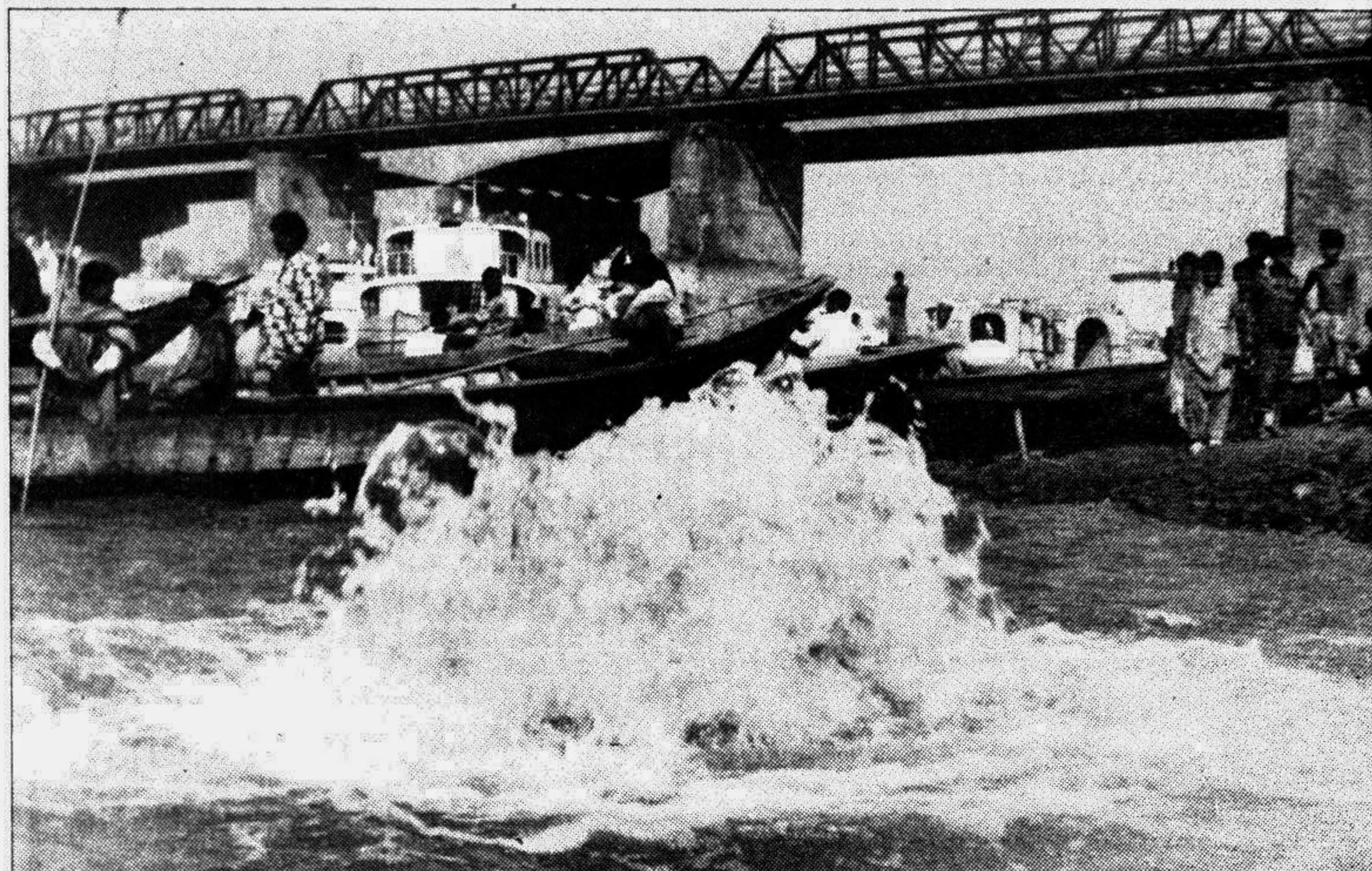
General students of the university have come together on the platform to protest alleged sexual harassment of female students of the university by a section of their teachers.

Their demands also include disclosure of all probe committee reports, severe punishment to the teachers accused in sexual abuse and inclusion of student representatives in any probe committee like this.

Meanwhile, they have submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor, laid siege to the VC office, formed human chain on the campus to realise their demands.

In another development, a section of students formed another platform to protest what they said the harassment of the university teachers in the name of sexual abuse.

They will hold a protest rally at 'Aparajeyo Bangla' at 11 am today.



## Trouble in Turag

Gas leaking an under-water pipeline blew huge bubbles that might have been a treat to watch but posed a big threat if it caught fire. Locals said they saw no activity to fix the damage caused by a motor boat Tuesday. It was also alleged that there was nothing to warn boats of a high-pressure gas pipeline at that point of the Turag river.

— Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

## Sohel had conflict with Bunty, Aziz Mohammad

By Reaz Ahmad and Shaikh Nazrul Islam

### Mother says

The Department of Narcotics Control has suspended one of its inspectors, Fazlul Haq, in charge of Gulshan-Banani area for his alleged negligence in checking unauthorized liquor trade.

Commenting on this, some residents near Banani Bazar, however, told The Daily Star that illegal trading in liquor was not something new to be 'revealed' after the killing of film star Soheli in front of a club in the area. 'Narcotics Department took no action earlier. Now it has made one of its inspectors scapegoat', one resident said. Fazlul Haq was suspended on Tuesday.

Sources in the Narcotics Department, when contacted, however claimed that their men were not properly assisted by other agencies of the government and alleged that policemen get tolls from unauthorized bars and liquor traders on liquor.

When asked about alleged 'Bakhras' (toll for police station), a senior police official

avoided a direct reply but said, 'Influential people in liquor, bar and night club business have got very long hands'.

The policeman, who declined to be named, listed a few names involved in the illegal trade and said they have 'good ties with the upper echelon of the police administration'.

Talking to these correspondents at her residence adjacent to Tramps club, mother of Soheli Chowdhury said that her son's membership of the club was cancelled three months ago following a feud with Bunty Islam, its proprietor.

'Sohel had also conflict with Aziz Mohammad Bhai, husband of Bunty's niece. However, days before his murder, Aziz came at Soheli's place for reconciliation', she added but expressed her ignorance about the matter of conflict.

The elderly mother of Soheli asserted that if police want, they can catch the assailant. 'There were two policemen on duty in the vicinity of Tramps when the incident took place',

she claimed.

According to Narcotics Department, Tramps had approval for 'dance floor' but no bar license.

Meanwhile a press statement signed by Bunty Islam claimed that he did not trade on alcohol. 'I am not a fugitive and it is unfair and improper to say that I am absconding. I have been taking advice from my lawyer and seeking protection of law', he said.

Detective Branch of police, which is investigating the murder, however could not trace Bunty till date.

Tramps, housed on the sixth floor of Abedin Tower, next to Banani Mosque, is closed since December 19, the day Soheli was gunned down.

While visiting the Tower yesterday, these correspondents had talks with some people there. Some students of Queens University on the fifth floor said that they became used to high-pitched heavy metal music on the dance floor but had

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## Damaged gas pipeline yet to be repaired

By Staff Correspondent

Titas Gas and Transmission Company (TGTCo) could not repair the damaged under-water gas pipeline in the Turag river below Mirpur bridge in the city till last night.

During a visit to the spot at night, this correspondent found that huge bubbles were coming out from the damaged pipe. The TGTCo has only marked the area of gas leakage with some red flags.

'It is still at a dangerous level as gas is continuously oozing from the spot and if it catches fire there will be an inferno', an engineer said on condition of anonymity.

'It may damage the entire Titas gas supply network linking the capital through Aminbazar if the authorities concerned delay in taking effective measures for repairing of the damaged line', he said.

The gas crisis in the city was compounded as a cargo vessel carrying stone chips hit and damaged the submerged 12-inch diameter gas line in the Turag Tuesday morning.

Residents of Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Kalyanpur, Kailash, Badda and Hazaribagh areas are severely affected by the gas crisis.

## Fresh power crisis grips Ctg city

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Dec 23: Fresh power crisis gripped the port city as there was frequent power failures today.

PDB sources said there was 50 MW power shortage in the city today.

Chittagong was supplied today with only 290 MW against its requirement of 340 MW, the sources added.

PDB sources attributed the power crisis to fall in power generation at Raazan power plants due to gas crisis.

Today, the two units of Raazan generated 220 MW against a normal of 300 MW, PDB sources informed.

## BNP activist shot dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Dec 23: Anwar Hossain, an activist of BNP and accused in three murder and six robbery cases was gunned down by unidentified assailants at about 9:30 pm on Tuesday at TB cross road in the city.

Police said the assailants fired on him at point blank range while he was coming out of the house of one of his associates.

Police immediately arrested a notorious criminal identified as Ranga Badsha (28) from Natun Bazar suspecting his involvement in the murder.

## Under trial prisoner dies at DMCH

An under-trial prisoner, allegedly a member of a terrorist group, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) early yesterday, reports APB.

The prisoner, identified as Harunur Rashid alias Rajib, 32, was said to be an accomplice of the city's notorious gang leader Joseph.

Hospital sources said he was shifted to the DMCH from Dhaka Central Jail Hospital at about 1:30 am as blood gushed out of his mouth. The attending doctors declared him dead.

## Hold rape-related trial in camera, asks women's group

By Staff Correspondent

Durban, a network programme of women's group Naripakkhya, has demanded that trial of rape cases be held in camera to spare victims of embarrassment during questioning.

The coalition of women's groups from across the country has also called for changes in the phrases that describe repression and torture on women during the Liberation War in official documents.

During 'camera trial' or 'closed-door trial', presence of representatives of victims of rape or sexual assault should be allowed in the court. Durbar Project Co-ordinator Mahbuba Mahmud told a press conference in the city yesterday.

All War documents should replace the phrase 'dishonouring of women' with 'rape and sexual assault' and that the government should announce the change through a gazette notification.

The documents should state that more than one hundred thousand women were raped or sexually assaulted during the Liberation War and instead of saying that they were violated

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## BNP, JP alliance to be interesting, says Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her government is not at all worried about any possible simultaneous movement by BNP and Jatiya Party, reports UNB.

She said it will be rather interesting to see an alliance of Khaleda Zia and Ershad, as once Khaleda had identified Ershad as the killer of her husband Ziaur Rahman and staged movement against his autocracy.

Briefing members of the Overseas Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (OCA) at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday over the country's latest political and economic developments, the prime minister indicated that the next general elections might be held in the year 2000 and ruled out the demand for mid-term poll.

Asked about the opposition threat for a oust-government movement, she said: 'We are ready to face it with the support of the people since my government is engaged in ensuring public welfare.'

In reply to a question about the number of seats her party will secure in the next election, the prime minister said it could be 20-25 seats more than the last election. 'Say, about 170-175 seats'.

Hasina said that in the past she had two objectives of the movement: establishment of people's rights to ballot and bread. 'Through long drawn movement, we've established people's voting rights, now we're working hard for their economic welfare.'

About the post-flood rehabilitation, she confidently said the government has been able to face the flood fallout through efficient management and averted 'deaths of two crore people feared by international agencies, media and opposition parties.'

The government, she said, has decided to continue its food support to more than two crore vulnerable people affected by the devastating flood till the end of Ramadan.

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## Moderate Republicans want tough censure, not Clinton's removal

WASHINGTON, Dec 23: A handful of Republican congressmen who voted to impeach President Bill Clinton joined yesterday with those seeking presidential censure in the Senate instead of removal from office, reports Reuters.

The Senate faces the prospect of only the second presidential trial in history and since the last was 130 years ago there is little precedent, senators were debating how to go about trying Clinton on two articles of impeachment.

The White House, where Clinton was going through the typical holiday motions of

Christmas parties coupled with presidential duties, was preparing a trial defence while at the same time indicating a willingness to compromise short of removal from office.

Adding to the compromise effort was a letter from four moderate Republicans — Reps. Michael Castle of Delaware, Jim Greenwood of Pennsylvania and Sherwood Boehlert and Benjamin Gilman, both of New York — sent to the Senate Republican leader Trent Lott and released yesterday.

The lawmakers said they did not want their votes on Saturday to impeach Clinton 'inter-

preted to mean that we view removal from office as the only reasonable conclusion of this case.'

Instead, they said the Senate should consider options that included 'a tough censure proposal, which would impose a fine and block any pardon.'

A fifth Republican, representative Bob Franks of New Jersey, said he would support a proposal by former presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter for a strong censure of Clinton.

But Franks conditioned this stand on Clinton saying he lied under oath in the Monica

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## Young man thrown out of bus?



## Death sparks protests

By Staff Correspondent

Angry people hurled rocks at passing vehicles at Tophkhana Road and Abdul Ghani Road yesterday, protesting the death of a young man under the wheels of a BRTC double-decker bus after he was allegedly kicked out of it by its conductor near the Secretariat following an altercation.

Riot police rescued the conductor, Nasiruddin and driver Mamun, took them into custody and seized the bus.

Police brought the situation under control taking the arrested operators and the bus inside the Police Control Room at Osmany Uddyan. But the melee left a huge gridlock of vehicles in the area for sometime. The incident took place at about noon.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) sources identified the deceased as Khalequezzaman, 25, reportedly an employee of an architecture firm in the city's Dhanmondi area. Police, however, could not ascertain the identity of the dead till last night.

Witnesses said people became agitated seeing the young man being thrown out of the double-decker on a crowded link road connecting the Tophkhana Road and the Abdul Ghani road.

His skull was crushed, blood and brain were scattered on the street. A police officer gathered the remains of the brain on a polybag and sent it with the body to DMCH for autopsy in a rickshaw van. The gory scene enraged the people in the area.

Witnesses said Khalequezzaman wanted to get down at the Jatiya Press Club stoppage. But the bus on its way to Shanir Akhra from Mirpur did not stop. This led to arguments with the conductor.

Conductor Nasiruddin grabbed his neck, shoved and kicked him saying 'get out now', witnesses said. Khalequezzaman was thrown out and his head was crushed and

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**Death comes so easy!**  
(Above) Police carry the dead body of a young man crushed under the wheels of a double-decker on Tophkhana Road in the city yesterday. The poor man's crime was that he wanted to get dropped right in front of the Press Club, prompting an angry 'helper' to push him out on to the high street where death waited to devour him. (Top) Police arrested driver Mamun and helper Nasir of the double-decker that killed the young man. — Star photo

## Sheri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sheri	Iftar
4	24	5-13	5-21
5	25	5-14	5-22
6	26	5-14	5-23