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JS body decides to repeal Vested Property Act

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Land at a meeting here yesterday took final decision to repeal the Vested Property Act, reports UNB.

The meeting, with committee chairman Mojibar Rahman Talukder in the chair, constituted a four-member sub-committee to formulate a framework.

Suranjit Sengupta was made convenor of the sub-committee while State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf, Abdul Latif Siddiqui and Shaikh Razzaq Ali were made members.

The meeting also decided to recover the *khas* land in the capital illegally occupied by private housing projects.

Leasing of *khas* lands under shrimp cultivation in Cox's Bazar and Sathkhira districts also came up for discussion.

Committee members State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf, Suranjit Sengupta, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Sheikh Razzaq Ali, Mohammad Ali, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Salahuddin Ahmed and Enamul Haq were present at the meeting.

Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Court starts functioning from Jan 7

The Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Court will start functioning from January 7, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will open the Session Court at the Dhaka court premises on January 7, said an official yesterday.

The second such court will come into operation in Chittagong metropolis from January 17.

Under a session judge, the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Court will have three additional and four assistant judges to deal with the cases of 21 police stations of the metropolis.

The Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Court will have one sessions judge, two additional and three assistant session judges.

With the setting up of the metropolitan sessions courts, all criminal cases pending before the Dhaka and Chittagong District and Sessions Judges courts will be transferred to the metropolitan sessions courts.

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Prayer Timings

December-30

RAMADAN	DEC	SEHRI	IFTAR
Fajr	5-15	5-20	
Zohr	12-45	1-15	
Asr	4-00	4-15	
Maghrib	5-23	5-27	
Esha	7-00	7-15	

Source: Islamic Foundation

Sehri, Iftar timings

RAMADAN

Dec 30

10 30 — 5-25

11 31 5-16 5-26

12 Jan 1 5-16 5-27

Hasina ridicules, without naming Ershad Where will he end up - streets or jail?

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 29: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has warned deposed President HM Ershad saying his own behaviour will determine his future, reports UNB.

"Your behaviour will determine where your place will be - the street or the red building of jail. Don't forget, the people had once taken you to task for dacoity and abuse of power," she said, without naming Ershad, but ridiculing his threat of launching street movement against the government.

The Prime Minister was addressing a public meeting at Fuljora College ground in Nalika union of Raiganj thana. Hasina also ridiculed opposition leader Khaleda Zia for planning an alliance with the Jatiya Party of Ershad whom she once accused as the killer of her husband, Ziaur Rahman.

Earlier, in Nalika in the district, the Prime Minister opened the work of the 55 km Nalika-Hatikumrul-Bonpara road, which will reduce the distance of Natore and Rajshahi with the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge.

She alleged that the Opposition leader did not take any step to bring the killers of her hus-

band to trial, rather had taken a plot, house and other facilities from the very person she accused as the killer of her husband.

Criticising the "negative politics" of the BNP-led opposition, she said they were trying to create unrest when the government had restored the people's right and was working

ceaselessly for overall development of the country.

Hasina said: "We've decided not to call hartal, but the opposition leader is calling hartals one after another without any issue."

BNP even tried to create an issue for hartal by killing innocent people mixing poison in their food, she alleged and said.

"Awami League doesn't believe in the politics of corpse."

Replying point by point to Begum Zia's five conditions for renouncing hartal, the Prime Minister said of the demand for freedom to hold street programmes: "Why BNP is demanding something which they're enjoying fully?"

Hasina said her government doesn't arrest anyone without specific reason. The government arrests terrorists, snatchers, violators of women and other criminals. If they happen to be the activists of any political party, what can the government do?

She added: "To ensure rule of law, we'll have to arrest criminals and punish them. We can't allow anyone to usurp the rights of others."

About Khaleda Zia's demand

See Page 12 Col 1

'Hijacking' of opposition leaders AL losing confidence in partymen: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia has alleged that the ruling party started "hijacking" opposition leaders after losing confidence in its own men.

The Awami League government has now started "hijacking" BNP men to cling to power because it has become "completely isolated" from the people due to failure in all sectors, repression on opposition workers and filling of false cases against them, she alleged.

The BNP Chairperson was speaking at a discussion prior to Iftar at Mirpur Town Hall, hosted by the local unit of her party yesterday.

She said the government is forcing opposition leaders to join the ruling party to show its

See Page 12 Col 2

BNP, allies to demonstrate in city tomorrow

The BNP-led opposition alliance will demonstrate across the country tomorrow protesting the "soaring" prices of essentials, including rice, pulses onion and edible oil, reports UNB.

Their demands also include selling of rice at Tk 10 per kg through OMS at village and thana levels.

As part of the programme, the city BNP will bring out a procession from Muktagong at 2.30 pm.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has urged the thana and district level leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations to join the procession.

Jamaat will hold a protest meeting at Purana Paltan-crossing after Zohr prayers.



The vanishing parks of the city

It had been a small oasis on way to the Fulbaria railway station. Groves of palms dotting the triangular island near the ex-railway hospital provided a relief to passers-by. Generations after, the park is still there without the palms. Nothing but a chestnut, a rubber and an unknown variety of trees stand there in sharp contrast to the barren landscape. Some local boys prefer to while away their time, playing carom. Nearby stands a lone horse whose owner found it convenient to keep the animal there. In the evening, "anti-socials" take over, using the space as a launching pad to menace the pedestrians and others, taking advantage of the near-dark streets around. Drug peddlers also find it suitable for their business. But no one cares or mourns the demise of a park, writes Shehab Ahmed.

—Star photo by AKM Mohsin



More than eight years on, they say, they are still being victimised. The 1990 Gulf War victims, forced to quit jobs in Kuwait and return home, are angry that they are being asked to pay in various forms while they receive the belated compensation from the UN — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Illegal liquor traders active, Narcotics officials sit idle

By Reaz Ahmad and Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Illegal trading on liquor is rampant in various pockets of the city and young men, irrespective of family background and economic condition, are being increasingly lured to this deadly habit.

The business is flourishing due to easy availability of liquor and no visible check by the government.

Officials in the Department of Narcotics Control said there are only 23 licensed bars. They however declined to say anything about mushrooming of illegal liquor traders in the city.

A top Narcotics official said, "We're trying our best to ensure application of law but our strength is inadequate."

Against a total posts of 1,274 in the department, 403 are vacant, said another official requesting anonymity.

The recent murder of film actor Sohel in front of a city club triggered the question of illegal sale of alcohol. An inspector of the Narcotics Department was suspended for alleged negligence in checking illegal trading on liquor.

These two correspondents were desperately trying to get some basic information about illegal trading on liquor from the Department of Narcotics Control for the last one week.

Initially, the authorities agreed to entertain a written questionnaire but, later its Director General, Nazmul Hasan Chowdhury, regretted saying, "You have to come through home ministry".

He would not even tell The Daily Star what prompted suspension of an inspector now while it became widely known that the city dwellers much earlier that liquor was on sale illegally at different places.

"We respond immediately whenever we receive complaint from any one regarding illegal sale of liquor" another official said. Asked when did the department receive such a complaint last, the official said, "I can't recall off hand".

Talking to The Daily Star today the former mayor and ambassador said "Our confidence has already been shaken by the Pabna by-election where the ruling party utilised all government machinery."

According to the proposal of the plan, employment opportunity for 4.5 lakh people should be created in next 20 years to face the pressure of population which is increasing by 42,000 annually in the port city.

It also said 90 hectares of land would be needed per year for the housing of the increased population on Sunday.

The plan also proposed to limit the extension of the city in three areas — Bakulia, Kulaon and the area between Hattazia Road and Foyez Lake.

For the proper observation and monitoring the overall activities, the city would be divided into nine regions and separate integrated programmes have been taken up.

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