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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 Razzak 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 Sakhira districts also came up for discussion.

Committee members State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf, Suranjit Sengupta, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Shaikh Razzak 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 session 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.

## 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 vote-buying 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 Nalka 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, at Nalka in the district, the Prime Minister opened the work of the 55 km Nalka-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 husband 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

## Ershad dreaming to capture power with the help of killers: Manju

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 29: Former secretary general of Jatiya Party and communication minister Anwar Hossain Manju has spurned his party chief H M Ershad's directive to quit the Awami League cabinet, reports UNB.

Sharply reacting to the directive "quit the cabinet or the party" Manju rather charged the deposed President with making a bid to recapture power in league with the "killers and conspirators."

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## 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 Mukhtangon 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.

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## '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 filing 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

popularity but its popularity has come down to zero. "It is not possible to judge people's support through stealing vote and hijacking opposition leaders and workers," the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad said.

"If you (government) have courage... step down, declare national election immediately and judge people's support," the former prime minister said.

"They have started the evil game of hijacking opposition men at a time when life of the commonman has become miserable due to price hike of essentials, terrorism and toll extortion throughout the country. There is no security of life and

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## 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.

## 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."

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## Two cousins gangraped in city

By Staff correspondent

Two teenage cousin sisters landed in hospital after being gang-raped in the Old City's Maneshwar Road on consecutive days.

A 16-year-old girl was raped on Monday and her younger cousin, 14-year-old, the next day.

The second incident of violation was suspected to be a sequel to the arrest of two charged with Monday's rape.

The first incident took place at the Maneshwar Road residence of Monika, 16, (not her real name) while she was chatting with two of her friends at 6:30 pm on Monday.

A gang of five -- Jahangir, Abed Ali, Shafiq, Mamun and Javed -- allegedly stormed into the victim's house and asked her friends, at gun point, to leave the place immediately.

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## Ctg city Master Plan approved

CHITTAGONG, Dec 29: The much awaited "20-year Chittagong Metropolitan Master Plan" was approved by the government, reports UNB.

Work on formulation of the Master Plan started in April 1992 with the financial and technical assistance of UNDP and concluded in June 1995 was approved this week, said officials yesterday.

The Plan which was finally approved by the Works Ministry has 76 guidelines. This includes a 10-year Urban Development Project, and area plans aiming at the development of the city to cope with the needs of the next century.

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.

The plan also proposed to limit the extension of the city in three areas -- Bakulia, Kulgaon and the area between Hat-hazari 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.

## Sheikh Tayebur BNP candidate for KCC mayor

BNP yesterday finalised its candidate for Mayor of the Khulna City Corporation in the upcoming election, reports UNB.

Sheikh Tayebur Rahman, the incumbent Mayor, has been nominated.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia took the decision after consulting with party leaders at her official residence last night.

Earlier on Sunday, Mir Nasir was nominated candidate for the Mayoral election of Chittagong City Corporation.

Secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Ashraf Hossain, Sheikh Razzak Ali and Sheikh Tayebur Rahman were present in the meeting.

## Ctg mayoral polls Mir Nasir confident but fears rigging

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 29: "I am optimistic about winning the mayor election, if it is held in a free and fair manner. But I am afraid of 'vote dacoity' by the ruling party" said Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, BNP nominee for the upcoming mayor polls of Chittagong City Corporation.

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."

"I can sense in advance, the ruling party's attempt for vote dacoity. But I will try to resist any such move," said Nasir, president of Chittagong city unit of BNP. He got party nomination on Sunday.

"If the situation demands in case of vote rigging, I will boycott the election and paralyse Chittagong through launching a greater movement" the lawyer turned politician added.

Replying to a question he

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Mir Nasiruddin

He alleged that the ruling party was giving favour to officials of the port city ahead of mayor election to use the government machinery.

Nasir claimed that BNP is enjoying immense popularity in Chittagong. It enjoys support of people of from all walks of life, he said.

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## Protest against alleged sexual abuse at DU mounting

By DU Correspondent

Different organisations and professionals including teachers of universities have expressed solidarity with the students agitating against alleged sexual abuse of female students by teachers at Dhaka University.

They expressed solidarity with them at a rally on the campus organised by the Students' Protest Against Sexual Harassment (SPSH).

The student organisations including Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF), Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) condemned the attacks on the agitating students and demanded exemplary punishment to those responsible.

Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), which were silent on the issue so far, brought out separate processions and held rallies on the

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## Kuwait returnees allege Novel way of 'toll collection'

Star Report

A book was on 'push sale' as people waited for hours for their turn to receive the money as compensation for their miseries during the 1990 Gulf War.

Several hundred people, who returned home from Iraq and Kuwait eight years back as a fallout of the Gulf War, gathered at the Kakrail office of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) yesterday.

All of them complained of 'push sale' of a Bengali novel written by the director general of BMET and that a price of Tk 200 each was charged for a Tk 80 book. Besides, they were being forced to give Tk 1,520 each to an association, Kuwait-Iraq Repatriated Bangladeshis Association (KIRBA), for getting the compensation.

Farid, a representative of a

returnee, narrated all this to a photojournalist of The Daily Star on the spot yesterday afternoon. Soon after one Shaheed Howladar beat him up on the BMET premises, terming him a *dacoit*. Later, police took Howladar to Ramna thana.

Ramna police told The Daily Star last night that they arrested Howladar on charge of demanding tolls from returnees from Kuwait and Iraq.

The United Nations recently sanctioned compensation for 13,524 Bangladeshi Gulf War returnees each of whom are entitled to get 2,500 US dollars.

This correspondent accompanied by a photojournalist of The Daily Star spent the whole day at BMET yesterday. It was found that officials handing

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## Inside Today

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### Prayer Timings

December 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
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	Sehri	Iftar
10	30	—	5-25
11	31	5-16	5-26
12	Jan 1	5-16	5-27

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