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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addresses a roadside rally at Srinagar yesterday with her daughter-in-law Christine and son Sajib Wajed Joy at her side.

## Plan for engineering cells in ministries against advice

**AKBAR HOSSAIN**

The government has decided in principle to create mini engineering cells at the ministries to carry out their construction and maintenance work instead of engaging the Public Works Department (PWD).

The decision goes against the recommendations of different committees formed earlier to assess the quality of PWD's work. It also contradicts the government's Rules of Business which tasked the PWD with construction and maintenance of public buildings and other struc-

tures, sources said.

Since 1985, successive governments formed three committees to assess the quality of the PWD's construction work and the bodies recommended strengthening the PWD instead of creating mini PWDs in different ministries.

The committees also pointed out that no government department other than the PWD has the manpower and logistic facilities required to carry out the tasks.

The BNP-led coalition government after coming to office formed the Public Expenditure Review

## Hasina urges all to pull down govt

**UNB, Tungipara**

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged people to stand united to pull down the alliance rulers through a mass movement and free the country from what she said was their misrule.

"The time of this government is running out fast... This government will not be allowed to exploit the people and the nation further," she told wayside crowds on her way to Tungipara.

Hasina was accompanied by her son Sajib Wajed Joy and his wife Christine. This is Hasina's first visit to Tungipara after the August 21

## CPB won't join January 15 programme

**Unhappy with Hasina's meeting with SQ Chy**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Sheikh Hasina's recent meeting with Salauddin Qader Chowdhury has enraged the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), a partner in the Awami League-led combined opposition, that has already signalled a split with the joint platform.

The left-leaning party seemingly unhappy with the repeated hartal calls by AL front organisations in

## PM calls for crop diversification

**Terms import of onions, garlic, ginger, turmeric a sorry affair**  
**UNB, Dhaka**

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the agriculturists to increase production of diversified crops to make the country self-

## Khulna newsmen demand security

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Khulna journalists, concerned over Tuesday night's bomb attack on Dainik Jugantar Bureau Chief and a former leader of Khulna Union of Journalists, have asked police to step up security measures and demanded immediate arrest of criminals involved in the plan to kill journalists.

Journalists in the press club

## First Test at Ctg starts today

**Prayer Timing**  
**January 6**

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

**SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong**

Under pressure to produce their maiden victory, Bangladesh take on Zimbabwe in the first match of the two-game CityCell Test series in Chittagong today.

The match will start at the MA Aziz Stadium at 9.30am. Bangladesh Television and ESPN will telecast

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## Small industries to get long-term tax holiday

**STAR REPORT**

To boost the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday approved a proposal to offer tax holidays to small enterprises having a maximum investment of Tk 30 lakh.

Such enterprises in Dhaka will enjoy a tax holiday for seven years and those in Chittagong for 10 years.

And, if their investments are permanent, they will also get Vat

(value-added tax) exemptions.

"We'll now ask the industries ministry to work out the details and put the decision into effect," said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman who chaired the committee meeting yesterday.

The proposal came from the Committee on Developing the Small and Medium Industries (CDSMI) formed in 2003 headed by Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Siddiqui. It was one of a set of short-, medium- and long-term

specific recommendations the CDSMI made in its report submitted recently.

The government defines a small enterprise to have a maximum capital of Tk 1.5 crore and a medium enterprise over Tk 1.5 crore up to Tk 10 crore.

The CDSMI also recommended establishing a foundation with representations of donors, civil society and SME associations to look after the SMEs.

## Benapole strike enters 5th day

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore**

Strike at Benapole land port continued for the fifth consecutive day yesterday as five striking organisations of the port users rejected government's decision to reduce 50 percent of increased duties.

They demanded complete withdrawal of the additional charges imposed by the port authorities from January 1.

Meeting of port users' representatives with of Shipping Ministry Joint Secretary Lutfor Rahman and Customs Commissioner Rafiqul

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