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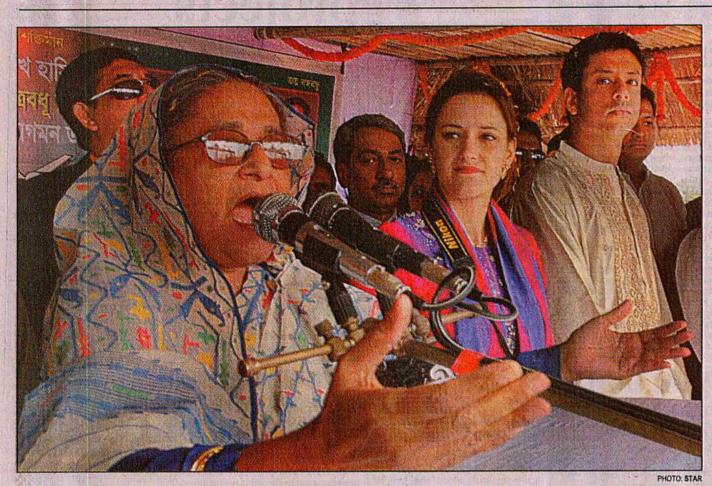
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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addresses a roadside rally at Srinagar yesterday with her daughter-in-law Christine and son Sajib Wajed Joy at

## 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-

CPB won't join

Unhappy with Hasina's

Sheikh Hasina's recent meeting with

Salauddin Qader Chowdhury has

Awami League-led combined oppo-

sition, that has already signalled a

The left-leaning party seemingly unhappy with the repeated hartal

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

6-05

1-15

4-15

5-35

7-30

calls by AL front organisations in

Prayer Timing

January 6

5-30

12-45

5-30

7-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

split with the joint platform.

meeting with SQ Chy

January 15

programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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

Committee (Perc) headed by Hafizuddin Khan, adviser to the last caretaker government, to cut unnecessary expenditures.

The Perc emphasised that the PWD should continue carrying out government construction and maintenance work, and did not favour establishing mini engineering cells in the ministries.

PWD sources fear that 18,000 officials and employees of the department might lose jobs if such

## PM calls for crop diversification

Terms import of onions, garlic, ginger, turmeric a sorry affair

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia vesterenraged the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), a partner in the day urged the agriculturists to increase production of diversified crops to make the country selfreliant in agro-food production.

"It's not a matter of dignity, rather of sorrow that still now Bangladesh, a country with a population of 14 crore, has to import SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

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 iournalists

demand security

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Hasina urges

all to pull

said was their misrule.

ATTEMPT ON JOURNO

Tungipara.

UNB, Tungipara

downgovt

Journalists in the press club SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

### First Test at Ctg starts today

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 SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



# Small industries to get long-term tax holiday

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

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

CDSMI made in its report submitted recently

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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

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

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

#### Benapole strike enters 5th day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Strike at Benapole land port continued for the fifth consecutive day yesterday as five striking organisa tions 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' represen-tatives with of Shipping Ministry Joint Secretary Lutfor Rahman and

Customs Commissioner Rafigul

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



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