A resident of Dhaka had a magic lamp. One day, he scratched the lamp and a genie came out, and said "Your

wishes are my command, stre." With hopes swelling, the person asked the gente to build a beautiful house for him in a nice neighbourhood in Dhaka.

Ruefully, the genie said. this is the only thing he cannot do for his master.

When the stupefied master enquired about the reason, the genie replied "If I had a place to live in Dhaka, would I be living in this tiny lamp?"

Apart from the lighter vein. this popular joke about Dhaka city, in a way, highlights the widening gap between the aspiration to provide shelter for every person by the year 2000 and the growing number of people in Dhaka without dwellings.

in particular, the housing crisis for the middle-income people of Dhaka has reached such a critical stage that future planning and harmonious growth of the capital are facing a real challenge, according to city planners.

A study on the availability of houses says that roughly 22,65,200 people out of the estimated44 lakh population of the capital city do not own any land.

They live either in rented houses of private owners or in apartments they own- not the

Land deprivation in Dhaka is very high, observes a report of the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Planning (DMDP). Urban housing policies are biased against the poor and low-income people.

It says that half of the population earns less than Taka 4600 a month and 17.60,000 people are estimated to be below the poverty line.

The DMDP report points out that 46 per cent of the population has no access to clean water and only half of them enjoy sewers, or septic tanks and garbage disposal.

About 20 per cent- or 7,04,000 people -- have no ac cess to electricity, it says.

Another study by Dr Taufiq M Seraj points out that, among those who own land, 10.24 per cent have less than one katha of land.

An estimated 5.95.600 people, own land between one and five katha, 7.31 per cent own between five and 10 katha and only 6.76 per cent own land above 10 katha.

With the present rate of urbanisation. Dhaka City needs some 65,000 housing units every year, RAJUK officials told The Daily Star.

But construction of new houses every year never crosses more than 20,000

units, they said. As a result, the city suffers

a cumulative deficit of nearly 40,000 units every year. By the year 2000, the total

shortage of housing units

would stand at more than 50 lakh units, they predict. "Building your house in Dhaka has now become a

dream," said M Anwar Hossain, a retired government official living at Mahakhali. The land price in Dhaka

city had such a steep wise over the last two decades that housing has gone out of the reach of the middle-income people, said Hossain who managed to own a plot of 1.5 katha. "Look at Mahakhali," he

said. "20 years back, nobody wanted to buy land here ... and now, one-katha plot costs Taka six lakh."

Interviews with experts involved in land revealed that the land price in Dhaka city has gone up for several reasons. One strong point is that speculation in land business has pushed up the price.

Listing the other reasons, they point out that the lack of investment opportunity in other sectors, inflation and po-

URBANISATION & HOUSING: PART II

Oh, for a house in Dhaka!

By Masud Hasan Khan



Since the mid-80's the Dhaka skyline has been changing fast with high-rise apartment complexes and condominiums coming up all over the city, though not quite in the most planned way. — Star photo

litical instability had also caused the increase.

Besides, land is still regarded as a mark of social prestige in Bangladesh and it crops up from scarcity of land in the country.

As an obvious outcome, the house rent has also increased manifold. The role of successive gov-

ernments regarding housing in Dhaka is also questionable. Government financing in

housing so far has been very limited, according to land experts. On the other hand, private sector has also failed to replenish the vacuum due to lack of adequate policy sup-

For example, in 1952 the Public Works Department (PWD) and the Housing and Settlement Directorate (HSD) swung into building housing units for accommodating the inflow of Indian refugees into the country.

During 1964, the total number of housing units at different government quarters in Dhaka was 3,400 while the total number of government employees was 50,000.

During 1981, the number of government employees stood at 97 thousand while accommodation rose only to 10,000.

The House Building Financing Corporation (HBFC) has so far elent credits for construction of 90,000 housing units since its inception in

The private real estate developers have concentrated their efforts mainly on the high-income populace.

Rules are for breaking

By Morshed Ali Khan

amount spent by the public on construction of buildings in

the capital, experts feel that people here spend the maxi-

mum for construction purpose compared to that in any other

RAJUK? "The answer in 99 per cent cases in, "No", said the

authorised officer of RAJUK, the only body to approve and

(price Taka 50), any residential building must be built at least

must be constructed at least 1.5 meters away from the main

road or 4.5 meters away from the centre of the road on which

The handbook also stresses that for a plot of upto two

the site is situated. For every twenty users of a building, a

kathas (about three hundredths of an acre) an open space of

1.5 meters must be kept around the site. A four katha plot

should have 1.75 meters, while five katha and above plots

must have 2.5 and three meters of open space respectively

hardly anybody who goes by the rule, "said a top RAJUK offi-

cial," once the building plan is approved, the developers twist

the plans and construct illegally. "He said when asked what

RAJUK does to crack down on these law violators, the official

RAJUK has a total of thirty-six inspectors who go around to

"When an inspector goes to a site," said a highly placed

The source added that sometimes RAJUK has to act on

check every construction site. Out of these, only five are quali-

fied engineers. The remaining workforce areself-trained peo-

source in RAJUK, "and finds any anomalies, it is only then

that the inspectors are 'looked after' by the developers. The

complaints from neighbours, but then again influential quar-

A developer in a residential area of the city who is con-

structing an apartment bloc said on condition of anonymity

that the regulations set by RAJUK on construction are grossly

outdated and unscientific. "Most of these laws were set in the

early fifties," he said "and in 1984 they were hurriedly

world. Unfortunately, most of its skyline is dotted with some

kind of anomaly or another. It is time we clamp down on

"Dhaka is one of the fastest growing metropolises in the

ters get involved and the legal actions are suppressed.

ple with long experience with the institution.

But in reality, the picture is quite different. "There is

space of 23 square meters must be reserved for parking.

around the building; nothing can be built in this space.

oversee all construction plans and works in the capital.

4.5 meters away from any road or lane or by-lane.

Although there are no statistics available on the actual

But do these buildings go by the standards set by the

According to the rules set by the RAJUK in their handbook

For a commercial building the rule is slightly different. It

Allegations of selling 'not fully developed' land to the absentee buyers are also there.

The government's limitation and the private developers' emphasis on rich has led to a situation where the middle-income, upper middle-income or the low-income people of Dhaka now find it extremely difficult to own any place called home.

Until the National Housing Policy came into being, the role of the government in the housing sector was as a provider.

However, the new policy rescheduled the programme of the government and changed its role to 'facilitator' from provider.

Commenting on the National Housing Policy, Prof Nazrul Islam of the Dhaka University, an expert on Dhaka's urbanisation, says it would hardly have any positive effect on the people until the government emphasises its 'facilitating role" on land allocation and financing.

Besides, the new policy has to control the price of the house-building materials and approval of building construction plans, he said.

M Rafigul Islam Mia Minister for Housing and Public Works, however, believes that the housing crisis in Dhaka would never be resolved without controlling the con-

He said as long as Dhaka remains as a place for lucrative job opportunities with better civic amenities, people would continue to pour in, thus worsening the housing crisis.

Spelling out an outline of the future plans of his ministry to off-set that effect, the minister said that plans are underway to chart a new face of Dhaka as a 'megacity' by the year 2000.

One step is developing satellite towns around the capital so that migrants can settle in these towns connected with Dhaka and provided with civic

He said that a model commercial-cum-residential project-'Purbachal' located in the north east of the city, would provide some 30,000 plots.

In addition, development of another project was being considered in Keraniganj thana to arrange another 2,000 plots, he added.

"Given my experience in this ministry, another point is equally important," Rafiqul Islam Mia added, "that is awareness of the citizens about their rights and their civic duties." Readers' contributions are solikited.

From Page 1

for all cadres are held simultaneously. As a result, candidates are often reluctant to admit their preference for the technical posts.

In its report, the Commission reiterates its earlier suggestion for withdrawing the quota for freedom fighters since such candidates are no longer available because of the age bar. However, it has called for encouraging women in government services.

The report says, the promotion of a gazetted officer is usually considered on the basis of his seniority and competence. But very often, the competence factor is determined by the confidential report on the individual. Contradictions and irregularities in the substance and procedure of filing and preserving such confidential reports have been noticed, the PSC observes, and regrets that the system is yet to be improved

In 1994 the PSC received 20,102 confidential reports on 4.120 officers for promotion to 2.870 posts. It went through 4.975 reports and recommended 1,020 persons for promotion.

The annual report mentions that the Commission had earlier suggested regularisation of the services of those who joined the Revenue sector after May 12, 1983.

The report, also suggests relaxation of rules regarding age for those who have completed their M Phil or Ph D and intend to join the Education cadre.

The Commission observes that frequent changes in the rules and regulations of gov-

Crime on rise

guity of reports filed by the investigating officer, the report

said the authorities took eight to 18 months in settling departmental cases and sometimes, even up to three years.

The report suggested that specific time frame should be set to resolve the cases.

Khaleda From Page 1

willed that the two countries remain close friends. However, she mentioned that it is equally true that Bangladesh and Pakistan have inherited some unresolved problems.

She expressed her optimism that given the political will and the spirit of friendship and understanding that prevail in the bilateral relationship, these can be resolved.

She said that SAARC is completing its decade this year and with SAARC, the nations of South Asia now share a distinctive identity in the community of nations.

tries can share experiences in the socio-economic development of their peoples, she observed 'we have a lot to learn from each other. I am certain this will be mutually beneficial'

tragedy with courage, opposed dictatorship for democracy more special".

binds our peoples together". Benazir said.

"We believe there is much that we have in common and much that we can achieve working together in close cooperation," the Pakistani Prime Minister said.

the economic strides Bangladesh has taken under the leadership of Begum Khaleda

record in the field of population planning. In fact, you are doing better than us", she said. She also paid tributes to the

"We are envious of your

dreamer of SAARC late president Ziaur Rahman and said, President Zia lives in the embodiment of the idea of regional cooperation.

Inu, five others get anticipatory

yesterday granted anticipatory bail bond, reports BSS.

the Prime Minister herself had offered to have talks at any level with the Opposition to break the stalemate.

crisis through discussions.

PSC suggests reforms | The Whitehall Co

2 held in India for hurting

BHOPAL. Apr 24: India arrested a female Hindu firebrand and her religious teacher today on charges of breach of peace and making a provocative speech hurting religious sentiments, a senior official said today. Vijay Singh, a senior official of the government of the central state of Madhya Pradesh. told reporters that Sadhvi Rithambara and Swami Parmanand were arrested at Indore, some 200 km from the state capital of Bhopal, reports Reuter.

Opposition sit-in

From Page 1

The parliament secretariat did not issue any visitor passes for the day while journalists and other staff were thoroughly frisked by plainclothes men guarding the main entrance of the impressive Sangsad Bhaban.

From 2:30 pm the opposition MPs, some in small groups and some individually. started entering the building. Police did not obstruct them at the main gate although the authorities had earlier said they would prevent them from staging the sit in.

At around 3:15 the AL MPs. led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad sat on the staircase while those belonging to the JP and the Jamaat assembled in the carpeted corridor.

The Jamaat and the JP MPs tried to push towards the Speaker's chamber but parliament security staff obstructed them. In the face of resistance from the securitymen, some 30 JP and Jamaat MPs immequately sat down in the corri-

Almost at the same time, Razzak Ali came out of the office and spoke to the agitating MPs, some of whom wanted to know if there was any restriction against their entry into his chamber.

In reply the Speaker apologised for the behaviour of the securitymen and requested the MPs to come to his chamber for a cup of tea. But the MPs declined the offer and stayed in the corridor.

During their stay inside the parhament building, a number of Al. MPs addressed their fellow partymen, journalists and a section of curious, non-plussed Jatiya Sangsad employees.

"Parliament has lost its legitimacy after the resignation of the opposition members." Abdus Samad Azad, who resigned as deputy leader of the opposition on December 28 along with another 146 MPs. told his party colleagues. AL Chief Sheikh Hasina was not present at the sit-in. Samad Azad demanded

immediate dissolution of the Fifth Parliament to facilitate

Changes From Page 1

pointed an Additional Foreign Secretary. Two Additional Foreign Secretaries — Abdul Momin Chowdhury and Kazi Anwar Masud - are, meanwhile, expected to be nominated as envoys, sources said.

Reazul Hossain who was serving as DG. Far East, will now be attached to the Morshed Committee. Aminul Hossain Sarker who has recently been promoted to DG has been given the charge of the Far East Desk.

Jamil Majid, who is now acting as the country's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Mission in New York. is expected to be given the charge of the United Nations Desk at the Foreign Ministry. Dr Afsarul Quader who is the DG. UN Desk, is moving out to Kenya as High Commissioner.

Ashfagur Rahman, Director General of the SAARC desk, will take over charge as DG, International Organisations, after the SAARC summit.

Shamim Ahmed who has been recently promoted to the post of Director General has been given the charge of South Asia and SAARC desk. Ashraf-ud-Doula who was

serving as minister in Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra has been given the charge of America and Pacific desk. Syed Noor Hossain who was heading the desk has moved to the newly created Trade and Investment Promotion Wing as Director. General.

fresh elections under a caretaker government.

He said the Speaker had violated the Constitution by giving his February 23 ruling on the resignation letters of the opposition MPs. In his ruling, Razzak Ali had said that the mass resignation of the opposition legislators were contrary to democratic norms and rules of procedure and hence were not acceptable or valid.

A movie camera was seen busy recording the happenings although news photographers were not allowed to enter the Sangsad Bhaban. The cameraman identified himself as a Detective Branch staff.

Following the sit-in, the Jamaat Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami told newsmen that earlier, in 1987. the Third Parliament was dissolved following resignation by only 10 Jamaat MPs. But this government is trying to run this crippled Parliament de-

spite resignations by 147 MPs. The JP's Municul Hug Chowdhury said that the ruling party violated each and every ruling delivered by the Speaker. Although, according to the Speaker's ruling, the resigning MPs are still members of Parliament, yet the government does not inform them about the state of development activities in the constituencies of the opposition MPs. Similarly, the Ministry of Law had violated the Speaker's ruling by withholding the remuneration and allowances of iailed MP Ershad, the deposed president.

The protesting opposition MPs later left the parliament building at around 5:15 pm, chanting slogans.

Once they left a group of journalists entered the Speaker's room and sought his comments about the opposition's programme. Shaikh Razzak Ali said that

his ruling was absolutely legal and there is no reason for changing his decision.

"I am clear in my conscience. I have given my decision for the sake of democracy and the country," he told reporters in reply to questions.

An apparently annoyed Speaker declined to answer some of the questions by saying: "I will not repeat my answers again and again."

Investment accord

From Page 1

tries, reports BSS. The agreement and the

MOU were signed at the Pakistan Prime Minister's house immediately after the officials talks between the two coun-

The agreement on investment was signed by foreign ministers ASM Mostafizur Rahman and Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali while the MOU was signed by the foreign secretaries of Bangladesh and Pak-

Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto were present at the signing ceremony of the agreement and MOU.

Separate div

From Page 1 expressed the hope that the division will be able to make a much needed 'positive impact' in the fields of investment and trade promotion. Syed Noor Hossain said the

TIP division will hold a meeting with the FBCCl on May 6, chaired by the Foreign Secretary. Meetings would also be organised with the DCCI, the MCCI and other leading chamber bodies shortly in an effort to link up and coordinate economic activities, he

Do You Know? (Health Message)

Jaundice is not a disease but symptom. It may be due to virus infection like A, B, C, D, E etc. Prognosis of different virus infection differs & in some instances, these are treatable. Next Common cause of Jaundice is due to bile duct obstruction. ERCP is the most modern & accurate method for diagnosing & treating Obstructive Jaundice.

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New

message

next day

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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Responding to another proposal regarding improvement of shipping services, the Pakistani Prime Minister said that the shipping corporations of the two countries would hold a meeting soon to discuss the issue.

Pakistan proposed to hold the next meeting of the joint economic commission in Islamabad in the last week of July.

It also urged Bangladesh to organise a single country trade fair in any major city of Pakistan. The Pakistani side showed

its keen interest in renewing the existing cultural protocol between the two countries, which expires at the end of this year. On the question of repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis

from Bangladesh, Benazir Bhutto explained at some length the issue, reaffirming

that this was a humanitarian problem which merited attention of the whole Islamic

amended and implemented."

them," said another expert.

simply added, "nothing."

construction goes on."

The modalities of the repatriation process, she said, would be discussed at the ministerial level. Pakistan side explained its

position on the Kashmir issue. The Bangladesh side also raised the matter of sharing the assets and liabilities, between the two countries following 1971.

Begum Zia said the relations between the two countries are based on a sheered religion, culture and similar perceptions on many international issues.

Begum Zia also mentioned the measures taken by her government for socio-economic development of Bangla-

About the Farakka problem, Begum Zia said this issue has

Khaleda, Benazir to expand trade ties become a matter of life and

death for Bangladesh. The unilateral diversion of waters of the Ganges by India at Farakka and its upper reaches is having a catastrophic effect on the people of Bangladesh, she said.

The two prime ministers discussed SAARC matters, including the forthcoming eight summit, to be held in Delhi in the first week of May.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia for the way she conducted the chairmanship of SAARC during her tenure. Explaining the reasons for

her inability to attend the

summit, Benazir said President

Farooq Ahmed Leghari would represent Pakistan. The Pakistan Prime Minister appreciated the notable economic successes and achievements in the social sectors

of Begum Zia's government.

She also mentioned Bangla desh's high foreign currency reserves and low rate of inflation. Pakistan also assured unin-

The two sides also disand private levels.

held in a 'most cordial atmosphere' at the Pakistan prime minister's house, Begum Zia thanked the government and the people of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to her and the members of her delegation.

by Shaheed President Ziaur Before the formal talks, Be-

terrupted supply of cotton to Bangladesh. A High Court division bench

cussed rice exports to Bangladesh both at the government During the official talks,

She also appreciated Pakistan's valuable support when

gum Zia and Benazir Bhutto meet for an exclusive chat.

the idea of SAARC was mooted

bail petitions for the six LDF leaders, charged with committing an offence (rioting and arson) under the Special Powers Act, 1974 on April 2 last in the city's Dilkusha

The case was filed by Motifheel police.

From Page 1

Citing examples, the PSC

Begum Zia said time has

Saving that the two coun-

Benazir From Page 1

Welcoming Begum Zia in Pakistan, Benazir said "that the Prime Minister has faced which makes this visit all the

"One thousand miles apart our two countries, yet the faith, tradition and history

She said Pakistan admired

bail from HC

bail to JSD (Inu) leader Hasanul Haq Inu, Dilip Barua, AM Mahbubul Huq. Mir Hossain Akhter, Golam Mahmud and Shirin Akhter and directed them to surrender before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka within May 20 for furnishing Dr Kamal Hossain filed the

ernment service hamper the lifestyles and plans of the officers concerned. It also says the government should consult the PSC when changing any rules. This was not done during the dissolution of Senior

Services Pool (SSP), the report It also points out that the authorities concerned promoted a number of police officers without recommendation

and approval of the PSC. Mozammel Huq laid to rest

The body of veteran journalist Syed Mozammel Hug was laid to eternal rest at the Banani graveyard yesterday afternoon, reports BSS.

Special correspondent of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Syed Mozammel died of massive heart attack April 23 at his city residence. His first namaz-e-janaza was held at the National Press Club

premises where hundreds of

fellow professional friends and

admirers of Mozammel assem-

bled to have a last glimpse at this simple-hearted, humble personality. Editors of the national dailies, politicians, union leaders. Press Club executives, journalists and a host of admirers of the deceased took part in the janaza. Besides, wreaths were placed at the

coffin of Syed Mozammel on

behalf of BFUJ, DUJ and the

Press Club as a mark of re-

His second namaj-e-janaza was held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Zohr prayers. Earlier, his body was brought to the BSS office premises.

The Qul Khwani o

Mozammel Hug will be held

after Asr prayers tomorrow at

his 205/1/B Elephant Road residence. Meanwhile, a condolence meeting and milad mahfil wil be held at the BSS office today at 11 am.

Hasina

BNP government should resign

to hold fresh general elections

under a non-party caretaker

From Page 1 'courageous role' in this re-"The unlawful Parliamen should be dissolved and the

administration without further delay," she told the rally." The AL chief also accused the Prime Minister and her government of violating the Constitution by continuing in power with a 'dead Parliament and inducting opposition MPs in her party. She also brought similar charges against the Speaker for his ruling on the Opposition MPs' resignation."By rejecting the resignation letters, the constitutional

been curbed," Hasina said. Referring to the Prime Minister's current visit to Pakistan, the AL chief demanded that the PM realise Bangladesh's due share of assets from Pakistan and ensure total repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis.

rights of the opposition MPs to

relinquish their seats have

Turning to the Prime Minister's planned visit to India, the AL leader asked the PM to guarantee Bangladesh's due share of Ganges waters The AL chief also repeated

her allegations that the BNP

government's corruption, mis-

rule and inefficiency had cre-

ated the fertiliser and rice crises in the country. B Chowdhury

From Page 1 whether such acts breach the sanctity of Parliament." Prof. Chowdhury said in the House

referring to the Opposition's He termed this an 'unprecedented incident' and said they are still members of Parliament and should come to the House by accepting the Speaker's ruling on their res-

Calling for a fresh dialogue,

Prof Chowdhury said political disputes should be resolved politically. There is no deadline for holding negotiations. Time for

dialogue never runs out, he

"I hope the Opposition

The Deputy Leader said the

Opposition had spoken about

various problems but, he

ignations.

noted.

members will return to the House." Prof Chowdhury said. BSS adds: He said the responsibility of a political party was to solve problems, not to create them.

pointed out that, there were two places - one is Parliament and the other at public meetings where problems were discussed. Prof Chowdhury said that the Treasury bench had been trying to end the crisis, even

He said the Prime Minister had repeatedly made her call inside the Sangsad as well as outside the house to end the

religious sentiments