

SAVE DHAKA ROUNDTABLE

50000 dwellings needed a year

By Nadia S. Hossain

Fifty thousand dwellings are required each year to accommodate the ever growing population of Dhaka city.

A case study on the rail-road settlers tells us a horrifying story of the large number of homeless people living on both sides of the rail tracks.

Shanties were built on footpaths, with hundreds of poverty stricken people possessing nothing more than the little bit of the footpaths they call their 'homes'.

The political parties do not have urban housing or land policies. Nothing seems to

have been done to accommodate these people.

The public housing facilities built in the past were mostly for high officials. The designs of these housing units now seem to be proving somewhat of a problem, having used up unnecessarily large spaces.

The problems of land and housing availability for the poor have already reached a crisis level. It is not so much the problem of lack of urban land as it is the problem of developing a system to make the land available to the poor in the form of appropriate housing with proper living conditions — hygiene, sanitation and drainage.



Leaders of the G7 pose for photographers Friday during their Economic Summit in Halifax, Canada. Left to right are European Commission President Jacques Santer, Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, US President Bill Clinton, Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, French president Jacques Santer, British Prime Minister John Major and Italian President Lamberto Dini.

No polls under party

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who tendered resignation as Deputy Leader of the Opposition last December 28 along with other lawmakers in his camp.

Responding to the Speaker's planned move to bring to the notice of the House the Opposition's 90-days absence, Azad said the Opposition MPs had already resigned from parliament. "We're not waiting for that."

The former Deputy Opposition Leader criticised the Speaker for rejecting the opposition MPs' resignation letters, alleging that the Speaker's efforts are directed towards keeping his party the BNP, in power.

"He (Speaker) is playing foul in (political). He lost the confidence of the people for his partisan role," Azad said.

In reply to a question, he said it would have been wise

on the part of the government to dissolve parliament after the Opposition resignation and arrange fresh election under a caretaker government.

"Arranging early election is nothing unusual in a parliamentary democracy. Nowhere it is written that a government must complete its five-year term."

In this context, he referred to political events in Nepal where fresh election was declared within six months of the communist government's takeover.

Asked about any possibility of a negotiated settlement of the problem, Azad said had the government been sincere, it would have come up much earlier with positive approach.

G-7 summit

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over Bosnia were having little effect on the warring factions.

Sarajevo is one of six UN-designated safe havens which NATO is entrusted to protect along with UN peacekeepers. But the latest outbreak in hostilities, which follows a Bosnian government offensive against Serbs besieging the city, is testing the alliance's resolve to the limit.

On Wednesday, the meeting of NATO ambassadors failed to address the prospect of renewed hostilities despite the fact that government forces had for days been massing around the Bosnian capital instead the meeting concentrated on plans to withdraw peacekeepers, diplomats said.

Manzur murder

Another gives statement

By Court Correspondent

Retired army havilder Mozaffar Ahmed, arrested in connection with the Gen Manzur murder case gave a confessional statement before court yesterday.

Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, Mohammad Sharfuddin recorded the statement made under Section 164 of the CrPC.

Heat wave claims 78 more in India

NEW DELHI, June 17: A blistering heat wave sweeping India has left around 470 people dead and disrupted businesses in some of the country's busiest trade centres, officials said today, reports AFP.

The Press Trust of India reported 78 more deaths today in Uttar Pradesh taking the heat-related toll in the overcrowded northern state to 283.

Unofficial reports said more people could have perished since many casualties go unreported in the country's hundreds of thousands of villages.

Officials said residents of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh suffered under a hot sun with the mercury remaining constant at 48.5 degrees Celsius (119.3 Fahrenheit) for the third day today.

150 anti-dam marchers hurt in UP

NEW DELHI, June 17: Police beat back some 2,000 protesters, injuring 150, who marched on the site of a huge dam being built in an earthquake-prone zone of India's Himalayan foothills, a news agency said today, reports AFP.

Witnesses said at least 20 were seriously injured in the police action on Friday in the town of Tehri in northern Uttar Pradesh state, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Moudud

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against Moudud immediately, if he fulfils certain conditions as desired by him. The sources, however, declined to disclose the conditions.

Shah Moazzem Hossain, Col (ret'd) Abdul Malek, Col (ret'd) Zafar Imam, Sardar Ahmad Hossain and Anwar Hossain Manju were among the participants in the discussions. Others will take part in discussion today while Moudud is also expected to clarify his position.

The meeting also discussed the June 27 hartal called by JP and 'implicating' Ershad in Manjur murder case. Almost all the presidium members, including Raushan Ershad, were present at the meeting.

Nirmul urges EC not to enroll 'war criminals' as voters

By Staff Correspondent

A delegation of the Ekatattar Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday demanded of the Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque not to enroll the 'war criminals' as voter and restrict their participation in the forthcoming elections.

The demand was raised during the committee leaders' meeting with the CEC at the later's Sher-e-Bangla office in the city.

The Nirmul delegation also demanded that the elections be free from the influence of money, muscle and arms.

The Nirmul delegation included its acting convener Shahrir Kabir, advisors poet Shamsur Rahman, Columnist Syed Shamsul Haq, artist Kalam Sharafi, advocate ZI Khan Panna, Kazi Mukul, Zulfiqar Ali Manik, Mehedi Hassan, Kazi Mamun Rashid and Adilur Rahman Khan.

The CEC was assisted by the Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil and other EC officials during the meeting.

Justice Sadeque, after listening to the Nirmul leaders, said he would consider the demands in the light of constitutional provisions.

During the meeting the Nirmul leaders submitted to the CEC a memorandum and a copy of the report on 16 'war criminals' and presented him video cassette of the British documentary film "The War Crimes File."

Budget hailed

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He expressed satisfaction over the proposals for withdrawal of licence fees on agricultural and textile inputs and reduction of duty on industrial raw materials. He also welcomed the steps aimed at poverty alleviation.

However, the BGMEA leader expressed regret that the budget does not contain proposals for complete withdrawal of deduction of tax at source, compulsory flood and cyclone clause in Factory Fire Insurance Policy, all indirect charges and VAT on telephone, fax, C&F both in case of garment industry and other export-oriented industries.

"To keep our readymade garments and other exports competitive in the international market," Redwan Ahmed said, the government should exempt garment and other export-oriented industries of indirect charge without the deduction of tax at source and make all exports income-tax free.

BSIF The Bangladesh Share Investors Forum (BSIF) at a meeting of its executive committee yesterday welcomed the budget and expressed satisfaction at the fiscal concessions given to the investments in shares and stocks.

Chaired by Professor Abu Ahmed, president of the forum, the meeting termed the budget as a pro-investment one and urged the government to maintain the present macro-economic stability at any cost in order to achieve the desired growth rate in future.

The forum welcomed the proposals for reduction of the corporate income tax by 2.5 per cent exempting the dividend income upto Tk 10,000 from income tax deduction at source, and waiving tax on capital gains from share and stock transaction.

Boat purchase case Ershad's defence counsel begins argument

Advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, defence counsel of deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad told a special judge's court trying the former general in a corruption case that had there been any irregularity in the procurement of relief boats from Japan, the responsibility would have to be shared by all those involved in the whole process, reports BSS.

To single out Ershad for any fault or offence if committed at all in the purchase deal would be unfair and against justice, Humayun said while initiating argument in favour of his client in the Special Case No 19 of 1993. Jinat Ara, the Additional Sessions and District Judge (first court), Dhaka was presiding.

The case, better known as the Japanese boat purchase scandal, had its argument from the prosecution side completed late last month.

Ershad and a Japanese national are coaccused in this case in misappropriating from the exchequer to the tune of over Taka 33 crore.

He said there were many reasons for buying boats from Japan. The first reason being that Japan provided grant and their produce (Yanmar and Yamaha) are repairable in Bangladesh. He said, the ex-

perience of the army in using the brands had also contributed to choosing the Japanese boats. The timelimit for utilisation of the grant was also a big factor, he added.

As for choosing the second lowest bidder whose offer was much higher than the first one, Humayun said it was found that the lowest bidder was not competent enough to do the job, a fact also testified by documents. He said, the final order to supply the boat was placed to Marubeni after receiving detailed reports from Bangladesh mission in Tokyo which mentioned the incompetence of the Kingsu Mataichi Company, the lowest bidder.

As for the role of Marubeni Corporation, Humayun said there is nothing wrong for a trading firm to procure order. He said, it is fact that Marubeni Corporation had worked to arrange the grant.

The argument remained incomplete and was adjourned till June 18.

Former ministers Rabeya Bhuiyan and Nitai Roy and Sudhir Kumar Hazra were among others present to defend Ershad.

Public prosecutor Abdur Razzak Khan stood for the state.

14 die in incidents

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electrocuted, as a deep tubewell, he was working on, came in contact with a severed electric wire at Manikdi Bazar under Cantonment police station at 11 am.

Abdus Siddique, 50, who was injured in a road accident at Shibpur in Narshingdi on Friday, succumbed to his injuries at DMCH in the early hours of yesterday.

Ali Hussain, 26, a pedestrian, was hit by a bullet when he was caught in a cross-fire as two groups of local gangsters were exchanging fire near IG Gate Colony, yesterday evening.

He was admitted to the DMCH with a bullet which went through his left eye. His condition was stated to be critical.

Meanwhile, police recovered a body of an unknown man, aged around 35, from Kaoula area under Cantonment police station yesterday morning. The body bore marks of injury on the chest.

BSS adds: Six persons including one child were killed in two road accidents on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

According to police sources, the first accident took place at Raipur, when a speeding truck and a private car collided head-on killing two persons on the spot.

In the second accident near Nawtola also a truck collided head-on with a private car. Three persons including a child were killed in the accident.

Meanwhile, four persons were killed and 30 others injured in two separate accidents in Faridpur.

Police sources said one passenger and a truck driver were killed when a minibus

and a truck collided head-on during heavy downpour at Shankerpatha on Faridpur-Barisal highway, 16 kilometres from Faridpur.

The passenger died on the spot and the truck driver succumbed to his injuries at the Faridpur general hospital. The injured passengers were admitted to the hospital, six of whom were released after first aid.

In another incident at Patchar, six kilometres from Faridpur, young brothers died instantly when they were struck by thunder bolt this afternoon.

They were sitting on the verandah of their tin-shed house during the heavy shower when they were hit by the thunder bolt.

Chief Whip

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MPs' seats falling vacant after 90 days of absence from parliament, the Chief Whip cautioned the hard-won democracy and development might come under threat if a solution could not be found.

"None will be benefited if democracy is disrupted... such situation is welcome for none," he said.

Replying to a query about ruling party stand on the question of Opposition's 90-day absence from the House, he said the matter was not discussed in the party forum.

He also refrained from making any comment on the possibility of bye-elections in the seats of Opposition MPs, who have been boycotting parliament since March 1 last year.

"It's the affair of the Speaker and the Election Commission," he said.

Floods hit six districts

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About 500 people were affected by the flood. The municipal authorities evacuated members of 50 families while many others took shelters in safe areas.

The Dholai river at Kamalganj, now flowing over danger level, has inundated the low-lying areas along its banks.

Our Correspondent adds from Sirajganj: Incessant rainfall and onrush of flood water from the upper catchment areas further aggravated erosion by the Jamuna and flooded new areas in the district.

More than 300 families became homeless due to the erosion in five thanas—Kazipur, Sadar, Chouhali, Belkuchi and Shahjadpur. Besides, flood waters washed away the Brahmaputra Flood Control Embankment at two points—Ramgati in sadar thana and Banglabazar in Kazipur thana. At least 38 villages in Ratanakandi, Chougachcha, Sibgachcha and Kaliharipur areas were inundated yesterday.

BIWTA sources said 100 yards of approach road at Sirajganj ghat were devoured by the Jamuna.

Parts of an embankment collapsed due to downpour and onrush of hill waters, inundating many houses and crops on a vast tract in Islampur thana of Jamalpur district yesterday.

Over fifty bridges, culverts and kutcha roads have been affected by floods in Ne-

trakoma district. Officials said five out of seven thanas were affected as the Shomeswari river was flowing above the danger mark.

In Pabna, at least 16 villages in char areas of Bera and Sujannagar thanas were submerged due to heavy rainfall since Friday.

UNB reports from Gaibandha: Flashflood hit the district as waters of different rivers rose above danger marks due to heavy downpour in last two days, officials said.

The 20 feet embankment of Water Development Board, three kilometers from the town, was damaged by the incessant rain.

Some two lakh people have been affected and 40,000 houses went under water in the district. Standing crops on nearly 30,000 acres of land were damaged.

About one lakh people in the 'char' areas have been marooned.

WDB officials Friday said Brahmaputra near Kamarjani, Teesta near Sundargani, Jamuna near Fulchhari and Ghaghar near Sadar were flowing above danger marks. The Ghaghar river was flowing two meters above the danger level.

Incessant rain paralysed life in the district since Thursday. A rainfall of 185 cm was recorded today (Saturday). BSS adds: Finance Minister, M Saifur Rahman yesterday visited the flood affected areas

The Midnight File

G-7 summit in Moscow next yr

HALIFAX, Canada, June 17: Group of Seven (G-7) leaders and Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed today to hold a special summit on nuclear safety in Moscow next year. "We all agreed that such a summit would be of historic importance," said Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien who chaired the meeting of the eight leaders, reports AFP.

Serbs declare 'state of war'

PALE, June 17: Bosnian Serb military headquarters today proclaimed a 'state of war' in the Sarajevo region, introducing martial law, according to Momcilo Krajisnik, the president of the self-proclaimed assembly, reports AFP.

EC to seek amendment

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the tender schedule. The director of ID Card Project earlier said that they would begin selling tender schedule from mid-June.

"We are working on it," said Omar Farooq, the project director. "I have nothing else to add other than this."

Sources, however, said preparation of the tender schedule has been delayed as the EC is yet to decide about the shape and content of the cards.

Moreover, the sources added, the Commission is now faced with different complexities ranging from obtaining photographs of voters to addition of thumb impressions to the cards.

"We will have to go through the same process as in enrolment of voters' names to obtain photographs of the individuals," said an official. "This will again take a lot of time."

"Many voters enrolled themselves in their respective villages. Now it will not be possible for many to go to villages again for photographs," another official said.

EC officials indicated they may prepare ID cards without thumb impressions and signatures to minimise complexities.

To check thumb impression within a reasonable time, high-tech computers are needed which the EC does not have. It will cost extra money, the sources said.

When asked about an allegation that simplification of ID cards might increase the chance of manipulation and duplication, he said they were also thinking about it.

"We are not going for issuing ID cards for all voters. We can revise the process as ID cards will be issued in some selected areas," he said.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque said the EC, not computer traders would be responsible if ID cards could not be prepared before elections.

"If the computer firms fail to do their job at the eleventh hour, what will happen to them? They will, at the most, lose their contract. The EC cannot lose elections just for issuance of ID cards. We can not begin the work without considering all aspects cards," he said.

He further said only ID card can not ensure fair elections if law and order situation does not go normal.

BB monitoring

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raised in connection with the Friday's post-budget press conference of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

Both the Beximco and Islam Groups were represented in the boards of these banks and in 1993 the central bank, after learning about the illegal loans, remove representatives of both these houses, and had them sign an understanding to repay the money in installments. The amount of the loans in various names ran into more than four hundred crore taka. The Governor was unable to confirm the exact amount.

The Governor, however, acknowledged that chances of getting the money back from them in the short-term was better through negotiations than through legal action, as it would take years to resolve the issue through the court system. He said that the Central Bank, in consultation with the Boards of the concerned banks set a repayment schedule, which both business houses have followed so far. He claimed that the central bank was carefully monitoring these cases.

The finance minister in his press conference expressed his frustration over the huge default in the banking sector. "I agree that we are not being able to solve the problem expeditiously and it creates frustration."

"We have two alternative ways to recover the default loans — one is to put the defaulter on trial and the other to reschedule the loans and pursue them to give the money back," he added, noting that the first option was difficult, lengthy and time consuming due to the flaws in the legal system.

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CEC to visit Ghana

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque will leave for Accra, capital of Ghana, on June 23 to attend a workshop of the chief electoral officers of the Commonwealth countries. The workshop will begin on June 25 and continue through June 29. Justice Sadeque is expected to return home on June 30.

Today's world, said the Prime Minister, is beset with problems like moral degradation and drug addiction in the youth community, and Bangladesh is not free from the problems.

But she said society could be freed from different problems through religious teaching, Islamic rules and regulations and clear concept of life here and hereafter.

Responding to the problems of the Kazi Samity, Begum Zia said some of their demands had already been met and now the marriage registrars were being treated as honorary public servants.

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Panchlaish thana OC shot

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 17: Two police personnel, including the Officer Incharge (OC) of Panchlaish thana received bullet wounds when an unidentified person fired on them in Katalganj area today. They were admitted to the Chittagong medical college hospital.

One arrested in rape case

By Staff Correspondent

Demra police yesterday arrested the main accused in rape case from village Nandarampur of Kuliarchar thana in Kishoreganj.

Md Belal, 30, is accused of violating two young girls at South Matuail on May 30.

Jewel, one of Belal's accomplices, was arrested earlier.

Monsoon spell may continue

Monsoon spell may continue for another couple of days with decrease in intensity.

"This spell was the major source of monsoon rain," Deputy Director of the Met Office Sajedur Rahman told UNB adding that heavy rainfall was caused by active monsoon and 'monsoon axis', which runs from central part of the country.

He further said that because of heavy rain, temperature has gone down significantly over the country and there would be no appreciable change in temperature unless rainfall ceases.

Heavy rain in north eastern regions of Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal in India as well as in Bangladesh, may cause drainage problem, he added.

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Islamic values

for the pledges in the after-world. And we are fulfilling our commitments keeping in mind the Quranic message," she told the Kazis.

"Islam is our complete code of life. The eternal message of Islam is our driving force. Islam on the one hand is the religion of peace and tolerance and on the other sanctions rising against injustice."

She said her government was working for removal of injustice from society. This is why the government has undertaken programmes to eradicate illiteracy, introduced compulsory free primary education, free education for girls and self-employment schemes for the youths and women.

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