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Low-income groups to get soft-term housing loans

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the housing problems of low-income groups would be solved by bringing necessary amendments to the National Housing Policy introduced by the previous regime, reports UNB.

She announced that the government would give soft-term loans to low-income groups of people for solving their housing problem.

Also, Rajuk and Housing Directorate would be made effective to meet the increasing demands of home, said the Prime Minister unveiling her government's housing plans on the occasion of World Habitat Day.

Though the previous government had introduced a national housing policy, its aims and objectives remained dumped in files and documents," she said inaugurating the Day's programme at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the morning.

Hasina said the problem of housing was increasing day by day with the increase of population, and in this perspective, the theme of the day for this year — "Urbanisation, Citizenship and Human Solidarity" — is very much timely.

Housing and Works Ministry disclosed an elaborate programme in observance of the world housing day. The programmes included a four-day exhibition at Ramna park and a seminar at BARC auditorium.

Housing problem is acute to the low-income groups, said the Prime Minister calling upon the scientists, researchers and architects to innovate means of constructing home at low costs.

The government will provide assistance for coordinating endeavours of private initiators, government and local government bodies in this regard, Hasina assured.

The PM observed that majority of the country's population was still living below the poverty line, which stirred the exodus of people towards the urban areas.

It is possible to ensure home for the homeless through planned urbanisation by providing jobs to the unemployed people, she said.

Supply of pure drinking water, electricity, traffic-jam-free safe road, hygienic environment and smooth communications system should be given priority in the urbanisation planning, she added.

DMP to receive complaints against police

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has taken up an initiative to receive complaints against police from the people, reports UNB.

DMP Commissioner Mohammad Salam will hear the allegations from the people at his office from 10 am to 12 noon on October 10 and take necessary actions, said a DMP press release yesterday.

As per the existing rules, all sorts of complaints are supposed to be lodged with police concerned.

But the people, who lodged complaints with their respective thanas and deprived of legal actions, have been requested to come with the related papers.

Govt has failed

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snatching the people's voting rights as a first step towards killing democracy. This is not a people's government, this is a party government," he said.

After the takeover of Awami League government, he said, some 100 workers of the BNP and its front organisations were killed across the country.

He criticised the government's "plan to import electricity from India and given transit facilities" to that country, sacrificing the interest of Bangladesh.

The government, he said, is not making any clear statement about the discussion with India on the Ganges water-sharing issue. "We will not accept less than 34,500 cusecs water," the BNP leader warned.

The rally was also addressed by Anwar Zahid, Rezabuddin Chowdhury and Wasim Bari Rajib.

Meanwhile, Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement demanded unconditional release of the arrested leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations.

He alleged that the members of the BNP and its front organisations were being arrested in false cases and attacked by the activists of ruling Awami League throughout the country.

He criticised the government for instructing the police to arrest BNP, Jubadal and JCD leaders and activists without assigning any reasons.

Nobel Prize

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Zurich. Zinkernagel, born in Basel, Switzerland, studied in his home town and in Canberra, where he worked with Doherty.

The institute said the scientists work at the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra from 1973 to 1975 had been crucial for understanding the mechanisms used by humans to recognise foreign bodies.

DU classes

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ministration and Sociology, he disclosed.

Generally, the office of the Controller of Examinations asks the teachers concerned to take answer scripts from examination halls on the day the examinations are held. If they do not take the papers from the halls, they are given reminder time and again to take those as early as possible.

As per rules of the university, an examiner is supposed to examine ten answer scripts in a day and if he fails, he is fined. But the teachers are reluctant to examine the answer scripts and in many cases it is found that the amount of fine exceeds the money the examiners get for examining those. Examiners very often go abroad keeping the answer scripts in their custody, the sources claimed.

An examiner get Tk 15 for examining an answer script at honours level and Tk 18 at masters level.

When asked about changing the examiners, the sources said it is a very complicated process. A written authorisation of the examiner is needed to change him. Once it is obtained, the Academic Council has to take permission from the Vice-Chancellor to give the responsibility to somebody else, the sources said.

Botanical garden

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based on the two restaurants inside the premises for Tk 42,000 a month each.

There are 51,425 trees of 800 species in the garden. Conservatories for cactus and orchid and a waterfall have been built, a tissue-culture laboratory has been set up and some work for development of the lake done under a 5 crore taka project, the director said. The project work had started in 1989 and continued till the current year, he said.

But the tissue culture laboratory, situated in a room, was found equipped with empty wooden shelves. An official there said that the laboratory was yet to start functioning.

"Once the laboratory starts functioning, we will be able to produce saplings of rare trees through tissues which cannot be grown by using seeds or other means," the official said.

ADB for completing reform agenda in capital market

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has proposed for completing the reform agenda in the country's capital market as additional policy initiatives are required for its development to augment the efficient allocation of capital resources, reports UNB.

In an aid-memoire to the finance ministry, the ADB identified five areas where further reforms could be carried out in early next year under the revised Capital Market Development Programme Loan (CMDPL).

The major areas are strengthening of the regulatory framework anchored on the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), raising the efficiency of the stock market and restructuring of the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB).

Reforms in the insurance sector and pension/provident funds aimed at increasing the pool of investable resources and developing of the government securities, corporate bonds and money markets have also been proposed under the programme.

Official sources said the ADB resident mission in Dhaka reviewed developments in the capital market and reforms that have been adopted by the government since the formula-

tion of the proposed CMDPL in 1992.

The mission noted that although it appears that the SEC has sufficient powers to regulate the capital market, there is significant scope for improvement in SEC activities.

It underlined the need for the SEC to implement the remaining part of the recommendations made by an ADB consultant and concentrate on enforcing rules and regulations through developing its general regulatory capacity and market surveillance capacity and giving closer attention to promoting reforms in stock exchanges.

The Bank also underscored the need to restructure ICB to avoid conflicts of interest among ICB's different business lines and ensure that funds entrusted by investors to ICB are properly handled and accounted for.

In view of the upcoming mutual fund regulations that would allow floatation of mutual funds by banks and non-banking financial institutions, the mission stressed the need for levelling the playing field by removing ICB's privileges, specially the preemptive 15 per cent allocation to ICB of all public issues and ICB tax exemption.



President of the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat (L) answers reporters' questions as President of the European Council and Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring looks on during a short briefing at the end of their meeting in Gaza City yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Israeli-Palestinian talks continue

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip. Oct 7: Israeli and the Palestinians entered a second day of critical peace talks today focusing on Israel's long-delayed withdrawal from Hebron, as tensions eased after last month's bloody clashes, reports AFP.

The two sides met under a press blackout in a guest house at Beit Hanoun on the Palestinian side of the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, joined by US-Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross.

Earlier in the day, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said he hoped for rapid progress in the talks now that they were getting down to concrete issues after Sunday's opening meeting, which dealt with organizational questions.

"Yesterday, it was the steering committee. Discussions on Hebron, on security, on the (Israeli army) redeployment, on the airport (in Gaza) will start today," he told reporters ahead of a visit to Egypt and talks

with President Hosni Mubarak. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a speech to the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, that the talks were going on in a "good atmosphere" and he was "convinced" and a new accord on Hebron would be reached.

He said he aimed to launch "final status talks" with the Palestinians after resolving "Hebron and other issues."

MCCI: Govt demands removal of VC by Oct 16

By Staff Correspondent

The teachers' association of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has decided to boycott the meetings to be presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof Md Shahjahan and threatened to go for greater movement if the VC is not removed by October 16.

The decisions were taken at a general meeting of the association held yesterday with its president Dr Md Abdur Razzak in the chair, says a press release of the Engineering University Teachers' Association.

The meeting observed that the present VC should be removed and a senior professor of the university should be appointed as the new VC to protect the reputation and academic atmosphere of the institution.

The teachers' association, however, resolved that all academic activities, examinations, and classes of BUET would continue uninterrupted.

Mayor : Greatest tragedy of life

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and, instead, a new coordination committee was approved by the Prime Minister. The LGED Minister will be the chairman and the Mayor will remain co-chairman of the proposed committee.

Hanif, also city Awami League President, has withdrawn his name from the proposed coordination committee putting the government in an awkward situation.

The proposed committee, the Mayor thinks, will virtually be useless as the committee's decisions will not be implemented unless covered by existing laws and adequate funds.

"I have resigned from the committee voluntarily," said the Mayor, who looked a little bit disappointed. "I hope the Prime Minister would give a second thought to my proposal."

In reply to a question, Hanif said: "I am the elected Mayor and I am committed to my people, not to the LGED ministry, to resolve their problems."

He went on: "My pain for my people is much more than the LGED ministry's. I am being blamed for every problem, but I will have no power to solve those."

he had fulfilled two of them — keeping Dhaka City Corporation outside the party politics and non-enhancement of holding tax.

Hanif said he had attained success partially in eradicating mosquito menace but achieved "zero" in dealing with terrorism.

About combating terrorism, the Mayor said he did not get cooperation from police in arresting terrorists and curbing terrorism because police is controlled by the Home Ministry.

He said there has been anti-terrorism committee at each ward headed by the Ward Commissioner who has no recommending power to ask police to arrest the identified terrorists.

"Let the metropolitan police be put under the city corporation and I can give challenge that I will ensure a terrorism-free city within six months," the Mayor said with determination in his face.

He said his proposal for metropolitan government was mooted from this idea that the corporation will be vested with necessary power to deal with all these problems.

He also suggested that the Ward Commissioners be given the magisterial authority to solve local problems.

Review meeting of EC-assisted projects begins today

The on-going European Community-assisted development projects in the country and the 'pipeline' of future projects will be the main topic of discussion at the two-day meeting of the two sides, beginning in the city today, reports BSS.

A four-member delegation, led by Erich Muller from the European Commission, Brussels, will take part in the European Community-Bangladesh Working Group meeting. Muller, head of the Technical Unit (Asia) will represent the EC along with officials from EC delegation in Dhaka.

Abu Saleh, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Division, will represent the home side in the meeting. Representatives of various ministries and departments will assist Saleh.

The European Community is a partner in over 25 projects in Bangladesh with a total grants amounting to 374 million ECU (about Taka two thousand crore). These projects are mainly in sectors like food security, water management, poverty alleviation and social development.

Biswas leaves

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Biswas, however, will come to the Bangladesh for the last time as President to attend the swearing in of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed tomorrow morning.

President-elect Shahabuddin Ahmed is scheduled to take oath at Bangabhaban's Darbar Hall at 10 am on the day. Chief Justice of Bangladesh ATM Afzal will administer the oath of office to the new President.

Except for attending the investiture of his successor, Abdur Rahman Biswas completed his work as President meeting the officials of Bangabhaban yesterday noon.

Earlier, President Biswas placed wreath at the Jatiya Smriti Soudha at Savar paying respect to the martyred freedom fighters. He also placed wreaths at the mazar of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Leader of the Opposition and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia made a courtesy call on the President at Bangabhaban at 10 last night. She was accompanied by BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, along with Begum Khaleda Zia, is expected to go to Saudi Arabia on October 17 for performing Umrah. They will be treated as Royal guests of the government of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

MCCI: Govt

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certing" because other countries were collecting more and more resources from non-tax revenue.

The non-tax revenue grew by 18.2 per cent in '94, 29.2 in '95 and 5.8 per cent in '96, it mentioned.

Suggesting a meaningful policy reform to increase dividends from public financial institutions, the chamber body said the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) should reduce their losses which now average Tk 13 billion a year.

Many implicit subsidies in the form of concessional loan/debt reliefs enjoyed by the PSEs should be phased out, self-financing capacities of public sector bodies should be improved, it suggested adding that controlling the governments own expenditure can help improve the situation enormously.

The MCCI recommended that the Ministry of Finance should consider utilising the consultative committee of the National Board of Revenue and seeking its views for the requisite measures.

Thai trade team for joint venture investments

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said an investment-friendly environment is prevailing in the country that should encourage local and foreign investors, reports UNB.

Legal framework has been liberalised to create investment friendly atmosphere in the country," she told a Thai trade mission which called on the Prime Minister at her office in the evening.

The 23-member Thai trade mission was led by Photpong Lamsam, chairman of the Board of Trade of Thailand and the Thai Chamber of Commerce.

Hasina said there is a good potential for investment in different sectors, particularly in agro-based industries and food processing.

Earlier, the Thai trade delegation was briefed by the Board of Investment (BOI) to give them an overall idea about business and economy of the country.

BOI executive chairman briefed the delegation highlighting the investment conducive areas for the foreign investors.

During the session, leader of the Thai delegation Lamsam said, "Bilateral trade and economic relation can be expanded through joint ventures and separate initiatives."

The BOI chairman mentioned textile, infrastructure, agriculture, leather and other labour intensive industries as potential areas for investment.

PM: Doctors

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cation has been increased" Responding to the demands raised by the BMA leaders, the Prime Minister said the government would actively look into those problems. She also announced the formation of a board to look into the promotion of doctors.

Reciprocating, the BMA leaders assured the Prime Minister of giving all support to her government for taking the medical facilities to rural level for ensuring health for all.

They said only one doctor was there for 20,000 people while 8,000 young medical graduates were still unemployed in the country. They further said that the health sector was not allowed to run as it should be due to personal interference as well as manipulations in different forms over the last five years. Dr Majed said that the Public Service Commission (PSC) was also politicised during the last five years.

Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf, addressing the function, regretted that hundreds of people were going abroad for medical treatment.

The Bangladeshi doctors have the same skill and talent as of others, but patients are compelled to go outside the country as they don't get proper treatment here, he said.

The function was also addressed by BMA Secretary General Dr Kazi Shahidul Alam, Prof Modasser Ali and Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin.

The trade team expressed their eagerness for joint-venture investment in various fields when they met the members of the Board of Directors of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) at the DCCI auditorium yesterday.

Lamsam informed that the mission members are interested to invest in areas of life and non-life insurance, export and import of agricultural products, chemicals, seed, fertilizer, frozen sea foods, frozen fruits and vegetables, bags, bathtubs gem and jewelry, raw materials, iron, non-ferrous metal, industrial and consumer products, services of information technology and infrastructure, civil and construction engineering industry, petrochemical and hydro-power plant projects.

Welcoming the delegation, DCCI president Ali Hossain said the visit of the Thai mission would pave the way for further developing the business relation between Bangladesh and Thailand.

Young man stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was stabbed to death at Goran in the city yesterday.

The Sabujbagh thana police said, one Biplob 22, was stabbed allegedly by a pedestrian identified as Anisur Rahman Robin when his rickshaw on which he was passing the area hit a person.

Biplob died soon after admission to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A case was lodged with the Sabujbagh thana. Police arrested Anisur Rahman Robin from his house at Mathertek area.

Hero for Today

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"At Reader's Digest we also strive to make a difference in people's lives," says Editor Janie Couch.

She added: "We celebrate courage and we want to reward people whose courage and caring makes a difference in their communities, or take exceptional measures to help others."

Khair's story appears in October issue of the Reader's Digest and will be seen by millions throughout Asia.

He is among four individuals featured for this month's award. The others are: Christina Nobel, an Irish working for street children of Vietnam, Hui Fukpa and Chun Moman of Hong Kong, and Vernon Seow Kuan Hong of Singapore.

"Heroes for Today" column was first published in the United States in 1982 and since May in 1994, appeared regularly in Asia English-language edition, besides periodically in the Chinese edition of Reader's Digest.

The column appears in 22 international Reader's Digest editions.

TOURISM MONTH-96 SPECIAL RIVER CRUISE

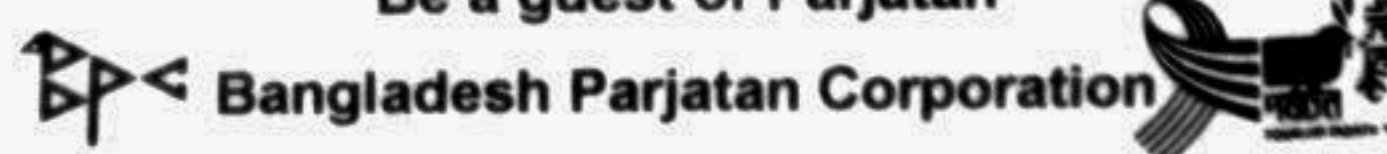
Parjatan offers day-long River Cruise on river the Buriganga and Meghna upto confluence of the Padma - Meghna at Chandpur. Enjoy riverine beauty of Bangladesh avail the rare opportunity of buying fresh Hilsha from river.

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Starting Place	Mary Anderson Floating Restaurant VIP Jetty, Paglaghat
Duration	09:00 a.m. to 07:00 p.m.
Price	Tk. 800.00 per person Tk. 600.00 for children under 12 years
Attraction	Raffle Draw with attractive prizes Special gift for the children
Price Includes	Transport (non AC), Snacks with tea/coffee, Lunch, Live Cultural Programme on board.
Pickup Points	Hotel Abakash : 07:45 a.m. Hotel Sonargaon : 07:55 a.m. Dhaka Sheraton Hotel : 08:00 a.m.

For booking and further details please contact :

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DRESS AS YOU LIKE COMPETITION

In observance of Tourism Month an attractive Dress as you like competition will be held at Abahani Playground Dhanmondi on 18-10-96 Friday at 10.00 a.m.

Winners will be awarded with attractive 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes. Interested participants are requested to contact the undermentioned officers during office hours on or before 13-10-96 for registration and further information.

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