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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.

Biswas: I never bowed

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"uttar para" should seize power. Even though they are in power in many countries. Some said that the President was engaged in conspiracies. But I was guarded by them. They would have caught me if I had done something wrong," the President said. Some newspapers are saying that I am not acting as per instruction. Well, I never do anything without going through the details. It's not like something that you threw at me," he retorted and referred to Indian history of correspondents between India's first premier Jawaharlal Nehru and the then presidents Rajendra Prasad and Dr Radha Krishnan. Nehru too would take note and send letters to attorney general in the event of a disagreement on signing of something, the President said, without referring to recent non-signing of a bill when it was taken by the outgoing Cabinet Secretary while making a farewell call on his last day in office.

Biswas was also critical of an unnamed weekly magazine, saying it wrote in vitriolic language about his family. "I will be out of the bounds of protocol after I retire. Nothing will go unanswered," he said.

The President said he never had any desire to hang on even though the then government offered him to continue if it was voted to power again. I told them 'I had enough in my career, attending the best institution, the Dhaka University, had been active as lawyer, social worker and opposition legislator, beginning in the early sixties. By the grace of Allah I am blessed with a large family, six sons and two daughters, who all had proper education and are working. My wife had very smart intellect and education

and she had been a source of strength for me," the President said.

Later the President shook hands with all and sat for formal portraits with officials.

In the evening, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia called on him at the Bangabhaban to make a farewell call.

Hafiz Textiles

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The government is now negotiating with the bidder so that the workers of the mills are not retrenched and their wages slashed after privatisation, the sources indicated.

The government had earlier formed an interministerial committee to negotiate with the workers so that no unrest arises.

Privatisation of the Hafiz Textile Mills was a condition of the World Bank (WB) for releasing the floating tranche of the 175 million SDR Jute Sector Adjustment Credit (JSAC), signed on April, 1994.

Only 35 million SDR of the JSAC was released earlier and the floating tranche and second tranche of the JSAC were stopped as the BNP government failed to sell the unit despite getting 'good response' from bidders after floating of tenders. The second and third tranches of 75 million dollars each are also pending.

The Privatisation Board (PB) had proposed sale of the mills in February, 1995.

A decision on the issue had been lying with the office of the former prime minister for months as the BNP government felt that privatisation of the mills would be a "politically counter productive move," the sources said.

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 Zaidi, Rezabuddoula Chowdhury and Wasim Barajib.

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, Jubabdal and JCD leaders and activists without assigning any reasons.

Nobel Prize

From Page 1

Zirkernagel, 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 gets 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.

3 police officials

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spondent that he came to know about the fresh suspension but did not receive any official order till late last night.

Recently expelled Narayanpur town unit President of Awami Juba League, Jahangir Alam and two of his associates were picked up by Narayanpur police on charge of snatching some fabrics at Ukipara area of the town on September 22.

Police then released all the three reportedly under pressure from a local politician.

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 the idea that the corporation will be vested with necessary power to deal with all these problems.

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

Recalling his four election commitments, the Mayor 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 add-memo 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 a ADB consultant and concentrate on enforcing rules and regulations through developing its general regulatory and market surveillance capacity and giving closer attention to promoting reforms in stock exchanges.

The Bank also underscored the need to restructure in 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, especially 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 after the end of their meeting in Gaza City yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Israeli-Palestinian talks continue

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip, Oct 7: Israel 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.

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

BUET teachers' assoc 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 LGRD Minister will be the chairman and the Mayor will remain co-chairman of the proposed committee.

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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.

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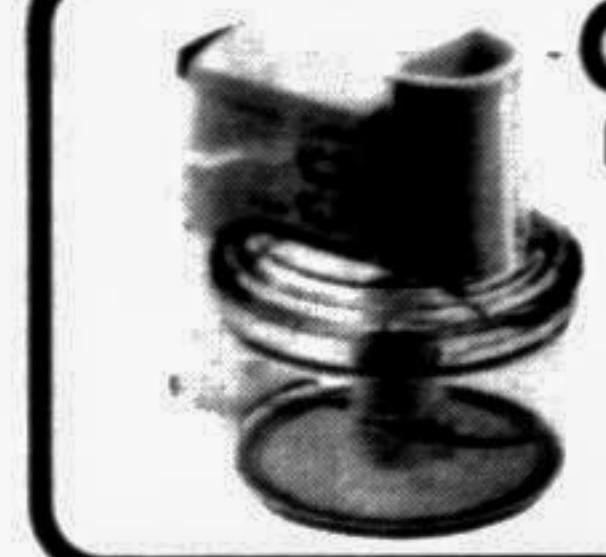
He said his proposal for metropolitan government was mooted from the idea that the corporation will be vested with necessary power to deal with all these problems.

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

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

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



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Let's make things better

PHILIPS

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.

President-elect Abdur Rahman Biswas, however, will come to the Bangabhaban 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 of Bangabhaban yesterday noon.

Earlier, President Biswas placed wreath at the Jatiya Sriti 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 Manan Bhuiyan MP.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, along with Begum Biswas, 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