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A fire broke out in a garments factory in this multi-storied building in the city's Mirpur area yesterday. — Star photo

Bangabandhu murder

From Page 1

near Rd No 32 of Dhanmondi area either during the azaan for Fajr prayers or immediately after that. We were posted on duty at the entry point of the road and ordered not to allow entry of anyone through the road.

As we took position we heard the noise of heavy gun fire from a place on the eastern side. The gun fire was followed by artillery shelling.

Hearing the noise of gun firing the soldiers deployed there took laying position in the nearby lake. The PW-22 said during cross-examination by the lawyer of the state defence.

Replying to another question, Aziz said that following the night parade on August 14, 1975, he along with others, under instructions from commanding officer of the Second Field Artillery Maj Khandaker Abdul Rashid, moved out of the new airport area in a convoy of three or four trucks.

In his deposition, Aziz said, seeing the forces of Artillery and Lancer getting into the house, we also entered inside the residence.

"Myself, Khaleque (PW-21), Nazrul our Guard Commander, along with two or three others

Govt employees

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He along with two other officials at the PMO tried to cool down the employees last week when they staged demonstrations at the Secretariat protesting the new pay scale.

They were invited for talks with him last week. But the meeting was deferred until Sunday. Insiders said that the employees expressed their grievances about the new pay scale, saying it failed to benefit them as most are in their mid or late stages of service because there had been no fresh recruitments in recent times.

The employees leaders were told by the official that it was not possible to raise their pay beyond what had been announced now. If the government's allocated fund of Tk 700 crore spins any surplus, the question could be considered, the sources said.

He also brushed aside their demands for raising the tiffin allowance of Tk 100 per month to Tk 200 or revert to the old of five hours.

The sources said that employees' leaders expressed their disapproval of the government's claim that the new pay scale had more than compensated the inflation by 27 per cent. They mentioned the cost of living since 1991 had increased by 30 per cent not 18 per cent as claimed by the government. However, the official promised to meet them again, the sources said.

A meeting of the employees was held at the Secretariat yesterday. "We briefed our members on the talks we had with an official at the PMO and the possible next course of action," President of Sachibabala Karmachari Samity Zafar Ahmed told The Daily Star.

He said the employees' leaders would hold consultations with members in all the 46 ministries to decide their next course of action.

Meanwhile, the Coordination Council of Bangladesh Government Employees, representing class three and four employees have announced sit-in programme at the premises of the offices of divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and thana nirbahi offices on October 20.

The programme has been taken up for a revision of the pay scale. They will also stage protests on October 25 and announce the next course of action, president of the organisation Salehuddin Selim told newsmen on Saturday. He said the pay scale ignored thousands of low paid employees.

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Garments factory

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women, were killed in a stampede following an electric spark in another garments factory in the same building.

Police and fire brigade personnel said yesterday's fire originated from a boiler burst in the second-floor factory at about 2:15 pm.

Witnesses and fellow workers told police that Rina suffered fatal head injuries as she jumped down from the building when the fire broke out.

As the fire engulfed part of the factory, panic stricken workers tried to jump out using bamboo poles. Some simply jumped through the windows and others scrambled down the crowded stairs.

Police said a small number of workers were in the building at the time of the fire as most of them went out during the lunch break.

Firefighters from the fire brigade headquarters and Mirpur, Mohammadpur and Kurmitola stations put out the flame in about an hour.

Other than the affected factory, the building houses four other garments factories. There was no emergency exit in the affected factory while the only staircase was about four and a half feet wide.

Police were deployed around the building. No case was, however, lodged in this regard till the filing of this report last night.

LDF demonstration October 26

By Staff Correspondent

The Left Democratic Front yesterday said that the government had no right to prohibit people from holding public meetings and demonstrations on the streets.

It also urged the government to refrain from using police to suppress people's democratic rights.

Addressing a press conference in the city, LDF coordinator Morshed Ali said that the Awami League government had failed to re-direct the nation in the light of progressive politics and economics.

Announcing an 11-point charter of demand and a series of agitational programmes, Morshed Ali said that the Left Front will stage demonstrations across the country on October 26.

Businessman

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of three unidentified young men on a motorbike intercepted Hossain who was also on a motorbike. Accompanied by his employee Kamal, he was going to Motijheel after withdrawing Tk five lakh from Gendaria branch of Janata Bank.

The snatchers, at gun point, demanded all the money. As Hossain refused, they were locked in a scuffle with him.

At one stage, the muggers shot him and drove off with a bag in which Tk three lakh was kept.

Police recovered the rest Tk two lakh from a tool box of Hossain's motorbike. The body was handed over to his family after autopsy at the Mitford Hospital morgue.

None was arrested in this connection till the filing of this report last night. Hossain's brother Monir filed a murder case with Sutrapur thana.

WB disputes

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The domestic savings rate was up because, as the Bank said, there was a strong growth in agricultural GDP, increases in nominal interest rates and lower rate of inflation in 1996-97.

The Bank, however, gave an optimistic picture about medium-term prospects of foreign direct investment. If reforms continued, Bangladesh could easily bring in between 400 million and 600 million US dollars in foreign direct investment (FDI) annually, it said.

Referring to recent deals in energy sector, the Update estimated the FDI flow could reach half-a-billion dollars in the current fiscal.

Prospects for portfolio investment were not discussed in the Update, which, however, reviewed the impact of the stock market boom in India and said there were bad days ahead for the capital market.

"The prospects for developing a healthy capital market in Bangladesh have been badly set back for the near and medium term. There could be a long-term benefit from the whole experience since the retail investors learnt first hand the nature and extent of the risks involved and have presumably understood the importance of taking the capital market."

It said the foreign direct investment was safer for Bangladesh in terms of "prospects of abrupt outflows". The same would not be the case with portfolio capital, the Update said.

"FDI is usually associated with long-term commitments of funds with more predictable repatriation of profits", it added.

PM urges teachers

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Teachers' Federation and Assistant Teachers' Association attended the meeting under the banner of Teachers' Unity Council.

They hailed the Prime Minister for placing the non-government teachers in the 5th National Pay Scale and taking into consideration various problems of the teachers. The association leaders also apprised her of some problems facing the teachers.

The Prime Minister told them despite constraint of resources, the government was taking all possible steps for the welfare of the teachers. "We are trying our best to solve the teachers' problems."

Sheikh Hasina said past governments had created an anarchic situation in educational institutions through massive manipulation and misappropriation of wealth during last 21 years.

The present government is trying to restore discipline and peace on the campus for proper grooming of the students, she said, asking the teachers to discharge their duties with sincerity.

"We have natural resources, and if we can utilise those properly, then poverty will not be here," she said, calling upon them to work unitedly to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

3 more illegal structures dismantled in city

By Staff Correspondent

On the fourth day of the Dhaka City Corporation's demolition drive in the city yesterday three illegal structures belonging to different political parties were dismantled in Mohammadpur and Rayer Bazar areas, DCC sources said.

The DCC team, assisted by about thirty policemen, also removed some construction materials from the public thoroughfares in Dhanmondi area, a DCC Estate Department official said.

"We have brought down a structure belonging to BNP at Noorjahan Road and two in front of the Municipality bazaar at Rayer Bazar of which one belonged to BNP and the other to AL," he said.

DCC officials said they could not dismantle many such illegal structures because the land belonged to PWD or Railway. A top official said there was no effort from the DCC authorities to bring to coordinate the drive with these departments prior to launching the operation.

The operation was also slowing down due to lack of cooperation from the mechanical department of the DCC itself, he said. The pay-loader which was scheduled to arrive at DCC before 10 am, turned up more than two hours late without any valid reason. On Sunday the officials started the operation at 1:30 pm instead of 10 am as scheduled.



Finance Minister SAMS Kibria receiving World Bank President James D Wolfensohn at the Zia International Airport on his arrival yesterday. — PID photo

Wolfensohn in city

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On his arrival, Wolfensohn said he was looking forward to the visit and expected to have a firsthand experience about the progress made in the country in recent years.

The World Bank chief termed the visit 'overdue' and said he expected to have 'substantial discussion' with government leaders during his stay here in Dhaka.

A visibly tired Wolfensohn, who travelled 23 hours to reach Dhaka, said he would be in a better position after seeing a number of projects and comment during a planned press conference on October 17.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria told newsmen the government was very happy to welcome the World Bank chief and hoped that the relations between the Bank and Bangladesh would be strengthened by the visit.

He described the World Bank as 'friend in need' and said the donor agency had extended its support to the country's struggle against poverty for many years.

He hoped that the partnership between the World Bank and the country would grow further in the years to come.

World Bank officials in Dhaka said Wolfensohn's visit to Bangladesh is the third by a WB president after Robert McNamara and Louis Preston.

Government officials rate the visit as very important in framing policies for the Bank's future lending activities and related matters in Bangladesh which requires support from the donor.

The World Bank is one of the largest multilateral donors to the country and Wolfensohn's visit is expected to result in a more active role of the agency in the future development endeavours of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh borrows mostly from the International Development Association (IDA), the Bank's soft-loan window which provides interest-free credit to the poor countries.

Bangladesh has been a member of the World Bank since 1972 and received cumulative commitments to-date of 7.5 billion US dollars for 161 projects.

In fiscal 1997, which ended in June, credits to Bangladesh totalled 321.1 million US dollars for three projects. Today, the Bank's active bankrolling portfolio for Bangladesh includes 24 projects, totalling more than 1.82 billion dollars.

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Britain's Queen Elizabeth II chats with Indian President KR Narayanan (right) as Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral (left) looks away during the Queen's official welcome ceremony at the presidential palace in New Delhi yesterday. The arrival of the Queen on a week-long visit was marred by an alleged remark by Gujral describing Britain as "a third-rate power." — AP/UNB photo

Some changes in admin

By Staff Correspondent

Some transfers were made at the top level of administration yesterday, according to a PID handout.

Secretary, Cultural Affairs Ministry, Syed Yousuf Hussain was transferred to Defence Ministry while Chairman, Land Appeal Board, Azad Ruhul Amin was transferred as Secretary, Disaster Management and Relief Ministry.

Mahfuzul Islam, Additional Secretary, Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry, was made acting Secretary of Jute Ministry while Dr Shamsuzzaman Majumder, Additional Secretary, Industries Ministry, was transferred to Cultural Affairs Ministry as acting Secretary.

The transfer order of Abdul Hamid Chowdhury from the Food Ministry to Defence Ministry as Secretary was cancelled.

Abdul Mannan Howlader, Principal, Planning and Development Academy, was transferred to BIWTA as its Chairman on deputation. Azizul Haq, an officer on special duty at the Establishment Ministry, was made Principal of Planning and Development Academy.

Managing Director of Bangladesh Shipha Bank, Shamsuzzaman Chowdhury, was transferred on deputation to Tariff Commission as its Chairman.

Former Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Mahbubur Rahman, was appointed, on contract, as Managing Director of Sonali Bank for two years.

D-8 Executive Director in city

Development-8 Executive Director Ayhen Kamel arrived in the city yesterday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh to discuss implementation of the forum's action plans, reports UNB.

Bangladesh is one of the members of the D-8, an economic bloc, born in a summit of eight OIC countries in Istanbul last June.

Shortly after his arrival in the afternoon, Kamel held an official talk with Secretary (Economic Affairs) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs M Aminul Islam on implementation of programmes of the newly launched intercontinental cooperation.

Aminul Islam is one of the commissioners of the D-8 forum from Bangladesh side.

Kamel is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today.

During the visit, he will also meet State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and other officials.

Indo-Bangla border confce begins in city today

A five-day Indo-Bangladesh border conference begins today at the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) headquarters in Dhaka, reports UNB.

An eight-member delegation led by the Director General of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) will arrive in Dhaka today to attend the conference, officials said.

Bosnia

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called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

The 6-member army delegation of Bosnia-Herzegovina apprised the Prime Minister of current peaceful situation in the region and asked for help of the Bangladesh government in the reconstruction of the war-torn country.

Ministerial committee

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The minister accused the committee of secretaries — Committee for Decentralisation of Administration — of misinterpreting the LGC report as well as Constitution of the country in its report placed for consideration of the cabinet yesterday, the sources added.

The administration decentralisation committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, was constituted on June 2. Other members of the committee are Secretary of the Local Government Division, Secretary of the Finance Division, Establishment Secretary and Secretary of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry.

The committee was asked to examine the possible implications of implementing the LGC proposals relating to setting up of local bodies and placing of various government departments and offices, including the offices of the DCs and SPs, under the local bodies.

The committee recommended that around 40 offices of 26 different government departments, directorates and autonomous establishments, presently under 14 ministries, be put under union parishes and the proposed upazila and zila parishes.

The committee kept mum on the LGC recommendations for placing the DCs and SPs under the proposed zila parishes, to be run by elected representatives of the people.

The offices proposed to be placed under the local bodies are presently under the ministries of Youth and Sports, Cultural Affairs, Establishments, Fisheries and Live Stock, Health and Family Welfare, Education, Industries, Women and

Escapes accident

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Of them, subedar Abdul Rahim and sepoy Amjad Hossain were rushed to Pabna Police Hospital.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver, Shahjahan. A case was also filed with Santhia thana.

Begum Zia, the former prime minister, however, left for Bogra by her jeep after local people pulled it up onto the road.

Khaleda at Bogra

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tion pledges to the people.

She asked the people to ask the government what it had done for them and the country in its 15 months in power.

Begum Zia blamed the government for ruining the economy by allowing people's money to be plundered through the share market and be funnelled out of the country.

"This government had committed to the farmers to ensure fair price of agri-produces and reduce prices of agri-inputs. Now the farmers are not even getting back their production cost," she said.

Begum Zia said the ruling party pledged that if voted to power they would ensure minimum jute price at Tk 500 per maund, but have totally forgotten this commitment.

The BNP chairperson accused the government of trying to turn the country subservient to 'their foreign masters' and opening the borders to allow entry of all types of Indian goods.

Indian goods have flooded the local markets and almost driven out the domestic products, she said.

After the meeting, Begum Zia visited the residence of Anwar Hossain, who was killed in recent violence at Bogra, and consoled his parents. She assured them to provide all possible assistance.

The BNP chairperson also addressed a workers' meeting at the Bogra circuit house.

At the Jtma ground, a large number of volunteers were piling up scattered corrugated tins, bamboos, iron rods and mattresses.

JMB

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enforcements to fix the defective pier head units were not adequate as was called for by the design requirements.

The designers will also check whether broad gauge rail tracks can be laid over the bridge, originally designed to have only metre gauge tracks.

The designers' comment is crucial so far as the viability or the possibility of having such rail tracks on the bridge," one engineer said referring to the authorities' decision to lay broad gauge tracks along with metre gauge.

Now questions are being raised whether the bridge will really sustain when it will be open for normal traffic.