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National Housing Authority soon New Dhaka city' by 2020: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said National Housing Authority would be formed soon to expand residential facilities across the country, particularly for the underprivileged people, report agencies.

Besides, planned townships would be set up in all district headquarters to reduce the population pressure on the capital and big cities besides establishing a 'New Dhaka City' by 2020.

The Prime Minister said following excess population pressure and in the absence of any planned construction of townships our cities have become almost unfit for human habitation which may cause national disaster at any moment.

She said, to improve civic amenities and healthy atmosphere her government has taken up a programme to establish 'Semi-urban Infrastructure Development Project' in 22 district headquarters. This would said also reduce population pressure on big cities.

The cities of the country has already become inhabitable due to the population pressure, which can be disastrous for the nation," she said while inaugurating the World Habitat Day programmes in the morning.

To mark the World Habitat Day, Housing and Public Works Ministry organised the function at the Osmany Memorial Hall and also arranged a Habitat Fair at the Ramna Park.

This year's theme of the Day is: "Cities for All."

Housing and Public Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Dhaka City Mayor Mohammad Hanif, Housing Secretary Sohel Ahmed and UNDP representative Andre Klab also spoke at the function.

She said under the 'Asrayan' project, government is providing shelter to the homeless people. The government has already approved a proposal for building 3,000 barrack-type houses under the project with an estimated cost of Tk 164 crore.

The number of such houses will be increased in phases, the Prime Minister said, adding that 5,000 barracks will be built to provide homes to 50,000 families. Already, she said, 8,130 families have been provided with shelter in 813 barrack-type houses.

Hasina said the government

Dhaka-Yangon deal to boost business

Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday reached a counter-trade agreement in a package deal to boost trade between the two neighbours, reports UNB.

To this effect, an expert committee comprising representatives from both the countries will be formed.

Officials said the two countries agreed on broad-based counter-trade and some other issues of mutual interest at official talks at the state guesthouse "Padma" yesterday morning.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed led the Bangladesh delegation while visiting Myanmar Minister for Commerce Maj Gen Kyaw Than headed his side in the meeting.

Commerce Secretary Sayed Alamgir Faruque Chowdhury, Industries Secretary KM Izajul Huq, Foreign Secretary M Shafiq Sami, Shipping Secretary Saiful Islam, Jute Secretary Mahfuzul Islam, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo and Bangladesh-Myanmar Business Promotion Council President Rashed Maksud Khan were on the Bangladesh side.

During a two-hour parley, the delegation members expressed their keen interest to increase trade and investment between the two countries.

Giving emphasis on the need for expanding road, river and air linkages between the two neighbours, the two sides reached understanding on a

is implementing the "Adarsha Gram" (model village) Project to stop migration of people from the rural areas and already some 46,505 families have been rehabilitated in 109 model villages.

She said the government has taken another programme to provide low cost houses to rural peasants and decided to build 10,000 such houses. Under the rural/infrastructure development projects, these houses will be given to the farmers who will repay the price on easy terms.

The government has entrusted 29 NGOs with the responsibility to build low cost houses under another unique programme and provided Tk 50 crore as loan to these NGOs. These NGOs are constructing houses for the rural poor, she added.

About the city slum dwellers, the Prime Minister said many people are living subhuman life in the city slums and the government has taken a long term plan to rehabilitate them in a better environment providing homes, work and hygiene.

She said a project of constructing 16,000 flats for slum dwellers is under implementation at Bhasanteek in Mirpur. In Keraniganj, 50 acres of land have been earmarked for constructing "Core House" and in Savar 100 acres of land has been selected for the rehabilitation of the slum people.

For meeting the rising demand of housing in the city, Sheikh Hasina said the government would build flats for the low-income group and distribute those on hire-purchase system.

She said already 4,360 low cost flats have been distributed in Dhaka and 4,282 flats in Chittagong city. Moreover, 500 flats are being constructed in the city's Lalmoni area and another 600 flats in Mirpur. Work on constructing 10,000 flats at Duttapara of Tongi will be started soon, she said.

The Prime Minister said the preliminary work of developing a residential township named "Purbachal" is going on in the northeastern part of the capital. Rajuk is also developing the Jhilmil housing project near Dhaka-Mawa highway.

"We are taking long-term plans to develop cities free from traffic jams and with all civic facilities."

Hartal observed 5-day protest programme in Sherpur

SHERPUR, Oct 4: The liaison committee of four-party alliance here today announced a five-day programme to protest the killing of BNP's front organisation leader Bidyut Talukdar, reports UNB.

The alliance will hold protest meetings tomorrow and on Saturday.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the Saturday's meeting at New Market.

The alliance enforced a day-long hartal in the district today.

BNP claimed that Bidyut, a local leader of Jatiyatabadi Shechchha Sebok Dal, was killed in police firing during a fierce clash between police and pro-hartal activists.

Meanwhile, Bidyut was buried at Chapatoli graveyard in the town after *namaz-e-janaza* in front of BNP office in Raghunath area.

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"We are taking long-term plans to develop cities free from traffic jams and with all civic facilities."

By Court Correspondent

Charges were framed in the Abdur Rob Serniabat murder case against 16 accused at the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Judge Amar Kumar Roy fixed October 19, 21, 24 and 26 for cross-examination of the witnesses.

Some unruly army officers killed Abdur Rob Serniabat, along with seven members of his family, on August 15, 1975.

Six of the 16 charge-sheeted accused, including Taheruddin Thakur were produced before the court yesterday. The remaining 10, including Lt. Col. Shariful Huq Dalim are absconding.

Special public prosecutor Serajul Huq and Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Quamrul Islam appeared for the state while T.M. Akbar, Sharafuddin Mukul and Mahbubur Rahman for the accused.

Official sources said Myanmar agreed to extend stay of Bangladeshi businessmen to 7 days and the sphere of their movements up to Sittwe from Maungdau.

Following a bilateral trade agreement struck in 1994, Bangladesh's business travellers can stay in Maungdau 72 hours after crossing Teknaf thana area this afternoon.

The dead was identified as Lalmuddin 38.

Police and witnesses said Lalmuddin was sitting in a shop when the armed gang numbering 12 on board two auto-rickshaw arrived there and fired at him indiscriminately.

Fatally injured Lalmuddin was rushed to the Narayanganj Hospital where the attending doctor declared him dead.

Police said the victim was involved in dacoity and hijacking in the area. Several cases were lodged against the victim with Siddirganj thana.

A case was lodged in connection with the murder. Police arrested five people — Raju, Rajib, Santa, Khaton and Shanzaz — for their alleged involvement with the murder.

Pirates attack Panamanian ship at Ctg port

CHITTAGONG, Oct 4: Armed pirates attacked a foreign ship at outer anchorage of Chittagong Port early today and took away some anchoring materials, reports UNB.

Police said pirates came in an engine boat and attacked the Panamanian flag-carrier, MB Ritz and took away rope, hook and some other materials.

The ship arrived at Chittagong Port two months back, carrying rice for a private firm. It was sent to the outer anchorage after the importer refused to take the consignment saying the rice was substandard.

A case was filed with Bandar police in this connection.



— Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Plan to build 10,000 low-cost houses at Duttapara

By Staff Correspondent

With urban housing shortage currently running into five million, the government is planning to construct about 10,000 low cost houses at Duttapara on the outskirts of the city by 2005.

Public Works Department (PWD) engineers said apart from the planned 10,000 units, some other government projects are at "conceptual stage". These include proposed towns at Keraniganj and Savar.

The Duttapara project on 70 acres of land on the northern side of the Open University campus has been approved by the ECNEC.

Amjad was killed likely for helping police arrest the local terrorists. He was always vocal against terrorists, police said.

But other sources said Amjad was killed as a sequel to intra-party rivalry.

None was arrested in this regard till filing of this report tonight.

Serniabat murder: Charges framed against 16

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A case was filed with Bandar police in this connection.

Tension was prevailing in the town and no case was filed till filing of this report.

One of the many colourful rallies in the city brought out yesterday by different organisations to mark the Child Rights Week.

— Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

JU students submit memo

Open JU, withdraw enhanced fees

By JU Correspondent

Students of Jahangirnagar University submitted a memorandum to the Education Minister yesterday demanding, among other things, reopening of the university and withdrawal of the enhanced admission fees for first year honours classes.

They announced that the students would go for a token hunger strike near the Jatiya Press Club on Thursday at 10 am and form a 'human chain' on DU campus on October 9 to press their demands.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation brought out a procession near the High Court intersection and held a rally on DU campus yesterday in support of the demands of JU students.

Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya has started a 'signature collection and mass contact programme' in demand for withdrawal of increased admission fees at JU.

Meanwhile, a JU Syndicate member told The Daily Star the university authorities have made a 'list of 18 students involved in the recent movement' and would serve show-cause notice on them. After examining their answers, the disciplinary committee would decide punitive action against them, he said yesterday seeking anonymity.

The agitating students held a

Mintoo's move to strike political consensus

Star Report

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo has sought cooperation from leaders of the apex chamber to evaluate the current political situation in the country and find a way out involving 'conscious and responsible citizens.'

The two-hour work stoppage will end on Wednesday, said a press release issued by Khulna chapter of BMA.

The BMA has demanded an investigation into the incident and immediate withdrawal of the KDA chairman Brigadier (Retd) Monzur Alam "for ordering the demolition".

When contacted, the chairman of KDA denied the charge saying that only three medicine shops attached to