

# Urban Life Becoming Increasingly Insecure

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**MAHFUZ ANAM:** There is a very strong feeling among journalists that you are using your position as a political opposition, to always blame the government and use it as a pretext not to do anything yourself. Would you like to answer this question? There are certain powers that the Mayor has himself. Are you using these to the full?

**HANIF:** You have given me another chance to speak my mind. I never have the attitude to attack the government in my talks. I have never done in the past, never do so now and will not do so in the future. But if the Japanese grant of three crore seventy lac given for mosquito eradication is not given to me by the government, will I not say anything? Will I remain silent despite the fact that it has been stated that this money has been given to the City Corporation for the project to eradicate mosquitoes from Dhaka City? This was approved in the ADP, at the pre-ECNEC meeting, but at the ECNEC this was not given to me. Should I not ask about this? If you can increase the annual grant for other corporations, what wrong has Dhaka City Corporation done? I don't want anything extra. All I want is my due. I never simply criticise the government for the sake of criticism. I simply held up the budget and pointed to the figures which showed that other corporations were receiving increased grants, so why was the allocation for my corporation being reduced? I shall definitely speak out.

**MAHFUZ ANAM:** We appreciate your forthrightness here, where the budget is cut. But the other side of my question is that the powers that you have already, are you actually utilising these to the full?

**HANIF:** Yes, I am working to the limit of my limited capacity. I will not claim that I have been 100 per cent successful. I have failed. I have clearly stated that my first year in office, now 14 months, has been a probation year. Next year will be my productive year. But I have tried my utmost. But if the government cooperates a bit, the work will be better.

**PROFESSOR SHAHIDUL AMIN FROM BUET:** It is true that Dhaka City is riddled with problems, but I have noticed that some sectors are not well defined. For example, there are some problems in the RAJUK manifesto and in the Dhaka City Corporation too. These two organisations do not take into the matter clearly or feel it is not their responsibility. One such problem is the slums. In 1988 there were about nine lac slum dwellers in Dhaka City. This has increased to about 12 to 15 lacs. RAJUK normally says that the slums are not

countries such museums are in the City Halls, but there is no such museum in my city hall. So, to meet that demand, I am giving a small space in the City Corporation office, for the time being, for the Dhaka City Museum. Though this is a 16 to 17 storied building, we still do not have a lift. When a lift is installed, this will be expanded so that people can come to the Nagar Bhaban to know about Dhaka.

**OBSERVER 2:** What about house to house collection of garbage?

**HANIF:** Yes, we are examining this and have a pilot project in some areas of Gulshan and Dhanmondi, but this will take some time.

**OBSERVER 3:** And about?

**HANIF:** We will do our utmost. But as I said, there is a lack of basic civic awareness. We must develop civic awareness among the public with the help of youth fronts and others. As I said before, all the autonomous bodies must get together and work in coordinated efforts to resolve the city's problems.

**OBSERVER 4:** Tell us about privatisation of garbage collection.

**HANIF:** I am interested in this. Many have given me suggestions in this regard. I would hand this over to anyone who would be able to do this viably.

**OBSERVER 5:** (From Department of Architecture) About roads?

**HANIF:** The responsibility lies with RAJUK, the City Corporation and with the Roads and Highways Department. But all roads are not under Dhaka City Corporation. Near Kurmitola airport, for example, some of the roads are under the Cantonment Board. There is nothing I can do there. Otherwise, the maintenance and everything is our responsibility.

I want to announce that we are about to fulfill a long-standing demand of our cultural quarters. An open theatre is being established in front of Gulistan Shishu Park and then at other sites.

once RAJUK hands them over to us. I want to repair the roads but to ensure that the roads are not dug up all through the year, a coordinated body is required.

I want to announce that we are about to fulfill a long-standing demand of our cultural quarters. An open theatre is being established in front of Gulistan Shishu Park and then at other sites.

**MAHFUZ ANAM:** We congratulate you on this initiative.

**THOU REQUEST MIR MUBASHAR ALL, Head of the Department of Architecture to address the audience on the problems of urbanisation.**

**MIR MUBASHAR ALL:** I shall start by stating to you the case study of the road that goes through BUET, by the side of Dhaka University. The road is presently known as the Penetrator Road. The old railway line passes through this way, so it might have been called the Rail Road. The railroad on both sides was a haven for squatting people and in the sixties accommodated over a hundred thousand people. When the railway station was shifted and the movement of trains stopped, it became even more dense with squatters. In 1971 during the Liberation War, these squatters suffered the most, were made examples of indiscriminate killing and torture. The whole area was set aflame. Even then the settlers persisted, only to be thrown out and shifted to three locations at the periphery of the city in 1973. Some remained and others gathered. Gradually a wide road was constructed and the footpaths were paved, making it difficult for squatters. But the settlers persevered on the narrow tract of land at the edge of the footpath.

To fill the cup of their miseries, first Dhaka University and then BUET extended their boundaries and illegally grabbed eight to ten feet of land all along the edge of the road, pushing the squatters to the hard metal footpath. Even then the settlers didn't go.

The last nail was struck by the present truly democratic elected government, under the leadership of the former Mayor. On March 15, 1993 bulldozers were brought in and the shacks of the basti-dwellers were demolished and squatters were ousted for the final time. The bulldozers were hardly necessary to dismantle the thatched shacks. It was just a show of strength and power. The squatters had no sympathisers, nobody raised an eyebrow. Even the newspapers did not raise their voices. As a matter of fact, all were happy to be free of the eyesore. I give this case study to show the attitude of the people and the administration of Dhaka towards the settlers who do not have a piece of land or abode to call their own. They are to be pushed and pushed finally to be thrown off the cliff. Human dignity is at its lowest.

This was further depicted by the government when they were about to deny voting rights to the squatters. They were at first not being registered and given IDs.

The first step for solving housing for very low income citizens is to impart human dignity to the poor. The second step is probably to develop a political will. Political parties have not so far made urban housing or land policy their platform. They have not given any serious thought to the problem. They have only given lip service with cheap slogans like "Shelter for All".

Urban housing, especially for the poor, is a very serious problem and should be dealt within all seriousness by the political parties. Dhaka needs more than 50 thousand dwelling units to be built every year. Not half as many are being built. Where are all

these people going? They are either on the streets as squatters, or are being packed like sardines in whatever shelter is available. Room density is over eight persons per room. Dhaka is bursting at the seams. Unless some well thought out explosive measures are taken, it might explode. Save Dhaka before it explodes.

**MAHFUZ ANAM:** Now I call on Mr. Amin Nishat to talk about the drainage and water-logging of the city.

**AMIN NISHAT:** Thank you. I will first try to outline some of the major studies and their findings. First I will briefly try to give you the outline of the master plan for flood control, drainage and mitigation of the water-logging problem. Then I will raise four or five questions where I feel things are not working well.



Prof. Dr. Amin Nishat

Immediately after the flood of 1988, a report was published hurriedly. A Dutch expert Mr. Janssen had only ten days to prepare the report. That was October 1988. Based on that report in 1989, a kind of sketchy report for the flood protection of Dhaka was prepared. This went into immediate implementation in March 1989. And that has created a lot of problems because it didn't pay enough attention to water-logging.

When Flood Action Plan studies were taken up we had a component called FAP 8 which had two sub-components, 8A and 8B. Sub-component 8B was funded by ADB, wherein the problem of the western part of Dhaka City was looked into and 8A prepared a master plan for Greater Dhaka. Greater Dhaka is defined as an area under that programme which includes Savar, Tongi part of Narsingdi, the area bounded by Turag, Balu and Tongi. They had a projection of the population upto 2010, tried to find out where the people could move, and developed an integrated plan from drainage and irrigation. The central part of Dhaka City bounded by the river Turag, Buriganga, Lakshya and Balu, this central part is raised like the back of a tortoise. You come to Syedabad from Buriganga Bridge and take the new road Rampura, from Baridhara to airport, to come to Tongi, the two sides are sloping. The Western part in which 87 per cent of the population presently live and 95 per cent of the commercial activities take place, that was taken up on a priority basis.

The main problem here has been drainage congestion due to hurriedly constructed embankment on the flood wall. After completion of the pump station in Kalyanpur, a lot of problems have been solved, but issues remain. For the western part a feasibility study has been completed with JICA funding and a master plan for the rest of the area has been completed.

To come to the issues, the point I am trying to make is we do have a kind of documentation. It may not be perfect, but it can be a basis from which we can go ahead.

The first issue is, the embankments which have been built could very well serve as a bypass from Tongi to Mirpur Bridge. Similarly, if an embankment is built from Tongi to Narayanganj, following the Balu river, that can very well serve as a bypass on the other side. In various meetings where representatives of all ministries and all organisations were present this was raised, but somehow it didn't work.

The second point is, for the western point there was a proposal to improve 21 khs. Now Dhaka has a good natural drainage system from before. That is being lost. All the pump stations, whether in Ibrahimpur or in Kalyanpur or other places, would fail to work if the retarding points which are based on the existing low-lying areas are filled up and encroachment takes place. We see a lot of excavation on the road. These are the storm sewers that are being constructed. I'm afraid these will all be inoperative soon because the designs are based on the wetlands, remaining wetlands and marshy lands. If they are encroached upon, after ten years the diameter would have to be enlarged.

Lastly, we have seen in these documents that anything we do regarding flood protection, drainage or water-logging, must have a good relationship with sanitation programme, solid waste management, slum and squatter improvement and also management of toxic and hazardous waste. In these reports, how those can be handled has been reported but I see no effort being made to handle everything in an integrated way.

**MAHFUZ ANAM:** Professor Muntasar Mamun will be bringing a new dimension into our discussion - the historical and the social issues.

**MUNTASIR MAMUN:** It will be a hard task to highlight the historical and social issues in just three minutes. I will just put forward two proposals for discussion. First, historically waterways were very much a part of Dhaka City, with which social and cultural life and the environment are very much integrated. The Mughals took great care of the canals. At that time the canals were used for sewerage, for travel and for the environment, and this all had an effect on the

environment. But from 1947 till now, we see the canals are gradually filling up. This is resulting in water-logging, something we had never heard of in Mughal times. We only heard of flooding during the British period. The canals had served as sewers. Today we don't have any designs or plans of those canals to show us where they were and where they led.

But what has gone has gone. Now, all the low-lying areas of Dhaka City, the water bodies, like the one at Rampura, like the site where RAJUK wants to set up 'Nikunja', from Mirpur Bridge, all these areas should be preserved and protected. This will bring on an improvement socially, culturally and recreationally.

The lakes at Dhanmondi, Baridhara and Banani have been partially filled. Which ever government has come into power so far, seems to take on the land as their personal property, to do with as they please. I don't know how far this is true, but the open field in Uttara has been allotted as plots to MPs who have changed parties. You have seen for yourself, Zahurul Islam has taken up so much land in Banani. I wonder if any land or water bodies will be able to remain intact with Zahurul Islam around. This is really an alarming matter. He has filled up every place. In Tejaon where he has filled up a place, to its right the water body still may be protected. RAJUK or some other authority may be able to consider this.

Recently I hear the army has proposed that the land upto Aricha, from Mirpur Bridge, should be filled for a residential area. Many on the committees for the City have even agreed. I don't know how the army can give such a proposal when there are so many other organisations, the municipality and others for this purpose. These are alarming issues demanding our attention because if any such plan is really submitted from powerful quarters and is approved, then there will be nothing left of the city.



Prof. Dr. Muntasar Mamun

We have a proposal concerning the large stretch of land from Bijoy Sarani to Mirpur which is under the army. A cultural centre can be set up here. A centre can be set up for public meetings near Mirpur. We can use the place to grow all the kinds of trees native to Bangladesh. I realise neither the army nor the central government will do anything about this. Pikhana itself would be an excellent venue for public meetings.

Secondly, our social issues. We have no cultural or social recreation. Two matters are attached to our development, culture, environment and social life. One is Dhaka Cantonment and the other is Pikhana. There is about 3000 acres of land under Dhaka Cantonment and I do not know how many acres under Pikhana. If these two centres are not shifted from here, it will not be possible to save central Dhaka. We will simply not get the extra space needed for social recreation or cultural entertainment. But we don't hear this from any town planner or from any organisation. There simply cannot be two massive army centres within a city. It must be suggested how these can be shifted.

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**MAHFUZ ANAM:** Now I request Mr. Rabul Hasan, President, Institute of Architecture to speak on housing development.

**RABUL HASAN:** My topic of discussion is realistic development in Dhaka. The realistic development of Dhaka is considered as a living phenomenon. The urban living pattern in Dhaka City has got an evolutionary process in terms of social and economic considerations. Ours is an agro-based society and urbanisation is yet to come to the country in full swing. Coherence and unity is the common bondage of our rural society, centering around the joint family consideration. With influx of modern concept through industrial revolution, the monolithic attitude of the joint family structure began to shatter. Since independence and after receiving modern education, people continued to stay in the villages because working areas or living areas were not made by the rural facilities. They had to leave behind their ancestral village for the high standard of living available in urban towns. They can work there and live with all the modern amenities and useful facilities. The sloped thatched or tin roofed house with a courtyard in an atmosphere of congenial harmony is

not there. Instead flats or apartments with small areas are produced in a selfish self-centred community. There was bamboo, wood, grass or tin. Now they have brick, concrete and glass etc. There were free and abundant spaces, limited with a far horizon. Now it is truncated, compartmental, the site is limited within four walls. At best there is only lanes and by-lanes, congested roads with people, cars etc. The construction of multi-storied buildings has to be there to accommodate more people and more space with no land on the ground level. This type of culmination began from the independence period and still continues.



Rabul Hussain

Every country of the world which is developing the urbanisation process has got a proper planning for every city. It is there to face the unprecedented and fast urban growth so that it can cope with the future for the betterment of urban life. But we cannot handle it the way we do in our country. All the cities are growing but are like helpless orphans. It is true that those apartments are only for middle and higher income group people. They want to live in and near the city centre. This is why the land has got no way but to earn the potentiality to have the multi-apartment buildings. It is like a multi-urban village.

Agriculture is called the first revolution while urbanisation is the second in human civilization. We are now in the urban process of transition as other countries of the world. But the question is whether the architects, planners, politicians and policy makers are thinking enough with a realistic and objective approach so that the land can be handled with care and foresight. Realistic development is not a separate issue in the urban scenario. But in our country it is another situation altogether. In the comprehensive city planning it has no identity or proper mention and so we can see its deplorable height all on a sudden, just in front of the road. It has no zoning priority, it is simply an omnipresent structure which can be built anywhere. It is not known whether it has a proper density ratio, where it will be built or whether there is a proper approach to the site or not. It is not known whether the area has enough essential service facilities like water, gas etc.

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Let me quote the poem 'Apartment House' by Gerald Rapody. 'A filing cabinet of human lives/ Where people swarm like bees in tunnel hives/ Each to his own self in the towered comb/ Identical and cramped and we call it home.' In spite of that, every owner seems to be satisfied. They seem to be very happy and have achieved a sense of security. They now truly belong to the country or to the nation by this very ownership. All these logistic facilities have been provided by the real estate developer. They are serving the cause of the privileged well-to-do persons. It has become a lucrative and attractive business. Real estate developers are considered very honoured and dignified businessmen. You don't have anything against them as long as they abide by the rules of RAJUK, and as long as they follow the city planning code, and as long as they follow the architect's and engineer's designs and satisfy the needs and requirements of the users. They are serving the society of the rich people, they are changing the city horizons by building the high rise apartments. Their business is not for the poor and underprivileged. We do not expect this as they are not social workers. Our only expectation is that, wherever and whatever they build, it must be adjusted with the surroundings and the locality. It must be functional to the users. It must be aesthetically nice to look at. It must be absorbed in the comprehensive city planning. It must be a place of attraction to the children and elderly, with proper landscaping, car parking etc. It should not cause obstruction to anybody's activities. We know such advice has no meaning at all unless the concerned authorities like the architects, engineers, planners and policy makers

of RAJUK do their best to guide and force the real estate developer to do the right thing. Everybody concerned must render their responsibilities properly.

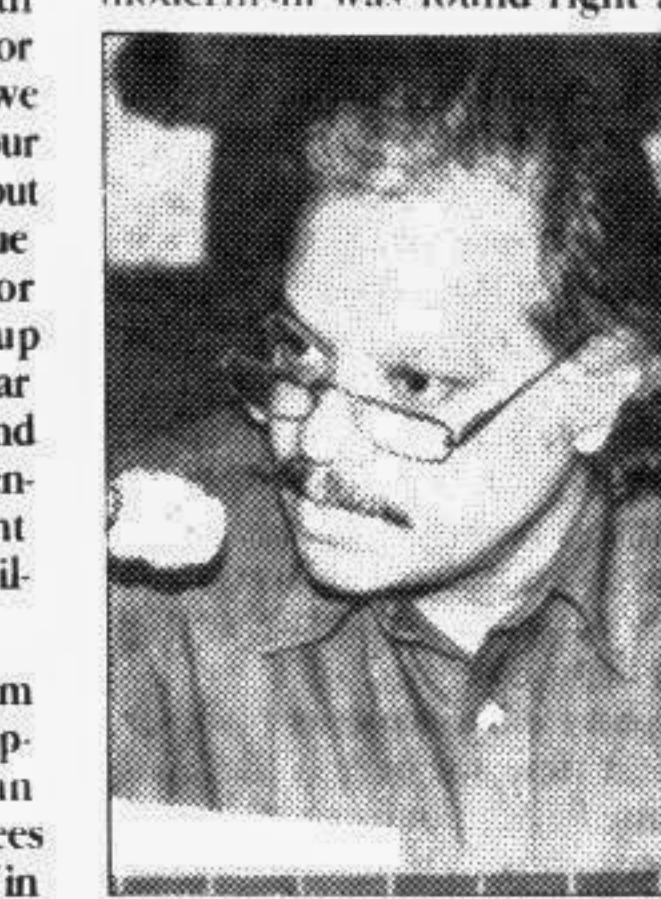
The most important thing nowadays is that everybody should be allowed to do his duty properly, everybody should be given his due share. Everybody's suggestion should be taken into consideration otherwise what is the point in having such discussions as this one on Save Dhaka? There has been and will be many seminars like this but unless and until resolutions from such conferences are implemented, which is never done in our country, this will be just wastage of time and energy.

So all my observations on real estate development discussed here today should be taken into serious consideration. It should be implemented by the relevant authorities. I appeal through this very timely round table conference on Save Dhaka, that all the suggestions made by all the experts on various problems and issues must be properly projected so that it can be raised above academic discussion and can come into a reality otherwise we will not be able to save our dear city Dhaka in any way. We can do nothing but shed a square-shaped tear as the poet in 'Squares and Angles': 'Houses in a row, houses in a row, houses in a row/Squares, squares, squares, houses in a row/People already square souls, ideas in a row and angles on their backs/ I myself shed a tear yesterday which was, good heavens, square!'

**MAHFUZ ANAM:** Before we start shedding square tears, may I now invite Mr. Shamsul Wares to speak on popular architecture.

**MR. WARES:** I am talking on contemporary notions in architecture, cultural indeterminism and visual chaos. In contrast to nature, cities are built by man. This building of cities is, and has always been, one of man's greatest achievements. The form of the city is determined by the multiplicity of the decisions made by the inhabitants of the city. These decisions are the result of their collective faith, wisdom and emotion and thereby the form of the city becomes a pitiless indicator of the state of organisation of the people who live in it. The form of a city is primarily perceived by its mass and its space which are the basic ingredients of architecture. In other words, the form of the city is organised, divided, composed and articulated by its architecture. So for a city dweller, architecture is not a matter to look at, but to be in. It draws him into its depths and involves him in an experience shared by all who work and move about in it. Obviously the quality of living in a city is primarily affected by the quality of its architecture. So one of the prime concerns of architecture is to heighten the drama of living.

Although architecture is supposed to be developed in response to the socio-cultural, geographic and economic context of a given country, in the contemporary world, due to globalisation of knowledge and information, many external influences shape the architecture of our city. The global development of theories in architecture by scholars and practicing architects, do divide designers into tenets of different schools of thought. Modernism in architecture that developed in Europe and North America around the 1920s not only championed above all other nations in architecture, but the very rise of modern architecture as such began to be understood as inevitable because modernism was found right as it



Shamsul Wares

Although Dhaka is not cosmopolitan in nature, architecture has become more and more pluralistic and a growing visual chaos seems to be becoming inevitable due to lack of proper cultural orientation of the people and the general loss of humanity in the society as a result of continued political and economical failure to uplift the quality of life of the mass. At this stage we can only hope and envisage that with the rise of socio-economic and political stability of the country, architecture will take its right course because, after all, architecture is the mirror of society.

could match and mirror the industrial world. Modern architecture was evolved primarily as reaction to over-dressed decorations of art nouveau of the later 19th century prevalent in Europe. Modern architecture, with a view to meet mass production, a new demand of the industrial society, deliberately cut off all ties with the historical past. It was based on the basic planes, lines and dots, but with a greater emphasis on proportion and scale. Modern architecture was not considered a style but an appropriate response to the

functional demands of 20th century life. Modern architecture was also found to be morally right because it told no lies and used its materials honestly and sought to satisfy real rather than imaginary needs. Approached by an artist of genius, modern architecture was transformed through a complex framework of abstract ideas, as challenging and as refreshing as the changing styles of its contemporary Pablo Picasso.

By the 1960s, modern architecture seemed to have achieved a universal and ultimate solution to all questions pertaining to architecture. Architect Mazharul Islam, as an exponent of modern architecture first introduced the language of modernism through his work in the Institute of Fine Arts in Dhaka University campus. Architect Islam, through this work, along with his later works like Dhaka University Library, Jahangirnagar University campus, etc., was able to promote modern architecture in Bangladesh, maintaining the purity of form, expressive value of materials, climatic responses and structural clarity. Mazharul Islam actually pioneered a fresh beginning in curbing the architecture scenario in 20th century Dhaka.

In the late 1970s, modern architecture gradually became questionable primarily because of a sense of loss of tradition, loss of identification, and due to cheap quality of construction mainly by the property developers, and post modernism, as a new trend, began to flourish where a historic sense gave rise to symbols, semantics and syntax in architecture derived from linguistics. Architects began to look for inspiration from various sources of history. Throughout the 1980s, architects had been endeavouring to anchor architecture to its tradition and began to view their work as part of a trend of historical development. This new trend although gave architects a wider scope of selection, could not generate genuine architecture. Most of it seemed superfluous and inconsistent. The influence of post modernism seemed active in Dhaka from where the young architect attempted to create a culturally genuine architecture for Bangladesh, but in reality most attempts were to attain some semblance with the past instead of being able to transform what was the spirit of the past.

Some architects have enjoyed greater freedom and instead of searching inspiration from our own history, they have directly copied the classic Greek architecture, with full order of the columns and such. This kind of architecture not only ridicules our culture, but attempts to debase ourselves from our cultural roots. But ironically, the owners of such houses are often found to be proud possessors. The recently built BDR gate in the playful Greco-Roman classic style, the recently renovated RAJUK Bhaban and the newly built Nagar Bhaban, inspired by the colonial English architecture, and many buildings that possess the revivalism of European historical styles are buildings highly detrimental to our cultural development. Often these are built on popular taste which testify the poor aesthetic understanding of our general people as well as the growing professionalism of our architects who failed in their commitment to their occupation.

Although contemporary architecture began with more promise and sensitivity, the abstract principles of modernism in the 1950s and 60s, architecture in Bangladesh today may be viewed as artifacts, individual man-made structures standing in space that fail to evolve as a social process having the potential to generate urban values and culture. Although Dhaka is not cosmopolitan in nature, architecture has become more and more pluralistic and a growing visual chaos seems to be becoming inevitable due to lack of proper cultural orientation of the people and the general loss of humanity in the society as a result of continued political and economical failure to uplift the quality of life of the mass. At this stage we can only hope and envisage that with the rise of socio-economic and political stability of the country, architecture will take its right course because, after all, architecture is the mirror of society.

**MAHFUZ ANAM:** Can I now invite Dr. Abdul Quayyum, Associate Professor, BUET? He will speak on planning and transportation issues.

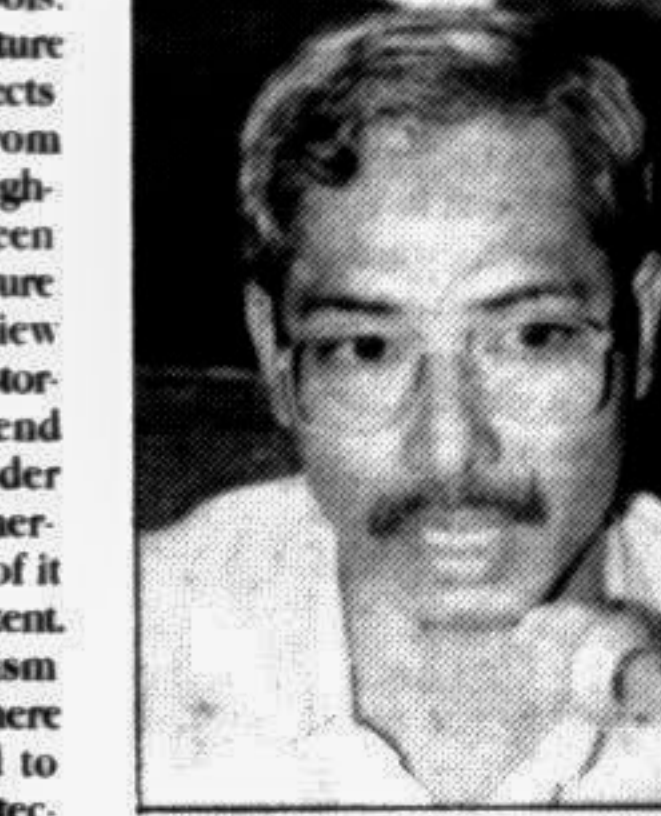
**DR. ABDUL QUAYYUM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, BUET:** We are very concerned about the major problems of Dhaka City. The Honourable Minister has already mentioned some of them. Most of these problems are multi-dimensional in nature and as such we must admit there is no simple and magic solution to these. Nevertheless, there is a general complaint that unplanned growth is the root of many of these problems. In response, I will try to touch on a few general issues related to urban planning and transportation, as these have been considered to be the major sectors.

First, let us focus on some realities to find an answer to the general complaints. What is the legal basis of our planning system? There is no legal basis for a comprehensive system of urban development planning. We have legal provisions for a type of rigid land planning. The concept is particularly inappropriate in a situation of rapid change and largely uncontrollable growth. To deal with the current dynamic situation, we need a more flexible and responsible kind of planning system.

Next, we come to institutional weaknesses. Planning has always remained a peripheral activity of the development authorities. Even if it were not so, the situation would not have been much different. Without an implementation mechanism, any planning exercise is of little worth. If we consider a multi-sectoral urban

plan, RAJUK, which is supposed to be the development authority of Dhaka City, has no control over the numerous implementing agencies who can actually implement such a plan. Under the present institutional arrangements, it is almost impossible to carry out a comprehensive development plan. As the Honourable Minister already mentioned, RAJUK is now preparing a comprehensive development plan for Dhaka to accommodate future growth. A draft structure plan has already been released. Different options have been evaluated in that exercise. It didn't appear to be a feasible option to accommodate such growth on the other side of Buriganga. However, some other agencies have already planned a few bridges and other infrastructure development to take the growth over on to the other side. Obviously, if such strategic elements are implemented, it would change the spatial pattern of the growth process envisioned in the structure plan.

Furthermore, an overwhelming sectoral bias in our planning system makes it difficult for the implementing agencies to coordinate their actions. Again, a very recent example can be cited, as reported in a local daily. The construction work of a pedestrian overpass has been suspended after completion of 40 per cent of the work due to the complaints of another agency. Interestingly, the objection concerned another project of the same transportation sector. When a project of the



Prof. Dr. A S Abdul Quayyum

What is the legal basis of our planning system? There is no legal basis for a comprehensive system of urban development planning. We have legal provisions for a type of rigid land planning. The concept is particularly inappropriate in a situation of rapid change and largely uncontrollable growth. To deal with the current dynamic situation, we need a more flexible and responsible kind of planning system. Without an implementation mechanism, any planning exercise is of little worth. If we consider a multi-sectoral urban plan, RAJUK, which is supposed to be the development authority of Dhaka City, has no control over the numerous implementing agencies who can actually implement such a plan. Under the present institutional arrangements, it is almost impossible to carry out a comprehensive development plan.

same sector could not be coordinated, how can you expect coordination when different sectors are involved? It is our great pleasure to know that the Honourable Mayor of DCC is well aware of the issues and subscribes to the same point of view. We need new kinds of institutional arrangements to deal with these problems. Anyhow, new institutions will not grow overnight as we can well understand. Alternatively, a partial solution can be found through the development of a GIS (Geographical Information System) based planning and information system. This type of system can record all the future development proposals of all the agencies with their locations and alignments. The expected time of implementation and on line access to this information can help inter-agency coordination as well as agencies in preparing their own plans.

Along with this, for better management of growth, land readjustment projects should be immediately undertaken. This is probably the best planning instrument that we can employ to deal with the present situation and is also expected to be more acceptable to the society than any other alternative plans that we may have.

Now I come to transportation. Do we know who is responsible for the city's transportation system? As a whole, no one is. Fragment responsibilities lie with many agencies. No one looks after the overall situation. So there again institutional weakness remains a major barrier. In fact, not much can be expected unless something comes through in this line.

Another hard fact is that only 18 per cent of all people in the city use motorised modes of transportation. In this situation, how can significant improvement be expected by constructing flyovers at different locations?

We know that the four major identified problems of Dhaka City are traffic management, law enforcement, management of rickshaw traffic and public transportation. To address these problem areas, we need