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Down to Earth

City's satellite township projects and their implementation

By A S M Nurunnabi

It is quite plain that the Dhaka city has come under the deadweight of over population. The issue of dispersal of some of its population away from the metropolis by the generally adopted processes has assumed great urgency.

The generally adopted alternatives may be building an overhead network of express ways or by-passes or going underground for the purpose. The third alternative is undertaking satellite township projects around the city. All these alternatives could be adopted together, but the all-important question is: what will the funds come from for such projects? Obviously the funds constraints will put a drag on the implementation of any of such projects.

Keeping all this in view, we find that RAJUK has drawn up a plan to build new townships and satellite towns to disperse the city population and ease pressure on civic services. The plan includes construction of 10 square miles between the Sitalakha and the Balu Nadi. Purbachal encompasses 14 mouzas in upanaj

and two in Kaliganj thanas. Purbachal will have 30,000 residential plots of 10, 7.5, and 5 katha sizes. It will have a wide range of institutional and service facilities and civic amenities. Five thousand families affected by the project will be rehabilitated in the project area at cost price. New industries in the earmarked areas will provide employment opportunities to the residents.

Jheelmeel, another RAJUK township project covers 450 acres of land along Mawa Road. It will have 2000 residential plots of 5 and 3 katha sizes. This project will also include normal institutional and service facilities. The project is awaiting approval of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council.

Utara Phase III, a satellite township programme of RAJUK, is to be located on 2100 acres of land at the western side of the existing Model Town. The satellite town will have 15,000 residential plots of 5 and 3 katha sizes. This township will also provide normal facilities and utility services and civic amenities.

East Baridhara Integrated Township programme is RAJUK's another satellite township plan envisaging housing settlement on 5,000 acres of land. This housing settlement will also be provided with the normal civic amenities and public utility services.

It is reported that RAJUK has set a time-frame of eight years to complete the Purbachal township. It has set 10 years to

complete the Jheelmeel township. Utara Phase III will be completed in five years, while East Baridhara satellite town will require roughly 10 to 13 years to be made ready for habitation.

The Purbachal project is reported to have already made some progress. But the progress so far made is said to be slow. One of the reasons for the slow progress was said to be complications that cropped up in the acquisition proceedings in respect of the area originally proposed for the project. The present government has reportedly taken the initiative in implementing the project by reducing the project area so as to avoid legal complications. And RAJUK has already made payments to the people as compensation for their lands acquired for the project. There is, however, doubt in some quarters whether the time-frame fixed for completion of the project can be adhered to unless the pace of progress is speeded up.

There are pessimists who say that since 1995, we have seen a mixed bag of governments where promises and pledges were made, but few were delivered. The question of paucity of funds, as apprehended by observers, may be always there impeding the progress of the projects. As a consequence, the city's mammoth problem of population will remain unsolved; rather the problem will get more acute and horrendous with the passage of time, turning all our hopes into mere pipe dreams.

Kibria-Panja talks

India to give Rs 200 crore fresh loan

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday requested India to arrange a fresh 200 crore-rupee state credit after utilisation of the present tranche, reports UNB.

"This credit is very helpful in transport sector, for both the countries, particularly for buying railway machinery," he said while talking to the visiting Indian State Minister for External Affairs Ajit Panja at his residence.

Ajit Panja agreed to give a fresh 200 crore-rupee state credit after the utilisation of the current one, an official announcement said.

Kibria also called upon the Indian entrepreneurs to come forward to set up industries in Bangladesh in joint venture or 100 per cent ownership.

During the parity, enhanced economic cooperation between the two countries came up for discussion.

Ajit Panja observed there was ample scope for enhancing economic cooperation between the two countries. He stressed the need for visiting India by Bangladesh trade delegations in order to explore the scope of joint industrial investment.

The visiting Indian Minister called upon the Bangladesh government to accelerate the steps for development of joint economic commission, investment and trade and commerce.

Economic Relations Division secretary Dr Masudul Karim, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dev Mukherjee and Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Mostafa Faruque Muhammad were present there.

Election of JU VC panel today

From JU Correspondent
SAVAR, Jan 21: The election of a three-member panel for selecting Vice-Chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) will be held tomorrow.

Voting will begin at 3 pm at a special session of the university Senate at Senate hall.

Acting Vice-Chancellor Abdul Bayes will chair the session while JU Registrar Mohammad Ali conduct the polls as election commissioner.

The election will be held through secret ballots after proposing the panel from Senate members.

Pro-Awami League and Pro-BNP teachers have announced four panels to contest the election.

Pro-Awami League teachers have announced two separate panels — one led by Acting VC Abdul Bayes and the other by Shahjahan.

Pro-BNP teachers have also announced two separate panels one led by Mustafizur Rahman and the other by Jasimuddin.

Some 83 Senate members out of 93 are expected to cast their votes in the election.

200 officers of 13 BSC ships threaten strike from Feb 1

CHITTAGONG, Jan 21: Over 200 officers of 13 ocean-going ships of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation have threatened an indefinite strike from February 1 if their three-point demand is not met by January 31, reports UNB.

A meeting of Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers Association with its president captain Zahangir Kabir in the chair today finalised the programme.

Their demands include implementation of the proposed remuneration for the officers, service regulation and removing irregularities in payment of salaries.

30 injured as villagers clash in Magura

MAGURA, Jan 21: At least 30 people were injured in a clash between rival villagers at Daribila village in Sreepur thana of the district today, reports UNB.

Police said the trouble began when the supporters of Nazir Mia and Abu Baker attacked each other in the morning.

Both the groups used lethal weapons during an hour-long clash over establishing supremacy in the village.

The injured were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital. Condition of Ahmed Ali, 25, and Fakaruddin, 30, were stated to be critical.

Police arrested Nazir and Baker. Two cases were filed with Sreepur thana in this connection.

DCC sack

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Committee for Public Accounts is probing the charges.

Sources said there are also allegations that Bhuiyan had resorted to 'massive corruption' over payment of bills without making sure that the scheduled work was finished.

The PS is having the axe after he fell out of the mayor's favour, sources said.

Case against Sharif for planning jail-break

KARACHI, Jan 21: Police have registered a case against deposed Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif for planning a jail break in Karachi, police and government officials said today, reports AFP.

The case was registered at a local police station on the complaint of Nusrat Hussain Mangi, superintendent of Landhi prison, where Sharif and others are being held, they said.

Sharif, Saif-ur Rehman, former head of the Accountability Bureau, and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former head of Pakistan International Airlines, were also accused of taking part in planning the jail break.

A senior police official, who did not want to be named, said the plan was unearthed when prison authorities caught the

daughter of one of the accused, Rehman, on January 9 leaving her father's prison with a sketch map of the jail.

"These three people prepared the jail break plan," said Chief Public Prosecutor Raja Qureshi, who is also the Advocate General of southern Sindh province.

Qureshi said Sharif and two others accused in the case could be punished with a maximum 10 years imprisonment, if found guilty.

"Since these are not scheduled offences, the case of jail break would be tried in normal courts and not in the special anti-terrorism courts," he said.

But a lawyer for Sharif, Arshad Khan Jadoon, insisted the former premier was innocent.

"It is a lie. The former premier Mian Nawaz Sharif does

not need to plan for jail break while he is already facing charges in the court," Jadoon said.

"It is just an attempt to humiliate the political leader," he said. "He is innocent and does not need to run away from the prison. It is just a joke."

On Wednesday, a Pakistani anti-terrorism court judge formally charged Sharif, his brother Shahbaz, and five other senior officials with abduction, attempted murder, hijacking and terrorism.

If convicted of the hijacking charge they could face the death penalty.

Sharif pleaded not guilty.

The former premier was ousted in a military coup by army chief General Pervez Musharraf on October 12. He has been held in detention since.

Body of Shibir activist found in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 21: Police today recovered the bullet-ridden body of an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir who was abducted at gunpoint allegedly by his rivals from Zahur Hawkers' Market in the city yesterday.

Police said the body of Md Salauddin, also a student of Haji Mahsin College, was found with bullet wounds at Isapur bridge under Hathazari thana at 9 am today.

Salauddin was kidnapped when he went to Jahur Hawkers' market for shopping, police said.

The death of the Shibir activist sparked tension in the city. Shibir activists staged a demonstration after a funeral rally held at Laldighi Maidan this afternoon. Chittagong district unit of Shibir called for an eight-hour hartal in the city today to protest the killing of its activist.

Shibir blamed the activists of BCL for the murder while BCL denied it.

The body of Salauddin was sent of his village home at Saitkania for burial.

Bullet-injured young man dies at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

A young man, who sustained bullet injuries during a gunfight between two rival groups at Tipu Sultan Road on Wednesday, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The dead was identified as Suruj Mian, 22, son of Hashem Mian, a resident of the city's Sutrapur area.

Suruj was shot in his right chest and abdomen at around 12.45 pm when supporters of late wd commissioner Selim and Islam group clashed to establish supremacy in the area.

Suruj was admitted to the DMCH where he succumbed to injuries yesterday.

2 sacked pilots

From page 1

grounding him. The High Court gave an interim order the same day asking Biman to immediately renew Ishaq's license.

Biman had told the HC that it did not have anything against Ishaq and that it withdrew him from duties on government orders.

The HC after a complete hearing passed its judgement on January 19, 1998, directing the national airline to immediately renew Ishaq's license and restore him to his normal flight duties.

The government did not submit any affidavit or written paper or file before the court. However, the then attorney general verbally mentioned that an intelligence agency has found the petitioner involved in subversive activities.

Biman and the government went to the Supreme Court against the High Court order. But the Supreme Court upheld the HC order on November 3 last year, saying the Biman action against Capt Ishaq was illegal, mala fide, arbitrary and that it was without any lawful authority.

It also ruled out the sabotage charges against Ishaq.

Ishaq delivered the copy of the Supreme Court judgement to Biman in person on January 4.

The same day Biman sent him on retirement and terminated the service of his wife and colleague Yasmin.

Business confce

From page 1

Abdul Awal Mintoo appeared a bit embarrassed after the whole episode and said "He was happy. I am happy because the problem is solved."

After the press conference the commerce minister took the four business leaders along with Mintoo for an audience with the prime minister.

The Businessmen's Conference was arranged by Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) along with other leading business leaders "in the dark" resulting in frustration and division among the business community.

The business community bid to bring together the government and the Opposition to shun confrontational politics appeared to have tumbled as the government had to intervene to mend the rifts which surfaced over the Businessmen's conference scheduled to be held today.

The frustrated business leaders had alleged that they were made speakers of the conference without their consent and refused to attend the conference.

To worsen the situation FCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo along with his vice-president was also out of the country raising the gap between the community further.

Mintoo returned on Wednesday evening and tried to resolve the crisis. He also held several meetings with the leaders in

Finally, sources say Mintoo along two others to the Ganabhaban seeking intervention from the highups.

CDU may sue Kohl as funding scam deepens

BERLIN, Jan 21: Christian Democrat Union (CDU) is considering suing its long-time leader Helmut Kohl to make him reveal the source of secret slush funds that have dragged the party into its worst ever scandal, a party official said, reports Reuters.

The woes of a party already tearing itself apart deepened on Thursday when a senior party aide hanged himself and police said his suicide note had led them to open a fraud investigation.

At the heart of the scandal is Kohl's forced admission that he received \$1 million in undeclared gifts for the party during his 16 years as chancellor, in contravention of electoral law.

Party leaders, many of them his proteges, desperately want him to name the donors as a way of shaking off the scandal, and their pressure has forced him to quit as honorary CDU chairman.

Late on Thursday former party general secretary Heiner Geissler said on national ZDF television that the CDU was considering launching a civil suit because the crisis could not be overcome until Kohl named names.

"As former party chairman he has a duty to provide the information," Geissler said.

Berlin prosecutor Stefan Wolf told the same channel he had begun an investigation "based on a preliminary suspicion of breach of trust" against Wolfgang Huelken, the 49-year-old head of the parliamentary



Kohl: Bad days

CDU's finance and budget unit who was found dead in his Berlin apartment earlier in the day.

Suicide note

The CDU said Huelken's death was a personal matter that had nothing to do with the scandal, but ZDF said the suicide note contained references which might connect him to misuse of party funds.

Commentators said Huelken's suicide added a new and tragic element to the scandal, even if it were unconnected.

The party says the motives for the suicide were personal. But at the same time, Wolfgang Huelken chose to commit sui-

cide at the peak of the finance affair, the conservative daily Die Welt said in an editorial.

Die Welt said the scandal was no longer only eating away at the party itself, but also at its members.

Kohl's successor as CDU leader, Wolfgang Schaueble — who has himself admitted to receiving donations that were not properly declared — apologised to parliament for what seem to be systematic violations of party financing laws.

The party is struggling to explain the origin or the handling of at least \$5 million worth of funds, and Schaueble admitted it was "stuck right in the middle of the donations mess."

Kohl himself is under criminal investigation for suspected breach of trust, an offence carrying a maximum five years in prison.

Revered until December as one of Europe's leading statesmen and an architect of German unification, he now finds himself dubbed "Don Kohleone", mafia-style, by German media.

The party which Kohl ran for 25 years, 16 of them as chancellor, has sunk to a historic low in polls.

A parliamentary committee of inquiry is to question Kohl and a galaxy of prominent politicians who served under him in an attempt to establish whether any of the secret funds were used to buy political favours.

Ghost billing continues

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changes. The exchanges and the number of lines are: 1) Central (23 level) 10,000 lines, 2) Central (24 level) 10,000 lines, 3) Maghbazar (40 level) 6,000 lines, 4) Maghbazar (41 level) 9,500 lines, 5) Nikhet (50 level) 10,000 lines, 6) S.B. Nagar (32 level) 7,000 lines, 7) Gulshan (60 level) 9,000 lines.

All the exchanges will be replaced after commissioning of new exchanges under Greater Dhaka Telephone Project, Phase-2.

"It is beyond of capacity of BTB to replace the existing 56,000 analog telephones by digital phones by the year 2000", he said preferring anonymity.

Another official however said, "BTB has long been working to achieve the target."

The telephone network in the capital and some other places is being expanded under two projects.

The first one is Overseas Economic Credit Fund (OECF) financed Greater Dhaka Telephone Project Phase-2, with a capacity of 67,500 lines and subsequently another 71,000

India, SL

From page 1

member team, the titlists sat atop the six-nation table yesterday with a combined score of 299. Sri Lanka tallied 301.

Pakistan finished third with a total of 311.

Hosts Bangladesh had to be satisfied with fourth, an improvement on their fifth-place last January.

Bhutan and Nepal ended fifth and sixth with 333 and 341 respectively.

Ashok Kumar carried on his first day's brilliant brand of golf, by birdying the third and seventh holes with good approach shots. But the talented 16-year-old fell away bogeying his next couple of shots to finish on four-over 76. He nevertheless emerged as individual winner with 149 points.

His teammate Rahil Gangjee encountered trouble early on. There was even a double bogey on the 15 though he recovered to sink birdies on the 7th, 14th and 17th holes. He collected a five-over 77.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, who is the chief patron of the championship, is expected to give away prizes at the Senakunja at eight this evening.

PM hosts dinner for diplomats

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hosted a dinner for the members of the diplomatic missions at the state guest house Jamuna here last night, reports BSS.

Cabinet members, advisers to the prime minister and political leaders were present on the occasion.

US Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth today held talks with Musharraf, with security and religious militancy reportedly high on the agenda.

Inderfurth, who is responsible for South Asia, is the most senior US official to visit Pakistan since Musharraf seized power in a coup in October.

He will hold talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Sattar and Finance Minister Shaikat Aziz later today, said US embassy spokesman Mark Wentworth.

Wentworth declined to say which issues were discussed.

Musharraf seeks Clinton's help to resolve Kashmir dispute

From page 1

ISLAMABAD, Jan 21: Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has urged US President Bill Clinton to play a role for peace in South Asia by resolving the Kashmir dispute state television said today, reports AFP.

"We look forward to the United States to understand the environment in the region and take steps to assist us to bring peace in the region," he said in a speech broadcast by Pakistan Television.

The general, who was speaking at a dinner for US Senator Tim Johnson here Thursday, said the US was playing a role for peace in Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo and in the Middle East where they were bringing Syria and Israel together.

The US and Clinton "should play a role to promote peace between India and Pakistan by addressing the core issue of Kashmir," he said.

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Security problems and questions over Kashmir and Afghanistan, including the Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, would be high on the agenda, reports said.

Bin Laden, who lives in Afghanistan, has been indicted by a US court for the bombings of two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania last year in which 224 people died.

During his talks the US official has also been pressing Pakistan to curb religious militancy. The News Daily said.

Inderfurth is travelling with a senior National Security Council official, Donald Camp, and Michael Sheehan, the state department counter-terrorism coordinator.

Tough anti-poaching laws suggested

Skins of 22 tigers seized across India last month

NEW DELHI, Jan 21: A leading tiger conservationist today said the skins and parts of at least 22 tigers had been seized across India in the past month and called for tough anti-poaching laws to stem the slaughter.

Belinda Wright, founder of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, told AFP that the seizures were the tip of the iceberg and indicated the growing threat faced by the Indian tiger.

"The past few weeks have been a nightmare," Wright, a British national based in India, said. "Between December 7 and January 12, the skins and parts of at least 22 tigers have been seized by the authorities."

Wright said three tiger and 50 leopard skins were seized by officials on December 18 in the northern industrial town of Ghaziabad and two tiger skins recovered during separate raids elsewhere in northern India.

"Four tiger skins and the bones of at least 15 other tigers were seized on January 12 in the town of Khaga," in northern

India, in addition to "18,000 leopard claws representing a staggering 900 dead leopards," Wright said.

Wright urged Indians to appeal to Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani to set up a special wing to try wildlife offences to save the Indian tiger.

She said current laws — which stipulate seven years imprisonment for poaching — were tough enough but the problem lay in poor enforcement.

"There have only been three convictions in India since 1947," she said, referring to the year the country gained independence from British colonial rule.

"There were about 40,000 tigers here at the turn of the century but now there are about 3,750 according to the government's estimates. I would say we would be lucky to have 2,500."

"About 60 per cent of the so-called official population live outside the protected network of reserve forests and are the most at risk. No tiger in the world is as vulnerable and accessible as

the Indian tiger."

Wright said the poaching was fuelled by demand from Chinese communities around the world due to their belief in the medicinal and rejuvenative qualities of tiger parts.

"There is almost no domestic market in India apart from a handful of people who want to flaunt tiger skins in their drawing rooms," she said. "Nearly all of it is smuggled through Nepal to China where the skins are processed."

"The skins and tiger are then sent to places where there is a large Chinese diaspora like Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and America. There is also a market in Japan."

There are 362 wild tigers in Bangladesh, 3,750 in India, 2