

GULISTAN-JATRABARI FLYOVER

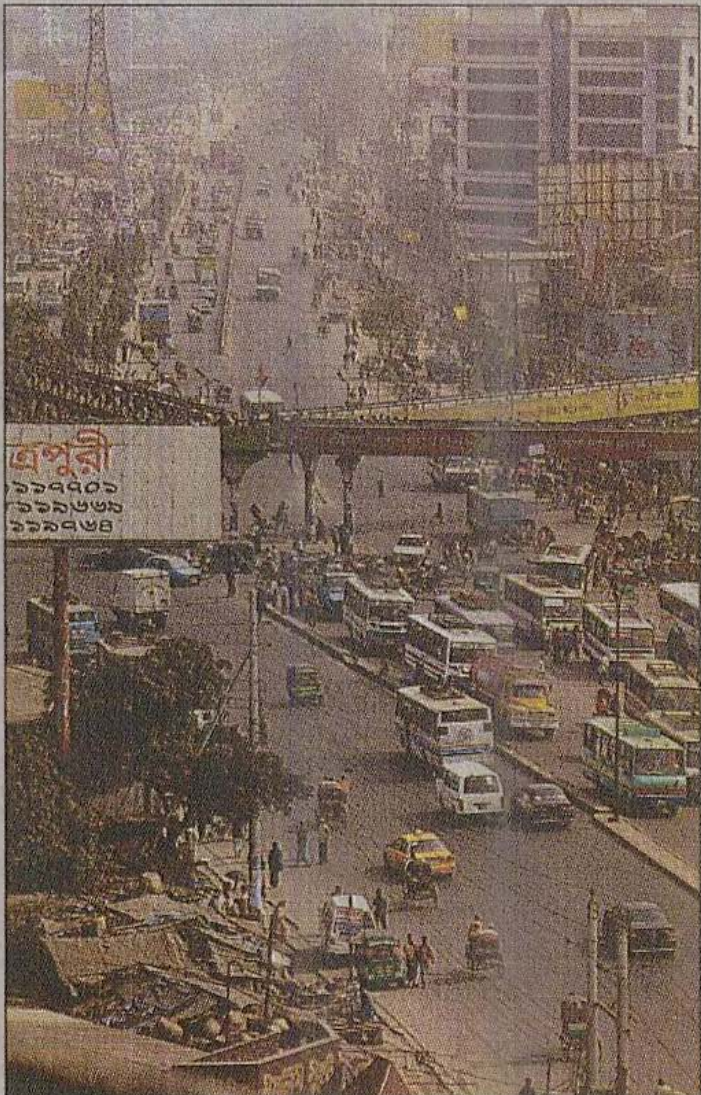
# Construction awaits final feasibility report

**SM KAUSAR ISLAM**  
Officials said that the work on the Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover might start within a few months if the project authority gets the final report on feasibility of its construction, by February without relocating and reinstalling the existing heavy utility service lines and connections in the area.  
The project authority has found that it is possible to construct the flyover keeping the utility service infrastructures intact, informed Ashiqur Rahman, project director (PD) Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover, saving at least Tk.150 crore.  
The ambiguity regarding relocation and reinstall utility services of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Dhaka electricity Supply (Desa), Titas Gas, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTC) and many other service providers has been resolved as the flyover authorities have decided to construct the flyover without moving the existing infrastructures.  
The 116-pillar flyover will now be constructed, locating its pillars at spots where no utility pipes or connection lines are located.  
"Our survey shows the possi-

bility of building the flyover without relocating or disturbing any of the utility service infrastructures. We will set up the pillars of the flyover at the nearest free spot," said Ashiqur Rahman, project director (PD) Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover.  
Following the estimated budget of around Tk. 160 crore from various utility service providers in the city, a committee was formed to crosscheck their demands.  
It was revealed to the committee that relocation of the heavy Wasa infrastructure in the area would not be cost effective, and concluded that the solution would be to relocate the flyover pillars.  
"We have seen from the field survey that it is possible to construct the proposed flyover keeping the existing infrastructure of the area intact," said Prof Dr Mohammad Ali Mortuza, Vice Chancellor (VC), Buet and convener of the committee.  
"It would be wise to have an emergency budget of Tk 8 10 crore to meet any damages to pipes or cable lines during the time of construction," said Prof Mortuza, adding that the committee would submit their report in the first week of February.  
Utility service providers in the

city are relieved and happy with the decision of not disturbing their network.  
"Relocating of utility establishments would waste minimum of two years and cause a lot of sufferings to the citizens and users of our network," said Nurul Haque, chief engineer Dhaka Wasa.  
The construction of the 7.5 km long flyover, the longest of its genre in the country was supposed to start in June last year. The deadline could not be met because of the debate between the project office and utility service providers regarding relocating of infrastructure.  
Project officials said the construction of the flyover would start as soon as possible.  
"With the soil testing complete and the problem of relocating utility infrastructure solved, we will start the construction as soon as we receive the report from the committee," said the PD.  
Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Belhassa-Accom and Associates Ltd, a joint UAE-Canada-India venture will construct the third flyover in the country -- the first flyover in the country under private investment.  
According to the agreement with DCC, Bangladesh Orion,

UAE's Belhassa and India's Accom will complete the project within a maximum period of 36 months on Built Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT) basis.  
The constructor of the flyover will own and operate the flyover for 24 years and afterwards will handover the ownership to DCC.  
Unlike the other flyovers in the city, commuters will have to pay a toll to ply through the flyover. The rates for using the flyover have been fixed. A motorcycle will have to pay Tk 5, a CNG autorickshaw -- Tk 10, a car -- Tk 35, a jeep -- Tk 40, a microbus -- Tk 50, a minibus -- Tk 100 and a trailer -- Tk 200.  
The DCC will get a five percent share of the profit from the income of the flyover without making any financial investment.  
The flyover that will be constructed at a total estimated cost of Tk 706 crore will have 13 ramps and six entrances with four lanes on either side.  
Starting from the Nawabpur road and Fazle Rabbi road intersection, the alignment follows Saheed Fazle Rabbi road keeping Gulistan Garden, Bangabhaban and Rajdhani market on the left side and intersect with the Hatkhola road at Tikatuli intersection.



Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover is expected to dramatically reduce traffic jams around the area.

MURDER OF TRADERS IN MIRPUR

# Families under constant threat

**TAWFIQUE ALI**  
Family members of the two Mirpur traders who were killed by extortionists recently are in extreme fear as the perpetrators continue to threaten them regularly with death.  
"Shahadat, one of the masterminds of my brother's murder, is threatening me over mobile telephone to kill me and my children and blow up my house with grenade," said Kazi Afrozuddin, younger brother of slain trader Aftabuddin Ahmed.  
"Shahadat also asked me to stop pursuing the murder case," Afroz told Star City.  
He said Shahadat had threatened to kill their family members when Aftab was undergoing treatment at the city's Shamorita Hospital. Shahadat last time called him on January 13. "The situation is so grave that we may have to quit the country," Afroz said.  
Four children of the family, three of Afroz and one of Aftabuddin, stopped going to school in fear since Aftabuddin succumbed to his bullet wounds on December 28.  
Armed assailants gunned down Aftabuddin, general secretary of the traders' welfare association of Muktabangla Shopping Complex, in the morn-

ing of December 25 just 20 yards away from his residence in block-Ein Mirpur Section-2.  
A case has been filed with Mirpur Police Station accusing 13 people including Shahadat in connection with the murder.  
Aftab's family members said a gang of criminals that included Shahadat, Khorshed and Azam carried out the murder as he refused to pay toll to the gang led by Osman, a notorious extortionist and real estate businessman, they said.  
"The police can arrest the killers if they want. It depends on their sincerity," said Aftabuddin's younger sister Baby. "It is not understandable how and why the perpetrators are still at large when Mirpur police are very well aware of the criminals' position."  
"What kind of a country is it where killings go on one after another while killers stay at large," resented Aftab's elderly mother, who has been deadened in grief since her son's death.  
The same gang led by Shahadat killed Jahangir Alam, son of Aftab's elder sister Firoza Begum, about one year ago, family members said.  
An official of Mirpur police said that they have arrested four including the prime suspect Osman and the case has been

transferred to Rab-4 for further investigation.  
"The difficulty in arresting the criminals lies in the fact that they use a chain of various commands in committing a crime and the masterminds never come to light," he said. "Actually, we have not found anyone who is ready to recognise Shahadat."  
Kazi Md Shahidullah, owner of Prince Group and general secretary of the traders' association of Shah Ali Co-operative Market, was killed by the same group around five months back.  
The group is killing Mirpur traders one after another but the

law enforcers have not been able to arrest the culprits, said Kazi Belal, younger brother of Shahidullah.  
"It can't be acceptable that the police administration is unable to arrest such identified criminals," Belal said. "The case of Shahidullah murder can never be resolved unless and until Shahadat and Azam are caught."  
Shahidullah's family sources said they had prayed to the higher authorities for transfer of the case either to the Criminal Investigation Department or to the Detective Branch as per a verbal discussion with the state

minister for home affairs in November last.  
The police took two months to say that the case could not be transferred as they did not receive any formal instruction.  
Shahidullah's family wrote once again to the state minister for his directive a week ago.  
"Reason behind such procrastination on the part of police is not understandable," said a close relative of Shahidullah. "We still receive threats of dire consequences if we pursue the case."  
An official of Mirpur police said two out of seven arrested in connection with Shahidullah murder have made confessional statement under section 164, naming 10 to 12 people including Shahadat and Azam who are the masterminds.  
Deputy Commissioner of west zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Kohinur Mian admitted that it is natural for the families to have resentments if the culprits are not put behind bars.  
"But it is also a fact that police can not nab the criminals, though they are identified, if they go into hiding," Mian said. he added that the same gang was involved in both Shahidullah and Aftabuddin murders.  
Exploitation of modern telecommunication facilities by criminals in passing information

creates a potential problem for police in tracking them down, he said, police have not made as much progress in Aftab murder case as in the Shahidullah case.  
Following consecutive murders of the two leading traders, leaders and common businessmen of Mirpur refrain from talking about the activities of the extortionists in fear of similar fate.  
"Anyone who dares to speak against the extortionists will lose his life," said the president of one of the traders' associations. "None is safe here."  
According to business leaders and common traders of Mirpur, at least 20 people including five traders were killed by the Shahadat group over the last three years. Shahadat is known as a leader of Mirpur Chhatra League, they said.  
"Osman, an influential man in real estate business, has masterminded many of the murders in Mirpur including those of Chandan and ward commissioner Mister," said a resident of Block-E, seeking anonymity. "He spends a great deal of money to manage police."  
The gang of Shahadat, Khorshed and Azam rose in the crime world of Mirpur under the patronage of 'Dish' Shahin and Osman, he said.



Mirpur traders brought out a procession with the body of Aftabuddin, gunned down by armed assailants at the end of December.

# Free calls – good or bad?

**FAIZUL KHAN TANIM**  
Mixed reactions from young subscribers and parents on Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission's (BTRC) action asking all mobile phone operators to discontinue free-call facilities at night were voiced at a survey conducted by the Star City.  
"I watch my 18-year old son glued to his mobile phone late at night. It was an obsession and we were greatly disturbed by his habit," said Habibur Rashid, at 50-year old parent.  
This is a reaction of just one parent.  
The Star City conducted a

survey of 30 people within the age group of 18 to 55 years; 18 full heartedly agreed with the decision; seven were against while five were confused and did not know who to support.  
Golam Ahmed, 42, another parent did not agree with the decision.  
"What BTRC did was unethical. It depends on how one raises his child, and control any wrong doing," he said. "I agree that a five-to-six hour conversation especially at night is harmful to health. But at the same time the free talk-time facility was a great opportunity for businessmen who communicate across the country," he

added.  
BTRC high officials said that they asked all five operators to discontinue free-call facilities as the regulatory commission received numerous complaints from guardians and others that this facility was causing ethical degradation and change in lifestyle among young people.  
The complaints stated that the free late-night call facility encouraged their children to talk to friends, which hampered their studies.  
They also said that the children slept through the day to make-up for the irregular sleeping hours at night.

This attitude resulted in children becoming zombies, and especially in the case of boys, adult-rated conversations with girls upset parents of both parties.  
"My younger brother has become ill in the last few days resulting from irregular sleep and meals at odd times," said a 35-year-old businessman Ahmed Mustafa.  
Other residents voiced concern about the recent bomb attacks. They said the free calls facilitated communication between absconders and helped in conducting tutorial sessions in making explosives. They agreed that the BTRC decision

was appropriate.  
Amena Rahim, a housewife, said that BTRC came up with this decision right at the time when the mobile communication was getting better and broader.  
"When I was resident student in Australia, free talk plans between the same network from 9:00 pm till 7:00 am existed. No irregularities were found then and the student studied properly. If they could, why can't we?" she queried.  
"It depends on how responsible people are. Parents should be blamed for opposing healthy relationships between boys and girls and deprive children of

friendly movement among themselves. Such restrictions tempt children to indulge in misuse of the free talk-time," Amenah said, adding that the free talk plan was used to discuss study related topics.  
Meanwhile, a practicing psychiatrist Gulzar Ahmed from Badda said the number of patients were increasing.  
"Unbalanced sleep and irregular food timings are cause for young boys and girls to be psychologically affected and need the guidance of doctors. Most of them complained of going blank, dizziness in the classroom and even attacks of fainting," he said.

But 20-year-old Ahraf Mahfuz thought the decision had no bearing.  
"I do not think that the young generation will stop their late night conversations. We will find other ways of communication," he said.  
Asif Iqbal, AKTEL's Head of Marketing, said although the free talk plans suffered from this decision, still they will abide by BTRC law.  
"We promised our customers that we will provide this exclusive service till March but it had to stop by end of January. We were trying to make communication better for everyone. But since it's an instruction from

BTRC, we will definitely follow it," he said.  
"A knife can be used both to carry out surgery to save life and at the same time used for harming. We have to look at the positive side of the knife and concentrate on how it can be used effectively. Every element has its pros and cons and the result will depend on the user," Iqbal added.  
Yaemin Bakht, Grameen Phone's General Manager said they were surprised by BTRC's decision. "In a competitive market, all customers benefit by such deals, and it was offered to the millions of subscribers Grameen has," he said.

## city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

*"Elections next year are so critical that only a level playing field and elections that are free and fair will give the winners legitimacy"*

-- Christina Rocca  
US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs  
Said at a crowded press conference at the American Centre in the city at the end of her 3-day long visit, on Friday.  
Source: The Daily Star

*"We don't think mere arrest of Bangla Bhai will solve the problem if militancy is not weeded out"*

-- Sheikh Hasina  
Leader of the Opposition and President, Awami League  
Told Christina Rocca, US Assistant Secretary of State when the latter paid the former a visit, on Friday.  
Source: The Daily Star

*"Even after a year there has been little progress in uncovering the masterminds, and the government's intentions (in this and the investigations of other political killings) are increasingly suspect, as only a few lower-level members of the ruling party have been charged with the murder"*

-- Asma Kibria  
Wife of slain Awami League leader and former Finance Minister  
SAMS Kibria  
Said in an article published in The Daily Star on the occasion of her husband's first death anniversary on Friday.  
Source: The Daily Star

*"We want to see an independent and strong Election Commission that is free from the PMO's authority and there should be transparency and accountability in the works of the EC"*

-- Nikolaus Scherk  
Leader of European Union Troika  
Told reporters after a meeting with the LGRD minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, on Tuesday.  
Source: The Daily Star

*"Elections will take place under Constitution. Foreigners cannot come and monitor and then criticise our elections. They will not be allowed to monitor elections of this country."*

-- M Saifur Rahman  
Finance Minister  
Said at a meeting in Sylhet organised by Chitra Dal, on Thursday.  
Source: Prothom Alo

*"I can not say anything about the illness. I cannot tell you the personal details about a patient"*

-- Dr Saiful Kabir  
Bangabandhu Medical University  
Told reporters when asked why the Chief Election Commissioner was admitted at the hospital, on Wednesday.  
Source: Prothom Alo