

## WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY OBSERVED

## Involve people in city planning for successful implementation

## Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for involving people in city planning for its successful implementation.

The roundtable titled 'Urban planning in Bangladesh: Perspective 2020' was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) with the assistance of UNDP to mark the World Town Planning Day 2008.

Addressing the roundtable at BIP auditorium as chief guest, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the culture of Bangladesh and its bureaucrats do not allow people to get involved in planning.

"This culture should be changed to get better result as without involving people we will not get the benefit of the planning,"

he said.

Prof Muzaffer said, "In India people are involved at the initial stage of planning, and then the plan is approved in parliament. This is absent in our country."

Emphasising the need for professionalisation of urban planning, Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of University Grants Commission, said experts like planners and architects who are involved in city planning, should not be commercialised but it happened in Bangladesh, which is a major cause of unplanned urbanisation.

He said the number of people in Bangladesh is now about 15 crore which will reach 25 to 30 crore within 20 years.

"We have to make proper planning from now on to accommodate the people and at the same time keep land for agriculture," he said.

"If we believe in climate change,

we also have to make plan considering about three to five crore people who will lose their lands," he added.

Underscoring the need for education on urban planning Prof Nazrul said this should start from kindergarten level and there should be planners even at village level.

Architect Iqbal Habib said the government is preparing a Detailed Area Plan (DAP) and the involvement of people will have to be ensured in it, otherwise it would not be fruitful.

Prof Golam Rahman said due to lack of proper planning on urbanisation, Bangladesh is losing 2.1 percent arable land every year.

Stressing the need for proper implementation of planning he said, "We make planning but we do not implement it."

"Although we have transport

planning but it is very much focused on cars and motorised vehicles, not for the pedestrian and people," said Moslehuddin Hasan who delivered the keynote speech.

"Our demand is give priority to pedestrians and people, and then cars and motorised vehicles," he said.

"To make the city liveable we must have urbanisation policy, compact development, preservation of agricultural land, integrated land use in urban areas, planned transport infrastructure and retention of canals and water bodies to reduce waterlogging," he added.

Earlier, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka inaugurated the daylong programme of BIP that included colourful rally, photo exhibition and cultural programme marking the day.



Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury inaugurates the celebrations marking the 38th founding anniversary of the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) in the city yesterday.

PHOTO STAR

## BIOJ, SIJ leaders call on Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote (BIOJ) and Sammito Islami Jote (SIJ) called on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina separately at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday to discuss issues relating to parliamentary elections, polls schedule and the grand alliance.

During a meeting, Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury told Hasina that his party seeks to contest the elections from four constituencies with the ticket of the grand alliance.

Hasina told the four-member Islami Oikya Jote team that she will consider their proposal.

The other members of the team were Vice Chairmen Md Nurul Islam Khan and Maulana Aminul Islam and Assistant Organising Secretary Sohel Ahmed Pallab.

Later, Sammito Islami Jote President Hafez Maulana Ziaul Hasan and General Secretary Prof Maulana Noman Chowdhury called on Hasina and offered to work together under the banner of the grand alliance during the election and movement.

Hasina said the grand alliance will take part in the elections and also in movement along with all who are against fanaticism and militancy.

She urged the Islamic scholars and pious people to come forward to build a secular society based on the spirit of the liberation war.

## 2 pro-democracy lawyers jailed in Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's High Court sentenced two lawyers from Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party to four months each in prison for contempt of court, a party spokesman told AFP yesterday.

Nyan Win said the jailing of Aung Thein and Khin Maung Shein, who have represented student activists in the courts, was a sign of increased pressure on the party from the ruling junta.

"U Aung Thein and U Khin Maung Shein were sentenced to four months imprisonment each by the High Court on Friday morning. They were taken from their homes Friday night," Nyan Win told AFP.

"Although they can appeal, U Aung Thein said he will not as he doesn't recognise the sentence," he said.

"We are in a difficult situation now as they (the lawyers) often represented political activists. This is strong pressure from the authorities," Nyan Win added.

Aung Thein and Khin Maung Shein made their defence to the High Court in Myanmar's main city Yangon on Thursday after receiving a letter last week that charged they had disrespected the court during an earlier trial of student activists.

The US State Department on Friday condemned Myanmar for charging lawyers defending student activists.

"These actions represent a blatant attempt by the regime to intimidate these lawyers and demonstrate its contempt for the rule of law," State Department deputy spokesman Robert Wood said in a statement.

Wood demanded that Myanmar release another lawyer, Nyi Htwe, sentenced to six months in prison last week for disturbing court procedure, and stop the prosecution of another lawyer, Saw Kyaw Kyaw Min, who also faces possible prison time for contempt of court.

## Brother visits Bali bombers' prison as execution looms

AFP, Tengkulun

The younger brother of two militants on death row over the deadly 2002 Bali bombings visited their island prison yesterday as speculation mounted over their impending executions.

Ali Fauzi, a brother of condemned bombers Amrozi and Mukhlas, left the militants' home village in East Java early yesterday to visit them in the island prison where they await the firing squad, another brother Muhammad Chozin said.

"My brother... went with the police and the district head to Nusakambangan at 2:00 am this morning in the hope of seeing the brothers for the last time," Chozin said, referring to the island prison off southern Java.

"If they're executed, he'll help prepare their bodies for burial," he said.

A source in the prison confirmed to AFP that Fauzi had arrived but could not say if he had met the brothers or if he would have access to their bodies.

Prison authorities have barred relatives from visiting the bombers before their executions, but will allow them to see the bodies, said Achmad Michdan, a lawyer for the bombers.

"This is a violation of (the bombers') human rights," he said.

Speculation has been rife in Indonesia over the exact date of the execution of bombers Amrozi, 47, Muklas, 48, and Imam Samudra, 38, who killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists, in a series of explosions on the Hindu-majority holiday island.

Prosecutors have said the bombers will be executed in "early November" but have not given a clear date, allowing Islamist sympathisers time to rally to their

cause. Achmad Michdan told AFP it was a "possibility" his clients would be executed Saturday night or early Sunday morning.

"The execution didn't happen last night so tonight is a possibility... but the prosecutors are the ones who know," he said.

Prosecutors said they may make an announcement about the executions later Saturday night, but did not elaborate.

Tensions in the village built over the details of the bombers' burial after family members were told the brothers' bodies would be delivered by helicopter, pre-wrapped in white shrouds.

"As a family we're terrified that we can't handle the bodies but we're worried about the possibility of bloodshed happening, so we accepted it even though we were forced," brother Chozin said.

## Two Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims die in Saudi Arabia

METRO DESK

Two Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims died of heart attack in Saudi Arabia on Friday.

UNB from Dhaka reports: A female pilgrim, who went to perform the holy hajj under government management, died of heart attack at a government-rented house at Modina in Saudi Arabia on Friday.

The deceased was identified as Mosammat Zarina Khatun, 65, wife of Alhaj Mohammad Moezuddin Mondal of Genda in Savar on the outskirts of the city.

BSS from Dhaka adds: Mohammed Muhibbul Haque, a ballot hajj pilgrim, died of a heart attack at his rented house in the holy city of Makkah on Friday night at the age of 85.

Muhibbul hails from Parbatpur village under Kanaighat upazila in Sylhet.

Religious Affairs Adviser AF Hassan Arif condole the death of Muhibbul Haque and Zarina Khatun. He also prayed for peace of the departed souls and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved families.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asha Alamgir, wife of Ashek Alamgir, elder son of singer Fakir Alamgir, passed away at a city hospital on Friday at the age of 25, says a

press release.

She left behind her husband, 20-months old son and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Her quikhwani will be held after Asr prayers tomorrow at her residence (259/B, Chowdhury Para, Khilgaon) in the city.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

## MN Larma's anniversary of death tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tomorrow is the 25th death anniversary of Manabendra Narayan Larma, former chief of Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity, says a press release.

Elaborate programmes have been taken at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday to observe the day at the national level.

A 100-member death anniversary observance committee was formed with National Prof Kabir Chowdhury as its convener.

The speakers placed a charter of demands including the renaming of Dhaka-Chittagong highway after Larma's name, setting up of his sculpture either in Dhaka or in Chittagong and incorporating his biography in the national curriculum.

To mark the day, the committee will lay wreaths at his portrait, arrange a Larma memorial speech and a discussion at the National Press Club.

Eminent journalist Kamal Lohani will deliver the Larma memorial speech, while Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Selina Hossain, Manzurul Ahsan Khan and Dr Dipu Moni will take part in the discussion. Larma was the founding general secretary of the Samity and later became its president.

The great leader of ethnic minorities was assassinated on December 10 in 1983 by a splinter faction within the party.



Ahmed Swapon speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is AKM Jahangir Hossain and on his left are Haider Akbar Khan Roni and Abdul Mannan. Shushasoneer Jonno Pracharabjanan organised the event.

PHOTO STAR

## 27TH BCS EXAM RESULTS Unsuccessful candidates continue hunger strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unsuccessful candidates in the second-phase result of 27th BCS Examinations yesterday observed their 8th consecutive day of fast unto death with eminent economist Dr Abul Barakat expressing his solidarity with them.

Meanwhile, around one hundred candidates, successful as per both the results, in a press release have demanded their quick appointment in BCS Cadre Services saying their valuable times are being lost.

The press release was signed by Yusuf, Kamrul, Nusrat, Khasru, Asad, Anup, Zakir and Anis.

Dr Barakat said if there is any corruption in 27th BCS examination, the actual corrupts should be identified and who are innocent should not be victimised for anybody's personal interest.

He urged the government to take a correct decision in this regard.

Around 1137 unsuccessful candidates have been observing hunger strike since the first day of November demanding their recruitment.

## Dhaka Textile Tech College to be upgraded to university soon Says education adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce and Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the College of Textile Technology in Dhaka would be upgraded to a university "soon".

The adviser also asked all concerned to take necessary steps in this regard.

He gave the directives while addressing a workshop on 'Upgrading the Dhaka Textile Technology College to University' at the auditorium of the college.

Hossain Zillur said, "Though the garment sector is the key sector of the country to earn foreign exchange, still we have to depend on foreign experts for development of the sector for lack of local experts."

In this regard, he stressed the need for setting up textile universities to rear local experts on the sector.

The education adviser also urged the authorities of science and technology universities to introduce BSC course in their varsities to groom textile technology experts.

## 'Form commission to monitor NGO activities'

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a book launching ceremony yesterday called for establishing an NGO commission to monitor the activities of NGOs.

An independent commission can make sure the accountability and transparency in the activities of the non-government organisations (NGOs), speakers said this at publication ceremony of the book 'Government-NGO collaboration for poverty alleviation: The case of Bangladesh' by Dr Shyamal Kanti Chowdhury, director general of Department of Audit.

Comptroller and Auditor General Ataul Hakim attended the function as the chief guest at Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium of National Museum.

Economists Prof Abu Ahmed and Prof Atiur Rahman spoke at the function.

Prof Abu Ahmed mentioned the widespread allegation against NGOs of the lack of transparency in their programmes, saying a separate regulatory body is needed to monitor their activities.

Prof Atiur said the next elected government has to give importance to agriculture sector to carry forward the poverty alleviation programmes.

Ataul Hakim said the govern-

ment-NGO partnership is essential to eradicate poverty. He said the proposed NGO commission would help establish transparency in NGO activities.

The speakers urged the political parties to attach importance to poverty reduction strategy in their election manifestos and called for strong partnership between public and private sectors on the issue.

## Allama Iqbal's 131st birth anniversary today

BSS, Dhaka

The 131st birth anniversary of great poet and philosopher Allama Iqbal will be observed today in a befitting manner.

On the occasion, Allama Iqbal Society organises a seminar on 'Allama Iqbal's philosophy and contemporary issues' at the National Press Club at 4:00pm, says a press release.

Iranian Ambassador to Bangladesh Hasan Farazandeh will attend the seminar as the chief guest while Iyaz Muhammad Khan, charge d'affaires of Pakistan Embassy, will be the special guest.



## No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 33.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakudna and lowest 16.2 degrees Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:15pm today and rises at 6:10am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.6	21.4	57	64
Chittagong	31.0	21.5	70	68
Rajshahi	32.0	18.8	91	81
Khulna	31.5	22.4	67	75
Barisal	31.8	21.0	67	89
Sylhet	32.0	18.2	61	75
Cox's Bazar	32.6	22.5	75	75



Pro-BNP doctors, nurses and employees of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) form a human chain on the university campus yesterday demanding resignation of Health Adviser Dr AMM Shawkat Ali.

PHOTO STAR

## BTCL wary of 'forced' partnership

FROM PAGE 1

the WiMAX venture will certainly hit the financial health of BTCL and it will inevitably impact the state-owned company's book value... That is the biggest blow to public interest," said the high official.

Again international telecom and broadband experts say that the BTCL's WiMAX venture would need investment of at least \$250 million to build a nation-wide WiMAX network. "Any new WiMAX venture will take six to nine years to reach the break-even point," said an expert.

"The same broadband network would cost half the price if it is done through 3G technology [fast wide area cellular telephone network]," said the expert, adding, "It will take less than a year to hit the break-even point because of wider availability of 3G devices in the market."

"But the main argument is why push BTCL into such a risky venture. It should concentrate on landline telecom business while letting the private sector take risks in wireless broadband," he said.

Of the three private winners of WiMAX licences, the highest bidder Bangla Lion immediately admitted of quoting too high and ultimately failed to make timely

down payment for the licence. Another local bidder BRAC also missed the payment deadline. The BTRC, citing global investment crisis, granted both defaulters 30 days of grace period that would end on November 16.

The third bidder, owned by a foreign entity named Augur, has made the payment timely and bagged the only WiMAX licence as yet. "It shows that the global investment crisis is not quite a just excuse for rescheduling the deadline for the payments," notes an official.

"Why does the BTCL need a strategic partner in the first place to run this business? It has been running the domestic and international voice and data services pretty well," he says, adding, "Is this proposed partnership required? WiMAX technology has no proven track record of commercial success anywhere in the world."

He said back in the late 90's, the government had forcibly made BTCL (Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board now turned into BTCL) forge a 50 percent partnership with a private company named BBT (Bangladesh Broadcasting Telephone & Technology) for Personal

Handiphone System operations. This operation never saw the light of day and the current government cancelled the licence of BBT, he added.

Despite such criticism, BTCL officials see future in WiMAX. "WiMAX is the future of broadband technology," said an official when asked if depending on WiMAX could be too risky especially since there is no instance of commercial success of any WiMAX network around the world.

Developed internationally by the WiMAX Forum, a WiMAX tower provides broadband speed without the requirement of cables up to 50 square km.

Supporters of 3G and Long Term Evolution (LTE) technology argue that the present 3G technology allows data transmission at the rate of 3.6 Mbps and 7.2 Mbps, which busts the myth of WiMAX superiority.

"There are 3.21 billion GSM, WCDMA-HSPA subscriptions worldwide and the GSM, WCDMA has 87.95% market share of mobile communications subscriptions worldwide," said an expert, "Bangladesh cannot swim against this global stream and be benefited by it."