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POVERTY ASSESSMENT REPORT ON BANGLADESH WB cites 3 major obstacles to bridging East-West divide

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The East-West divide in Bangladesh, in terms of poverty, is characterised by lack of availability of public infrastructure, integration with growth poles and inadequate market access.

A World Bank report titled "Poverty Assessment for Bangladesh: Creating Opportunities and Bridging the East-West Divide" is expected to be released next week. Severe seasonal deprivation (Monga), ecological factors like river erosion and quality of land contribute to economic deprivation, the report is expected to say.

Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2005, (HIES) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics shows that Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet cities have less poverty while Khulna and Barisal have higher poverty levels. The World Bank described it as East-West divide and made a number of recommendations.

Sources said the World Bank would also submit the report to the next elected government so that they can consider this as a policy option to remove regional disparity.

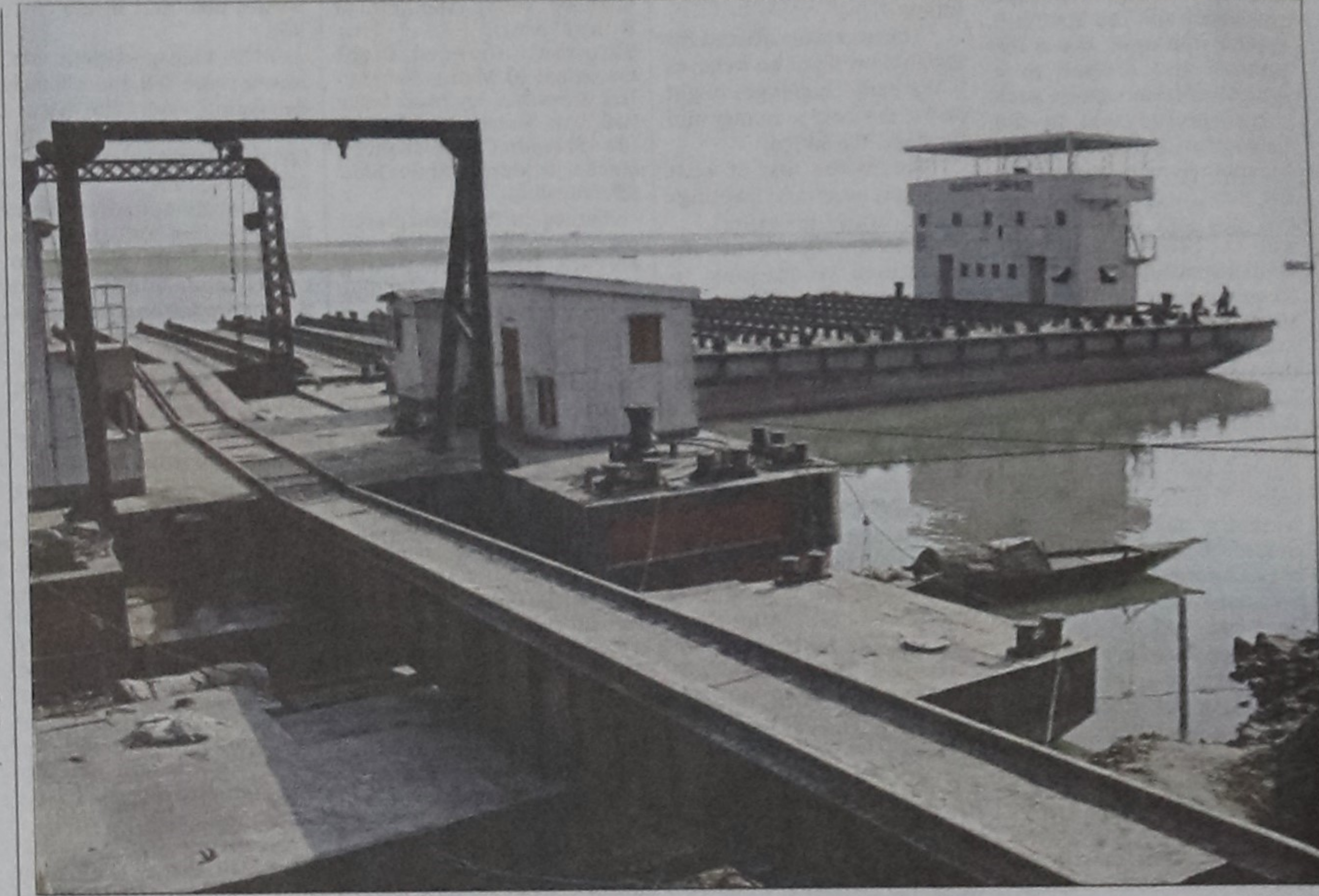
Strong evidence is there that two metropolitan cities--Dhaka and Chittagong--have emerged as the main

centres of economic activity of the country. The capital Dhaka with a population of 10 million and the main port city Chittagong with a population of 3.4 million together account for 88 percent of the nation's metropolitan area population and 41 percent of the total urban population, the report said.

Estimates based on HIES 2000 and 2005 indicate that the average real per capita expenditures in these two cities is about 40 percent higher than in other metropolitan areas.

"The dominant seats of major administrative and economic functions, Dhaka

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The Bangladesh Railway ferries for carrying wagons across the Jamuna between Balashi of Gaibandha and Bahadurabad remain idle at a terminal because of lack of navigability in the river.

2.8KM-LONG FLYOVER AT KURIL Presentation of final design on Monday

HELEMUL ALAM

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) has taken an initiative to construct a 2.8km-long one-way flyover at Kuril to facilitate free flow of traffic at the intersection of Pragati Sarani, Airport Road and Purbachal Road.

The final design of the flyover, funded by Rajuk, has already been completed and a presentation on it is expected to be held at Rajuk auditorium on November 24, said ABM Rafiqul Islam Khan, project director of Purbachal New Town Project.

The consulting firm, a conglomerate of three local firms -- Development Design Consultants Ltd, The Consulting House and Divine Associates Ltd, submitted its draft report on February 7 after conducting feasibility study, said a Rajuk official.

The construction work of the flyover is likely to begin in March, 2009 and scheduled to be completed by December 31 the same year at a cost of Tk 303 crore, said Rafiqul Islam.

"Rajuk primarily selected seven firms that participated in the bid for doing the job. They will submit their estimated costs of construction by December based on which one firm will be selected to construct the flyover," he said.

The one-way flyover which will have four loops (two Y loops and two U loops) will be 8.9 metre wide and 48 feet high, Rafiqul said.

The exit points of the flyover have been proposed to be constructed at Banani and on Airport Road, Pragati Sarani and Purbachal road.

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Govt hatching plot to bring a particular party to power Alleges Jamaat

UNB, Dhaka

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matiur Rahman Nizami Friday said the caretaker government is hatching a plot to install a particular party in power by holding one-sided stage-managed polls on December 18.

Addressing a press conference at Jamaat central office, he said four-party alliances had decided to take part in parliamentary election for the sake of people's interest and to re-establish the democratic system.

He said the alliance had put forward four demands cutting short of its seven-point demand to ensure free, fair and neutral elections.

The four demands are total lifting of the state of emergency, suspension of some "objectionable" clauses in the amended RPO including repeal of clause 91(e), deferring the December 28 upazila elections by one month from parliamentary polls and rescheduling of the date of parliamentary elections to ensure that the hajj pilgrims can cast their votes.

Nizami said the election commission agreed to defer the parliamentary polls to December 28 and conveyed it to the government after receiving positive response from political parties on November 19.

But he said suddenly the government put police administration on alert across the country and announced that the elections will be held

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Rain takes Test to fourth day

BISHWAJIT ROY in Bloemfontein

The rain spoiled most of the third day's play as Bangladesh fought to salvage from another innings defeat in the first Test against South Africa at the OUTsurance Oval yesterday.

Resuming the day on 20 for one as they followed on in their second innings, the Tigers lost two more wickets with the scoreboard reading 67 for three before rain stopped the proceedings half an hour before the lunch break

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SHARES SINK DESPITE SAUDI PRINCE'S INVESTMENT Citigroup now mulls sale of parts, merger

REUTERS, New York

Citigroup Inc lost more than one-quarter of its market value on growing worries over whether it has enough capital to withstand billions of dollars of potential losses and despite new support from its largest individual investor.

The second-largest US bank by assets is looking at options now, including a sale of parts of the company or a merger with another firm, after its stock fell 50 percent this week, a person familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

Discussions so far have been internal, and some options -- such as entering into a merger where other executives end up running the company -- are unpalatable to managers at Citigroup, the person said. The bank's board of directors is set to meet on Friday, and Morgan Stanley is not considering a possible bid, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Stanley did not comment on the report, repeating that it has a "very strong capital and liquidity position" and is focused on a strategy that will generate benefits "over time." Morgan Stanley did not immediately return a call for comment.

Earlier Thursday, Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal said he plans to increase his stake in Citigroup to 5 percent from less than 4 percent, calling its shares "dramatically undervalued."

Alwaleed expressed "full and complete support" for management, including Pandit, who said this week the bank will slash 52,000 jobs and 20 percent of expenses. Investors were unimpressed, and drove the

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Delhi's move for a 'foolproof' border with Bangladesh

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has decided to fully computerise the passport control points at its border with Bangladesh in order to keep tabs on visitors from that country with proper travel documents.

The decision came soon after the visit by a high-level team of senior government officials to Karimganj in Assam where they found passport control points not up to the mark and officials facing difficulties in manually checking travel documents of visitors.

India has already identified

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Huge quantity of adulterated spice powder seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 6,460 Kg adulterated spice powder and fined Tk 6,50,000 to three factories at Shyambazar in the city early hours yesterday.

A team of Rab-2 led by magistrate M Anwar Pasha recovered the spice in a three-hour long raid at Bhai Bhai Haller Mill, Emon Haller Mill and Abdul Majid Haller Mill at city's old part. The raid started at around 1:30am and continued till 4:30am.

The team picked up eight persons on charge of making the adulterated spice and marketing it. However, they were later released after realizing fine.

Captain Nurul Amin of Rab-2 told The Daily Star that they conducted the raid following information from the intelligence department of the Rab.

He also said these three

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PHOTO: STAR

A man sells deer hide in broad daylight in Comilla. Well aware that such trade is illegal he is selling the hide for as little as Tk 500.

Tejgaon link road may open Dec 16

HELEMUL ALAM

The capital's road network is going to have an important addition as the 60-foot wide and 2400-foot long Bijay Sarani-Tejgaon link road is likely to open to the public on December 16.

"We have already completed 70 percent construction of the road, and will do the rest, except the final touch (carpeting), by December 16," said a high official of Rajuk.

Construction of an overpass at Tejgaon rail crossing and demolition of Rangs Bhaban on the route however will not be completed by this time.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the road connecting Old Airport Road at Bijoy Sarani with Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani at Nabisco crossing, said the official.

The overpass being built at a cost of about Tk 39 crore will be completed by May next year while demolition of Rangs Bhaban will end in January.

Twenty-three other structures were acquired and demolished as part of implementation of the Tk 122 crore road project that began in March this year.

Besides, 44 illegal structures on the road site were demolished.

Another Rajuk official said they would construct an alternative road near the overpass on a temporary basis for vehicular movement.

Rajuk gave the work order on June 24 for building the overpass within six months

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Blast kills 8 mourners at Pakistani funeral

Pak jets kill 14 Taliban militants, suicide attack on mosque kills 12 others

AP, AFP, Dera Ismail Khan/ Khar

A blast killed at least eight mourners yesterday at the funeral of a Shia cleric in northwestern Pakistan who was gunned down hours earlier, police said. At least 28 others were wounded.

After the explosion, a mob burned several shops and vehicles near the blast site in Dera Ismail Khan, police officer Saadullah Marwat said.

Nuclear-armed Pakistan is undergoing a wave of Islamist violence that risks destabilising the country as the West seeks its support in fighting al-Qaeda and Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan.

The motives for the shooting and blast were unclear, but in the past members of Pakistan's majority Sunni Muslim community have attacked Shias, considered by some to be heretical.

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Advertisement for 'Star Campus' magazine, featuring the headline 'Linking Young Minds Together' and an image of the magazine cover.

Advertisement for 'Star Campus' magazine, featuring a list of contact numbers for various branches and a small image of the magazine cover.

Obama plans to nominate Hillary

AP, AFP, Washington

President-elect Barack Obama plans to nominate Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state after Thanksgiving, a new milestone for the former first lady and a convergence of two political forces who fought hard for the presidency.

One week after the former primary rivals met secretly to discuss the idea of Clinton becoming the nation's top diplomat, an Obama adviser said Thursday that the two sides were moving quickly toward making it a reality, barring any unforeseen problems.

The senior adviser, speaking on condition of anonymity because the president-elect is not prepared to officially announce the nomination, said Obama believes Clinton would bring instant stature and credibility to US diplomatic relations.

Obama is convinced the advantages of Clinton serving far outweighed potential downsides, the adviser said.

Transition aides said the two camps have worked out financial disclosure issues involving Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, and the complicated international funding of his foundation that operates in more than 40 countries. The aides said Obama and Hillary Clinton have had substantive conversations about the secretary of state job.

Clinton has been mulling the post for several days, but the comments from the transition aides suggested that Obama's team does not feel she is inclined to turn it down. Clinton spokesman Philippe Reines would not comment, except to say that anything about Cabinet appointments is for Obama's transition team to address.

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