

Ensuring accountability key to better urban governance

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strengthening the capabilities of urban municipal service delivery and enhancing the accountability in municipal management is the key to improving urban governance, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They said migration of rural population to urban areas has increased tremendously putting pressure on municipal authorities while civic amenities did not develop in comparison to increased population.

The experience-sharing seminar titled 'Implementation of Urban Governance Improvement Action Programme (UGIAP)' was organised by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) at its auditorium in the city.

The speakers informed that around four crore people currently live in urban areas which make up about 27 percent of the total population.

"About 3500 new faces are joining urban population everyday. With this rate, the ratio of rural and urban population will be equal by the year 2031," they added.

The UGIAP project aims at developing urban infrastructure facilities such as roads and bridges, water supply, sanitation, drainage, solid waste management and other municipal services such as kitchen markets, slaughterhouses and bus terminals to meet the demand of growing urban population.

The project is also aimed to enhance accountability and capacity building of municipal management and increase people's participation.

Starting in 2003, a total of 33 municipalities have so far participated in implementing the three-phase project supported by the ADB. It will end in 2010.

The participating pourasavas are required to implement UGIAP with a limited allocation of project funds to cover the most urgent

requirements.

The actual progress made by the participating pourasavas in implementing UGIAP will determine their eligibility for receiving continuing support from the project.

Sharing their experiences, mayors of the participating municipalities demanded increased budget allocation along with infrastructure development.

LGED Secretary Sheikh Khurshid Alam said internal migration is increasing everyday putting tremendous pressure on urban infrastructure.

The municipality mayors are under heavy pressure to provide service to increasing population, he added.

He said organisational capacity building is important to improve governance and provide better services to people.

State Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak said the demand for development is very high

compared to limited resources of the country.

"We have to ensure sustainable development with this limited resources," he added.

"The municipalities must work to scale down their dependency on the central government. They have to increase their own income to provide services to people. Increasing tax collection is important in this regard," said Nanak.

He hoped the municipality mayors would learn from the successes and challenges faced during the first phase of the project.

AKM Mozammel Huq MP, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on land ministry, Nurul Huda, deputy country director of ADB, Wahidur Rahman, chief engineer of LGED, and Md Azizul Haque, director of Urban Management Support Unit and superintending engineer (urban management) of LGED also spoke on the occasion.



Police stand guard in front of the main hostel of Chittagong Medical College yesterday following a clash between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: STAR

KAMRANGIRCHAR MURDER

Two accomplices of UP chairman arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested two accomplices of Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Monir Hossain in connection with the murder of a youth at Kamrangirchar in the city on Tuesday.

The arrestees are Nazimuddin Nazu, a member of Sultanganj union parishad, and Abul Hashem Hashu, a trader.

A youth was killed and another received bullet injuries as Monir sprayed bullets on a crowd at Ashrafabad.

Investigation Officer of the case MA Jalil told this correspondent that they arrested them from their houses at Kamrangirchar and took them to two-day remand.

Monir and his other accomplices have been absconding since the incident.

Police are raiding different places to catch them.

The arrestees have admitted that they are close aides of Monir but they were not on the spot when the incident occurred, Jalil said.

Meanwhile, Ismail Hossain, a cousin of Monir, has quoted

him as saying that the youth was killed by the bullets of an Awami League (AL) man.

Monir only opened fire in the sky, he added.

He also claimed that the case was diverted politically as the plaintiff of the case is an AL man and for that they are doubtful about getting justice.

Kamrangirchar Thana Swachchasebok League President Golam Maula Reza filed the murder case with the local police station against Monir and 17 others in the early hours of yesterday.

Medical student drowns in Padma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A student of Bangladesh Dental College in the city yesterday drowned in the Padma river at Mawa point in Munshiganj.

The victim was identified as Shamsul Arefin, 22, a third-year student of the college and only son of his doctor parents Dr AKM Shamsuddin and Dr Ismat Zakia, of Shankar in Dhanmondi area, family sources said.

Bappi, one of Arefin's friend said, "We, five friends, went to Mawa by a private car for a trip. After playing football in the afternoon, we went for swimming, but Arefin went missing suddenly."

On information, local people rescued the victim from the river in the afternoon and rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

SEDITION CASE AGAINST AKHTAR HAMID

Hearing on bail petition deferred for 4th time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Naogaon court yesterday deferred the date for hearing on the bail petition of former deputy speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui for the fourth time in the sedition case filed against him.

The court of the District and Sessions Judge Habibur Rahman fixed Sunday for the hearing after Public Prosecutor (PP) GM Moazzem Hossain fell ill in the court before the hearing could complete, sources said.

The lawyers of the BNP leader submitted the petition for his bail in the case on June 1 and the court deferred the date for various reasons, including the PP lacks preparation and his illness.

Naogaon police arrested Hamid from his house at Mohadevpur upazila on March 22 under the Special Powers Act for making 'seditious' statements.

According to the home ministry directive, Ilias Fakir, officer-in-charge of Mohadevpur Police Station, later filed the sedition case against him for making statements subversive to the government as well as the state.

Fakir alleged that Hamid warned him that the Awami League government would not last long referring to incident of BDR mutiny.

The police officer also alleged that Hamid threatened him that he would attack the police.

Talking to The Daily Star, Faria Tajin Siddiqui, a lawyer and daughter of Hamid, termed the sedition case to be a 'farical show' to harass the ex-deputy speaker.



Bangladesh Chhatra Union forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding allocation of eight percent of national income for the education sector in the budget.

PHOTO: STAR

Give highest priority to nat'l interest

President urges journalists

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged journalists to disseminate news giving the highest priority to national interest as he said the present government believes in the freedom of the mass media and free flow of information.

He noted that the government has passed the Right to Information Act and consequently the responsibility of the journalists also increased as regards propagating information through the mass media.

The president particularly urged the media men to act more responsibly while discussing or making remark on sensitive issues, including country's sovereignty and national interests.

He made the suggestion during a meeting with Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) executive committee at Bangabhaban. DRU President Shamim Ahmad and General Secretary Pathik Saha led the delegation.

Appreciating the courageous role of the journalist community in building opinion on important national issues, he said powerful writings of the journalists are contributing to the advancement of democracy and establishing the rule of law and human rights.

He expected that the journalist community would always stand beside the people in establishing justice and truth in national interest.

DRU President Shamim Ahmad said journalists always stood for democracy and the rule of law and hoped that the country would achieve economic progress under the able leadership of President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

DRU General Secretary Pathik Saha spoke about professional activities of their organisation and put forward certain demands, including a piece of land for DRU's permanent office at Segunbagicha.

VITAMIN A PLUS CAMPAIGN

Probe body to submit report today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation committee formed to find out the links between the Vitamin A Plus campaign and children's illness, such as diarrhoea, stomachache and nausea, will submit the report today.

The committee is mainly investigating the technical issues.

Following a visit to Faridpur Medical College Hospital, Bhanga, Sadarpur and Charbhadrason health complexes and talking to the local people and UNOs and chairmen, the committee members found that the situation has become almost normal by this time.

"Even the outbreak of diarrhoea this year is comparatively low than that of the previous year as per the hospital records," said Dr ABM Jahangir Alam, director of Primary Healthcare and head of the five-member probe body, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He further said that the committee would submit the report to the government this afternoon.

Talking to the media after laying the foundation stone of

Bangladesh College of Physiotherapy at Mohakhali, Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque also said, "The investigation is going on. We will get the report within 24 hours."

Meanwhile, the deputy commissioner of Faridpur also formed a three-member committee to find out the people responsible for creating panic among the people by using loudspeakers, according to our Faridpur correspondent.

"Although the national vitamin A campaign was scheduled for June 6, it was launched two days earlier at Char Shalipur and Char Hazar Bigah under Charbhadrason upazila considering the remoteness of the areas. We will investigate the matter. It may flout the programme schedule, but it has no connection with sickness," Dr Jahangir said.

Our Munshiganj correspondent adds: the situation of diarrhoea in Munshiganj is also normal now and an investigation committee will be formed soon to investigate the death of Urmi, a seven-year-old girl, of Ballabari village at Sadar upazila.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:46pm today and rises at 5:10am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest of 23.3 degree at Srimongal.

The 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	34.8	23.8	69	65
Chittagong	31.9	26.4	76	82
Rajshahi	36.5	27.8	77	63
Khulna	35.0	28.0	77	67
Barisal	34.0	28.0	74	73
Sylhet	33.4	23.8	72	63
Cox's Bazar	33.0	25.8	69	84

UAE to invest in power, agri, tourism sectors

Signing of two deals by Sept

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan yesterday assured Bangladesh of investing in various sectors after two deals -- one on avoidance of double taxation and protection of investment -- are signed by September.

At a joint briefing at his meeting with his counterpart Dipu Moni at the foreign ministry, he said the UAE would not recruit more Bangladeshis during the ongoing global economic recession, but promised taking manpower from Bangladesh after the UAE recovers the depression.

Admitting that Bangladeshi workers had faced some problems, including wage-related one, the UAE minister said his country had already taken steps to resolve the problems.

Dipu said they discussed the area of cooperation which would be finalised at the joint commission meeting, adding that the UAE shown its keen interest in investing in the infrastructure, power, agriculture, tourism and other sectors.

"But the joint commission, which last met 17 years, headed by the finance ministers, will meet sometime before September to finalise the deals on investment protection and avoidance of double taxation," he said.

Dipu said the two deals are almost at the final stage of signing, adding that the bilateral trade volume between the two countries is about \$350 million.

Nahyan, who came to Dhaka yesterday on a brief visit, had also talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before leaving Dhaka last night on the UAE investment in power,

infrastructure, tourism, education and agriculture sectors here.

The UAE minister underlined the importance of having and finalising an agreement on avoidance of double taxation and the importance of finalising an agreement on protection of investment.

On recruitment of more workers, he said, "I have heard from the foreign minister asking for more Bangladeshis to be appointed. But for the time being, it will be very difficult to do that. As you know that the UAE economy is privately driven."

Nahyan said his country is interested in projects relating to power since Bangladesh has the crisis.

More than 700,000 Bangladeshis are working in different sectors in the UAE.

CHAOS INSIDE CTG JAIL

Shibir Nasir, 7 others shifted to Comilla, Sylhet jails

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Notorious criminal Mohammad Nasir alias Shibir Nasir and seven others, including six convicted murderers, were shifted from Chittagong jail to Comilla and Sylhet jails on Tuesday night.

They were shifted on charges of attacking the warders and staging hunger strike inside the jail on Saturday reportedly in an attempt to create chaos.

Of them, Shibir Nasir, an accused in 37 cases, Shafiqul Azam alias Shafi, Shamim and Md Azam were shifted to Comilla jail while one 'Golakata' Rashid, Taslim Uddin Montu, Md Solaiman and Ali Akbar alias Dhakia Akbar to Sylhet jail.

Excluding Nasir and Ali Akbar, the other six were awarded death penalties in different cases, including Bahodderhat eight murder case.

Sources said the Chittagong jail authorities shifted them following an order from Deputy Inspector General (Prison) Fazlur Rahman, who along with Deputy Inspector General (HQ) Golam Haider, rushed to the jail and conducted an

inquiry into the attack on warders and hunger strike by the inmates.

The decision of shifting the prisoners was finalised after Inspector General (Prison) Moqbul Hossain visited the jail on Monday, the authorities said.

In the inquiry made by the DIG (prison) of Comilla range, the involvement of 30 prisoners, including 17 convicted murderers, were identified in the attacks and hunger strike.

The inquiry report recommended for shifting them elsewhere to ensure security and safety of the other inmates and maintain order in the jail, said Jailer Sohel Rana Biswas.

It was told that Shibir Nasir and his associates - all are Islamic Chhatra Shibir cadres - instigated a good number of prisoners of condemned cell and cell No 32 to stage the hunger strike inside the jail on May 6.

Shibir Nasir and his men started commotion since the authorities stopped movement of prisoners from one block to another, meeting accomplices in the guise of relatives and illegal entry of drugs into the jail, sources said.

Woman strangled by husband in Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

A young housewife was strangled allegedly by her husband at Satirpara in the town yesterday.

The police said the victim, Nazma Begum, and her husband Jahangir were locked in an altercation following a family feud at about 12:30pm.

At one stage, Jahangir strangled Nazma, 21, mother of two children, and fled the scene.

On receiving information, local police recovered the body and sent it to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The victim's father Abul Khayer filed a murder case.

Death anniversary

DU CORRESPONDENT



apress release.

Today is the eighth death anniversary of Dr MM Hossain, a physician and social worker, says

Khaleda given security as per law: Sahara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday said Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is being provided with security as much as she deserves in accordance with the law.

"Security for the opposition leader is being provided as per the law. It won't change in future," she said rejecting BNP's allegation that the government has withdrawn police deployed for her security.

Sahara was talking to journalists after a meeting with Saudi Ambassador Abdullah bin-Nasser Al Bushahi at her ministry office.

The home minister said security had been beefed up on all court premises and other important establishments across the country apprehending terrorist and militant attacks.

Referring to simultaneous bomb attack in 63 districts in 2005, she said they have taken the precautionary measures after being alerted about possible attacks.

The minister called on all to watch out for the militants and hand them over to law enforcers if found anywhere.

About the meeting with the ambassador, she said they discussed sending trained workers to Saudi Arabia, ensuring securities for Bangladeshi workers there and ensuring facilities for Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims.

Those involved in harassing politicians must stand trial

Says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Moudud Ahmed yesterday said those who harassed and persecuted politicians during the tenure of the immediate past caretaker government must stand trial.

His party would cooperate with the government in bringing to book those responsible, he said and agreed with the law minister's remark that the politicians were harassed during the tenure of the caretaker government.

Moudud said this while talking to reporters at his Motijheel chamber.

He also said that BNP will decide at its meeting today whether the party would join the budget session of parliament.

On Tuesday, Law Minister Shaifque Ahmed blamed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for harassing politicians during the caretaker government by filing cases against them.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Alhaj Kalimur Rahman, a former government official and former general secretary of Association of Vegetable Oil Refinery and Finished Leather Products, passed away in Sydney, Australia yesterday at the age of 87, says a press release.

He left behind his seven sons, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.



Seminar

Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) and JICA jointly organising a seminar on 'Strengthening capacity for water quality analysis and monitoring system in Bangladesh'. Venue: DPHE auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

BISS seminar

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organises a seminar on 'Bangladesh-Myanmar relations'. Venue: BISS office. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar on child labour

Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum organises a seminar on 'Elimination of worst form of child labour: Our role to mark the World Day Against Child Labour'. Venue: LGED conference room. Time: 9:15am.

Roundtable

Centre for Human Rights, Development and Human Security organises a roundtable on citizenship, human rights and human security of people living in enclaves. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.