

Minister suggests planned land use

UNB, Dhaka
Finance Minister AMA Muhith has suggested incorporation of migration, land utilisation and ICT in the Local Consultative Group (LCG)'s mapping for Bangladesh.
He came up with the view while making the concluding statement on the 'Consultation Meeting on Joint Cooperation Strategy' held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.
Muhith said land use should come under a plan, as the country's land is limited while the population is increasing.
Terming ICT a 'very useful' tool for development, the minister said the use of ICT can curb corruption

and ensure transparency.
Chaired by the minister, the consultation meeting was addressed among others by Economic Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Mashiur Rahman, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman.
Dr Mashiur said that significant improvement in the ministries is needed to monitor implementation of different programmes.
ERD Secretary and Co-chair of Local Consultative Group Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan made the welcome address, while DFID Country Representative and LCG Co-chair Chris Austin also spoke.
Former Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam underscored the need for ensuring mutual accountability

between the government and the development partners.
Lawmaker Suranjit Sen Gupta suggested placing such joint cooperation strategy in parliament stressing the need for aid effectiveness.
Oli Ahmed MP said there are deficiencies in some ministries, adding: "Some of ministries do not know how to make project profiles."
Underscoring the need for addressing the deficiencies, he said that increasing population, fear of earthquake, shortage of food grains, inefficiency, controversial judiciary are the principal hindrances to the process of development.
Underlining the importance of mutual accountability and policy coherence, Mustafizur Rahman,

executive director of Center for Policy Dialogue, said these would be reflected when the development partners would disburse the committed aid to the underdeveloped nations.
Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman said every project for its implementation should have a well developed timeframe as in many occasions the projects cross timeline.
Dr Shamsul Alam, Planning Commission member, Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government, Habibullah N Karim, BASIS President, and economists Ahsan Mansur and Zaidi Sattar also took part in the discussion.



Sandeep Pathak, group chief executive officer of Bates 141, speaks at the launch of Bates 141 Bangladesh, at a ceremony in Dhaka on Thursday.

Bates 141 sets foot in Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK
Bates 141, a leading Asia-focused marketing communications network, has started operations in the advertising arena of Bangladesh, the company said in a statement.
"Spreading our wings into Bangladesh has been on the cards for us for some time now," said Sandeep Pathak, group chief executive officer of Bates 141 India.
"Our foray in Bangladesh not only allows us to serve our current businesses more effectively, but also lets us put to use our Bangla language credentials for our current and potential clients in the country."
Abeer Chakravarty, director, and Sandip Chaudhury, country manager designate of Bates 141 Bangladesh, were also present at the launch of the venture at a ceremony in Dhaka on Thursday.
The company offers an array of services, including activation, CRM, digital and

mobile platform-driven solutions such as out-of-home media and retail marketing design.
"This is a happy culmination of a long standing dream to be engaged with and involve in Bangladesh," said Chakravarty.
"We are grateful to Marico that introduced us to Bangladesh and has been an incredible and exemplary partner to help us grow and build our team and regional caliber over the past five years."
The company seeks to help its existing clients tap the rapidly expanding market in Bangladesh together with the motive to serve local and multinational brands, according to the statement.
Bates 141 operates across 13 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Vietnam.
Bates 141 has a dedicated team of Bangla communications here.

Sugar refiners seek policy support

UNB, Dhaka
Leaders of Bangladesh Sugar Refiners' Association yesterday demanded that the government give them necessary policy support to help the industry survive.
They also called for increasing the import duty gap between raw sugar and white sugar to Tk 5,000 per tonne from Tk 3,000, and forming a supply chain structure.

The association urged the government to lift the ban on sugar export and also stop delivery order system.
The leaders placed the demands when they called on Finance Minister AMA Muhith at his ministry.
President of the association Fazlur Rahman and General Secretary Golam Mostafa were present.
The minister assured the sugar refiners of considering their demands.
ASM Mohiuddin Monem of Abdul Monem Limited told the minister that they are now incurring loss of Tk 20 per kilogram as the production cost of each kg of sugar now stands at Tk 58-Tk 60.

"We have to sell sugar at around Tk 38 per kg and so we are failing to repay our loans," he said.
Mohiuddin said the refiners had to procure raw sugar at around \$ 745 per tonne in January when the international market was high. "But now we are incurring loss."

He said the refiners have a huge export potential as they have the capacity of refining 24 lakh tonnes of sugar per year against the countrywide demand for 14 lakh tonnes and said the government could now lift the ban on sugar export.
Mohiuddin said there is good prospect of sugar export to India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bulgaria, Germany and France.
He also proposed that the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh should procure around 60,000 tonnes of sugar from the local refiners ahead of Ramadan to save foreign currency.



US Ambassador James F Moriarty poses for photograph with the officials of USAID and Golden Harvest Agro Industries Ltd at the embassy in Dhaka recently. Managing Director of Golden Harvest Rajeeb Samdani briefed the envoy on the company's exports and market development. It participated in an exhibition in Dubai in February with support from USAID.

Analysts back budget for balanced development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi
Speakers at a meeting in Rajshahi city on Sunday demanded allocations for balanced development in all regions of the country in the upcoming budget.
They said an increased allocation for small and medium industries and separate policies for regions can help cut poverty and boost economic growth.

Lawmaker Fazole Hossain Badsha attended the discussion on "pro-people budget in education, health and agriculture" as the chief guest.
He emphasised a "pro-people" budget by ensuring participation of people in the process and said development would be hampered without a balanced development of regions.

Shushahoner Jonno Procharavijan (Supro), a local NGO, organised the discussion at the GDRC auditorium in the city with its president Fazlul Haque in the chair.
The speakers demanded allocation for implementing North Rajshahi Irrigation Project and dredging of the Padma river.

Thailand urged to recruit more Bangladeshis

UNB, Dhaka
President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged Thailand to recruit more skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers along with further boosting the trade volume between the two countries through increasing investment.
The President made the call when newly appointed Thai Ambassador Tassanawadee Miancharoen presented her credentials to him at Bangabhaban.
During the meeting, Zillur Rahman said that Thailand is a neighboring country of Bangladesh and more people from both countries are working together in various sectors, trade and investment should be increased further between the two countries.
Emphasising road connectivity, the Thai envoy mentioned that trade and commerce between Thailand and Bangladesh could be further expanded when road connectivity through neighboring Myanmar would be operational as soon as possible.
Pointing to the gradual increasing bilateral relations between the two countries since 1972, Tassanawadee Miancharoen said private enterprises from her country

have already put huge investments here in trade, infrastructure, health, garment, agriculture and fisheries sectors.
"Presently Thailand is putting emphasis on energy, fisheries and garments sectors," she said, mentioning that many Thai experts have been working here in the energy sector for exploration of gas and petroleum in the Bay of Bengal.
The new envoy informed the President that her country is organising many trade exhibitions, particularly the Thai Food Festival, which are expanding the commercial activities between the two countries.
Tassanawadee Miancharoen said Thailand is keen on recruiting more skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshis and also on increasing scholarship opportunities for prospective students. "We're putting emphasis on increasing people-to-people communication," she said.
Secretary to the President's office M Safiul Alam, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and Press Secretary AKM Nesar Uddin Bhuiyan were present during the meeting.

Stocks end lower

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
Dhaka stocks suffered losses on the opening trading session of the week, driven by a sharp decline in Grameenphone share prices.
Benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, DSE General Index, fell 37.4 points, or 0.66 percent to 5,581.01.
Each Grameenphone share declined 5.42 percent to Tk 279.20.
Insurance and services and real estate sectors also contributed to the decline.
However fuel and power led the list of top positive performers yesterday, followed by engineering and miscellaneous sectors. But the gain in these sectors was not enough to cover the losses in other sectors.
The broader DSE All Share Price Index also fell 24.19 points, or 0.52 percent to 4,591.27.
Losers beat the gainers 147 to 100 with two securities remaining unchanged. A total of 4,33,43,964 shares worth Tk 1,537.46 crore were traded on the premier bourse.
Beximco Limited topped the turnover leaders with 27,90,800 shares worth Tk 121.07 crore being traded.
Chittagong stocks also marked a fall. The CSE Selective Categories Index slid 88.23 points, or 0.82 percent to 10,546.45. The CSE All Share Price Index also declined 120.46 points, or 0.73 percent to 16,167.42.
A total of 51,10,423 shares worth Tk 99.68 crore changed hands on the Chittagong Stock Exchange. Of the traded issues, 76 advanced, 104 declined and three remained unchanged.
Beximco Limited topped the turnover leaders.

Barvida demands imports of 8-year-old buses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
Used car traders yesterday demanded that the government allow the imports of up to eight years old buses to reduce public transport cost and ease traffic congestion in the capital city.
They also suggested imposition of additional taxes on the vehicles plying for more than 15 years.
"If the government allows traders to import buses aged up to eight years, it will help reduce the transport cost a lot," Habibullah Don, president of Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association (Barvida) said yesterday at the opening ceremony of the association's permanent office.
Commerce Minister Faruk Khan,

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Tamotsu Shinotsuka, FBCCI President Annisul Huq, Hamim Group Chairman AK Azad and Barvida's former presidents Abdul Haque and Abdul Mannan Khoshru also spoke on the occasion.
Habibullah Don pointed out that the government received Tk 1700 crore as taxes from the imports of 26,000 reconditioned cars in the ten months of the current fiscal year. The amount was Tk 2000 crore from the imports of 31,000 cars a year ago.
The importers also demanded that their show rooms should be allowed to close on Friday instead of Sunday. The association leaders also sought their representation in FBCCI.
The minister assured the association of reviewing its demands.

CCCI team off to Taiwan, Japan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
A 19-member delegation of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), led by its chief MA Latif MP, left for Taiwan and Japan on Saturday.
The business delegation is scheduled to hold discussions with trade organisations and business houses in the two countries, CCCI said in a statement yesterday.
The organisations and business houses include Taipei External Trade Development Council, Department of East Asia and Pacific Welfare, Bureau of Foreign Trade in Taiwan and Osaka, Kobe, Nagoya, Yokohama, Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Textile Importers Association, Japan External Trade Organisation, Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation in Japan.
The delegation will hold meetings on relevant issues with businessmen and will visit important business spots.
The delegation will also visit different government, private enterprises, investors and attend discussions in the two countries. The delegates will also meet with expatriate Bangladeshi businessmen in Taiwan and Japan to encourage them to set up industries in Bangladesh.
The delegation is expected to return on May 19.

Change in some BTCL phone numbers

STAR BUSINESS DESK
The phone numbers of 2,000 BTCL customers under Gulshan exchange have been changed due to technical reason.
Those who had starting number of 884 now can be reached by dialing 841.
The other four digits will remain the same, says a press release issued by Bangladesh Telecommunications of Company Limited yesterday.
For further queries, customers have been requested to call 841-6600, 841-0011 and 841-0022.



Masud Rahman, president of Canada Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CanCham), presents a memento to Yvonne B Suptene of Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI) after hosting a daylong technical training session for wheat millers, bakers and lab technicians in Dhaka recently.

World debt crisis looms behind Greek mess

AFP, Paris
With Europe locked in Greece-linked market mayhem, influential economists are now warning that a wider crisis of rising debts and ageing populations in advanced economies could be in store.
And it is not just Greece and some other vulnerable eurozone economies that are in trouble. Countries such as Britain and the United States are at risk too unless urgent action is taken to avert a major public finances crunch.
A recent working paper published by the Switzerland-based Bank for International Settlements, an organisation that groups together the world's top central banks, said the developed world has seen "an explosion of public debt."
"Drastic measures" are needed to slash this debt, said the authors of the report, including Stephen Cecchetti, chief economic adviser to the BIS, which often helps shape government economic policy years into the future.