

Better infrastructure for future living

KSRM and The Daily Star organised a roundtable on 'Better infrastructure for future living' on 22 October 2011. We publish a summary of the discussions.

--Editor



Brig-Gen (Retd.) Shahedul Anam Khan, Editor, Defense and Strategic Affairs, The Daily Star
Thank you very much for attending the roundtable. Our special thanks to Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury for agreeing to moderate the discussion. Many say urbanization is the machine of development, and better life is related to urbanization. Urbanization is not always a bane. It has also its downside. We have to see how to manage urbanization to make a better living out of making appropriate and good infrastructure.

Abdul Momin Mia, GM, Marketing and Sales (Uttara Branch), KSRM

KSRM is very eager to shed light on better infrastructure, and to ensure it we produce standard and safe building materials. To create consciousness about safe infrastructure we are arranging such roundtable as this. We pledge to continue such efforts.

Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, President, Bangladesh Earthquake Society, Former Professor, BUET

Third world economic intelligence has recently published a report on livability, and Dhaka unfortunately is placed 139 out of 140. The only city which is placed below Dhaka is Harare. This is a very sad reflection on the way we are handling the growth of the city.

Dr. Munaz Ahmed Noor, Professor, Dept. of Civil Engineering, BUET

I prefer the title 'better infrastructure for better living.' Future is a vast term. We should narrow it down for our discussion.

Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury

The intelligence report uses 7 indicators: quality of road network, quality of public transport, quality of international links, availability of good housing, qual-

ity of energy provision, quality of water provision and quality of telecommunication.

Dr. Munaz Ahmed Noor

There is always a gap between GDP growth and infrastructural development. In case of Bangladesh it is rather huge. So our quality of life and economic competitiveness with the world or in our internal market is to be considered. This is a huge question whether only government can bridge the gap? It is not possible for the government. It may introduce public private partnership which we see in other sectors like electricity, bridge and so on. But we need it in city infrastructure building which is rare here. Here are two factors: risk sharing and policy change. Another option is public private initiative or private finance initiative. Many experts prefer it. At least, we should support private initiative.

I want to emphasize on modern and efficient infrastructure for better living. We need to find out critical infrastructures. Without it we fail to put our limited resources into our critical infrastructures. As we face many types of urban disasters, we need disaster resilient structure.

Our infrastructure should be climate friendly. We can call it sustainable and green infrastructure. We have very beautiful weather today but we have closed all the windows in the room and are using unnecessary electricity. We have rich tradition like Moghul structure, where the temperature remains up to 30. We fail to follow that line rather we follow western tradition which causes problem. We have to keep in our mind the problem of maintenance of the infrastructure. We do not know asset management. If we take it seriously we would get good result.

The last thing is strategic planning. But politicians are not interested in long term planning. We can coin a new term deliverable infrastructural planning. If we can divide our long term strategic planning in accordance with the deliverable infrastructural planning, we would get remarkable success.

Shakoore Majid, Architect

We are living in a dead city. A city needs 25 % open place but we have only 2%. The number of our structure has gone up by more than 100 percent than the 50's plan. We have enough roads, but we have no planning. We never think about people's mobility rather we are engaged with car mobility.

Our urban population growth in Dhaka is 6 to 7 per-

KSRM Message

SHAHRIAR JAHAN RAHAT, DIRECTOR KSRM

Our objective as a business group or a manufacturing company is not to do business only. We strongly believe, we have obligation towards this society and the nation as a whole. We further believe that, while doing business in this country, it is our inherent responsibility to contribute to the growth of the country in our own way. Since we are a leading steel manufacturer in Bangladesh we are committed to producing quality steel product to ensure our participation in making a safer and dependable infrastructure for the country.

Going forward we don't want to limit ourselves only within producing quality steel; we also want to raise mass awareness on safer living for today and for tomorrow. We want to evoke the sense of responsibility among other stakeholders of the society as well and seek their participation for this common goal of protecting our future. We do not want to raise issues only for the sake of raising, but would like to unearth the opportunities that lie beyond those and would urge the concerned people to turn those into reality. There is a famous saying by one of the legendary leaders Sir Winston Churchill, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty". We also hope for the latter.

According to the international economy forums, Bangladesh is considered as one of the "Next Eleven" countries to have high potential with promising outlooks for investment and future growth. And to facilitate the growth, we need to be ready with a strong and safe infrastructure. KSRM believes this will only be possible if we are committed enough and we are aware as a nation.

Together we can achieve what no other country has ever thought of.

cent which is 2% in the national context. We have no plan to increase infrastructure to accommodate the increasing population. We have missed the train. We had options of establishing another capital. If we cannot reduce one third of the existing population of the Dhaka city we would not be able to sustain with our present resources. We can refer to the garment sector. We have 15 lakh garment workers and approximately

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Finished-goods stacking.