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**Editor (Star Weekend)**

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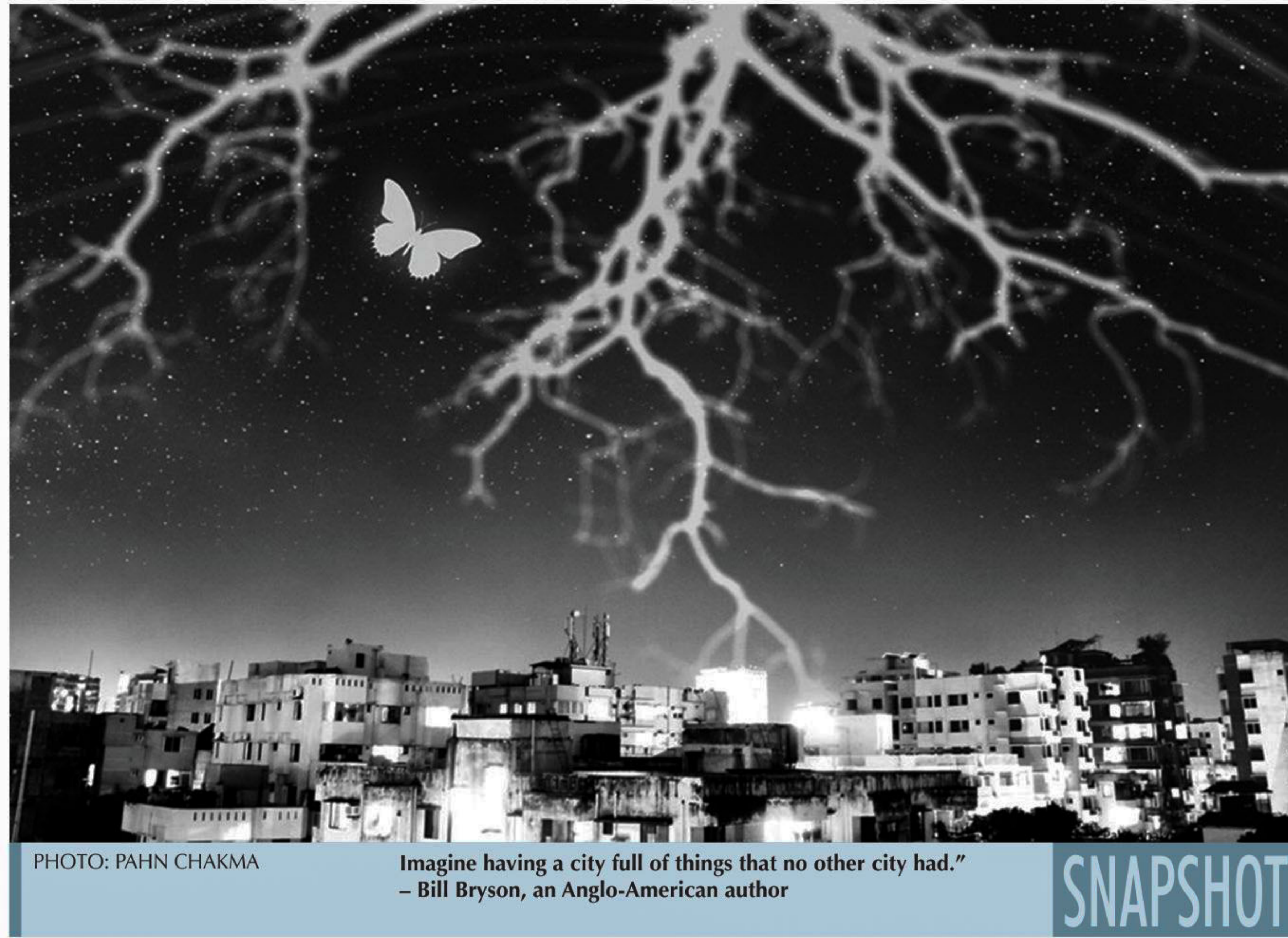


PHOTO: PAHN CHAKMA

Imagine having a city full of things that no other city had."  
– Bill Bryson, an Anglo-American author

**SNAPSHOT**

**OPINION**

During every Eid holiday, the fairly empty streets of Dhaka bring unexpected tragedies for the Dhakaites. During these days, which are not more than a week, city dwellers go out to enjoy the traffic-jam free streets of Dhaka and to take their loved ones out on drives. However, taking advantage of traffic-free streets and loosened activities of traffic police, the unruly drivers of motor vehicles unleash their barbaric appetite for midtown madness. On September 15, which was the third day of Eid ul Adha, Mohammed Abdullah was going towards Jamuna Future Park via Kuril flyover on a CNG-auto-rickshaw.

"While coming down the flyover at full speed, a bus suddenly pushed in from the left side out of nowhere. It pushed in way more than it needed and forced the auto-rickshaw to break very hard and consequently another bus behind the auto-rickshaw, failing to break promptly smashed its right side," Abdullah shares his horrific experience. "By the time we checked to see if we are alive, the bullying bus on the left lane was long gone. If the bus hit us any straighter, the gas cylinder would have exploded and I probably wouldn't be telling you this story," added a frightened Mohammed.

Just a day earlier, on September 14, an elderly couple was killed on the spot when a car hit them in Dhaka's Shewrapara area. However, the situation outside Dhaka is equally bleak as hundreds and thousands of people left the city to spend their Eid holidays and started to return after the vacation. To earn extra money from the rushing holiday makers, ramshackle, unfit buses and trucks run by poorly trained drivers are taken to the highways. These buses carry passengers of a larger amount than its actual capacity. They even carry passengers on the roof of the bus making them extremely vulnerable to fatal accidents.

The consequence of this uncontrolled attitude and negligence of the law enforcing agencies has proved to be fatal this year. According to a statistics of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity (Bangladesh Passenger Welfare Association), during the nine days from 7th to 15th September 157 people have been killed in 88 different road accidents all over the country. The death toll has been further increased certainly as 346 injured people have been admitted to hospitals due to these accidents.

Responsible government officials from Roads and Highways Department pointed their fingers at the owners of buses and trucks. They allege that during Eid holidays these owners increase the

**BANGLADESH'S LAWLESS ROADS**

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTO: STAR FILE



During the nine days from 7th to 15th September 157 people have been killed in 88 different road accidents all over the country.

number of trips of the bus to earn more money. So, the bus drivers have to drive their vehicles at a reckless speed. If the bus owners and their drivers do not correct their attitude, the government's steps to prevent accidents will be in vain, they said.

However, the government itself has appointed owners of different bus companies to some of the responsible positions of the National Road Safety Council. There are claims that due to the influence of these owners, legal steps cannot be taken against the responsible bus companies.

On the other hand, to reduce accidents in highways, the National Road Safety Council recommended 76 short term steps. However, only a few of its recommendations have been accepted. The Council also figured out 144 most accident prone spots of Bangladesh's highways and suggested immediate

measure to reconstruct the roads on those spots to prevent accidents. Roads and Highways Department also launched projects to remove design flaws on those spots but the project did not complete. In this year, there are reports that many of the accidents took place in those accident prone spots.

On 19th September. Road Transport and Bridges Minister, in a press conference, admitted his responsibility for the series of deadly accidents on highways. However, such unprecedented rate of loss of human lives in these accidents shows how weak our transport infrastructure is and how negligent our law enforcing agencies are to bring order and discipline in the highways. This positive approach of the minister showing sympathy for the victims will go in vain if steps are not taken immediately to prevent the cause of these deadly accidents.

**MAILBOX**

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**The Beautiful World of Dipankar**

The article titled "The Beautiful World of Dipankar" on, September 2, 2016, inspired me a lot. Dipankar proved that you need not to be a powerful one to do something for the betterment of the society; rather you must have a dream. To fulfil his dream, he established "Batighar" which is not only a bookstore, rather a movement towards enlightenment and awareness, which has become the home of thousands of book lovers. In a time when the habit of reading books is becoming rare among youngsters, this initiative taken by Dipankar is much appreciated. We wish him every success with his resourceful establishment, "Batighar". If we want a prosperous and developed Bangladesh, we need lots of Dipankar to enlighten us.

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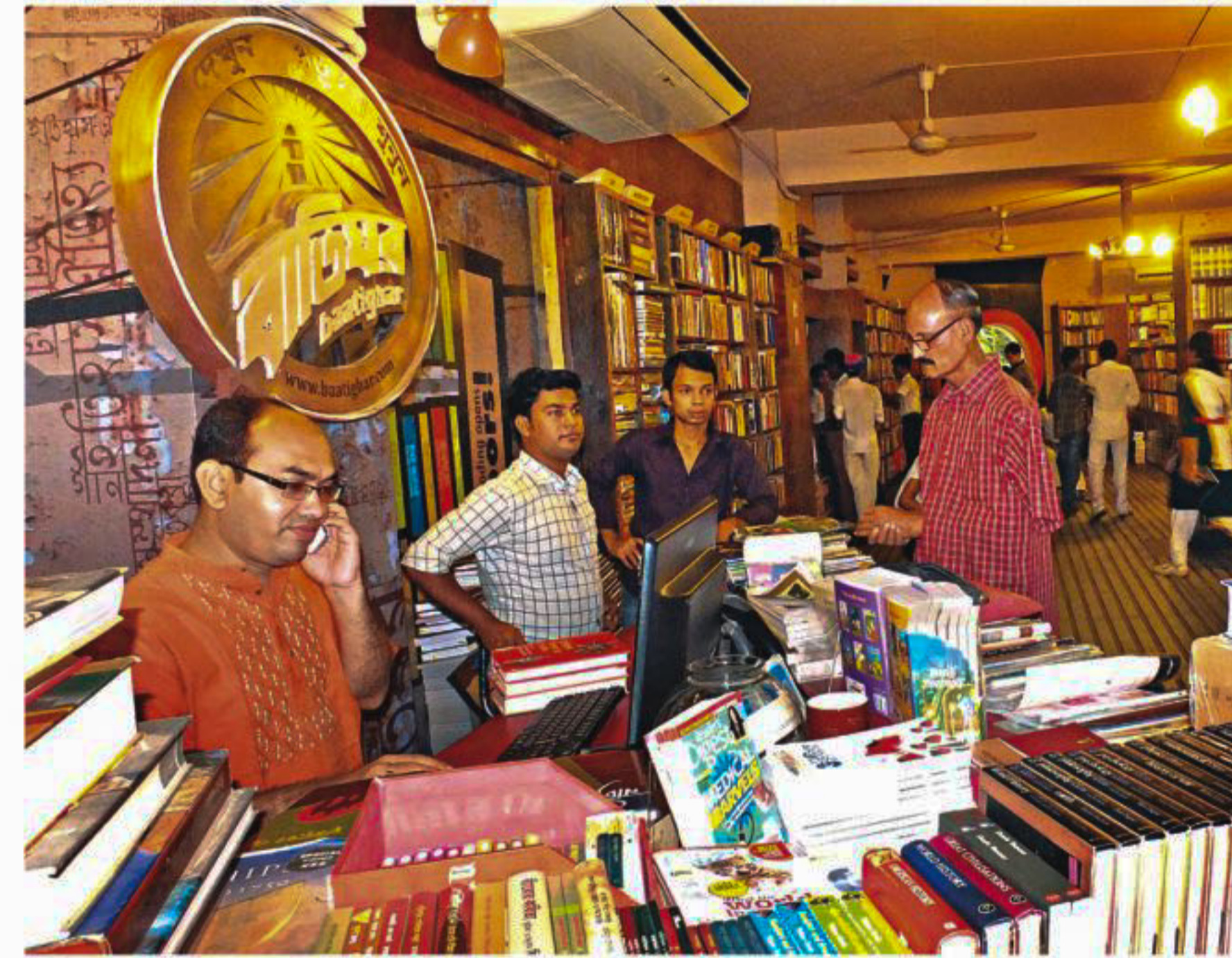


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**The Necessity of Planning**

Due to very limited media exposure, the profession of planning is not that familiar in Bangladesh. Being a student of planning when I introduce myself to people, they often ask me what it is about. Urban and Regional Planning (URP) is a discipline where students are taught about the basic planning disciplines like Urban Planning, Rural Planning, Regional Planning, Transportation Planning, Housing and Real Estate Planning, Land Use Planning along with a wide range of other related subjects such as Economics, Statistics, Mathematics, Environment, Computer Engineering, Geography, Architecture, Construction, Law, Government and Administration and so on. A planner has to hold the ability to work with the people of different professions. In that sense, it is a challenging profession. Moreover, planning is now a pressing issue not only in Bangladesh but also all over the world because of the increasing population and decreasing living space. It is high time we invest on this profession by creating scope of higher education on planning and by creating job opportunities for planners.

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The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.



**Remembering Salman Shah**

September 6, 2016 was the 20th death anniversary of Salman Shah, a renowned Bangladeshi actor and model. Unfortunately, the mystery behind his untimely death is yet to be solved. It is hard to believe that he committed suicide- because he was very hopeful about his career and his life. His father died with grief and his mother is still seeking justice. We demand exemplary punishment for those who were responsible for his death. His unnatural death was a great loss for our film industry. We, his fans, still miss him tremendously. On his death anniversary, we pray that may his soul rest in eternal peace and I hope that our government will take initiative to solve this case.

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**Earthquakes Don't Kill People. Buildings Do! Build Safe!**

