

AVOIDING AN URBAN NIGHTMARE: TIME TO GET PLANNING RIGHT

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Towards a better, balanced metropolis

A glance at the mega infrastructure projects aiming to fulfil Dhaka's urgent transportation requirements, and the stumbling blocks along the way



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If you look hard at a map of Dhaka city, you may notice a striking similarity with the side profile of a human face. The more you focus, the more you will notice that Uttara resembles the forehead, Mirpur resembles the eyes, Tongi resembles the scalp, Gabtoli resembles the nose, Motijheel resembles the mouth and Keraniganj resembles the throat. Hardly do I need to mention that all these organs are equally important for the proper functioning of the human body.

Imagine your face being contorted and squeezed upon day after day with external pressure. Can you put a smile on your face with such pressure? You can't. It hurts, right? Well, isn't that what, in some way or the other, has happened to our beloved capital Dhaka over the years?

Well, things are starting to take a turn for the better. Dhaka is being rethought, reinvented and restructured. Concerted efforts are being undertaken to reinforce its infrastructure and transportation networks. Multiple mega infrastructure projects are in the process of being implemented and more is in the pipeline. These projects, when completed, will change the cityscape,

ensure enhanced living standards of the residents and facilitate greater ease and convenience of moving around the city.

However, throughout this revitalisation therapy of Dhaka Metropolis, proper coordination between concerned development authorities is of utmost importance. Adequate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) strategies have to be incorporated within these mega projects. Strong regulatory frameworks need to be established for the implementation of multiple public-private-partnership projects. Also, an optimal mix of financing needs to be figured out for these projects by striking a proper balance between government funding and funding from foreign investors. All of these will act as combined catalysts to transform the face of the capital in the next few decades to come.

As of October 2018, Dhaka is the most densely populated city on earth with a density of 47,400 people per square kilometre. Understandably so, because every day about 1,400 people enter this city for a better and a more solvent life. Being the administrative, economic and commercial hub of the country, Dhaka has seen an exponential

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Metro rail construction, Rokeya Sharani.

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