

# Towards a safe, sustainable Dhaka

## Experts suggest tackling corruption in dev process, reclaiming canals and open spaces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Safe and inclusive urbanisation in keeping with the global SDGs will remain a far cry unless political hooliganism and corruption in development process are tackled, said urban experts at a discussion yesterday.

Bangla daily Prothom Alo and Save the Children organised the event on "Safe and sustainable city: progress and challenges to implementation" at the newspaper's Karwan Bazar office.

Prof Kazi Maruful Haq of Development Studies at Dhaka University said sustainable urbanisation and balanced distribution of development are not achievable unless there is a change in the abovementioned practices.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam said, "Surely, there is a question of corruption in the development process, as the prime minister too said in parliament that she would show zero tolerance in this regard."

Prof Md Akter Mahmud, general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said essentially, urbanisation according to the UN sustainable goals has to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable to bring about fundamental social and humane qualitative changes.

"Development merely in numerical figures, concentrated in Dhaka city alone, is not enough," he said, adding that it has to bring a qualitative social change with equal distribution of wealth across cities

and regions.

At the discussion, Mayor Atiqul said population density in per square kilometre in Dhaka's city corporation area is 49,000. The speakers said a city can never achieve sustainable development with such an overwhelming density.

Dr Khurshid Zabin Hossain Taufique, director of Urban Development Directorate, said with the highest fatality, pedestrian passage as an urban public transport mode is unsafe in the capital. The transport system can be streamlined with a mere tuning of the plan and setting priority with public transport mode on top, he added.

Md Ashraf Islam, project director of Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan (revision), said eastern part of the city is still a green field and can be developed as a planned city.

He said 88 percent roads in the city are less than 20 feet wide, making further planned urbanisation difficult. The revised DAP is going to have a proposal for 627 neighbourhood-based schools and over 100 primary health care centres at a proposed cost of Tk 27,000 crore, he said.

The DAP project director suggested that 566-kilometre-long recorded public canal network within Dhaka be reclaimed for water-based transport network, pedestrian passage, beautification and ecological balance.

He said 75 percent of Dhaka's 21 lakh structures should be developed in a

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### PHOTO OF THE DAY

AMRAN HOSSAIN



ONE MAN'S WASTE IS ANOTHER MAN'S LIVELIHOOD... A vendor sells discarded glass bottles and jars in front of Sena Kalyan building in Motijheel, along with plastic storage boxes and various kitchen accessories.

## 'Govt to put checks on social media'

### Warns telecom minister Jabbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar yesterday said the government will be able to 'directly interfere' on social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube after September, to contain rumours on social media.

"No one will be able to publish anything as per their whims on social media," Jabbar said while addressing a programme organised by Awami League's publicity affairs committee at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

The government has been keen to stop rumours on social media but failed so far, Jabbar said, adding that Facebook and YouTube are US companies run by US community standards. "We can't interfere in this regard directly yet," he said.

"We can't take any measure instantly when a status update or video is published on social media." But soon, the government will have the capacity to "interfere" in any website if it wants, which is a big achievement, Jabbar said.

"We see some news outlets spreading rumours and we face trouble in dealing with it. We will be able to stop unauthorised news portals after publishing registration list," he added.

## Bring Pakistan army to book for war crimes

### Speakers say at sector commanders' conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent freedom fighters and citizens yesterday demanded that the government bring the then Pakistan army under trial for carrying out war crimes during the Liberation War in 1971.

The demand was placed at the fifth national conference of Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF), a platform of freedom fighters, held at Officers' Club.

SCF Vice-Chairman Lt Col (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury said people of the country know how brutal the Pakistan army and their collaborators were during the war.

"We have to complete the trial of war criminals... it is a national responsibility."

"At the same time, Pakistan army should be brought under justice for leading the murder of about 30 lakh people," he

added.

SCF Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiqullah said the government should immediately arrest all war criminals and collaborators, who are yet to be charged.

He also urged for publication of a complete list of freedom fighters soon.

Speaking as chief guest, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel said the government has recently decided to build all graveyards of freedom fighters in an identical design, as a mark of respect.

He also assured that they will soon take initiative to preserve all killing fields and notable places of the Liberation War.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque, Liberation War Museum Trustee Sarwar Ali, SCF Secretary General Haroon Habib and cultural personality M Hamid also spoke.

## Ensure disposal of transformer oil

### Speakers tell DoE programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Severe health threats from the toxic liquid chemical Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), popularly known as transformer oil, have remained unaddressed till date, and action has to be taken in this regard immediately, speakers at a project inception workshop said yesterday.

PCBs pose serious health risks to fetuses, babies and children, who may suffer developmental and neurological problems from prolonged or repeated exposure to even a small amount.

The Department of Environment (DoE) estimated that there are around 500 tonnes of PCBs-contaminated transformers across the country, and the chemical has not been decomposed properly.

With a view to eliminating PCBs within 2024, DoE yesterday launched a project titled, "Environmentally Sound Development of Power Sectors with Final Disposal of PCBs", at its headquarters in Dhaka.

According to DoE officials, Bangladesh stopped importing PCBs around 15-20 years ago and has been

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## KHALEDA'S RELEASE BNP to come up with 'package movement'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP high command has decided to intensify their efforts -- continuing ongoing movement and fighting a legal battle -- to ensure release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia. The party said it will come up with a "package movement" within four weeks.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir made the announcement yesterday, following a meeting of party's national standing committee -- its apex policymaking body -- at Khaleda's Gulshan office.

"We have decided to intensify our ongoing movement immediately to ensure release of our party chief. The meeting also decided to go for a legal battle," Fakhrul said.

On June 22, BNP also took a decision that they would wage a movement across the country to ensure Khaleda's release.

At yesterday's meeting, party leaders discussed various issues including the prevailing political situation, Barguna's Rifat Sharif murder and present crisis in its student front Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal.

Acting Chairman Tarique Rahhan joined the meeting through videoconferencing from London.

Asked about current setback in JCD, Fakhrul said BNP has given authority to some leaders to solve it.

Replying to a query about the Liberation War affairs minister's call in the parliament to remove Ziaur Rahman's grave from its premises, Fakhrul said it is a sign that the government has become politically bankrupt.



TOXIC POULTRY, FISH FEED... A mobile court of Rab confiscates poultry and fish feed made with tannery waste at a factory in Demra yesterday. During the drive, the team shut down three such factories, fined them Tk 32 lakh in total and sentenced 16 persons to different jail terms.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Make 3rd-party insurance mandatory for road crashes

### Campaigners demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A road safety organisation yesterday demanded amendment to the Road Transport Act-2018 to make third party insurance for road crash victims mandatory, and called for creating accident compensation fund immediately.

Road Safety Foundation, a non-government organisation, made the recommendations at a roundtable at Jatiya Press Club. It organised the discussion titled "Compensation for Road Accident Victims: Need of Road Safety Insurance and Separate Road Safety Fund."

However, two top transport leaders, said it is a very lengthy process to get insurance claim after an accident, and emphasised on relaxing related procedures so that victims and vehicle owners can make the claims easily.

MS Siddiqui, vice-president of the foundation, said the Road Transport Act-2018 makes the insurance for third party

(passengers and pedestrians) optional.

"The third-party insurance should be made compulsory and the law [Transport Act] should be amended accordingly," he said.

He also urged the authorities to reconsider a section of the new act which said an accident compensation fund would be created -- with contributions from transport owners and workers aside from the government fund.

"The penalty realised from traffic violators should be main source of the fund. The government can allocate fund in the next budget," he added.

In his keynote paper, Prof Moazzem Hossain, former director of Accident Research Institute at Buet, said instances of people getting insurance claim in Bangladesh is almost absent, and thus no statistics were available in this regard.

He said as per the existing law, a deceased victim's family gets Tk 20,000 while an

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A faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League members, who were not named in student group's recently-announced central committee, continued their hunger strike unto death for the second day at the base of Raju Sculpture at Dhaka University.

PHOTO: STA

### DHAKA TODAY

#### DISCUSSION

Budget for Higher Education  
Organiser: Center on Budget & Policy  
Venue: Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Building, Dhaka University  
Time: 12pm

#### WORKSHOP

Promoting Urban Gardening in Dhaka  
Venue: Institute of Wellbeing, Rayerbazar  
Time: 7pm

#### CONVENTION

Sunday Salsa Socials  
Venue: Cuppa Coffee Lounge  
Time: 7pm

#### MATCH SCREENING

World Cup with Pizza  
Venue: Le Meridien Dhaka  
Time: 3pm

#### FRIENDLY DEBATE

Organiser: Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Debating Club  
Venue: Dhaka University  
Time: 3pm

#### BOOK LAUNCHING

Memoir of Cultural Activist Syed Hasan Imam  
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Time: 5pm

#### CONFERENCE

International Conference on Cyber Security & Digital Forensics  
Venue: Dhaka International University, Banani  
Time: 4pm

## Remove Zia's grave from House premises

### Liberation War minister urges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque yesterday in parliament asked the authorities concerned to remove Ziaur Rahman's grave and other structures, constructed going beyond the original design of the Jatiya Sangsad, from the premises of parliament.

Participating in the discussion on the proposed budget for 2019-20, the minister said, "Some structures including Zia's grave were constructed on the Jatiya Sangsad premises going beyond the original design. There are also some other graves here. I request to remove these."

Several ministers and lawmakers had made the same demand in the 9th and 10th parliament, to restore the parliament complex to its original design made by world-famous architect Louis I Kahn.

The Jatiya Sangsad collected the original design in 2016, but no initiative is visible yet to remove those structures.

Elaborating on the government's activities on providing facilities to freedom fighters, Mozammel said his ministry has taken initiative to keep experience of every freedom fighter in record. The experience of every freedom fighter will be recorded for 10-20 minutes, and preserved permanently, he added.