

'Inclusive urbanisation impossible through sector-wise allocation'

Experts say on DSCC, DNCC budgets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Budgetary allocations for the two city corporations of Dhaka for 2019-2020 fiscal are non-participatory and non-representative of city dwellers, claimed noted urban planners yesterday.

They said inclusive urbanisation will not be possible through such sector-based and one-dimensional allocation, where area-based allocation is totally missing.

They made the observations while speaking at a press conference on "Review of DNCC and DSCC budget for 2019-20 fiscal" at conference hall of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) in the capital.

They said the two city corporations should devise plans and start implementation from grassroots levels to ensure sustainable development.

Presenting a written statement, General Secretary of BIP Dr Adil Mohammad Khan said disparity among various areas and wards of the city are noticeable in the budgetary allocation. "Such budget could not reflect real scenario of areas-based civil service," he claimed.

He further said an analysis of last year's revised budget shows that the government and foreign aid projects have not been allocated as expected this year.

He urged the two city mayors to ensure good governance through ensuring public opinion in policymaking. "Accountability of ward commissioners should be ensured properly to ensure proper urbanisation," he added.

Adil recommended adopting a ward-based development plan, creating profiles of the areas, determining existing

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WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING A FOOTPATH? Dhaka residents are long used to seeing roadsides lost to illegal parking. But on Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Avenue in Mohakhali, buses not only occupy the corners but also block access to the adjacent footpath from all directions, forcing pedestrians to either squeeze past the vehicles or walk on the busy street amid risk, inset. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Monitor entire supply chain to ensure safe food: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economists and rights activists at a roundtable yesterday urged the authorities concerned to start monitoring the entire food supply chain, from production to sale, for ensuring safe food for all.

If the authorities -- such as Food Safety Authority, law enforcement agencies and relevant ministries -- keep their activities limited to the marketing stage only, it will create hype instead of ensuring safety, the said.

They urged food processors, manufacturers and traders to maintain honesty while doing business. They also suggested that farmers be trained on how to produce safe and healthy food.

Conscious Consumers Society (CCS) and Change Initiative, two non-government organisations, in association with Healthy Bangladesh, a civic platform, organised the discussion on consumer rights and safe food at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

"Safe food is our right. The safety has to be ensured at all stages, not only focusing on the final product only," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, a noted environmental lawyer and rights activist.

At first, farmers have to be trained to produce safe food; then suppliers, manufacturers and processors should continue maintaining the safety through strict quality control, she added.

Rizwana, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), also urged consumers to raise their voice against unsafe food and adulteration.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, prominent economist and chairperson of Brac, said not only adulteration, but

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Solving traffic chaos proving difficult: Mayor Khokon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Mayor Sayeed Khokon yesterday said finding solutions to the city's traffic problems are proving to be difficult, as service-providing agencies have failed to keep up with development.

"Although the city saw huge economic growth in last decade, capacity of service and utility providers did not grow accordingly," he observed while speaking at a roundtable.

Engineers Institute, Bangladesh (IEB) and Nagar Unnayan Sangbadik Forum, Bangladesh (NUSFB) organised the discussion, titled "What should be done to bring discipline in public transport" at IEB auditorium.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed us to make service agencies skillful enough and ensure coordination among them," the mayor added.

About initiatives to streamline public transport services, the mayor said, "The

government formed a committee [in September last year], headed by me, to solve the problems in public transport sector. The committee had sought two years from city dwellers. And within this time, changes will be visible," the mayor said.

He said all the buses plying in the city will be brought under six companies, and 22 specific routes within this time.

Prof Mizanur Rahman, director of Accident Research Institute at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), said there are numerous problems -- including violation of traffic laws -- in the transport sector which need to be fixed.

Transport expert SM Salehuddin said the city does not have enough bus stoppages and no central traffic management system. Neither the Strategic Transportation Plans (STP) have been followed nor directives given by the Prime Minister's Office following the safe road demonstrations last year were implemented, he said.

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To give domestic helps a better life

Oxfam launches 4-year project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rahela Begum has been struggling to sustain herself and her four children with the earning she makes as a domestic help in the capital, since her husband abandoned her years ago. And on top of that is the everyday abuse and ill treatment of employers that add to never-ending episodes of painful experiences.

If the government and society extend support to women like her, as Rahela put it, "We will have a better life".

She spoke of her family and work life when given the floor at a national dialogue on rights of women domestic workers, organised by Oxfam yesterday.

At the programme at the Cirdap auditorium in the capital, Oxfam laid out a project titled, "Securing Rights of Women Domestic Workers in Bangladesh". The project will strive to create a platform for workers to speak up for their rights, due recognition of their work and contribution to economy over the next four and a half years.

Lawmaker Israfil Alam, member of the parliamentary standing committee for the labour and employment

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DHAKA TODAY

DISCUSSION
Bangladesh Climate Budget FY 2019-2020: A CSO Analysis and Reflection
Organiser: ActionAid Bangladesh
Venue: The Daily Star Centre
Time: 9:30am

DISCUSSION
On Liberation War Museum and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum
Venue: Liberation War Museum, Agargaon
Time: 4pm

FRIENDLY DEBATE
Shikkhatarka
Organiser: IER Debating Club
Venue: IER Building, University of Dhaka
Time: 3pm

SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
On Cultural Diversity and Peace
Organiser: Dhaka University Film Society
Venue: TSC Auditorium, University of Dhaka
Time: 10am onwards

CELEBRATION
International Culture Awareness Day
Organiser: Bangladesh Forest Department and IUCN
Venue: Bon Bhaban, Agargaon
Time: 12pm

TRAINING
MS Excel on Business Planning for Small Entrepreneurs
Venue: EMK Center
Time: 6pm

An inspiration for today's generation

Legacy of Abul Mansur Ahmad recalled



Winners of an essay competition with eminent personalities yesterday. The award ceremony and a discussion, marking the 121st birth anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, was held at Dhaka University.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Litterateur, journalist and politician Abul Mansur Ahmad's multifaceted success could be an inspiration for the present-day generation and one must follow his life and works comprehensively to achieve such feat, eminent citizens said yesterday.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was a brave and honest chronicler of contemporary social reality. His journalism reflected progressive ideas and it was always on the side of those who were oppressed. His role as a politician is significant in the country's history, they said at a discussion marking his 121st birth anniversary.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad arranged the discussion at Professor Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium of Faculty of Social Sciences of Dhaka University.

"His [Abul Mansur Ahmad's] multifaceted life inspires me immensely," said National Professor Anisuzzaman, who chaired the discussion.

Anyone who wishes to write books on history must refer to his memoirs that depict objectively which are authentically our history, said Prof Anisuzzaman, adding that Abul Mansur Ahmad always wrote against hypocrisy and duplicity of the elite. His talents were multifaceted and his vision encompassed the totality of social reality.

Abul Mansur Ahmad's satires are important assets of the country's literature, he further said.

Addressing the discussion as chief guest, eminent scholar Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury said Abul Mansur Ahmad wrote on numerous topics and he was "prominent" in every field.

He said Abul Mansur Ahmad's world of thoughts was dominated by three aspects -- economics, culture and politics.

In economics he highlighted the role of peasantry, and he began his political career by fighting for their rights. He campaigned for recognition of farmers' contribution in economics and realised the centrality of their role through his own experience as he came from a peasant family, said Prof Choudhury.

His satirical writings remain unmatched till today, he said, adding as a satirist, Abul Mansur Ahmad was prolific.

In his speech, essayist Syed Abul Maksud said as a journalist Abul Mansur Ahmad was "objective". He was "progressive" as an author while "pragmatic" as a politician.

"Abul Mansur Ahmad initiated modern journalism among Bengali Muslims," he added.

Prof Mahbud Murshid said Abul Mansur Ahmad did not write against religion but always attacked those who tried to take benefit from the misinterpretation of religion.

If anyone wants to take inspiration from his life, he or she must read his writings, he said.

At present many young writers and scholars are showing a renewed interest in the writings of Abul

Mansur, which is encouraging, said Prof Md Chengish Khan.

Journalists who face difficulties in their professional work could take lesson from Abul Mansur Ahmad's life as a journalist, said journalist Kajal Rashid Shahin.

Alongside discussion, the award-giving ceremony of an essay competition on Abul Mansur Ahmad was also part of yesterday's programme.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad took the initiative to arrange the competition for the second time, to encourage the youths' engagement in the work of Abul Mansur in areas of history, literature and culture.

Md Hasibul Islam, Md Saiful Islam and Sima Rani Arjya were the first, second and third prize winners respectively in the category "Bigotry in society and class-character in Abul Mansur Ahmad's literature". The top three winners in "Context and progressiveness of Abul Mansur Ahmad's journalism" category were Yasmin Aktar, Russell Ahmed and Md Emdad Ullah respectively, while Muhammad Ali Talha, Shahidul Islam, and Md Imam Mehedi had the top three entries respectively in the category "Politician Abul Mansur Ahmad's thoughts on state and today's Bangladesh".

In each category, first prize winners received Tk 10,000, second prize winners got Tk 5,000, and third prize winners were handed a set of Abul Mansur Ahmad's books. Each winner also received a certificate and crest.

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