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An extension of chaotic capital?

Purbachal on same path as unplanned Dhaka after multiple revisions in design, deadline

ASIFUR RAHMAN and HELEMUL ALAM

The "ideal town" planned in Purbachal to ease Dhaka's burden of overgrowing population is likely to become yet another extension of the unplanned capital, thanks to the long delay in implementation and constant changes in project design, according to urban planners.

They said the population within the project area and its surrounding places will nearly triple the initial projection by the time it is likely to be completed.

The Purbachal New Town project was initiated by Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) in 1995 on around 6,227 acres of land in the south of Dhaka.

Located between Gazipur's Kaliganj and Narayanganj's Rupganj, with the Shitalakkhya river to the east and the Balu river to the west, it was designed to accommodate 10 lakh people in around 25,000 plots of various sizes.

However, it took the government 10 years to approve the Purbachal project -- its largest housing scheme -- at an initial cost of Tk 3,312 crore. With the initial deadline having elapsed in 2010, the cost has now more than tripled to a whopping Tk 10,329 crore with various other components added.

The project, which has seen five revisions to its design so far, is now expected to be completed by 2025, after several revisions of the deadline.

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A massive development work at 300-foot Purbachal Road is underway. The government is constructing an eight-lane expressway to connect Kuril with Kanchan Bridge via Purbachal. Besides, 100-foot canals are being built on both sides of the road from Kuril to the Balu river. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

PROJECT INITIATED	1995
DEVELOPMENT WORK STARTED	2002-03
INITIAL DEADLINE	2010
CURRENT DEADLINE	2025
INITIAL PROJECT COST	Tk 3,312cr
CURRENT PROJECT COST	Tk 10,329cr
INITIAL POPULATION ESTIMATE	10 lakh
CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATE	27 lakh

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Uncertain as govt relied on one source

Legal procedure wasn't duly followed, third party benefitted along the way, finds TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh now faces uncertainty over nationwide Covid vaccination as the government depended on a single source for procuring vaccines, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said yesterday.

"There is still no success in securing more vaccines though the government is now trying to get those from different

sources," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman was speaking at a virtual event organised to release the findings of the TIB study titled "Tackling Coronavirus Crisis: Good Governance Challenge in Covid-19 Vaccine Management".

He said the government depended on a single source for getting vaccines and this benefitted a third party. But it could have purchased the jabs directly.

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Daily Covid cases, deaths jump again

Natore, Khulna set for lockdown

STAR REPORT

As Covid-19 cases began skyrocketing again, both the death and infection rates yesterday were the highest in the last month or so.

Some 44 people died in 24-hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

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BTRC'S NEW BROADBAND TARIFF

Would it bring cheap internet? Unlikely

ZINA TASREEN

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission's move on Sunday to fix the broadband prices brings to mind an oft-used quote by celebrated French author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: A goal without a plan is nothing but a wish.

On paper, the move has all the ingredients to be a gamechanger for the 'Digital Bangladesh' agenda: in one sweeping stroke, the government made broadband internet accessible and affordable from anywhere in the country

-- right away.

The prices set -- Tk 500 for 5 megabits per second (Mbps), Tk 700-800 for 10 Mbps, and Tk 1,110-1,200 for 20 Mbps -- are indeed a bargain for those who live outside of Dhaka, who currently have to pay many times over for broadband connection.

This is particularly great news for the legions of information technology-enabled services freelancers such as graphics designers, software engineers, mobile app developers, business process outsourcing professionals as well as the e-commerce

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Bangladesh GDP growth 2nd-best in South Asia

Says WB in its publication on FY21

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank yesterday upgraded Bangladesh's GDP growth forecast for this fiscal year by 2 percentage points to 3.6 percent, making it the second best-performing economy in South Asia behind the Maldives.

In fiscal 2020-21,

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