

What are guidelines for, if not followed?

Planners call for taking public sufferings as key consideration before implementing road digging projects in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) yesterday demanded that the authorities follow road digging guidelines for their works to reduce public suffering.

Speaking at a virtual press conference on "Contemporary Planning and Development Management", the speakers highlighted how it is a failure on the road authorities, city authorities, and contractors' part that road digging projects are undertaken during the months of monsoon,



FILE PHOTO

SUGGESTIONS

- » Coordination among utility service providers
- » Submitting work plans to city corporations
- » Zone based monitoring
- » Involving locals before starting work
- » Following guideline
- » Suspending digging work during rainy season

Though there is a guideline on digging roads in Dhaka, it is not being followed during the work

DR ADIL MOHAMMAD KHAN
GENERAL SECRETARY OF BIP

which add tremendously to public sufferings.

"Though there is a guideline on digging roads in Dhaka, it's not being followed at all," said Dr Adil Mohammad Khan, general secretary of BIP.

Dr Adil said according to the guideline, which was prepared in 2003 and revised in 2019, digging work is prohibited during the months of June to October, but in reality, these months keep seeing rampant road digging.

He said there is no co-ordination among the utility service organisations and that they do not submit their yearly plans to the city corporations.

"It's very important to prepare a one-stop co-ordination cell and several zone based monitoring

cells in this regard. In addition, it's imperative to hold intra-service provider discussions and discussions with locals before digging works are undertaken," Adil said.

He said the city corporations are responsible for reducing public suffering following the Local Government (city corporation) Act 2009, though it often fails to do so.

Identifying the huge shortcomings in road digging project contracts, president of BIP Akter Mahmud said there is

a severe lacking in the selection of contractors, quality materials, and finding alternative means to complete a project in case of an emergency.

He suggested ensuring that the Terms of Reference (TOR) are followed by contractors and strengthening project supervision to avoid these issues.

Stressing the need to maintaining professionalism in implementing a project, BIP vice

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NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD

EC to get students' info from edu institutions

MOHUDDIN ALAMGIR

Election Commission (EC) is planning on collecting information of students from their educational institutes to provide them with National Identity (NID) cards.

The commission officials will acquire details of out-of-school children from union offices, top EC officials said.

This year, information of citizens who were born between January 1, 2005 and January 1, 2006 will be collected from schools, madrasas, other educational institutions and union offices.

They will get NID cards at the age of 16, after completing the biometric process, and will gradually be included in the voter list after reaching 18, the officials said.

"We are planning to collect data of citizens from educational institutions, which have students' data," Election Commissioner Brigadier General (ret'd) Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

NID cards are issued to every Bangladeshi citizen upon turning 18 years old. NID is required for multiple essential public services, such as obtaining utility connections, getting mobile SIM cards and passports, and opening bank accounts.

Usually EC gets information of eligible voters by going door-to-door. In 2019, officials received data of people born between January 1, 2001, and January 1, 2004.

Shahadat said they are not planning to go door-to-door this year due to the

EC Plans At A Glance

- » Info of those born between Jan 1, 2005 and Jan 1, 2006 to be collected
- » 16-year-olds to get NID card
- » Gradually to be included in voter list after turning 18
- » No door-to-door info collection this year due to pandemic
- » Huge campaign to be run to inform citizens

coronavirus.

On August 23, NID-wing officials at a commission meeting had proposed getting details of people born on or before January 1, 2006, online and through upazila election offices.

It was decided that a committee under Shahadat, which usually observes NID activities, will review the proposal and send their recommendation to the commission.

Shahadat said they will soon have discussions with relevant ministries and authorities regarding the issues. "We will place the proposals before a commission meeting soon," he said.

EC officials said they are not going for online registration, as not all citizens would be able to avail the service. As all schools keep student records, it would be

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Amend laws for a country free of tobacco by 2040

Chiefs of JS bodies urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairpersons of parliamentary watchdogs yesterday urged the government to amend existing tobacco laws for a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040.

They made the appeal at a meeting held at the office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan.

National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh and Tobacco Free Bangladesh Mancha organised the meeting.

Speakers said there are some weaknesses in the existing tobacco control law. Due to this, it is unable to play a proper role in reducing tobacco use.

They called for amending the law in line with World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

Presided over by Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairperson of parliamentary standing committee on the environment ministry, the meeting was attended among others by Shamsul Haque Tuku, chairperson of parliamentary standing committee on home ministry, Mokbul Hossain, chairperson of parliamentary watchdog on land ministry, and lawmakers Rezaul Karim Bablu, Khodeja Nasrin Akhter Hossain and Khadijatul Anwar.

The meeting discussed six important amendments to the tobacco control act. Especially during the pandemic, they proposed necessary amendments to make all types of public places and public transport free of tobacco use.

They also said in light of FCTC, it is necessary to ban displaying tobacco products at shops; stop corporate social responsibility initiatives by tobacco companies; disallow retail sale of tobacco products; prohibit import, production,

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Ethical practice in recruitment a must

Speakers tell webinar on migration sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a virtual consultation yesterday said standard employment contract paper should be provided to outgoing migrant workers as part of fair and ethical recruitment practices in the migration sector.

They said ensuring fair and ethical recruitment is a precondition for the migrants' wellbeing and emphasised that migration should be a matter of choice and not a necessity.

Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants (BCSM) and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) organised the consultation on "Fair and Ethical Recruitment".

Shakirul Islam, chairperson of Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), said in their research they have found that more than 75 percent migrant workers were not provided with job contracts before departure.

Those who were provided with job contract did have little idea about its importance, what was written and what were the conditions, Shakirul said.

Providing migrant workers with job

contracts can play a big role to hold unscrupulous employers accountable, he added.

"We must make sure that job contracts are given to the migrant workers," Shakirul said.

He also stressed on making the job contracts easily understandable for the migrant workers.

Providing migrant workers with job contracts can play a big role in holding unscrupulous employers accountable.

SHAKIRUL ISLAM
CHAIRPERSON OF OKUP

Speaking as the chief guest, Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary, chairperson of Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development, said, "We need a standard contract form".

He called for framing a code of conduct on ethical recruitment.

In his keynote presentation, BCSM

Chair and RMMRU Executive Director Prof CR Abarar highlighted the need for regulating the middlemen or intermediaries and bringing an end to visa trading.

He suggested that ethical recruiters be recognised and provided incentives and the unscrupulous recruiters be blacklisted and penalised.

IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri said exploitation of migrant

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JS goes into session today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 11th parliament will go into its 14th session this afternoon. The sitting will start at 5pm at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan at city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, according to the parliament website.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, health guidelines will be followed strictly during the session.

Duration of the session will be brief as this session is likely to continue for four days, sources at the parliament secretariat told The Daily Star.

President Abdul Hamid on August 16 convened the 14th session of parliament through exercising power bestowed upon him as per the Article 72 (1) of the constitution to convene the session.

Before commencing House proceedings on the day, the Parliamentary Business Advisory Committee is likely to hold a meeting, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair, to fix the duration and agenda of the session.

The 13th session of the 11th Parliament, which was the budget session, was

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Pranab Mukherjee remains an inspiration

Says Hasina on former Indian president's first death anniversary

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday hailed Pranab Mukherjee as an inspiration saying that his death has created a vacuum both in the intellectual as well as political arenas of this subcontinent.

"He would remain as an inspiration for the coming generations of our region. We would remember him for his support and love for Bangladesh," she said.

Hasina said this in a video message on the occasion of First Pranab Mukherjee Memorial Lecture (Virtual) organised by "Pranab Mukherjee Legacy Foundation" on a virtual platform.

The lecture was delivered by Vice President of India M Venkaiah Naidu.

This lecture is an event to commemorate the first death anniversary of Pranab Mukherjee and begin the foundation's journey dedicated to the cause of taking his legacy forward.

In her speech, Hasina said, "He was a true friend of Bangladesh and a great political icon of the subcontinent. I pay my deep homage to the memory of this towering personality on his death anniversary."

"His contribution to our great Liberation War would never be forgotten."

"The people of Bangladesh will forever remember his support. Pranab Mukherjee had enormous respect and deep regards for our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she added.

The premier said as Pranab had been given "Bharat

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POACHERS ON THE PROWL

5 held with elephant tusks in Ctg within 4 months

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Due to frequent killings and shrinking of their habitat in the absence of concrete protective measures by the government, wild elephants face serious threats to their survival in the country.

Amid such circumstances, several smuggling syndicates are allegedly hunting the endangered mammals in Chattogram region and the hill tracts, according to law enforcement agencies.

The law enforcers came up with the information after arresting five persons in two separate incidents along with three elephant ivories in Chattogram recently.

Investigators said the tusks were being smuggled from Banshkhalhi and CHT respectively while the smugglers poached the elephants in deep jungle.

Seeing the seized items, investigators and wildlife crime control experts said the tusks and part of the elephant jowl (lower teeth) cannot be collected without killing the mammal.

They also said smugglers allegedly killed the elephants by placing electric fences in their path or shooting them.

Poachers are possibly hunting the mammals and later cutting off their tusks for smuggling using the pretext of human-elephant conflict, they said.

Since 2001, a total of 120 elephants

It's time the forest department and law enforcement agencies work together to protect the endangered Asian elephants

ABU NASER MD NEVAZ YEASIN, IMMEDIATE PAST DFO OF CHATTOGRAM

IUCN classified Asian elephant as an endangered species

120 elephants killed in 20 years

12 killed in shooting by poachers in last 5 years

Electrocution, shooting among lead factors of deaths

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strict measures against poaching

Protecting elephant habitats

Reducing human-elephant conflict

Research on elephant conservation



have died for various reasons, including direct shootings, shows data of Wildlife and Nature Conservation Department of Chattogram Circle.

At least 12 elephants have been killed in shootings by poachers in the last five years - all in the forests under Cox's Bazar and Chattogram (South).

On August 7, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-7) arrested three persons with a piece of elephant's tusk (jowl's part) in port city's Mohora area.

Among the arrestees, two hail from Manikchhari of Khagrachari and another from Baghaichhari of Rangamati.

Apart from that, members of the Detective Branch (DB) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police in a drive arrested two

persons with two tusks in Karnaphuli area on May 25.

Both the arrestees hail from Banshkhalhi upazila's Puichari union.

According to the Rab first information report (FIR), during primary interrogation, the three accused said they collected the tusk from the hill tracts. Rab also said they were trying to smuggle the jowl to a neighbouring country.

While investigating the Karnaphuli incident, DB found that the tusks were being smuggled from the hilly area of Banshkhalhi where wild elephants roam.

Banshkhalhi is the upazila where several human-elephant conflicts were reported in the last few years and several people died in elephant attacks. Apart from that, wild elephant herds sometimes were also

attacked by locals when the mammals came to their locality in search of food, said local sources and media reports.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nobel Chakma, additional deputy commissioner (ADC-DB) of Port Zone, said, "In remand, the two accused told police that they were scheduled to hand over the tusks to a party for Tk 35,000."

"They told investigators that the 24-inch long tusks were collected from the hilly areas of Banshkhalhi. They said they got those from a local. A wild elephant was poached via the electric fences," he added.

The ADC said they have sent a team to Banshkhalhi to investigate. "However, the IO got infected with coronavirus... that's why it got stalled for a while."

"We are continuing with our investigation and trying to find out the network of black market, destination of the smuggled items and those involved with it," he added.

According to the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), wild elephants are seen in Chhunati of Lohagara-Satkania, Banshkhalhi-Rangunia, Bandar and Rangamati areas, where there are several elephant corridors.

Apart from that, several corridors were also spotted in Cox's Bazar-Teknaf forest, which were hampered by the establishment of Rohingya camps.

Elephant corridors are strips of land that the large animals use to move from one habitat patch to another.

According to the 2016 elephant census conducted by the IUCN, 63 wild elephants were found in the southern forest division of Cox's Bazar while another 205 were spotted in the country's other regions, including Bandarban, Sherpur and Mymensingh.

Seeking anonymity, a police official said, "We found that poachers reportedly instigate

Elephant killed, cut into pieces in Cox's Bazar forest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants from Ramu upazila of Cox's Bazar electrocuted an Asian elephant and mutilated the mammal, in an apparent attempt to cover up the killing.

The killing took place in the south Khuniapalung area under Ramu upazila early yesterday.

Police arrested one Najir Ahmed in connection with the incident.

Pronoy Chakma, upazila nirbahi officer of Ramu, told The Daily Star that a group of people fenced the arable land which was part of a protected forest.

The elephant was electrocuted initially, said Pronoy. Later, Najir Ahmed and his three sons cut up the injured mammal into pieces and tried to bury it in the mud, he added.

On information, they rushed to the spot, recovered the body parts, and arrested Najir while his three sons fled, Pronoy said.

locals including Rohingya to intercept the elephants, and later hunt them."

"We are not sure about the techniques they use but are trying to identify the whole process focusing on the Banshkhalhi incident," he added.

Last year, three Asian elephants had died in

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