

# Dhaka's overgrowth costs up to 10pc GDP

Reveals study presented at BIDS event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly eight percent of jobs in the country are concentrated in Dhaka city, and 40 percent are condensed in the greater Dhaka region, which includes Gazipur and Narayanganj city.



- Nearly 8pc jobs concentrated in capital
- 40pc jobs condensed in greater Dhaka region
- 31.9pc of country's urban population live in capital
- Dhaka's population increased by over 50pc in last 10 yrs

excessive concentration of resources and economic activities in Dhaka. In 2019, GDP loss amounted to USD 35 billion.

At present, Bangladesh is losing six to 10 percent of its GDP, because Dhaka's growth has crossed the optimum rate.

Ahmad further revealed that Dhaka's economic overgrowth has slowed down the reduction of urban poverty in the country significantly.

According to his study, from 2010 to 2016, extreme poverty rate in rural areas has declined from 21.1 to 14.9 percent, whereas there was virtually no change in urban poverty rate. In 2010, the urban poverty rate was 7.7, and in 2016, it was 7.6.

Traffic congestion in Dhaka causes losses amounting to 2.9 percent of Bangladesh's GDP, he said, citing a 2011 estimate.

There are also environmental and health costs resulting from environmental degradation. These should also be taken into consideration, he said.

Ahmad added that when compared to cities of developing countries, Dhaka's

Such extreme concentration of population and economic activity in the capital are having negative impacts on the national economy.

A study in this regard was presented yesterday by Ahmad Ahsan, former lead economist of the World Bank and director of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, at the "Annual BIDS Conference on Development 2021". The event was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) at a city hotel.

According to the study, some 31.9 percent of Bangladesh's urban population live in Dhaka, whereas the country's major cities that have over a million inhabitants contain only 3.5 percent of the urban population.

In the last 10 years, Dhaka's population has increased by more than 50 percent.

In 2017, per capita income and GDP was 11 percent lower than its potential, due to



Footover bridges are hard to find around the capital's Rampura Bridge area. Stranded by the side of this busy road, these three children were too afraid to cross it. This is when a police officer came along and lent them his hands. By manoeuvring around the incessant rush of vehicles, the official helped them cross the street and led them to a place of safety. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Playground only exists on paper

10 years after plans were announced, field for children with disabilities yet to be completed

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

In the western corner of the National Parliament building adjacent to the Mirpur Road in the capital, a signboard with the inscription "proposed playground for children with disabilities" can be seen erected on a field covered with thick vegetation.

The five-acre land is supposed to be a playground for children with special needs, after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced to turn it into a playground in 2011.

But 10 years later, the construction of the country's only playground for children with disabilities still has not begun, all due to the negligence of the authorities concerned and bureaucratic tangles.

With no gates whatsoever for visitors or

children, the field has been left unattended all this time.

It is now covered with bushes and shrubs of all kinds, becoming an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

According to disability rights experts, following the announcement, the land acquisition process for the playground was completed by 2016.

In January 2017, ASM Feroz, the then chief whip of the parliament, announced that it would be completed within six months.

But even after Feroz's announcement, the procurement process for the playground remained immobile.

Initially, the National Disabled Development Foundation was given the responsibility to develop the playground, which decided that the field will be turned

into a sports complex.

Contacted, Md Anisuzzaman, managing director of National Disabled Development Foundation, said, "We do not have the experience and capacity to complete such projects."

"Therefore, the task was handed over to the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2019," he added.

On November 20, 2019 Md Zahid Ahsan Russell, state minister for the youth and sports ministry, and Akhter Hossain, senior secretary to the ministry, visited the site and promised to inaugurate the playground as soon as possible.

In December 2020, Zahid presented a primary design of the playground to the speaker of the parliament.

The design included boundary walls,

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A lonely signboard stands on the playground that was promised to be turned into a sports complex for children with disabilities almost 10 years ago.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



News clippings of reports run by international media organisations, after the successful operation.

PHOTO: COURTESY

## OPERATION JACKPOT A mission that rattled Pakistan

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

"We started swimming in the calm waters of the river. I was moving fast and reached the jetty, where I found the big barge. The jetty was dazzling with lights, but no guard was in sight."

"We were instructed to fix the mine beneath the ship or barge, underwater, but I was so excited that I forgot all that and fixed it on the barge's side... and then I pulled off the mine's safety pin," recalled Faruk-e-Azam, Bir Pratik, who was a sub-commander of Operation Jackpot, one of the biggest operations undertaken during the Liberation War.

"The timer started, and I just had half an hour to flee the scene," Faruk wrote in his article "Amar Muktiujddher Kotha", remembering the



pivotal days. "We were swimming back from the barge fast," he described. "At one point, we were running in the middle of the paddy field. Right then, we heard the explosion. One after another, our mines started to explode, and Chattogram port and its surrounding areas were filled with thunderous bangs." News of the incident reached the international media, and the whole world got to know that a guerrilla war was going on in the country, contrary to Pakistan's claims that there was no war and everything was under control.

Operation Jackpot was planned in May, 1971 in India. The commandos selected for the operation were trained for two months in Palashi's Ambagan.

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# DOLESHWAR HANAFIA JAME MASJID Keraniganj mosque wins Unesco award



PHOTO: COLLECTED

UNB, Dhaka

Doleshwar Hanafia Jame Mosque, situated in Keraniganj on the outskirts of Dhaka, has won the "Award of Merit" in the 2021 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Popularly known as "Daroga Masjid", the mosque was constructed by Daroga Aminuddin Ahmed in 1868.

After Aminuddin's son Moiz Uddin Ahmed, brothers Khidir and Kader Baksh, Moiz's relatives, continued the mosque's construction and renovation.

Kader Baksh's grandson former lawmaker Prof Hamidur Rahman expanded the mosque further and built its minaret in 1968.

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# Probe into death of elephants

Parliamentary body directs govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary committee meeting has directed the government to investigate the recent serious of elephant deaths due to electrocution and file a report at the next meeting.

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources gave the direction yesterday. The meeting was held at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, chaired by lawmaker Wasika Ayesha Khan.

According to media reports, five out of the eight elephants that died over the last one month died of electrocution.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid, lawmakers Md Abu Zahir, SM Jaglul Haider, Md Aslam Hossain Saudagar, Khaleda Khanam and Nargis Rahman were present at the meeting.

In addition, the standing committee also discussed issues relating to underground power distribution systems, fuel use in public transports, and system loss of Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board.

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