

Rajuk's grand plan to ease commute

Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake and Hatirjheel to be connected; water-buses, new road to facilitate travels

HELEMUL ALAM and DIPAN NANDY

The waterbodies of Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Hatirjheel are set for a transformation.

If everything goes according to Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha's (Rajuk) new plan, the two waterbodies – Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake and Hatirjheel – will be connected, with water buses freely moving from one place to another. A new circular road along the lakes will further ease commutes.

Rajuk is aiming to construct an 11.9 km road network along the banks with grade separation in Baridhara and Banani, to ease traffic congestion in the areas.

Currently, water buses are operating in Hatirjheel but cannot go through Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake due to no connection between the two waterbodies.

A revised development project proposal (DPP), which has already been prepared, will be sent to the ministry concerned soon and then to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne), said Saber Ahmed, immediate past director of the lake project.

Once approved, the work will start. "Earlier, the DPP was submitted in an Ecne meeting [in 2018]. It was sent back to Rajuk along with some observations, and we have already complied with the points raised," he said.

Prof Mizanur Rahman, a member of the Buet team tasked with conducting a study for the project, said after finishing the study, they proposed walkways, two interchanges above the lake, and an integrated road network. He said the 11.9-km, one-way circular road will be constructed around Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake along with walkways. If this is done, traffic congestion would not be a problem there even after 20 years.

This circular road will also ease pressure on Gulshan Avenue. Suppose, if anyone wants to go to Baridhara from Gulshan's Police Plaza, they will be able to via the new road, he said.

Responding to a question, he said the lake's water flow will not be intercepted because of the project. The road will remain elevated, and they will just install pillars.

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- ✓ Rajuk to build 11.9-km road network
- ✓ Walkways, two road interchanges proposed
- ✓ Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake being excavated
- ✓ Authorities recovering encroached land
- ✓ Revised plan to be sent to Ecne soon
- ✓ Once approved, work will start

Mahbub
Talukdar laid
to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Md Shah Nawaz Khan Chandan
Talukdar, former Election Commissioner and litterateur, was laid to eternal rest with state honour at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Dhaka yesterday.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal attended his namaz-e-janaza at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

Mahbub died on Wednesday and his body was kept at Birdem hospital's mortuary. He was buried after his children reached Dhaka from abroad.

Following the janaza, he was given a guard of honour by a police contingent beside the mosque premises.

From the mosque, his body was taken to his Baridhara residence. Current and former EC officials paid their last tribute to Mahbub.

Mahbub, also a freedom fighter, died at the age of 80 and worked as an election commissioner from February 2017 to February 2022. During his service, he was outspoken and would often publicly criticise some of the commission's decisions.

He had 44 books to his credit, mainly on poetry and fiction. He received the prestigious Bangla Academy Literary Award for his contribution to children's literature.

Is Bangladesh turning its back on renewable energy?

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Bangladesh's dependency on coal-based power plants is gradually increasing, when countries around the world are abandoning the technology to make electricity.

The total capacity of under-construction coal plants in the world declined up to 13 percent last year, from 5,25,000 megawatts (MW) to 4,57,000 MW, as many of the plants were cancelled mid-construction, according to Global Energy Monitor's 8th Annual Survey, titled "Boom and Bust Coal: Tracking the Global Coal Plant Pipeline."

The report was published in April.

Experts mainly blame a lack of political commitment and weak enforcement of environmental laws for the gradual increase in the dependency on coal-based power.

Producing 1,000 MW of power requires burning of 122,92 tonnes of coal. So, by cutting 68,000 MW of coal-based electricity, the world has burned 8,352,78 tonnes less coal, thanks to countries like Germany, Spain and Portugal, which have abandoned coal-based power projects.

South Korea, Japan and China have also pledged to stop funding new coal-based plants in other countries.

In South Asia, India is cutting its dependency on coal-based electricity, although it has the highest capacity to operate such plants.

According to the report, from 2015 to 2021, pre-construction coal-based power capacity decreased sharply in the world, from about 2,38,600 MW in 2015 to 36,600 MW in 2020. In 2021, additional 12,700 MW worth of coal-based power generation projects were scrapped globally, reducing pre-construction capacity to 23,900 MW.

In Bangladesh, however, coal combustion increased last year and will continue to increase in the coming years contrary to the global trend, it added.

"In Bangladesh, many coal-based power station projects have been abandoned, but not on the scale initially suggested by government announcements in 2020," the report said.

According to the report, total capacity of under-construction coal plants of the country is 26,600 MW. Two more plants, with a total capacity of 6,700 MW, entered construction in 2021, raising the number of

such plants from four to six.

If completed, the two plants would further increase the current 1,800-MW coal-based power capacity of Bangladesh.

In addition, at the end of 2021, the country still had proposed plants, capable of producing 10,800 MW, in the pre-construction phase.

The report stated that proposals for coal-based power plant such as Patuakhali Phase I, Matarbari Phase II, and Patuakhali (RPCL/ NORINCO) Phase II projects were listed for completion by 2024, 2028, and 2031, respectively, in the Bangladesh Power System Master Plan. However, in June, Japan decided to cancel funding for Matarbari Phase II in response to international and domestic criticism.

The total capacity of under-construction coal plants in the world declined up to 13 percent last year, from 5,25,000 megawatts (MW) to 4,57,000 MW, as many of the plants were cancelled mid-construction.

In contrast, total capacity of under-construction coal plants of Bangladesh is 26,600 MW. Two more plants, with a total capacity of 6,700 MW, entered construction in 2021, raising the number of such plants from four to six.

Nonetheless, construction of another 700-MW coal-fired power station is going on in Barguna, and according to government reports, the 1,320-MW Rampal Power Station, officially known as Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, will go into production any time despite protests by environmentalists.

"In Bangladesh, a combination of high coal prices and guaranteed purchase agreement are putting consumers and the Bangladesh Power Development Board in a tough situation," said Flora Champenois, a research analyst at Global Energy Monitor.

Mohammad Hossain – director general of power cell division at the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources – said he did not fully agree with the report.

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Roles of
Teachers to
change in new
curriculum:
Dipu Moni

BSS, Dhaka

Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni has said the role of teachers is getting changed in the new education curriculum.

"The role of teachers will not be limited to classrooms as they'll also work as facilitators and guides. Learning will be enjoyable according to the new curriculum. There will be no fear of examinations, and the curriculum will be based on experience," she said.

The minister was speaking at a views-exchange meeting titled "Improving the quality of education" organised by Pabna Edward College yesterday.

Addressing as the chief guest, Dipu Moni said for their own interest, the previous governments created a toxic environment by continuing the long-running colonial educational system.

But the education minister also said the current regime has started an education system with the backbone of science and technology.

Chaired by Pabna Edward College Principal Md Humayun Kabir, the meeting was addressed, among others, by National University VC Prof Md Moshiur Rahman, Pabna University of Science and Technology VC Prof Hafiza Khatun and pro-VC Dr SM Mustafa Kamal.

Removing current
govt BNP's only goal
Says Mirza Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the fall of the Awami League government is now the only goal of BNP.

"The absolute reality is that now a terrible fascist and monstrous regime is destroying everything we have. Our only goal now is to resist and defeat them [govt]," he said.

Fakhrul was speaking at a discussion marking national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's 46th death anniversary, titled "The Politics of Nazrul – the politics of Bangladesh" and organised by Jatiyatabadi Sangskritik Foundation at Jatiya Press Club.

Describing Nazrul as a poet of world humanity, Fakhrul said his poetry has always inspired the exploited and oppressed to wake up.

"Nazrul's work is now being ignored in the country. His poems and essays are not included in the curriculum of Bangla literature," he said.

COMMONWEALTH BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Bangladesh elected as EC member

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been unanimously elected as a member of the executive committee (EC) of Commonwealth Board of Governors for 2022-2024.

The country has been elected a member of the EC from Asia Europe region. The committee is mandated to oversee all matters related to finance, personnel and administration of the Commonwealth Secretariat. It also makes policy recommendations for the Commonwealth.

Bangladesh has also been unanimously elected as a member of the Commonwealth Accreditation Committee for the 2022-23 term.

This committee functions as a sub-committee of the Commonwealth Secretariat EC.

High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the United Kingdom and member of Commonwealth Board of Governors Saida Muna Tasneem will represent Bangladesh in both committees.

BSMMU'S CABIN 117

Where the national poet breathed his last

DIPAN NANDY

One's interest may pique after seeing that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University's (BSMMU) B-Block doesn't have a single patient or attendant walking the halls.

That's because the block is dedicated to serving a different purpose – preserving the testaments of Nazrul's last breath.

In 1942, at the age of 43, Kazi Nazrul Islam was affected with Pick's disease, a kind of dementia that affects the brain cells, eventually making one lose the abilities that those areas once controlled. For Nazrul, it was his hearing.

In the last stages of his life, on May 24, 1972, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman brought Nazrul to the newly born Bangladesh and titled him the country's national poet.

House 330/B at Old Dhanmondi 28 was prepared for Nazrul's arrival, to keep him comfortable. And suitably so, the house was then titled "Kabi Bhaban (poet's

house)", as it accommodated the poet for more than three years.

After that, Nazrul was taken to BSMMU's (then PG Hospital) Cabin 117 in B Block, where he spent the last year of his life in treatment, before his demise.

Visiting the site, this correspondent saw that the same cabin is decorated with pictures of the poet and some of the utensils he used. Entering the cabin, the visitor's eyes will be drawn to a cot, the same where the rebellious poet's frail body had lain.

Above the tidied bed is an oil painting, one where Bangabandhu is greeting the national poet with a flower garland.

An antique tea table and chair that was used by Nazrul during his time there have also been preserved. And in front of that is a dressing table, whose mirror captured Nazrul's last reflection.

There is also a bust of Nazrul in the memorial room. The walls are adorned with the poet's photographs and paintings

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One might not be able to recognise the frail man Bangabandhu is welcoming with a garland in the picture hanging above the bed of Cabin 117 at BSMMU. The man is our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, who was receiving treatment here in the last stages of his life. This room now bears testament to the late poet's memories, where the nation bade farewell to his rebellious spirit.

PHOTO: STAR



Fazr 12:45 4:45 6:33 8:00
Zohr 5:05 1:15 5:00 6:36 8:30
Asr 4:30 12:45 4:45 6:33 8:00
Maghrib 12:45 4:45 6:33 8:00
Esha 4:30 12:45 4:45 6:33 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PRAYER
TIMING
AUGUST 27

SOURCE: DGHS