

WORLD CITIES DAY

Mid-sized cities are our new urban frontier



**THE GRUDGING URBANIST**  
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ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED

As Bangladesh, along with the rest of the world, observes World Cities Day today, I am wondering what its most pressing urban policy challenge is. The country has been urbanising at a rapid pace since the 1980s. But has it been an equitable urban development? The answer is no. The main problem is the overwhelming Dhaka-centrism that dominates our policy universe. We have become too Dhaka-focused – as if Dhaka's future is Bangladesh's future. Dhaka, of course, has its monumental historical place in the nation's economic, social, and cultural evolution, but it should not be seen as synonymous with Bangladesh.

Dhaka has become a colossal primate city, disproportionately larger than the next three big cities combined (the city accounts for about 35 percent of GDP, and hosts 10 percent of the country's total population and 30 percent of urban population). Yet, we continue to develop urban policies that result in more people, more vehicles, more shopping malls, higher buildings, denser built environment, and longer flyovers in the capital. We do need a functional and liveable capital city, and we must work towards that goal. But our lopsided infatuation

**A liveable city supplies affordable housing, ensures clean air, low urban noise level and good sewage systems, reinforces cultural traditions, makes humane efforts to reduce urban poverty, and creates soft infrastructures like footpaths and green spaces that foster a healthy lifestyle.**

with Dhaka is hurting both Dhaka and other cities of the country.

This year's theme for World Cities Day is "Act Local to Go Global." This is a good piece of advice from the United Nations General Assembly. We need to act local – consider local contexts and harness local resources – while thinking globally about the impact of our local acts, so that we can build sustainable and thriving cities integrated with the world systems of economy, ideas, and mobility.

We should have our own motto – under the umbrella theme of "Act Local to Go Global" – for this year's World Cities Day. It should be: mid-sized cities are our new urban frontier. Frontier is the unknown sphere where people chart the right course for their future. The future of Bangladesh's equitable growth is not in an outsized primate city, but in its mid-sized cities – a bridge between metropolises and upazila growth centres.

The only way to decentralise Bangladesh is to increase the liveability measure of mid-sized cities. A liveable city is the one that offers all its people – irrespective of their economic status, religious orientation, and birthplace – an equitable access to economic opportunities, quality healthcare and education, parks, and,



Mid-sized cities such as Rajshahi can still be developed in a planned way, without repeating the mistakes made in Dhaka.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

most of all, the institution of social mobility. A liveable city supplies affordable housing, ensures clean air, low urban noise level and good sewage systems, reinforces cultural traditions, makes humane efforts to reduce urban poverty, and creates soft infrastructures like footpaths and green spaces that foster a healthy lifestyle. A liveable city produces law-abiding citizens and creates an inspiring built environment that makes cronyism, corruption, and oligarchic behaviour seem unhealthy and immoral. A liveable city must be administered with a good governance model.

Since most of our mid-sized cities are yet to firm up a stable urban DNA, we still have time to imagine and develop them as liveable cities. An integrated network of mid-sized cities – each with a population range of 100,000-1,000,000 – across the country should be Bangladesh's new urban frontier.

There will be interrelated and irredeemable damages unless we realise the vast premises of this frontier urgently. First, our national resource allocation will be inequitable, calcifying a permanently faulty urban footprint and eventually resulting in a stunted national growth. Second, all mid-sized cities in the country are likely to become a hodgepodge imitation of Dhaka (alas, this is already happening in some places), because city corporation and municipality leaderships erroneously see Dhaka as a model. I have come across local government officials in mid-sized cities who, unwittingly, would like "Dhaka-style" flyovers, shopping malls, and tall buildings in their cities as symbols of their progress.

I have recently toured a few mid-sized cities across Bangladesh: Barishal, Jashore, Kushtia, Faridpur, and Narsingdi, among others. The signs of the country's vaunted economic growth are clearly visible in these cities, both spatially and socially. There are four-star hotels, ostentatious shopping malls and restaurants, massive billboards advertising a vast range of commodities, apartment buildings, multi

storey office complexes, shiny local government offices, and growing traffic congestion in the inner city.

However, economic growth has not been translating into planned spatial organisation. Talking to local government officials, one is likely to conclude that there is no soul-searching as to what their city wants to be, based on its social, cultural, and environmental uniqueness.

SUPERPOWER RIVALRY IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Is the balance of power shifting?



**Dr Sayeed Ahmed** is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytix, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

Of the world's 114 smartest factories that deploy cutting edge Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies, China owns a whopping 42. The US, only seven.

These factories – lighthouses in the World Economic Forum (WEF) parlance – will lead the world to tomorrow's knowledge economy. A smart factory implements Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3D printing, and advanced robotics to transform the manufacturing process, value chains and business models. In a stiff competition, only a select group of leading companies have successfully deployed such technologies to qualify as lighthouses, symbolising the superpower race for supremacy in the emerging knowledge economy era. It is an existential question as to who will win this race.

But what has propelled China to this leading position in the first place? Dr Marina Zhang of Swinburne University of Technology, Australia thinks it's the huge innovation machine Beijing launched in the late 1970s that is behind this phenomenal stride. At its heart lies the vision for technological independence. It doesn't just want to make innovative and distinctive products; it wants to do so entirely with its own knowledge, investing heavily to materialise this vision. Between 2000 and 2017, Beijing's spending on research and development (R&D) grew by 17 percent each year. Over the same period, the US dragged far behind with a paltry 4.3 percent growth rate. The trend continues under Beijing's 14th Five-Year Plan (2020-2025) as it intends to increase R&D spending by more than seven percent each year. In 2017, the global R&D spending stood at USD 2.2 trillion, of which 25 and 23 percent came from the US and China, respectively, and the gap is fast closing.

So far, Beijing's priority has been more on experimental development that is closely related to manufacturing processes and less on basic and applied research critical to the development of new scientific ideas. In 2018, It spent only five percent of the research budget in basic research compared to the US' 17 percent. For applied research, the corresponding figures were 11 and 20.4 percent, respectively. In contrast, almost 80 percent of China's R&D spending went to experimental development. Acutely aware, Beijing wants to its strengthen basic research programmes and make groundbreaking innovations. Its researchers are already creating increasing impacts among the global scientific community, as Japan's National Institute of Science and Technology Policy reports. In 2019, about 27.2 percent of the top one percent of the most-cited papers came from Chinese institutions. The US came second with 24.9 percent of such citations. In the total number or publications, Chinese works exceeded those from the US in 2020 (305,927 against 281,487).

University rankings follow a similar trend. Successive listings of world university rankings by Times Higher Education (THE) show a steady fall in the number of US universities among the top 100 as that from China is rising. American institutions in the top 100 saw a drop from 43 to 34 between 2018 and 2022, while Chinese universities rose from two to seven. Unsurprisingly, China's share of global patents rose from 16 to 49 percent between 2010 and 2020. Its innovation capacity is also going up, rising from 29th in 2015 to 14th in 2020 in the Global Innovation Index. Beijing jumped from fourth to first in the global league table for patent registrations, becoming a large intellectual property (IP) exporter.


But are these developments bringing any significant tangible benefits to Beijing? The case of China's DJI Technology, the world's top drone maker, may help answer the question.

Of late, DJI is under Washington's sanctions reportedly for its involvement in surveillance of Uyghur Muslims. But unlike Huawei, it is proving difficult to eliminate because hundreds of US public safety agencies use its products including the New York Police Department. DJI's 80 percent market share in consumer drones has dropped to 54 due to sanctions. But it's another Chinese company Autel Robotics that has picked up most of the lost market. That is how ubiquitous Chinese technology has become in America's everyday life.


China has also made big leaps in a much larger and more complex arena, the space. Space missions involve the highest level of achievement in hundreds of cutting edge interconnected technologies. A leading space player, China is the fourth country to have a satellite-based global navigation system (BeiDou). It boasts a near perfect heavy payload launching system (Long March rockets). All these indicate that Beijing could be well on course to achieve its goal of becoming a global tech leader by 2050.

Is the balance of power of the knowledge economy shifting?

In the book "Crest of the Peacock: Non-European Roots of Mathematics," University of Manchester Emeritus Professor George Gheverghese Joseph makes an interesting point about the evolution of science. Mathematics, the root of all sciences, borrowed from the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Arabs, Indians, and Chinese to become what it is today. Similarly, China's progress in cutting edge technology has its roots in the knowledge generated by scientists from many regions over millennia. Regardless of who leads the knowledge economy, the benefit goes to everyone. University of Oxford Research Fellow Xin Xu has aptly summarised it as: "The sun may rise in the East, but it shines across the world." Science, innovation, and knowledge belongs to all humanity. Understanding it is essential for peaceful coexistence.



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**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

স্মারক নম্বর: ২৩.৩৭.০০০০.০০৩.৩৮.০০২.১৭-১৯৪৫ তারিখঃ ১৪ কার্তিক ১৪২৯/ ৩০ অক্টোবর ২০২২

০১	সস্তার নাম	বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা
০২	দরপত্রের নাম	Procurement of Goods
০৩	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
০৪	বাজেট ও ফান্ড প্রান্তির উৎস	প্রাথমিক বাজেট
০৫	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	তারিখঃ ১৪-১১-২০২২ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, সময়ঃ বিকাল ২.০০(দুই) ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
০৬	দরপত্র মাফিনের স্থান, মাফিনের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা অফিসের নিরাপত্তা ও কল্যাণকর অফিসারের অফিস কক্ষে সঞ্চিত বাস্তব। তারিখঃ ১৫-১১-২০২২ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, সময়ঃ সকাল ১১.৩০ (এগারো) ঘটিকার পূর্ব পর্যন্ত
০৭	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	কনফারেন্সরুম, বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা তারিখঃ ১৫-১১-২০২২ খ্রিস্টাব্দ সময়ঃ সকাল ১১.৩০ (সাতো এগারো) ঘটিকায়
০৮	দরপত্র তফসিল প্রান্তির স্থান	ক) পরিচালক, প্রতিরক্ষা সার্ভে পরিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর খ) পরিচালক, উন্নয়ন সার্ভে পরিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর গ) ম্যানোজার, নিয়ন্ত্রণ অফিস, বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর ঘ) নিরাপত্তা ও কল্যাণকর অফিসার, বাংলাদেশ জরিপ অধিদপ্তর

লট নং	বর্ণনা	দরপত্র প্রাপ্যতার সময় (সেপারেটভাবে)	কার্য সম্পাদনের সময়	তফসিলের মূল্য (অফারের মূল্য)
০৯	Lot-1 Procurement of Liveries (সফারি, শার্ট, শাড়ী, ব্রাউজ, জুতা, মোজা, ছাতা, নামময়ক ইত্যাদি)	মেট্রি উক্ত মূল্যের ২% (শতকরা দুই)	চুক্তির তারিখ হতে ৪৫ (পঁয়তাল্লিশ) দিন	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা
	Lot-2 Re-filling of Fire Extinguisher (151 Numbers)	৫.০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা	চুক্তির তারিখ হতে ১৫ (পনেরো) দিন	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা

১০	যোগাযোগকারীর নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ	নিম্ন যোগাযোগকারী বরাবর যোগাযোগ করতে হবে।
১১	বিশেষ নির্দেশনাঃ সরকারি কারী/প্রকৌশল সমূহের বৈধ প্রকৌশল, টিআইএন সার্টিফিকেট, জ্যাকট প্রকৌশল সার্টিফিকেট এবং স্বাক্ষর সম্পর্কিত সার্টিফিকেট থাকতে হবে।	
১২	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র বাতিল অথবা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

(মোঃ মোহাম্মদুর রহমান)  
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পক্ষে: সার্ভেয়ার জেনারেল অথবা বাংলাদেশ  
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**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
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**CORRIGENDUM-01**

Memo No: 35.01.0000.276.32.032.22 - 776 Date : 30.10.2022

**Package Name:** Construction of Kewatkhali Bridge with Approach Road & Associated Structures. Package: WP-01  
**Invitation for Tender (IFT) Memo No:** 35.01.0000.276.32.032.22 - 712  
**Issue Date of Invitation for Tender (IFT) Notice:** 28/09/2022

Due to the unavoidable circumstances, the following clauses of the Invitation for Tender (IFT) for the above-mentioned works have been amended as follows:

Subject	Amended Description									
Last Date and Time for Selling of Tender mentioned in the S.N. 8 of the Notice	8. Last Date and Time for Selling of Tender: <b>04 December 2022, 15:00 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time)</b>									
Last Date and Time for Submission of Tender mentioned in the S.N. 9 of the Notice	9. Last Date and Time for Submission of Tender: <b>05 December 2022, 11:00 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time)</b>									
Tender Opening Date and Time mentioned in the S.N. 10 of the Notice	10. Tender Opening Date and Time <b>05 December 2022, 12:00 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time)</b>									
Para 2 of Tender Terms & Conditions	<table><thead><tr><th>Reference</th><th>Existing Clause</th><th>Modified Clause</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>3<sup>rd</sup> line</td><td>by 13th November 2022, 15:00 (BST)</td><td>by 04<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 15:00 (BST)</td></tr></tbody></table>	Reference	Existing Clause	Modified Clause	3 <sup>rd</sup> line	by 13th November 2022, 15:00 (BST)	by 04 <sup>th</sup> December 2022, 15:00 (BST)			
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All other terms and conditions of the Invitation for Tender (IFT) notice will remain unchanged.

(Noor-E-Aham)  
ID No. 005074  
Project Director (SE), RHD  
Construction of Kewatkhali Bridge at Mymensingh Project

GD-1988