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Comprehensive urban and spatial planning for a balanced and sustainable Bangladesh

IPD research in 2023 reveals that there is a shortage of 795 playgrounds in Dhaka, the densely populated capital, while Chattogram lacks 541, to meet the urban planning standard. Moreover, number of playground shortages is 37 in Rajshahi, 65 in Khulna, 40 in Sylhet, and 45 in Barisal, according to this study.

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INCLUSIVE PLANNING FOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

Parks, playgrounds and open spaces are very important recreational facilities for sustainable urban living. The number of population is increasing in urban areas whereas access to recreational facilities is declining in the city areas in Bangladesh. IPD research in 2023 reveals that there is a shortage of 795 playgrounds in Dhaka, the densely populated capital, while Chattogram lacks 541, to meet the urban planning standard. Moreover, number of playground shortages is 37 in Rajshahi, 65 in Khulna, 40 in Sylhet, and 45 in Barisal, according to this study.

Different types of playgrounds should be planned for different age groups in urban areas. In densely populated urban areas, one playground is needed for every 3,000-5000 individuals under three age group categories - playlot for children (3-6 years, 0.5 acres), playground for teenagers (7-15 years; 1.5-3 acres) and playfield for adults (above 15 years, 5 acres), according to planning criteria.

No significant initiative has been observed so far to plan three types of playgrounds for children and adolescents in the urban areas in Bangladesh, depriving children and youth of sports activities and subsequently hindering their physical, mental, and social development. Additionally, three types of parks should be planned in urban areas - neighborhood parks, community parks, and urban or city parks which are mostly absent in the urban planning

practices in Bangladesh.

Only 16% of the residents of Dhaka city live within playground facilities as there are only 42 public playgrounds in the two city corporation areas. Also, 41 out of 129 wards in Dhaka North and South do not have any playgrounds according to the Detailed Area Plan (DAP, 2022-35) by Rajuk. Many of the public playgrounds and parks of Dhaka city are controlled and even restricted to common people by clubs or other vested quarters.

We should create new parks and playgrounds in urban areas. The land acquisition should be done in addition to utilizing available khas land in urban areas for recreational space development. Privately developed residential projects and educational institutions should have an adequate number of playgrounds. Parks and playgrounds should be accessible to all sections of a society and a community management committee should be formulated to manage and protect these important public spaces from vested interest groups.

INTEGRATED AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURES FOR URBAN AREAS

It is perceived that better transport infrastructure in urban areas can help to combat traffic jams in urban areas. However, it has been observed in many cases that investment in transport infrastructures alone cannot solve traffic problems in the city. Rather cities should concentrate on traffic management, road governance, travel demand management, and better integration of land use-transport relationships to ensure efficient and affordable

transport systems in urban areas. An efficient urban transport plan generally prioritizes pedestrian-friendly facilities, roadway development, improvement of bus services and bus route franchising, and development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT).

However, in the case of Dhaka city, in the different phases of the Strategic Transport Plan

flyovers have been constructed in various levels of urban areas across Bangladesh without detailed transport and planning impact assessment. For example, flyovers of Chittagong City have been constructed without a detailed feasibility study. Ultimately traffic chaos could not be resolved in Port City, even after huge investments in infrastructure. Urban authorities should

Rapid Transit (MRT) due to its financial viability. As metro rail is usually a subsidized project - for developing countries like Bangladesh - any plan for MRT network development should be judiciously planned and designed for reaping maximum socio-economic benefits and lessening economic burden and debt for the country as well.

Speedy rail connectivity among different regions in

A WAY FORWARD TOWARD BALANCED URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh highly demands planned, balanced, and sustainable development of its urban areas for its sustained growth. Comprehensive urban and spatial planning is necessary to achieve this goal. Development authorities like RAJUK, CDA, RDA, and KDA have been planning Structure Plan, Master Plan, and Detail Area Plan (DAP) for divisional level cities for many years. However, the implementation rate of these physical plans is very low. Master plans prepared long ago by LGED have not been gazetted by the government yet. Therefore, our secondary towns are growing in an unplanned manner, having detrimental effects on people and the environment. On top of that, even 50 years after independence, we do not have a National Physical Plan for Bangladesh to guide its urban and spatial development. Recently, Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) has formulated a 'Spatial Planning Framework' for Bangladesh to ensure proper planning practices in Bangladesh in a coordinated way. The government should take appropriate steps in this regard to ensure that urbanization and spatial development around urban centers follow this framework to ensure the planned and sustainable development of Bangladesh. We need comprehensive urban planning of all levels of our urban areas and their appropriate implementation so that further damage to urban areas is not done - lest it is too late to respond.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

(STP, 2005) implementation, appropriate attention and importance on low investment priorities like pedestrian-friendly facilities, improvement of bus services, and bus route franchising were not given due importance by the successive governments. Rather, high investment projects - which were not preferred in STP - like expressways, flyovers, and Metro Rails, have been prioritized by the authorities for traffic solutions in the capital.

Over the years, unnecessary

devise comprehensive plans to integrate transport-land use relationships effectively. This includes the implementation of intra-city bus and paratransit services, alongside the development of pedestrian-friendly footpaths throughout all urban areas in Bangladesh.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Commuter Rail services could be very beneficial to increasing the connectivity of big cities with their surrounding regions. LRT could be a better option in many cases than Mass

Bangladesh should receive priority to promote balanced urban and spatial development of Bangladesh. Rail link to Cox's Bazar has been a new introduction, though, there are some criticisms regarding environmental issues relating to the protection of three Conservation areas along this route. Regional decentralization can be functional and effective if we could connect our divisional and regional centers with Dhaka by speedy rail network.

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শরী'আহ ভিত্তিক ইসলামী ব্যাংক

আধুনিক ইসলামী ব্যাংকিংয়ের পথিকৃত এক্সিম ব্যাংকের
শরীয়াহ্ ব্যাংকিংজগতে আপনাকে স্বাগতম
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