

CUS BULLETIN

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Kuntal Barai, *Wheel of Dhaka-05*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2012

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Wheel of Dhaka-05
Acrylic on Canvas, 2012
by Kuntal Barai (b.1987)



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The Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), Dhaka is a self-supporting independent non-profit research, training and advocacy organization, registered under Society Registration Act, 1860, Government of Bangladesh. Established on May 13, 1972, CUS has evolved into a fully multi-disciplinary centre with specialists from the disciplines of aesthetics, administration, anthropology, architecture, demography, economics, education, geography, history, information technology, governance, housing, management, sociology, statistics and urban and regional planning. CUS is a member of the South Asian Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI), Associate Member of CITYNET, the Local Government Institute of Training and Research (LOGOTRI), and an institutional member of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA). CUS is also represented in the Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF) since its beginning in 2011.

The main objectives of the Centre are:

- to initiate, promote, sponsor, organize and disseminate scientific research on various dimensions of problems and issues pertaining to urbanization and development;
- to provide training in the field of urban and regional studies, planning, development and management; and
- to provide consultancy services and advocacy pertaining to urban and regional planning and development.

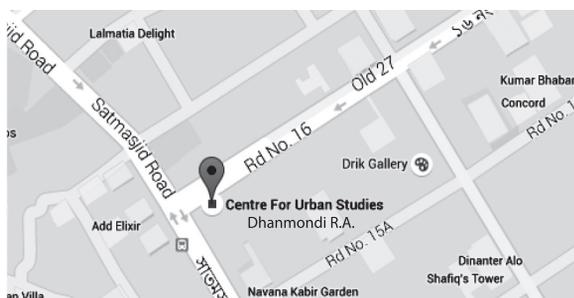
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CUS depends on contribution and donations from its members and patrons, training, research and consultancy overheads, and publication sales proceeds for its funds.

The Centre is managed by a 19 member Executive Council elected on a four year term from amongst its General Body members. All Executive Council members work on honorary basis. There is a regular full-time paid administrative and research staff for management and research activities of the Centre.

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Notes from the Chairman

Professor Nazrul Islam



The period (July- December 2017) covered by the present issue of CUS Bulletin has experienced a number of happy as well as sad incidences. The death of Mr. Annisul Huq, Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation was a great shock to the people of Dhaka. He died on 30 November 2017, in a London hospital. He was elected mayor in May 2015, and soon won the heart of millions of people of Dhaka with his dynamic leadership and pro-active development initiatives. Dhaka will definitely miss him. He was only 65 when he died. We at CUS deeply condole his departure.

- Annisul Huq's demise was preceded by another tragic event or rather a long process of events, namely the exodus of the Rohingyas from the Rakhine State of Myanmar, caused by genocidal atrocities on them by the Myanmar authorities. Hundreds of thousands of the Rohingyas were forced to flee their homeland and take refuge in Bangladesh. The process began after 25 August and over 700,000 of them already got sheltered in Bangladesh, the flow remained unstoppable even in late December. The Bangladesh Government extended unprecedented humanitarian assistance to the refugees. The people of Bangladesh have equally been sympathetic to them. The refugees have so far been accommodated in temporary shelters in Tcknaf region of Cox's Bazar district. Mid-term resettlements in offshore islands, such as at Bhashan Char, are being planned by the government. Indeed the whole issue is a huge humanitarian challenge not only for Bangladesh but also for the global community.

- Dhaka has experienced a very bad season of heavy rains and consequent urban flooding and water logging problem, this year. It is rather a regular annual feature. The authorities such as the City Corporations, Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (DWASA), Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkhya (Rajuk), Water Development Board, etc., keep on blaming one another for the problem, while the citizens suffer. One of course hears about new grand projects, but these are very slow in coming.

- Traffic in Dhaka remains a perennial problem with vehicular travel time having been reduced to only about 5km per hour in the central city areas. Added to

the horrendous jams have been the frequent fatal accidents caused by reckless driving of buses or even motor cycles. A recent development in Dhaka is the addition of 'Uber' service of shared cars and 'Pathao' of motorcycles, offering a little relief to the middle class youth.

- It is however not all bad news in the urban sector or about Dhaka. Some theoretical discussions try to keep our morale high. 'Making Dhaka a Great City', a two day International Seminar held in Dhaka in mid July, was such a positive move. Organized by the World Bank, the seminar advocated that we should 'seize the opportunity now to make Dhaka a great city'. The Seminar brought in leaders and experts from Delhi and Beijing with inspiring examples of development. The economic potentials of Dhaka were the central theme of the seminar. One however needs to examine how the urban planners in Dhaka (specially those at Rajuk) are perceiving the problems and prospects of the city. A close look at Rajuk's new Structure Plan (2016-2035) should be a reference point. The economic potentials of Dhaka must be supported by its physical, environmental, socio-cultural and political realities. Otherwise 'Making Dhaka Great' will only remain a slogan.

- The future of Dhaka is obviously related to some mega infrastructural development projects currently being implemented in the country. The under construction Padma Bridge is of course one such project which when completed will have immense impact on Dhaka and other regions of the country. The Padma Bridge is fast becoming a reality.

- Dhaka maintained its rich cultural image through the international classical Music Conference organized by Bengal Foundation and Channel i, the Folk Music Conference and many visual art exhibitions.

- At CUS we were pleased to have Professor Golam Rahman, the doyen of urban planning education and profession in Bangladesh, speaking on his lifetime experiences at the Annual General Meeting of the Centre held this year.

Notes from the Executive Editor

Architect-Planner Salma A. Shafi



Despite continuous work on the drains and unlimited funding by the Government and Donors problems of flood and drainage seems to remain unchanged. Perhaps it is time to rethink the problems of overbuilding and overcrowding which makes difficulties for infrastructure services to meet requirements. Traffic and drainage mostly become damaged and non-functioning from over congestion. Solution to these problems is not only by improving and adding piped drains and sewers along major roads, there is a need to target balanced development where services are provided as per population need.

The speedy development of the real estate market has spread everywhere in Dhaka and all urban centres of Bangladesh. Increase of earnings and lack of other investment have drawn people to this sector. The need for housing is definitely a positive one but our cities are facing uncontrolled, unregulated and unrestricted development in the private housing sector. Sadly those who need housing desperately are not able to participate in this market. So side by side there is the huge problem of unplanned and informal housing everywhere.

As buildings of high and medium size appear all over the cities and towns a huge amount of construction waste materials are thrown into the drainage and sewerage system. Also the low lying lands which were used as water retention areas have been filled up and built upon. Natural canals have already been encroached or clogged and closed by plastic garbage and solid waste. The refuse of buildings and road construction mainly end up by blocking surface and underground drainage channels.

The end result is that after a heavy rainfall the water is very slow in draining away. People face acute

sufferings when they try to conduct their daily work in this situation. The plight of the school children and women are non ending. We keep hearing about the initiatives and projects to solve the drainage systems of Dhaka and Chittagong. But without taking strict measures for control of built up areas in relation to density standards, regulate building construction particularly treatment of building waste, i.e. cement and sand mix, maintenance of the storm drains, canals and rivers cannot be solved.

Solid waste management along with drainage needs to be taken as a very important step by our city authorities. Making more drains is definitely needed but not the only way to reduce the problem. The city needs a well laid out integrated physical plan where solid waste management and drainage are solved locally and city wide. Today these are enacted in an ad-hoc fashion but not comprehensively.

Bangladesh is not progressing in a positive way where urbanization and urban planning is concerned. The state of the city areas is evidence enough. Improvement of per capita income needs to match with livability and it is time to act on this issue.

Note: The present number of CUS Bulletin includes an eight page Special Supplement in Bangla. The Article (cultural City Dhaka: Dance and Music) is an expanded version of a paper presented by Professor Rosie M. Ahsan, Vice Chairperson of CUS, at the CUS Symposium on "Dhaka: A Cultural City" held on 13 May 2017, on the occasion of the 45th Founding Anniversary of CUS. Professor Ahsan was a regular performer herself in dance, music and drama in her younger days. The article is like a reminiscences.

Essay

Urban Planning Experience in Dhaka: A Brief Note

Nazrul Islam

Honorary Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS)

Since its formal beginning in 1610, Dhaka grew according to the wishes of the rulers, first the Mughal Viceroy, then the British East India Company administrators followed by the representatives of the British Empire, until 1947. It is true that some partial evidence of modern town planning was experienced by Dhaka in the late 19th century and early 20th century. A rapid exercise at making a comprehensive town plan of Dhaka was accomplished by the British Town Planner Sir Patrick Geddes in 1917. A biologist by background Sir Patrick recommended respecting the natural topographic character of the city, including conserving the natural water bodies, specially the canals criss-crossing the town (Geddes, 1917). This plan, however, remained only a paper; it was not seriously considered for approval or application.

After Dhaka was made the capital of East Pakistan in 1947, the government decided to develop Dhaka in a planned manner (Islam, 2005). First the Town Improvement Act was enacted in 1953 under which Dhaka Improvement Trust (DIT) was setup. DIT then took the responsibility of preparing a Master Plan for Dhaka. Since DIT hardly had any qualified professional planners in their roll at that time, it hired consultants to perform the task. The British town planning company named Minoprio, Spencely and Macfarlane (DIT, 1959). The Master Plan of 1959 covered an area of about 829 sq. kms. The 20 year plan period however was 1958-1978, the task having been commissioned in August 1957.

Considering objective realities of the time, the Plan projected a target population for the city in 1978 at 1,466,000 with an average annual growth rate of 1.75 percent, which however turned out to be very wrong (Ahmed, et.al, 2014, pp 23-45). The city experienced over 5 percent growth even in the sixties, and double that figure in the seventies. The whole socio-economic

political scenario had changed after 1971, the city actually required a completely new plan. However, the primary roads, segregated industrial, commercial, administrative, high income residential areas and some refugee resettlement areas were developed according to the Plan. Basically the Plan had proposed a class structured city over its geographical space, at least in lands owned by the government. The railway line which had been running since 1885 through the middle of the city was partly removed to the then eastern fringe. Some important decisions, like planning a second campus of Dhaka University or making the canals functional, could not be implemented. Mass public transport was limited to a few state run buses. In any case the tremendous growth of population during 1971 to 1978 had rendered the 1958-78 Plan largely redundant. It may be noted that the first 12 years (1958-70) of the plan period belonged to the Pakistani military regime while the 13th year (1971) was the turbulent time of the war of liberation. The people's government of independent Bangladesh under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman got only three and half years (January 1972 to August 1975) to lay the political (the Constitution) and economic foundation (the First Five Year Plan) but not enough time to go for a new plan for the capital.

An effort for a plan of Dhaka was made in 1980 by the Planning Commission (then under a military government) with financial support of UNDP, and a Strategy Plan with the title Dhaka Metropolitan Area Integrated Urban Development Project (DMAIUDP) was prepared by a foreign firm with participation of local experts (Shankland Cox and Partnership, 1981). However, this Strategy Plan was not formally approved by the government and hence no implementation could be considered. Meanwhile, the problems multiplied and turned more complex. To face the challenge of mitigat-

ing the problems, a project was undertaken to prepare another Master Plan/Structure Plan for Dhaka Metropolitan Development Planning Area for 1995-2015 with support from UNDP-UNCHS. A democratically elected civilian government headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1996) was in power at the time. Known as DMDP, the plan was completed by the end of 1995, but it received formal approval only in August 1997 (Rajuk, 1997) during another civilian government, headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001).

The plan was supposed to be presented as three components, namely the (a) Structure Plan, covering the entire planning region of 1528 km²s, (b) the Urban Area Plan covering the present built up area or the Dhaka Metropolitan Area (of nearly 306 km²s) and (c) the Detailed Area Plans (DAPs), initially proposed for 26 zonal areas, but later approved as 5 amalgamated zones. The DAPs should have been completed along with the two other plans because without DAPs, implementation of the Master Plan would not be possible. But the work on the DAPs could not even be started until the end of 2004 and was finally completed and officially approved by the Government in 2010. One very significant aspect of both the Structure Plan and DAP was the recommendation to strictly avoid urban development in the flood flow zones, and also to recover such spaces if already filled up or developed. This decision was not acceptable to the land developers who had already changed character of many water bodies. They organized very strong pressure on the government. Ultimately within a couple of days a high powered committee of several senior ministers was formed to review projects for approval. The review committee could not meet regularly, and applications for approval kept piling up. It had been alleged that projects violating DAP standards somehow managed to get approved. There has been absence of transparency in the process. Meanwhile much physical expansion and urban development have taken place without planning. This happened through informal private initiatives and also through formal private sector activities which defied Rajuk's planning rules. The demand for urban expansion has been strong due to population growth and income rise of average households thanks to overall economic growth of the country. The implementation period of DMDP was 1995-2015. But very little could be achieved during this time. The most glaring example is the non-implementation of the proposal for developing a number of satellite towns and Special Economic Zones at different locations around the city, and maintenance of the proposed 20 plus water retention ponds so critically needed to reduce flooding. Rajuk's latest twenty year Dhaka Structure Plan (2016-2035) covers nearly the same areas as in the 1995-2015 DMDP Plan and projects a

terminal year population of 26 million (Rajuk, 2015). It envisages both central area densification and distribution of increased population in new satellite towns like Purbachal in the east and Jhilmeel in the south and also addition to the existing old urban settlements. The plan incorporates proposals of the Strategic Transport Plan (2006-2026, and its ongoing revision) for intra-city Metro lines and Bus Rapid Transit routes, Elevated Express Way (north-south), circular roads and inter-city highways. The Plan also stresses on conserving wetlands within the plan area. It also proposes more mixed-use zones, as opposed to segregated residential and commercial zones in the 1958-78 Plan. For the first time, the city plan has considered hazard risks and environmental management seriously. Hazard of religious/ social extremism also needs to be considered. However, details of land use allocations will only be known after completion of the Detail Area Plans. The planning process incorporated some public participation at the strategic level. This needs to be carried out at the local/ neighborhood level as well. The Dhaka Structure Plan 2016-2035 has been prepared by a Korean Company with a Bangladeshi Consulting firm. The plan is at the final stage of approval. The political regime once again is that of Sheikh Hasina who has been again the Prime Minister since January 2009. The Prime Minister sometimes sets her own priorities in development initiatives in the capital.

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Short Communication

Implementation of Paurashava Master Plan

Salma A. Shaf

Urban Specialist and Honorary Treasurer, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS)

It is essential to improve the process of master plan preparation and implementation to make the plan more realistic, relevant and control unplanned development. Enforcement of land use permit is also necessary. This involves revising the TOR for ongoing master plan projects and adding enforcement laws for towns when master plan studies are completed. There is also a need to strengthen existing urban planning resources at the Paurashava level and integrate involvement of stakeholders in the land use and building control process. The following two changes are immediate needs;

- Revision of Terms of Reference for master plan preparation with focus on landuse zoning and control.
- Stronger involvement of communities in master plan implementation process through TLCC¹ and WLCC²

The TLCC and WLCC are within the Paurashava governance structure where community members meet on a regular basis. These bodies provide an effective means of ensuring that the local community is involved in planning matters. There are items in the TLCC agenda that include reference to land clearance and building permit approvals. It should be the role of the PSA Urban Planner and Engineer to ensure that TLCC and WLCC members are made fully aware of the master plan contents and stakeholder involvement, in landuse and building control.

There are two policy actions that need to be taken in this regard;

- Ensure that Land Clearance and Development Permits are issued as per Master Plan recommendations
- Implementation and enforcement of Master Plan Guidelines by following the Planning and Building Permit system as per BNBC³.

Under the present regulation where there is an approved master plan, it should be mandatory to apply and receive approval for Land Clearance and Develop-

ment Permits. If this system is introduced then all citizens should be made aware of the process to follow these processes. For this it is important to make sure that,

- Masterplans contain existing land use and proposed landuse zoning.
- Master Plans be prepared and documented with clear guidance on how to issue land use and Building Permits
- Training of PSA officials and increase awareness of citizens for following planning and building control rules and regulations.

Masterplan document should contain clear definitions of densities, building heights, plot coverage, road setbacks, parking standards, etc. There can be a standard national format for these technical information which will become an essential part of the Master Plan and introduced for use in all Paurashavas.

A summary of the above processes should be prepared in Bangla language to be used officially.

Improve Effectiveness of Planning and Building Permits Systems

Paurashavas should further include computerization in their administration of planning and building control for transparency and consistency. This will make record keeping easier and help monitoring. A national based system should be prepared which is applicable to all Paurashavas.

It is also a need of the day to include disaster awareness and global warning issues during the decision making process on larger and more complex developments. PSA authorities should ensure that major developments take into account various climate hazards and how development is impacted by global warming issues. This should be associated with recommendations for improved education and training on climate issues, planning and building control.

Otherwise also it is important to consider climate disaster issues in planning and building control in all urban and rural settlement areas. A recent study by the author reveals the following findings on climate change, impacting life of people and buildings mainly in the coastal towns of Bangladesh. □

¹ TLCC: Town Level Coordination Committee

² WLCC: Ward Level Coordination Committee

³ BNBC: Bangladesh National Building Code

CUS Activities

CUS Annual Lecture and the 45th Annual General Meeting October 21, 2016

The 45th Annual General Meeting of CUS was held on August 12, 2017, Saturday at the conference room of Bangladesh Asiatic Society. Prof. Nazrul Islam, CUS Chairman, presided over the Annual Lecture and the 46th Annual meeting, CUS members, scholars and well wishers attended the program. Dr. Golam Rahman, Former President of BIP, gave this year's annual lecture.



(L-R). Professor Golam Rahman, Professor Nazrul Islam and Professor Nurul Islam Nazem

Professor Nurul Islam Nazem introduced Professor Dr. Golam Rahman. He is founder life member of CUS, Scholar and pioneer of urban planning sector, Bangladesh. Topic of his lecture was his educational life. He was born in 1937 at Shatkhira Zila. He completed his graduation from Department of Geography of Dhaka University. Then he went abroad for higher studies. He started his career as a Lecturer of Geography at Moulvibazaar College, Sylhet. He then joined as Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, BUET. After 38 years he retired from BUET. He has been Vice Chancellor of Khulna University from 1989- 1993. From year 2003-06 he acted as Vice Chancellor of UIU. He has more than 50 published papers in professional journals. His book 'Town Planning and the Political Culture of Planning in Bangladesh' is used as a text book in planning departments. Dr. Golam Rahman is a hard working and friendly person. He is life member of CUS and an active well wisher.



(L-R). Ar. Salma A. Shafi, Professor Golam Rahman and Professor Nazrul Islam

Planner Shawkat Ali Khan, Prof Dr. Sarwar Jahan, President of BIP Prof. Dr. Abul Kalam, Professor Ghulam Murtaza, spoke about the illustrious life of Professor Golam Rahman.

The Annual Meeting



Prof Nazrul Islam chaired the Annual General meeting. Professor Nurul Islam Nazem gave the welcome speech and presented the annual report of 2017. Treasurer Salma A. Shafi presented the Treasurer's Report. Both were approved by the AGM after discussion.

Urban Development News July – December 2017

CUS Desk

OBITUARY

December, 2017

Mayor Annisul Huq Passes Away

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Annisul Huq lost the battle for life in London at Wellington Hospital on November 30, 2017, after nearly three months' treatment. He was 65 years old. Anisul Haque was born on October 27, 1952, in Sonapur of Sonagazi in Feni district of Bangladesh. His father's name is Shariful Huq and mother's name is Rowshan Ara Huq. Annisul Huq graduated with honors in Economics from Chittagong University.



He established his own business in 1986 and was chairperson of nine export-oriented organizations under the trade name of Mohammadi Group, which directly employs about 12,000 people in garment sector alone. Once a popular television personality, Annisul held important positions in some local and international organizations. He was president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) from 2005 to 2006, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries from 2010 to 2012, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) from 2008 to 2010 and Bangladesh Independent Power Producers Association (BIPPA).

A successful entrepreneur and businessman, He left behind a host of relatives, admirers, well-wishers and followers to mourn his death. As the news spread, people started mourning his death in public and on social media. From an ordinary middleclass man, Annisul Huq turned himself into one of the leading businesspersons of the country to a household name.

He took up the challenge to give Dhaka city a complete facelift, to make it green, clean and healthy by contesting the mayoral election. Annisul came out victorious in the elections held in 2015, and was in the middle his mission to bring about qualitative changes in delivering civic services. But his sudden death put an end to the mission of the would-be successful mayor.

Mayor, Hoque had promised to build Dhaka into a clean, green and safe city. In this line during his tenure his office destroyed 20,000 illegal billboards from the city as part of the clean-up project. He took over control of many occupied Lands in the Dhaka North City Corporation. In a time when the threat of militancy is at the back of everyone's mind, he set up hundreds of closed circuit TV cameras in residential areas in Gulshan, Banani, and Baridhara. It is a fact that crime levels have dropped since those initiatives, and people in Dhaka North do feel much safer. The bane of the residents of Dhaka, though, is the city's horrifyingly bad traffic jam situation. Annisul Huq understood that the way to fix it was to reform public transport, which meant regulating the bus companies and bringing them under six umbrellas. As for his attempt to clean up the city in a rather literal sense, Annisul Huq deserves praise for setting up thousands of rubbish bins at the roadside across Dhaka North.

The mayor had taken many steps for the welfare of the people of DNCC. He will be remembered for his extraordinary work. It is a tragedy for the nation that we lost him to illness before his visions for the city could be fully realized.

Source: The Daily Star; Dhaka Tribune; 01/12/2017

Design for old Dhaka jail amusement complex finalized

The concerned authorities have planned to transform the site of 200-year old Dhaka Central Jail into a museum and amusement park for the city's residents. The implementation of the design will give Old Dhaka a much-needed facelift. The government has decided to transform Old Central Jail into an attractive historic site and tourist spot so that new generations can learn about our great leaders who had been imprisoned there. Not only had the great leaders of our Liberation War been imprisoned there, but those who sacrificed their lives for our mother tongue and fought against the British colonial rule had been confined in the jail.

Historically Mughal Subadar Ibrahim Khan built a fort at the present Chawk Bazar, which later became the residence of Naib Nazim of Dhaka. A criminal ward was built inside the fort in 1788 during the rule of East India Company that was later converted into the jail. The jail was built on 36.76 acres of land. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the four national leaders had been imprisoned in the jail during the Language Movement in 1952, Six-point Movement in 1966, and the Liberation War in 1971.

The area has been suggested to be declared as a heritage site. A design competition was held in October 2017 by the Home Ministry. A seven-member jury board selected the design by

Architect Abdur Rashid and his team through a competition. An exhibition of the design was held at Shilpokala Academy. Twenty eight Eminent Architects and design organizations participated in the competition, while a total of 34 drawings were submitted by the participants.

As per the winning design the jail site has been divided into three zones: A, B and C, following the premier's instruction. The plans for Zone C will be implemented by September-October next year. The prison will be redesigned as a museum under the new design, with a multi-purpose hall, convention centre, cineplex, restaurant, swimming pool, parking lots, and bank in Zone A, which spans 3.5 acres. Zone B, which is a 1.4 decimal area, will have book stores, flower stores and parking lots. Zone C will feature museums of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and four national leaders — AHM Qamaruzzaman, Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam and Captain Muhammad Mansur Ali.

Source: Dhaka Tribune; 31/10/2017

Bangladesh out of top 10 in Global Climate Risk Index

Bangladesh moved out of the top 10 climate risk countries in 2016 despite being hit by several natural disasters including tropical cyclones Komen, Roanu and Mora in the past three years. Last year Bangladesh ranked 6th in the index among the top vulnerable countries. The long-term study was published on November 9 during a session at the annual UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany. The index analysis to what extent countries have been affected by the impacts of weather-related loss events were compiled using data collected between 1997 and 2016. It said that between that time, over 520,000 people died worldwide in over 11,000 extreme weather events including storms, floods and heat waves, while the economic damages amounted to \$3.16 trillion. The latest round of UN climate talks closed without a clear direction on how climate adaptation measures will be funded in developing countries such as Bangladesh, putting the discussion on hold until next year's climate summit.

The Global Climate Risk Index 2018 ranked Haiti as the country worst-affected by extreme weather after it took a direct hit from Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. Zimbabwe, which suffered severe drought followed by floods, was placed second and Fiji was ranked third in the index, which is published annually by Bonn-based research group German watch. Fiji is still recovering from the strongest tropical cyclone ever recorded in the island nation, and is the president of this year's UN climate talks.

Nine of the 10 worst-affected nations in that period were developing countries, with Honduras, Haiti and Myanmar suffering the most in the low income or lower-middle income country groups.

Source: The Daily Star; Dhaka Tribune; 10/11/2017

Bengal Classical Music Festival 2017

The sixth round of Bengal Classical Music Festival was held on December 26 to 30 at Abahani Grounds in Dhanmondi of Dhaka. In the past five years, the Bengal Classical Music Festival has established itself as the organizer of biggest festival of classical music in the world in terms of performance duration and audience since 2014. The festival duration has increased from a day to five nights – running from evening to dawn. A formal inauguration ceremony with Finance Minister AMA Muhith as chief guest was launched. This year's festival was dedicated to

Emeritus Professor Anisuzzaman

The event is being organized by Bengal Foundation, Dhaka Abahani Limited, Channel I, Square Hospital Ltd, Perfect Harmony Global & Business Times in association with Index Group, Benga Digital, Bengal Boi & BLUES.

This year's festival started with performance of Virtuoso violinist L Subramaniam among many. Participating foreign performers The Astana Symphony Philharmonic Orchestra from Kazakhstan joined, marking the first-time Western Classical music being played at the festival. There were many performers of dance numbers.

This year featured some of the most iconic musicians from India, including Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Pandit Jasraj, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma and Ustad Rashid Khan, amongst numerous others. Bangladeshi recitals included performances by distinguished artists as well as students of the Government Music College and Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay. Students of Bengal Parampara performed Tabla, Sitar and Sarod respectively on 2-4th day of the program. Supriya das from this school performed kheyal on opening day.

Source: The Daily Star; Dhaka Tribune; 29/12/2017

Floods, Rains and Drainage Situation of Dhaka City

Dhaka faces acute drainage problem, every time major rain or floods occur in the country. Parts of the city go under water. Past record of 1954, 1956, 1988, 1998 shows devastating floods have occurred submerging 70 percent or more of the country. Along with the country most of Dhaka city except some areas went under various depths of water during these floods.

This year during May to October, 2017, heavy rain submerged various areas. Many streets in Dhaka's Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Shukrabad, Kalabagan, Karwan Bazar, Tejkunipara, Old Dhaka, Shantinagar, Puranapaltan, Motijheel, Mohakhali and Gulshan areas went under knee deep water due to the city's poor drainage system. Traffic on Dhaka's usually congested streets came to a grinding halt when the streets went under water. The stagnant rainwater also seeped into underground water storage tanks in residential buildings, contaminating the reserves. In many areas, the rainwater not only submerged the streets and alleyways but also flooded ground floors of many buildings. Dhaka Wasa, two city corporations, the Deputy Commissioner Office, Rajuk, Water Development Board, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and Dhaka Cantonment Board

worked together to resolve water stagnation of the city and its adjacent areas.

According to a World Bank study published in 2015, potential damages from water logging between 2014 and 2050 will be Tk110 billion in Dhaka, if climate change is not considered. In a changing climate with more intense rainfalls, the loss will be Tk139 billion in the same period. Wasa has 370km of drains, while the DNCC and DSCC have around 2,000km – insufficient for draining rainwater as the connecting 26 drainage canals' velocity had been reduced due to encroachment.

Dhaka's drainage network was designed to discharge storm water in the surrounding four rivers – Buriganga, Balu, Turag and Shitalakkhya – through the 26 canals. The capital had 65 canals but the number came down to 43 over time, according to Wasa. Of the existing ones, around 20 have nearly vanished because of encroachment.

In the past 25 years, urban planners had pointed out several times that rapid urbanization of Dhaka city had resulted in substantial increase in impervious area, created obstruction to natural drainage patterns, and reduced the detention basins, which in turn led to shortening of the runoff concentration time and an increase of the peak flow.

Urban Planner Prof Nazrul Islam told the Dhaka Tribune that the drainage network needed to be kept clear to resolve water logging. The problem cannot be solved if the concerned agencies do not work together.

Following failure of initiated plans and the prime minister's directive, the concerned authorities asked two private research organizations – Centre for Environmental and Geographical Information Services and the Institute of Water Modeling – to find out ways to get rid of water logging. Both research institutes recommended freeing the encroached water bodies. They also suggested widening rivers and flood flow zones surrounding Dhaka city.

The study pointed out that filling-up of wetlands in Ashulia, Banasree, Aftabnagar, Bashundhara, Meradia, Baunia, Badda, Amin Bazar and Hatirjheel have increased water logging in Dhaka.

Source: The Daily Star; Dhaka Tribune; 21/10/2017

Stairs being added to Moghbazar flyover

The earthquake-resistant Moghbazar-Mouchak-Malibagh flyover, the second largest in the country, opened to traffic on October 26 last. The government has taken a move to add stairs to the Moghbazar-Mouchak-Malibagh flyover to help traffic police monitor vehicular movement. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has taken the move for installing stairs. Iron-made angles are now being installed as part of the flyover in Malibagh intersection to help the traffic police climb up the flyover for monitoring traffic. There will be a roof over the upper part of the stairs where a small police box will be set up for monitoring traffic. The decision to add the stairs to the flyover is as per request of the traffic department.

Earlier, stairs were added to the Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover, but authority concerned later removed them following an order from the country's higher court.

Source: <http://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/index>

Illegal occupation of Dhaka canals

Dhaka had over 50 canals and lakes and was surrounded by four rivers and wetlands, three decades ago. Over the years, the capital and largest city of the country has lost almost all of it. The major part of Dhaka's drainage system consists of canals, rivers and lakes that help reroute extra water out of the city. There is also a storm drainage network of around 261 sq km around the city.

The two main reasons behind the disappearing canals are the creep of construction and dumping of massive quantities of garbage from surrounding neighborhoods. The authorities concerned have long ignored the illegal encroachment upon the canals, failed to re-excavate, demarcate and properly monitor their condition.

The major canal systems in and around the capital are the Degun-Ibrahimur-Kallyanpur canal that drains out to the Turag River, Dhanmondi-Paribagh-Gulshan-Banani-Mohakhali-Begunbari canal that drains out to Balu River, and Segunbagicha-Gerani-Dholaikhal canal that drains out to the Balu and Buriganga rivers.

According to urban planners, historians and government data, Dhaka used to have 65 canals, and over 50 were still flowing until the early 1980s. The number has fallen to 43 today with 20 of these under threat due to encroachment. The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) maintain 26 canals for the drainage system, although they are owned by Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office. Of the other 17

canals, nine have been covered by roads, box culverts and brick sewerage lines and another eight remain under jurisdiction of the DC office, according to Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

Concerns over the shrinking drainage canals have been acted upon before. In 2008, Dhaka WASA took initiatives to reclaim the 26 canals from illegal occupation by building walkways and channels and by planting trees along the canal embankments. The project was not implemented properly. A WASA report published in 2010 shows that the canals were filled up and grabbed by 10,500 grabbers with political power.

Source: *Dhaka Tribune*; 12/09/2017

No Playgrounds for Dhaka

Most public playgrounds and parks in Dhaka city are off-limits to majority of residents. Children, in particular, remain deprived of opportunities to play outside. The Dhaka North and South City Corporations have around 60 playgrounds and parks under their combined jurisdiction. But they are not the only authorities. The Public Works Department, Rajuk, Department of Forests, and Department of Environment are also involved in supervision and management of open public spaces. The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) is running a project to free and develop 19 parks and 12 playgrounds.

The undivided Dhaka City Corporation conducted a survey across the city and found that a number of playgrounds were occupied illegally or were being used for other purposes. Unfortunately, the situation has worsened over time. Many of the parks and playgrounds are bereft of grass and contain uneven soil and dirt. Makeshift shops occupy several playgrounds and parks. Reckless littering of waste, both liquid and solid, coalescing into festering cesspools of filth is a regular scenario.

A 2016 report by Work for Better Bangladesh Trust (WBB) concluded that majority of open spaces in Dhaka are used by government agencies and private organizations, limiting public access. The report stated the two city corporations failed to ensure citizens' needs for parks and other open spaces, as per the city's overall development plan. Dhaka's development plan recommends an average of at least 0.052 square metres of parks and 0.5 square metres of open green spaces per person. The World Health Organization (WHO) and Leadership in Energy Environmental for Neighborhood Design recommend nine and 20 square metres respectively.

Source: *Dhaka Tribune*; 22/12/2017

Canals & Water-Bodies of Chittagong

Many water bodies and canals are shrinking due to unplanned development, causing water logging in the port city during rainfall. Many parts of the city are inundated during even a light rain triggered by torrential rain or a tidal surge, causing untold sufferings to the people of Chittagong. Some 39 canals are disappearing gradually in Chittagong city area while twelve are said to have completely disappeared in the last 46 years due to illegal occupation by land grabbers, (a recent survey conducted by the City Corporation, Local Administration and Land Office).

The Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) itself and some housing companies are allegedly involved in constructing buildings, educational institutions and business establishments illegally. The concerned authorities of the city corporation failed to take any initiative to restore these canals.

Prof M Ali Ashraf, Former Chairman of Chittagong Engineers' Institute and an Urban Planner, pointed out that the CCC had made a master plan on "Storm Drainage and Flood Control Master Plan and Feasibility Report for Chittagong," identifying 34 canals in 1969. An American organization conducted a survey on 50 canals of the port city, financed by Public Health Engineering Department. They made a map of 34 canals from Patenga Naval Academy point to Kalurhat Bridge in the southern parts of the city. He also said, in 2017, a Netherland based organization conducted a survey for making a master plan on the drainage system. During the survey, they found the existence of only 22 canals out of 34 while the remaining 12 canals disappeared though the existence of 34 canals are found on the RS, CS, PS land record. Some 139 illegal establishments have been constructed on 22 canals by filling up some portions of these canals.

Source: *Observer Bangladesh; Dhaka Tribune; 05/06/2017*

Sylhet Canals

Sylhet's canals are dying, due to embankment grabbing, mismanagement and dumping of garbage. According to Sylhet City Corporation, around 26 canals, locally known as "chhora", connect the city's hilly hinterland with the Surma river. In total the urban canal system is said to reach 96 kilometres in length, with 13 major canals accounting for 76 kilometres of that length. Traditionally, these canals were an integral part of the city's drainage system and also served as a water storage asset. Most of them are not more than a repository for garbage nowadays. The waters are polluted and the canals are ecologically devastated.

In recent years, Sylhet City Corporation has implemented plans to protect the canals. One project at a cost of Tk 11 crore was launched in 2009 and extended with an additional budget of Tk 20 crore in 2013. The implementation of a second project worth over Tk 236 crore and sanctioned by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec), commenced last January.



Photo, Mirza Khal, for obstructing the free flow of water, Dhaka tribune

A 2015 study approved by the Ecneec and undertaken by a team led by Professor Jahir Bin Alam from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology on how to protect the canals noted 1,054 instances of land grabbing along the canals' embankments. The study included a recommendation that the corporation not to build any type of box drains, but they are constructing them anyway. They recommended that if a walkway is needed, it must be ensured that it is not to the detriment of canal connectivity. Besides, the walkways should not be allowed to undermine the cleanliness of the canal environment.



Figure: Illegal occupation and pollution continue to threaten Gabhbar Khal's existence. Photo Source: *The Daily Star*

The corporation's Chief Executive Officer Enamul Habib, assured the media that all steps have been taken to protect the canals with proper planning; and the continued existence of the canal system will not be threatened.

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?>

Conference and Seminar News

CUS Desk

October 15, 2017

Seminar on National Convention on Housing Finance for the Urban Poor

“National Convention on Housing Finance for Urban Poor” was held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on Oct 15, 2017. BRAC Urban Development Programme (UDP) organized a daylong program with co-organizers National Housing Authority, Urban Development Directorate, Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB), Bangladesh Institute of Planners and BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

Housing Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain attended the event as Chief Guest. The programme was chaired by BRAC’s Senior Director for Strategy, Communications and Empowerment Asif Saleh. Special guests of the programme were Secretary to the Housing and Public Works Ministry Md Shahid Ullah Khandaker, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon, Rajshahi City Mayor Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, Barisal City Mayor Ahsan Habib Kamal, Bangladesh Institute of Planners General Secretary Professor Dr Md Akhtar Mahmud, BIGD Executive Director Dr Sultan Hafiz, MAB President Alhaj Md Abdul Baten, Urban Development Directorate Director Dr Khurshid Jabin Hossain Toufiq, and National Housing Authority Chairman and Additional Secretary Khandakar Akhtaruzzaman. Around 75 mayors from different cities attended the event. Architect Planner Salma A. Shafi, Urban Specialist, CUS, presented the key note paper of the seminar.

The Minister mentioned that the government has already formulated a law titled "Urban and Regional Planning Act, 2016" for making a planned housing system not only for urban areas but also rural areas. Under the law, rural people will have to take permission from Union Parishad Chairman/ Municipality Mayor/ Upazila Nirbahi Officer for constructing any house. The government has plans to construct about 10,000 apartments in DCC for the slum people to ensure their basic needs. He expressed his concern about the rise of urban population and mentioned that due to increase of population, around 235 hectares agricultural lands shrinking every day.

Speakers at the programme said, despite reduction of poverty in Bangladesh, urban poverty has been increasing. Between 1997 and 2014, urban poverty

increased by 60.43%. Every year over 500,000 people come to Dhaka. While the population of the city is increases every day, one in every three of its inhabitants ends up living in the slums. It is expected that Dhaka will become the second most densely populated city in the world by 2020. Dhaka is currently the forth most densely populated city in the world. In this regard Mayor Syed Khokon said that, rapid urbanization coupled with wrong planning and shortage of land poses a great challenge to building a healthy and safe housing system in Dhaka and other cities of Bangladesh.

Source: Dhaka Tribune; 15/10/2017

International Conference on ‘Towards Great Dhaka: A New Urban Development Paradigm Eastward’

An International Conference on Development Options for Dhaka Toward 2035 was held on July 19, 2017. Preliminary findings of the draft report ‘Towards Great Dhaka: A New Urban Development Paradigm Eastward’ was discussed. The feedback will be used to inform and finalize the report, launched in the Fall. Honorable Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Khandker Mosharraf Hossain delivered the keynote speech. Policy makers, senior government officials, Mayors for Dhaka North and South, Urban Planners, Civil Society representatives, and private sector leaders also joined the conference. Professor Anthony Venables of Oxford University presented four simulation scenarios for Dhaka’s development towards 2035.

A new World Bank analysis shared today at a high-level international conference. It says, capital of Bangladesh has become one of the world’s most densely populated cities. Greater Dhaka possesses 36 percent of the country’s urban population. To achieve its vision of becoming an upper-middle income country by its 50th birthday, Bangladesh must manage Dhaka’s urban growth. This includes taking full advantage of East Dhaka – where there is ample availability of land near the core of the city – to increase the city’s economic opportunities and livability. Dhaka must seize the opportunity to properly plan, coordinate, and invest for the future to achieve its full potential.

Qimiao Fan, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal said that, "Based on current trends, Dhaka will have more than 35 million people by 2035. A productive and livable city of this scale can make enormous contributions to its citizens and the economy,"

With proper planning and implementation, East Dhaka can become a vibrant pole of activities with higher value added, while helping ease density and congestion in the rest of the city. If not managed properly, the rapid and unplanned urbanization of East Dhaka will make congestion and livability worse and expose more people to risks from floods and earthquakes.

Source: www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release; 19/07/17

October 2, 2017

World Habitat Day 2017

More than 30 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly took an important step in promoting the idea that everyone deserves a decent place to live by declaring the first Monday in October as the World Habitat Day. In Bangladesh the day is suitably addressed by concerned ministries and departments. In 1985, the United Nations at its General Assembly decided to observe the day and the Government of Bangladesh has been observing it since 1986.

This year's theme of the day has been ascertained 'Housing Policies: Affordable Homes'. Ministry of Housing and Public Works took various programmes to mark the day. Colorful rallies, seminar, publication of supplementary and souvenir were among the programmes for the day. A discussion was held at Osmani Memorial auditorium with the Housing and Public Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossen as the chief guest. The minister said that, government will construct sustainable dwellings for rural people through the National Housing Authority (NHA) with a view to achieving the target of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The process to start the construction work of 80,000 flats in Purbachol project area is underway.

Another Seminar on 'Human Habitat, Land Use Planning and Sustainable Development Goals' was held in the conference room of the Public Works Bhaban in the afternoon. Housing and Public Works Minister attended it as the chief guest and CUS General Secretary Dr Nurul Islam Nazem presented the keynote paper.

Source: *The Daily Sun*; 01/10/2017

October, 2017

Bangladesh National Conference on Disaster Risk Management 2017

The Department of Disaster Management in collaboration with key humanitarian NGO's in Bangladesh organized a seminar titled, 'Bangladesh National Conference on Disaster Risk Management 2017' on Tuesday, 3-4 October, 2017 at the Carnival Hall, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka. This Conference aimed to reflect the 5th Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Cancun, Mexico and the way forward; share updates on the Global priorities and stakeholder commitments. Mr. Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief attended as Chief Guest. Professor Nazrul Islam, Urban Expert and Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) chaired the 'Thematic Session 6: Urban Risk Reduction: Our learning and challenges' on the second day of the seminar.

General Objectives of the Program: The Bangladesh National Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction & Management 2017 had two main objectives;

1. Reflect on the 5th GPDRR and the way forward; share updates on the Global priorities and stakeholder commitments
2. Promote and introduce new initiatives and innovation, technology, systems and services in disaster risk reduction & management tested at local level, and harness the private sector and scientific community in all these aspects;

Source: www.facebook.com/events/175466269682899/

November 24-25, 2017

UTC Dhaka 2017 Campus

The Urban Thinkers Campus is an initiative of UN-Habitat conceived as an open space for critical exchange between urban researchers, professionals, civil society actors and decision-makers who believe that urbanization is an opportunity and can lead to positive urban transformations. It is also intended as a platform to building consensus between partners engaged in addressing urbanization challenges and proposing solutions to urban futures. The campus will emulate platforms for urban thinkers to identify ways to implement the New Urban Agenda has agreed on priority action areas, commitments and roles, actions plans and road maps. In line with the call of WUC Urban Thinkers Campus Dhaka 2017 was held in

Dhaka, Bangladesh organized by International Union of Architects (UIA) and hosted by Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) in November 2017. Title of the Campus was 'Road Map for Implementation of New Urban Agenda: Involvement of Multi-Stakeholders in Development Process'.

Professor Nazrul Islam, Urban Expert and Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) attended as Special Guest on November 24th, 2017. Salma A. Shafi, Urban Planner and Architect, was a discussant in one of the sessions.

Objectives of Dhaka Campus: Dhaka, capital and largest city of Bangladesh, is a mega city with a current population of approximately 1.6 billion people. Currently like Dhaka other developing mega cities around the globe are facing major challenges in urban environment, city infrastructure, urban space quality, urban and local governance and management sectors. The development and management of the intermediate cities as a solution for rapid urbanization in the mega cities is one of the major issues that are addressed in the New Urban Agenda. Department of Architecture and Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) was the Lead Partner Organization.

Source: www.iab.com.bd/iabupload/UTC%20DHAKA%202017.pdf

31 October, 2017

World Cities Day

The United Nations has designated every 31st October as World Cities Day. The theme for 2017 is "Innovative Governance, Open Cities." The theme is selected to highlight the important role of urbanization as a source of global development and social inclusion. World Cities Day was established on 27th December 2013 by the General Assembly in its resolution.

The day is expected to greatly promote the international community's interest in global urbanization. A seminar organized by City Development Department and Participatory Development Action Program at CIRDAP conference room in Dhaka to celebrate the day. The seminar was titled 'Urban Planning and Involvement of the Grass root People'. Housing Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain attended the event as Chief Guest. The programme was chaired by Director of Urban Development Department. Professor Nazrul Islam, Chairman, Centre Urban Studies and Nasima Begum, NDC, Secretary, Women and Children Ministry were present as Special Guest.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 formulates the ambition to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable - underlying the relevance of UN-Habitat's mission. Inequalities in cities have grown since 1980. The world largest cities are also often the most unequal, and this year's theme is embraced by the action and implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which is putting the topic of inclusive cities as one of the main pillars for urban development.

Source: <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/world-cities-day>

Smart City Week in Dhaka

UNDP Bangladesh, Access to Information (a2i) Programme of the Prime Minister's Office and urban sector stakeholders jointly organized the first ever Smart City Week 2017 in Dhaka from November 22 to 28. Theme was 'Smart City Smart People'. The event to build a home-grown vision of people-centric smart cities for all inaugurated through a three day (November 22-24); Smart City Innovation Hub at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre. A cycle rally with the theme 'Ride Smart, Live Smart' kicked off the campaign on November 18.

The Smart City Week, a part of the Smart City Campaign, focused on building people-centered cities by not only investing in technology and infrastructures alone but also engaging smart people who care, respect and pay values to the society. Apart from the Innovation Hub, the weeklong event also arranged a range of events including hackathon, roundtable discussion, photo exhibition, kite festival, citizen's forum, City Day, children's art competition and many more. All these events showcased innovative ideas that make cities people-friendly and contribute towards urban development by offering affordable and efficient services.

Government and non-government agencies, city corporations, municipalities, public and private universities, urban experts and social entrepreneurs came under one roof to present their views and plans for developing smart cities at the event. Partner organizations for Smart City Week include a number of government and non-government organizations working on urban issues, BUET, Bangladesh Institute of Planners, Bengal Institute of Architects, Landscapes and Settlements.

Source: *Source: Dhaka Tribune; 13/11/2017*

95% Resident of Dhaka city does not have emergency fire escapes

According to BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), at least 57% of Dhaka city's middle income and lower middle income population are forced to stay out of the housing market since financial institutions are reluctant to provide them monetary assistance. Executive Director of BIGD, unveiled in their Annual Flagship Report, titled "State of Cities 2017: Housing in Dhaka" on December 31.

The study covered 400 houses in Rampura, Badda, Mirpur and Old Dhaka throughout July-August in 2017. Speaking at the program, the study team members highlighted various problems in Dhaka's housing sector. The study report also pointed at problems faced by tenants that include lack of open spaces for safety during earthquakes. Houses have no fire escapes; residents get no provision of attending any fire drills, and improper and irregular waste disposal and collection.

Syeda Salina Aziz, senior research associate of BIGD pointed out that the massive population density in Dhaka is the crux of all those problems. About 44% of the country's urban population lives in Dhaka. Dhaka is accommodating a plethora of migrants, most of whom are members of the focus groups of the study. Not all of them can afford proper houses of their own.

Discussants suggested decentralization and better regional development planning, in addition to a stronger role by the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) to solve the crisis in Dhaka's housing sector.

Source: Source: Dhaka Tribune; 31/12/2017

Dhaka Lit Fest

The seventh edition of Dhaka Literary Festival began on November 16, 2017, Thursday at the historic grounds of Bangla Academy in Dhaka. More than 200 writers, poets, performers, publishers and journalists, representing 24 countries, took part in the three-day literary extravaganza. The festivities began with a beating of drums and the rhythmic tapping of dancing feet of Manipuri Theatre's "Pung Cholom". In addition, a graphic novel on the Father of the Nation, titled "Mujib," was unveiled at the inauguration.



DSC Prize: Anuk Arudpragasam emerged as the winner from a shortlist of five to take the coveted US \$25,000 DSC Prize. He has been announced as the winner of the prestigious DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2017 for his novel, 'The Story of a Brief Marriage' at the Dhaka Lit Fest in Bangladesh on 18th November 2017.

Gemcon Awards: Poet Mohammad Rafique was honoured with the Gemcon Sahitya Puroshkar (Literary Award) 2017 for his book "Duti Kabbyagrantha" on the first day of the Dhaka Literary Festival (DLF). Ashraf Jewel and Mamun or Rashid were also jointly announced as winners of the Tarun Literary Award, while Nusrat Nusin won the Tarun Poetry Award.

The festival this year focused on free speech, the plights of the Rohingya community, women's rights issues and a number of important debates surrounding overarching historical issues, according to the directors.

The lineup this year includes Booker Prize winner Ben Okri, Playwright and Filmmaker Sir David Hare, Eminent Padma Shri-winning poet Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Fiction Writers Lionel Shriver and Esther Freud, Journalists Charles Glass, Dominic Zeigler and Bachi Karkaria, and Oscar-winning British actor Tilda Swinton.

The festival is supported by the Cultural Affairs Ministry and hosted by Bangla Academy.

Source: Source: Dhaka Tribune; 16/11/2017

December 09, 2017

Round Tables: Volunteers for Tackling Urban Disasters

Prothom Alo organized a roundtable titled "Institutionalization of Urban Community Volunteers" in collaboration with Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP), Save the Children and C&A Foundation on November 29, 2017. Abdul Quayum, Associate Editor, Prothom Alo, was the Moderator of the Session. Professor Nazrul Islam, Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), opened the discussion. Participants were; Syed Matiul Ahsan, Deputy Director, Humanitarian Sector, Save the Children, Volunteers from Ward 15, Narayanganj City Corporation, Ahmadul Haque, Director (Administration), Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), Asit Baran Biswas, Councillor, Ward 15, Narayanganj City Corporation; Nayeem Gawhar Wara, Faculty, Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability, Dhaka University; Tahmina Jesmin Mita,

Deputy Director, Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP); Dr. Engr. Tariq Bin Yusuf, Executive Engineer, Environment, Climate and Disaster Management Circle, DNCC; Md Reaz Ahmed, Director General, Department of Disaster Management etc.

Statement of Professor Nazrul Islam, Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies in the roundtable discussion;

An integral part of urban planning is management of urban disasters. The government has also recognized the importance of this issue and has taken various initiatives to address it. There is a separate chapter on urban disasters in the Detailed Area Plan of Dhaka. It has addressed possible response mechanisms for a wide range of natural disasters including earthquakes, floods and fires. Urban Development Directorate of the government recently conducted a detailed study on Mymensingh town which also highlighted the resilience of the city.

We want a safe and livable city. We need safety from both natural and social risks. Institutionalization of volunteers is an important part of the urban resilience system. It ensures people's participation in disaster management efforts and thus makes those initiatives effective and sustainable. However, there are some problems in institutionalization. This kind of formalism creates dependency on government and sometimes discourages spontaneous response from common people. We need to strike a fine balance between the two aspects of formalization and spontaneity.



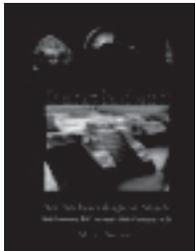
There might be some remuneration for volunteering service. But they should be recognized by the society and the government for their contribution. We need to create the mindset of volunteering for humanitarian causes. Students and young people generally have time and eagerness for volunteering. We need to get them organized. Student wings of political parties and youth clubs can play a big role here. Elected representatives of various local government bodies are key forces in mobilizing local volunteers and creating a link between volunteers and government and non-government agencies working on disaster management. But these leaders should be honest and pro-active.

CityNet Congress 2017

Our Cities, Our Future: Sharing Local Solutions for Sustainable Development

Dr. Nurul Islam Nazem, Honorary Secretary of CUS attended the CityNet Congress in Colombo during 5-8 November 2017. The Congress was organized jointly by Colombo Municipal Council and CityNet on the occasion of CityNet's 30th Anniversary. It was a convention about 300 international and local participants that included member cities, Associate Members like CUS and international organizations. The theme of the congress was 'Our Cities, Our Future: Sharing Local Solutions for Sustainable Development'. The participants in the Congress took the opportunity to reflect on the journey together towards the development of cities and to work collectively to face the challenges in future. The participants reiterated that the role of CityNet is more significant than ever before. The Congress looked back on journey of CityNet over the past 30 years and tried to deliberate on the main direction and major goals of CityNet for the next 30 years.

Book Review / Note



Early Urban Centres in Bangladesh,

An Archeological Study, 3rd Century B.C. to mid 13th Century A.D.

Author: Afroz Akmam

Published by Shahitya Prakash

The book was first published in April 2011 and this is the second version. Most of the information provided in the book are based on the authors research carried out in the 80's at Calcutta university which formed a major part of her PhD dissertation. It is an important documentation of the archaeological relics and features of urbanization in the Bengal Region between 3rd century BC and the mid- 13th century AD. The book contains a brief introduction and three elaborate chapters. Chapter one is an explanation of the Land and the people. The second chapter elaborates at length the urban growth in the region from the 3rd century B.C to the 7th century AD which the author mentions as the first urban growth. Chapter three continues with narration of a second urban growth from the 7th century AD to mid 13th century AD.

The book includes figures, sketches and photo plates for illustration, all collected from museums and various existing sites.



The Economy in Transition Challenging Issues

Author: Shamsul Alam M.A. Econs. Ph.D

Published by Tumpa Prokashoni; February 2015

The book published in February, 2015 is the third book by the author in the form of compilation of a collection of articles, policy briefs and speeches by the author. 32 articles are given in this collection all of which were prepared for deliberation in seminar/ dialogues/colloquium and targeted at development issues. The author published these topics as a representative of the Government in his position as Member, General Economic Division (GED) of the Bangladesh Planning Commission. The content of the topics cover a wide range of macroeconomic/ sectoral issues mostly reflecting the

thought of the author as a development economist and an analyst of transformative process of the nation rather than as a bureaucrat. The inner urge of the author to guide the nation building process for better economic outcome is reflected in these readings.

The articles are well arranged and guide the reader from the macro level to the micro level of planning context and need for strategic planning and action for proper development of the nation.



Aiding Resilience among the Extreme Poor in Bangladesh

Edited by: Geof Wood, Zulfiqar Ali, Mathilde Maitrot and Joe Devine

Published by: University Press Limited (UPL), 2016

This book comprises a selection of studies from the research team of the Extreme Poverty Program (EEP-Shiree) sponsored by GoB-DFID during 2008-16. The core premise of the researches and contents of the book is that extreme poverty is significantly different as a socio-economic, political and cultural experience from being moderately poor in this society. The book is divided into 6 parts. The headings of the parts are; Strategic Issues, Protecting the Gains, Resilience and Security, Being Healthy and Able, Extremely Poor Women, Empowerment and Resilience and Strategic Assessment. The papers in the volume explore the experience of supporting livelihoods of the extreme poor from each of these perspectives and draw attention to need for policy and practice.



Bangladesh Environment Movement: History, Achievements, Challenges

Author: Nazrul Islam M.Sc. Ph.D in Economics

Published by: EASTERN ACADEMIC, 2018

This book is recently published and written by Dr. Nazrul Islam, an Eminent Economist and Environmentalist. The book consists of 5 articles by the author which have been

previously published in journals and conference publications. All articles address environment movement and formation of this movement in Bangladesh. As a pioneer in environment activism among expatriate Bangladeshis Dr. Nazrul is founder of Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN) and also Vice President of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA). This book is an opportunity for readers to

learn, understand the history of environment movement in Bangladesh and also share the author's reflection on challenges that the country faces in future if positive policies are not implemented.

Salma A. Shaf