

Media News Report on 'China Smart City Experience and Lessons for Bangladesh'

Thursday, Dec 12, 2019



Smart city needs smart governance

Speakers tell PRI seminar

FE REPORT | December 12, 2019 00:00:00



Former Finance Minister A M A Muhith (centre) speaking at a seminar on 'China Smart City Experience and Lessons for Bangladesh' at the conference room of PRI in the city on Wednesday. PRI Chairman Dr Zaidi Sattar (left) and PRI Executive Director Dr Ahsan H Mansur (right) also spoke at the seminar — FE photo

Speakers at a seminar have stressed the need for introduction of smart governance and decentralised administration to successfully develop smart cities in the country.

“Good governance is crucial to the success of smart cities. Introduction of new technology or idea cannot be fruitful if the issue of governance is not there,” said former finance minister AMA Muhith.

The Policy Research Institute, Bangladesh (PRI) organised the seminar titled 'China smart city experience and lessons for Bangladesh' in its conference room in the city on Wednesday.

Lin Lingang, CEO of the Kingdom Engine International, gave a presentation on 'Chinese Smart City Experience' at the seminar, with Dr Ahsan H Mansur, Executive Director of the PRI, in the chair.

Speaking as the chief guest, Mr Muhith stressed the need for decentralisation of power to ensure good governance.

All the cities and towns are being governed by the centre. This policy needs to be changed, he said.

The former minister pointed out that he introduced the district budget few years ago with a view to expediting the process of decentralising the administration.

“Our top leadership is convinced that decentralisation will bring good to city governance,” Muhith said, urging all to put forward ideas on how to introduce a decentralised city administration system in the country.

He also noted that the housing and sanitation systems in the country have been improved to a great extent over the years.

In the past, cities were dominated by slums but now you will find a very few of them, he said.

Dr Ahsan H Mansur said decentralisation of power is very important in introducing smart cities.

The urban design for smart cities or townships should be home-grown and the people of the township or city concerned should prepare the design, he said.

If it is imposed from the centre, it will not be a smart move, he added.

He also mentioned that the success of any technology will depend on its adaptability and exclusiveness.

PRI Chairman Dr Zaidi Sattar highlighted the importance of the smart cities.

He said cashless transactions can reduce the incidence of corruption significantly.

Former BARVIDA president Abdul Huq suggested urgent reforms of the present city governance system, saying that the city dwellers are now living in a horrible situation.

Urban designer and architect Iqbal Habib raised the issue of adaptability and the readiness of the people to accept any new technology.

If proper governance is not there, no project can be fruitful, he said.

Former BASIS president Habibullah N Karim warned against excessive use of technology.

He proposed striking a balance between the governance and technology.

Ifty Islam, Chairman of AT Capital, in his presentation titled 'Lessons from China for Bangladesh Smart City Strategy' recommended putting people first by focusing on resolving urban problems and improving infrastructure instead of constructing shiny new buildings.

A smart sustainable city is an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies and other means to enhance the quality of life and efficiency of urban operation and services, he said.

The smart city also meets the needs of the present and future generations with regard to economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects, he said.

Mr Lingang, in his presentation, said a smart city enables convenient life for the citizens in respect of transportation, travelling, healthcare, shopping and entertaining facilities.

He also showed how automatic parking system, traffic control and smart construction method are being operated through IT-guided mechanism in Chinese smart cities.

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<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/smart-city-needs-smart-governance-1576083029>

Dhaka Tribune

Tech-equipped officials needed for smart city solution

Ahmed Shawki

- Published at 10:10 pm December 11th, 2019



Guests at a seminar on 'China Smart City Experience' organized by Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh on its premises in Dhaka on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 Rajib Dhar/Dhaka Tribune

Say participants in seminar on 'China Smart City Experience and Lessons for Bangladesh'

The government should ensure better collaboration among relevant agencies and equip public officials with technological know-how before implementing smart city model in the

country, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They also said government officials without technological knowledge and proper physical infrastructure in place, technology-based services, if launched to facilitate the causes of city dwellers, would not be sustainable.

The speakers made their observations at a seminar titled 'China Smart City Experience and Lessons for Bangladesh' organized by Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) at its auditorium in the capital.

"First we need to build the back end infrastructure and efficient public officials to ensure effectiveness of any such technology. We need to come out from any project-based technology implementation approach and take holistic approach," said Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Environment Movement.

He said earlier several projects failed for lack of homegrown knowledge and technology.

"For example, late mayor Annisul Haque wanted a software or an app to help citizens file online complaints directly to city corporation. The objective of the app was bringing any complaint to relevant official's notice, then to the mayor in case the complaints are not taken care of by the relevant city corporation official. We, accordingly, developed an app named Nagar to give quick solutions to problems through city corporation," he said.

"After launching the app we found out staffers in the city corporation were not equipped enough to deal with technology-based services. Finally, the app service had to be discontinued," Habib continued.

"This is just one example. There were lots of other projects like Nagar and a huge amount of money was wasted under those failed projects. This needs to be stopped," he added.

Patuakhali city mayor Mohiuddin Ahmed said the government needed to put stress on increasing city corporation earnings to implement smart city solution in the country.

Project Director of Sylhet City Corporation digitalization project Md Mohidur Rahman said

coordination among different government agencies was one of the biggest challenges.

Ling Lingang, chief executive officer of Kingdom Engine International, China said smart city was a concept where IT-based solutions were provided to ease public service and improve quality of life of the citizens.

"In China we have already installed infrastructure so that a holistic service solution can be provided. In Bangladesh we need to get such infrastructure to provide a holistic solution. And in our experience, smart city implementation requires homegrown need-based initiatives," he said.

Echoing Ling, AT Capital's Managing Partner Ifty Islam in his keynote presentation said before designing a smart city the problems should be identified beforehand on a priority basis.

"One city might need traffic solution while another may need waste management solution or smart healthcare. So first we need to identify the needs and then go for the appropriate solutions," he said.

PRI Executive Director Ahsan H Mansur said digitalization was inevitable in modern days but cautious approaches were also needed to avoid adverse impact of it.

"There are positive and negative impacts of digitalization. An integrated approach should be taken to minimize the adverse impact of digitalization," he said.

Former Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith said the government should decentralize the smart city development as most development was capital Dhaka-based.

"We need to decentralize the development modules so that small towns and cities also get the benefit. Dhaka is already a very densely populated city. Smart city solution should help to decentralize the economic activities,"

PRI Chairman Zaidi Sattar chaired the seminar.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2019/12/11/tech-equipped-officials-needed-for-smart>

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এ প্রতিবেদনে চীনে স্মার্ট সিটি গঠনের অভিজ্ঞতা, বাংলাদেশের জন্য কী কী শিক্ষণীয় বিষয় রয়েছে তা তুলে ধরা হয়েছে।

স্মার্ট সিটি গঠনের ক্ষেত্রে চীনের অভিজ্ঞতা, বাংলাদেশের সরকারি ও বেসরকারি উদ্যোগের মাধ্যমে প্রয়োগ করা যেতে পারে।

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http://bonikbarta.net/home/news_description/213714/চীনের-স্মার্ট-সিটি-অভিজ্ঞতা-বাংলাদেশের-জন্য-শিক্ষণীয়-বিষয়

কালের কণ্ঠ

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