

# Fund crisis puts tannery relocation in limbo

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Efforts to relocate tanneries from Hazaribagh to Savar under a project the government hopes will help the leather industry grow have snarled up largely because of fund crisis.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) received Tk 45 crore from the government in the fiscal 2003-4 to build a tannery town on 200 acres in Savar, but sources close to the relocation project said the fund was not adequate.

The implementing agency has so far acquired only 17.3 acres as part of the project that will have 195 industrial plots.

"We are trying to acquire all lands as early as possible, but it's not easy as we have to buy plots from private owners," BSCIC Public Relations Officer Bahauddin said, adding: "Only land acquisition will cost Tk 41 crore."

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) approved a Tk 176 crore project on August 16 to set up the tannery town with the December 2005 deadline.

If the 2003-4 (fiscal year) fund is spent on land acquisition, other components of the project will have to depend on the annual development programme (ADP) budget to be allocated in the fiscal 2004-5, the sources explained.

According to the project format, the government will bear 60 percent of the project

cost and the rest will come in loans or grants from donors, with the Economic Relations Division (ERD) working to that end.

But the ERD seems to have made no progress. "We have not been informed officially and we can't do anything without official instruction," said a high official of the ERD.

Bahauddin said the BSCIC did not send the project profile to the ERD for donor funds yet, adding: "I don't know when it will be sent."

The BSCIC will lease out land to tannery owners, who will build factories and other facilities, under the project that will also provide all utilities like power, gas and water.

The move for tannery relocation came as part of government efforts to cut toxic pollution that is threatening the Buriganga river.

All tanneries are private and 95 percent of them are located in Hazaribagh, home to 185 industrial units that have sprouted in an unplanned fashion over the last 50 years.

The tanneries, credited with earning up to Tk 1,600 crore in foreign currency a year, discharge untreated toxic effluents into the Buriganga river round the clock, creating a large-scale environmental hazard.

The project will build a central treatment plant to treat all toxic liquid waste before it reaches the river.

It is also expected to generate over one lakh jobs and attract foreign investment.



SVED ZAKIR HOSSAIN



Work goes on as usual at Hazaribagh tannery, right, as tanners await government decision for relocation. Left, Toxic wastes from tanneries continue to cause health hazard.

# No remedy in sight?



The nagging traffic jam at Jatrabari has failed to attract the authorities' attention.

## Tale of tiresome traffic jam at Jatrabari

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Commuters have to spend at least two hours to cross a mere three-kilometre stretch of road from Jatrabari to Kanchpur due to a regular traffic jam.

The road is absolutely vital for communication with the country's southern part as it is the only entry and departure point for vehicles moving in and out of Dhaka city. About 15,000 automobiles ply the Jatrabari-Kanchpur road everyday, said a Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) source.

"From Kanchpur, one can reach Comilla, which is some 116 kilometres from Dhaka, in two hours but it takes the same time to get through just three kilometres from Jatrabari to Kanchpur Bridge. And yet, the government is not taking adequate measures to address the situation," said a Dhaka bound passenger returning home after Eid.

The congestion is caused mainly by construction of illegal shops on the sidewalk and makeshift taxicab, tempo, bus, truck stands right beside the main road. A kitchen market has also flourished over the years and is virtually breathing down on the highway. The road has also been encroached by sawmills and some other establishments.

"The haphazard parking of trucks waiting to enter the city is one of the basic causes of the

severe traffic jam," alleged a local resident of Kanchpur.

"There are about 2000 trucks that wait at a time at the Kanchpur Bridge before entering the city at 8pm. The area is under Narayanganj and not the responsibility of the DMP. Still we are trying to solve the problem," said the Deputy Commissioner of Traffic Police (South).

The DMP recently requested the Roads and Highways department to construct a barrier so that the vendors of the kitchen market can not extend their business on the streets.

There are other problems too, which compound the miseries of the commuters.

Several road dividers in the area have been flattened but no finishing touches have been put.

"People cross the road whenever they feel like as there are no over-bridges. An over bridge is urgently required especially near the Dhania College," said the DC South.

The road at the Jatrabari intersection is in a dilapidated condition and contributes to the traffic congestion.

There are allegations also that a corrupt section of the police is rather happy with the daily traffic jams in the area and is reluctant to improve things.

"The police collect illegal toll from busses, trucks, lorries etc. that stand on the road," claimed a truck driver.

## Plot allotted clogging drain water in Banani

# Rajuk shuts ears to residents' appeal

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk's recent allotment of a housing plot near Banani-Gulshan lake to a state minister has drawn flak from local residents, as the already vulnerable surface water drainage there may be affected further.

The allotted plot close to road No. 19A at Banani is the lone conduit for drainage running into the lake.

In the mid-1990s, the areas along the lake were filled and developed as housing plots and the old drains were closed to clear space for the plots, which now stagnate rainwater.

The local residents in a recent letter to Rajuk Chairman Iqbal Uddin Ahmed expressed concern

over a probable environmental disaster, as the allotted plot they fear will clog the drains and urged him to take necessary steps to smooth drainage.

Despite earlier protests against the filling-up of the lake, the authorities did not pay attention and filled part of the water-body to develop housing plots instead, the letter pointed out.

"Rajuk pledged that this plot would not be allotted to anyone considering the importance of drainage. The road Nos. 19 and 17 at Banani are located on a slope and rainwater easily submerges the area because it takes four or five hours to recede into the lake," said Manzur Ahmed, a former lawmaker, who lives in the area.

"Rajuk also promised to plant trees on the plot," he said.

"If they don't build a proper drainage system, the building, likely to be constructed on the plot, will cause serious problems even in the dry season," Ahmed said.

The former lawmaker accused Rajuk of repeatedly revising the original master plan of the lake in favour of new housing plots endangering the lake.

The Rajuk chairman brushed aside the allegations and said, "We haven't done any wrong allotting the plot. Before allotment, we set a condition that there would be a pipeline beneath the building so that the water can flow into the lake easily."

On earlier promises of Rajuk, Iqbal said, "I don't know anything about tree plantation. This is baseless."



Surface drain water clogs road no 19A. The only conduit into the lake is sealed on an allotted plot of land.

## useful telephone numbers

### COURIER SERVICES

**International**  
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724  
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970  
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075  
Airspeed Express- 9563494  
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543  
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606  
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989  
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666  
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636  
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425  
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057  
Enem Express- 9330699  
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884  
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169  
Pacific Courier- 9568446  
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249  
Sky International Service- 9660442  
SkyNet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184  
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155  
Union Courier Service- 9341722  
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

**National**  
Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543  
BAE- 9884851  
Central Courier Service- 9881118  
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036  
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 7100842-4  
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975

Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222  
Dolphin Courier- 9558802  
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975  
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759  
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359  
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703  
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249  
Sundaban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656  
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751

**TIPS**  
Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

### LIBRARY & INFO-

#### Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

**Central Public Library-** 8626001-4,  
**Shishu Academy-** 9564128  
**Shilpakala Academy-** 8614673  
**Bangla Academy-** 8619550  
**Islamic Foundation-** 9550280, 9556407  
**Nazrul Institute-** 9114602  
**Ford Foundation-** 8116133  
**Alliance Francaise-** 8611557  
**British Council-** 8618867-8, 8618905-7  
**Community Development Library-** 8113769, 8113604  
**Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-** 9126525-6  
**Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library-** 8615096  
**The Russian Cultural Centre-** 9116314, 9118531, 9118314  
**Drik Photo Gallery-** 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

### OUTING

#### Museum and Zoo

**National Museum-** 8619396-9  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm - 8 pm, Thursday closed  
**Muktijuddha Jadughar-** 9559091  
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed  
**Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar-** 8110046  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed  
**Ahsan Manzil**  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed  
**Shishu Jadughar-** 9666466  
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed  
**Sonargoan Jadugha**

### CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulistan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahall
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biwa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan