

PM's 'Karnaphuli bridge' promise falls flat

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The 72-year-old Kalurghat Bridge is virtually on the verge of collapse. And the other bridge named after Hazrat Shah Amanat has not been in a good condition for quite some time now.

These two bridges on the river Karnaphuli have linked Chittagong city with most of the areas in greater Chittagong, including Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

People of vast areas such as Patiya, Anwara, Boalkhali, Chandanaisih, Lohagara, Satkania and Banskhali depend on both the bridges for communications.

About 10 to 15 lakh people of southern Chittagong will be cut off from the rest of the country if the two all-important bridges can no longer handle the traffic.

Although Kalurghat Bridge is still serving well, it had developed several big cracks over the years. The bridge was the only option for about 10 to 15 lakh people of southern Chittagong to travel by road until 1991 when the Shah Amanat Bridge was built against the backdrop of 1991 cyclone.

On the other hand, the Shah Amanat Bridge has never been a smooth track for vehicles since its opening. Rather, it remains a 'death-trap' for the passengers as it is so fragile and ramshackle.

Each day, passengers run the



Kalurghat Bridge (Left) has developed several big cracks with huge holes over the years. And despite having rail bits on the entry points of Shah Amanat Bridge (Right) to bar heavy vehicles, they find no difficulty by giving their bodies special shape to cross the bridge risking the lives of passengers.



risk of fatal accidents while crossing the bridges. But the authorities have turned a blind eye to this danger.

In such a situation, construction of a third bridge on the

Karnaphuli is the crying need of the time. This necessity should be given top-most priority, as the existing two bridges are unable to bear huge load any longer.

In her election pledge, Prime

Minister Khaleda Zia said her government would start building the third bridge within three months of coming to power, but there is no sign of such move till date.

She made the pledge at a public meeting at Gomdandi Pilot High School in Boalkhali Upazila on September 13, 2001, about 17 days before the last general elections.

The third bridge can reduce the sufferings of the people of southern Chittagong to a large extent. Their distress has mounted in May 2000 when the heavy vehicles were asked to stay off the Shah Amanat Bridge on

safety ground.

However, administrative sources hinted that the issue of third bridge is likely to figure high on the agenda of a cabinet meeting to be held for the first time in

Chittagong in mid-January.

All eyes of the people of Chittagong are now set on the outcome of the first-ever cabinet meeting at Chittagong Circuit House.

Tamakumundi: A materialist's heaven

MOHIT UL ALAM

Tamakumundi was once famous for being the location where the grandfather of the great Muslim personality, Habibullah Bahar, who was a great friend of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, and arranged for Nazrul to come to Chittagong for the first time in 1926.

While Nazrul was residing in this maternal grandfather's house of Bahar for a couple of days, Mahubul Alam, writer of Paltan Jibaner Smriti came from Fatehabad, Hathazari, to pay a visit to Nazrul. That was the first meeting between these two First World War veteran writers, and the relationship would continue and grow more, finally leading to

Nazrul's visit to Mahubul and Dider's house at Fatehabad in January 1929. (Dider Ul Alam, Mahubul's younger brother, an emerging poet of the time, but who died very early, had established a friendship with Nazrul, and was instrumental in bringing Nazrul to visit Chittagong.)

Mahubul wrote in his book Paltane that Nazrul stayed for two nights (January 26 and 27) at Fatehabad and was much charmed by the thicket of the betel nut trees of the village.

Whether that house of Habibullah Bahar's grandfather is still there or not I don't know, but I know for sure that Tamakumundi, an integral part of the Reazuddin Bazar, has completely changed itself

into the prime business district of the port-city, so as to make the thought of the Rebel Poet's staying here very difficult to imagine.

Tamakumundi is now a materialist's heaven and also haven, because everything from an office pin to the latest wide and flat screen TV is available here, fully compact, unopened, brand, and foreign. No complaint! Once I bought an Akai video cassette-recorder from one of the electronic shops here, which proved to be original and functional compared to the other sets bought by friends from New Market or other shopping centers. The days for using a video-cassette privately is over, but my machine is still good, though we don't use it because the video tapes

have been replaced by CD's in the video-market.

Such is the quality of things that you can buy at Tamakumundi, which is apparently a long tunnel-like alley, intersected by a maze of by-lanes and sub-lanes, connected with a cumbersome structured building that has narrow corridors and narrower staircases leading to an upper floor which stores all kinds of electronic goods, both possible and impossible to buy, garments and clothes, crockery and cookeries, toys and games, calculators, telephone indexes, hair-dryers, bangles, bracelets, necklaces, rings, stone ornaments, cosmetics, nail polish, soaps, buttons and needles, all kinds of ladies' wearing and everything, and everything in brand quality and highly fashion-

ionable order.

But there is a big 'but'. The butt of this but is that nowadays the fake culture of stocking contraband items, illegal goods, and products of inferior quality has overtaken the market, as fake local items are being sold as the original. As we reported in an earlier write-up about the ship furniture that the market has been corrupted by the grafting of local timber replacing the original wood, so has the market of Tamakumundi been a subject to the gradual invasion of the local items being promoted as foreign goods. Interestingly enough the customers' eyes do not often see through this faking business.



Visitors crowd the seven-day photo exhibition of Anwar Hossain at Alliance Francaise auditorium. The exhibition titled, "diaries of twin nationalities" ended on Tuesday.

the week that was

Docs urged to overlook commercial interest

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman called upon the physicians to provide treatment with a noble purpose of serving mankind overlooking commercial interest.

Noman was addressing the first meeting of Health Care Advisory Committee of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) here on Saturday.

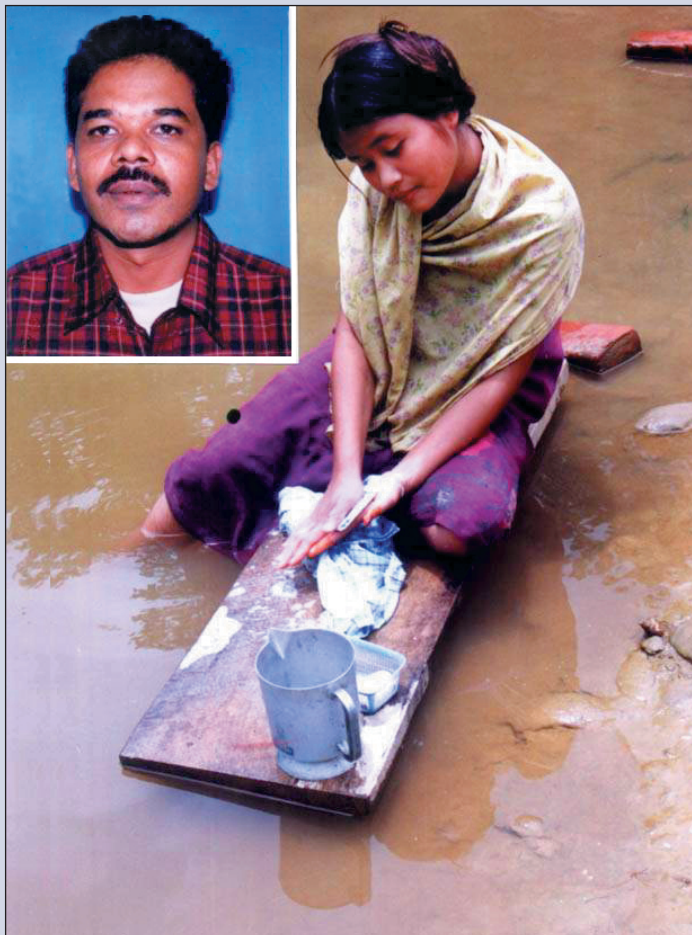
In his presidential speech at the CMCH conference room he said active participation and cooperation of non-government, national and international agencies as well as people from all walks of life will help the government ensure healthcare for all.

Noman also urged the physicians, nurses, officials and employees of the hospital to discharge their duties with honesty and sincerity.

Secretary General of the Advisory Committee Brigadier General Md. Toufique Alam, also the director of CMCH, briefed about different development measures as well as problems.

CSE workshop on CDBL software

Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) and Central Depository Bangladesh Limited (CDBL) jointly organised a workshop for CSE members at Chittagong chamber



Didarul Alam (inset) of the Bengali daily Jugantar got Asahi Shimbun Award for his picture "Tribal Life". "Tribal Life" that depicts life of tribal girls of Chittagong Hill Tracts was among the 130 pictures selected for the 64th International Photographic Salon Exhibition to be held in major Japanese cities from April 2004. A total of 7944 photos from 37 countries were submitted for the exhibition. The Asahi Shimbun has organised the event.

auditorium on Wednesday.

CSE members, those who have applied for Depository Participants (DP) were also attended the workshop on use and application of CDBL software.

CSE General Manager (finance) and Company Secretary AB Siddiq was introduced to the instructors and participants.

Laxmikanta S Joshi of CDSIL, Mumbai, Jumani Taher Fatemi and Joydip B Sawant of CMC Limited, India were instructors at the workshop.

Qatar WAQF chief assures cooperation

Qatar WAQF agency chief Dr. Ali Mohiuddin Al Kardagi, also the dean of Shariya Faculty, Qatar University, assured Bangladesh WAQF Motwallis of all-out support and called for serving human being through WAQF.

The Qatar WAQF chief made this assurance when Chittagong WAQF Estate Motwalli Welfare Association leaders made a courtesy call with him at a local hotel here on Friday.

They discussed different WAQF related issues with him in the meeting. Chittagong WAQF Estate Association leaders emphasised close relationship with Qatar WAQF to share experience.

Chittagong Motwalli Welfare Association President Alhaj Golam Mohammad, General Secretary Advocate Chowdhury Md. Zaforullah Khan, Shahjada Rabiul Hossain, Professor Shaikh Ahmad Faozee Ibrahim and

Moulana Alhaj Mahbubur Rahman Nizami were present.

US envoy visits CEPZ

US Ambassador in Bangladesh Harry K Thomas visited Chittagong Export Processing Zone here on Sunday.

Harry lauded the working environment at CEPZ. Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) Executive Chairman Brigadier General (Retd) M Mofizur Rahman welcomed the US ambassador to CEPZ and briefed him on achievements and facilities offered by BEPZA there.

Brigadier Mofiz also called upon the American investors to invest in different sectors and EPZs in Bangladesh.

Boost export for poverty alleviation

Commerce Minister Amir Khoru Mahmud Chowdhury urged the people to help build skills through training on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) as well as business to boost export for poverty alleviation.

Khoru was speaking at a seminar on 'export marketing planning for SME' organised by Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) in collaboration with Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) here on Sunday.

Addressing the workshop at CCI auditorium as the chief guest he stressed the need for developing area based growth sectors and efforts for capacity building.

CCI President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury attended the seminar as the special guest with EPB Director Mohammad Ishaq in the chair.

The chamber president said the products of non-tradable sectors like small and medium entrepreneurs were new addition to the list of items for export marketing.

Ishaq suggested the exporters and entrepreneurs to avail cooperation and assistance of the government for establishing themselves in the export markets.

Photo exhibition

Photography can bring in revolution in the society through putting up the reality of the age and expressing needs and dreams of the common people.

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman said this while he was inaugurating a 10-day photo exhibition at Shilpakala Academy Gallery here on Friday evening.

The minister called upon the photographers to make subject-based photography and thus work for building up a healthy society.

The exhibition was organised under the auspicious of Elite Paint on the occasion of Group Theatre Utsab (Festival).

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Vice-president Zahidul Karim Kochi, Elite Paint General Manager Lion AHM Kafil Uddin and Chittagong Metropolitan Union of Journalists (CMUJ) President Eskandar Ali Chowdhury were present as special guests at the ceremony.

A total of 42 photographs of Monjurul Alam Monju, senior photo journalist of the Dainik Purbokone, Suman Das of PID, Shyamol Das and MA Monayem Bappi of Bangladesh Photographic Society and Nipul Kumar of Pathshala, were on display at the exhibition.

High speed Internet facilities

Global Online Services Limited introduced High Speed Corporate Internet facilities in Chittagong.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Syed Margub Morshed inaugurated the high speed internet connection as the chief guest at a local hotel here on Saturday.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury was the special guest at the inaugural ceremony and Texas Group Chairman Syed Faruq Ahmed, Managing Director Syed Farhad Ahmed and Global Online chief operating officer Rasel T Ahmed were present.

Chittagong to be a city of international standard

Chittagong will be upgraded to a city of international standard through planned development in line with international urbanisation.

Minister for Housing and Public

Works Mirza Abbas said this while he was addressing a meeting with officials of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) as the chief guest at CDA conference room here on Friday.

He stressed on taking coordinated programmes by CDA, Chittagong City Corporation, Railway and different utility services for development of the city and immediate solution to the crises of the city dwellers.

CDA Chairman Brigadier General Sharful Alam informed the minister of the progress of different projects being implemented under CDA Master Plan and the projects requiring immediate implementation.

BATB scholarship

British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) under a programme for supporting education of the wards of poor farmers begins distribution of certificates and stipends.

As a part of the programme, BATB gave away certificates and handed over TK 12,000 each of six students from Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari at a function at its Naixmongchhari depot in Bandarban on Thursday.

Bandarban ADC (General) Muhammad Delwar Bakht was the chief guest at the function with BATB Chittagong Divisional Leaf Manager Zahurul Haq Sarker in the chair.

Under the social responsibility programme BATB would be providing financial support to 24 students in the country.