

SONADANGA BYPASS ROAD IN KHULNA

City entrance in sorry state as authorities evade responsibility

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Bricks and stones coming off, innumerable potholes to evade, engulfed in dust during dry weather and in mud during monsoon -- this is the sorry state of Sonadanga Bypass Road in Khulna city.

Authorities' indifference, and lack of foresight and responsibility have left the bypass road in a decrepit condition. Many locals and inter-city vehicles are left with no choice but use the road, as it is the main way to go in and out of Khulna city.

Zakir Hossain, secretary of Khulna Motor Workers' Union, told The Daily Star that 350-400 vehicles ply the road every day. Besides, buses going to 18 districts -- including Dhaka, Barishal and Bagerhat -- and many upazilas in Khulna start their journey from Sonadanga bus terminal and go through the bypass road.

"We have been seeking a solution to this problem for years, but Khulna Development Authority (KDA), Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and district administration are yet to repair the road," said Zakir.

"Authorities are yet to say when this important road will be fixed. Every day, 10-15 minor accidents occur here," he said.

KDA constructed the 2.16km bypass road, which stretches from Sonadanga

bus terminal to Joy Bangla intersection, to improve connectivity between the city and other parts of the country. Construction was completed in June 2013 at a cost of Tk 20.48 crore, said sources at the organisation.

In December of that year, KDA issued letters to KCC and LGED, directing KCC to take charge of the eastern part of the road and LGED the western part.

However, no renovation or repair work has been done since construction.

KDA Chief Engineer Kazi Md Sabirul Alam said, "KDA doesn't have funds to maintain the road, so we handed over a part of it to KCC. We issued a letter to LGED in the same year to maintain rest of the road."

"KCC recently took the responsibility, but LGED didn't inform us about anything," Sabirul said, adding that another letter will be sent to LGED soon.

"The bypass road has now become the main road. During the design period, we didn't think this road would be so busy," he said.

Tarana Khatun runs a tea stall with her husband beside the road. She said, "Whenever a vehicle drives through, the entire road and surrounding areas get covered in a thick layer of dust."

"Customers avoid my shop as they



On a quiet afternoon, Nazmul sets up his roadside barbershop, placing an old wooden chair and mirror in front, under towering trees in port city's Ambagan area. Amid the silence, he slowly chops away while his customer remains still like everything else surrounding them.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

No plan to deploy army at CCC polls

Says EC Rafiqul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

There is no plan to deploy army in the election to Chattogram City Corporation, said Election Commissioner Rafiqul Islam yesterday.

Rafiqul said this while briefing reporters at the regional election office after a meeting with the district election officials.

He said the commission never deployed army in the local government elections. They will follow the same policy in CCC polls.

Unarmed members of army will be present at polling centres only for technical support of EVM (electronic voting machine) so that no one is deprived of casting vote, he added.

He also said the EC is trying its level best to maintain a peaceful environment in the polling

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Shahadat facing 48 cases, Rezaul none

Show CCC mayoral candidates' affidavits; BNP aspirant far richer than AL counterpart

ARUN BIKASH DEY and MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

Income of BNP mayor candidate for Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) polls Shahadat Hossain is around five times higher than his main opponent, Awami League nominee Rezaul Karim Chowdhury.

Besides, Shahadat is accused in 48 criminal cases. Of those, 45 are under trial and he was acquitted from one. On the other hand, Rezaul has never been accused in any case.

The above information were mentioned in the affidavits submitted by the two to the Election Commission on Thursday. Election to CCC is scheduled to be held on March 29.

Rezaul is joint general secretary of AL's port city unit whereas Shahadat is president of BNP's Chattogram city unit.

According to their affidavits, Shahadat's annual income is Tk 20.74 lakh while Rezaul's Tk 4.34 lakh.

Shahadat has an MBBS degree while Rezaul holds a BA degree, according to their affidavits. Other than being a doctor,

Shahadat's source of income is house rent. On the other hand, Rezaul's earnings mostly comes from house rent.

Shahadat earns Tk 17.21 lakh as a medical practitioner and Tk 3.53 lakh from house rent, while Rezaul earns Tk 4.14 lakh from house rent and Tk 20,000 from other sources.

The BNP candidate also has more cash than his AL counterpart. As per their affidavits, Shahadat has cash worth Tk 15 lakh while Rezaul Tk 1 lakh. Rezaul has Tk 7.08 lakh in bank while Shahadat Tk 34.47 lakh.

Shahadat owns two vehicles while Rezaul has one. Shahadat has a car worth Tk 11.80 lakh and an SUV worth Tk 27.20 lakh while Rezaul has a car worth Tk 4 lakh.

The BNP candidate also has capital invested in a business (a private hospital) worth Tk 3.29 crore; Rezaul in a supply business and farm worth Tk 12 lakh.

Shahadat owns an apartment worth Tk 35 lakh while Rezaul owns four apartments worth Tk 1.09 crore. Shahadat also has

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Two expelled over attacks, clashes at BU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Two students were expelled over their involvement in violent clashes at Barishal University (BU) that injured at least 10 students on Wednesday and Thursday.

Panicked over the situation, general students asked authorities concerned to take steps against those involved in the clashes that took place over establishing supremacy on the campus.

Incidents of violence so far include beating up of students inside Sher-e-Bangla hall on Wednesday night and a clash outside the campus between two groups on Thursday night.

In the latter incident, five students received serious injuries from sharp weapons and were admitted to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Four-year-old girl killed by three-wheeler

Six others die in road crashes across country

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed in separate road crashes across the country yesterday, report our correspondents and UNB.

In Manikganj Sadar upazila, a 4-year-old girl was killed as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw ran her over on Betila-Balirtek road in Putil union yesterday, reports our Manikganj correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Ema Akter, of Katabania village under Paikgachha upazila of Khulna district. Her family has been living in Gokulnagar village as her father works at a brick kiln in the area.

Sub-Inspector of Manikganj Sadar Police Station Abdur Rahim said the accident occurred

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Sonadanga Bypass Road, the main way to get in and out of Khulna city, is in a decrepit state. All relevant authorities avoided repairing the road since its construction, and now, it is covered in dust and filled with potholes.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Engineering Section Unite Office, Khagrachari. e-Tender Notice (Limited Tendering Method). Table with columns: Tender ID & Package No., Description, Publication date & Closing date.

'Girl children in villages more social than boys' Says icddr,b study at EWU conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Girls aged five to 10 years in rural areas display better social behaviour compared to boys of the same age, revealed a study on the second day of an international conference held at East West University in the capital yesterday.

The study was conducted by five specialists of icddr,b with the participation of 3,790 children.

East West University (EWU) organised the three-day conference, titled "Multidisciplinary International Conference on The Social and Life Sciences: Gender, Health, Information and Environment" at the EWU Campus in Aftabnagar.

Some 200 participants from 12 countries took part in the conference, where academics, researchers, and participants presented and discussed contemporary issues, trends, challenges as well as solutions in fields of gender, health, information, and environment.

The study titled "Gender Difference in the IQ and Behavior at 5 and 10 Years Old Rural Bangladeshi Children" was to find out the differences in cognitive development and behaviour of children children in rural Bangladesh.

It also showed that vocabulary and working memory scores were significantly higher in boys than girls at 10 years, but there was no such differences at five years.

On the second day of the conference, several sessions on gender, health, information and environment took place.

The conference was inaugurated on February 27 and it is scheduled to conclude today.

The inaugural session of the conference was attended by Syed Manzur Elahi, chairperson of EWU Board of Trustees, and Prof Dr MM Shahidul Hassan, vice chancellor of EWU.

CLIMATE CHANGE FUNDING Bangladesh for special focus on South Asia

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Momen has urged the global community to put special focus on the South Asian region while allocating funds and taking up programmes for the region's extreme vulnerability to climate change.

He also stressed the need for technology transfer, recognising local solution and innovation and public awareness for combating the menace of climate change.

The call was made when Momen attended the board meeting of Global Center on Adaptation held in Paris on Thursday, according to a foreign ministry statement.

Former UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon, ministers from the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, and mayors from Paris, Rotterdam and Miami were present. China, the Philippines and Bangladesh were invited to be board members from Asia at the meeting.

Global leaders praised Bangladesh for its commitment and measures to fight the adverse impacts of climate change.

Momen gave an account of the activities Bangladesh has undertaken to adapt to the harmful impacts of climate change. These include developing flood, drought and salinity-resistant seeds; harvesting rainwater; rooftop gardening; introducing boat-schools; floating agriculture, setting up a self-funded Climate Change Trust Fund etc.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh College Education Development Project (CEDP) Invitation for Tenders. Table with columns: No., Ministry/Division, Agency, Procurement entity name, Procurement entity code, Procurement entity district, Invitation for.