



A huge portion of the river Karnaphuli has been silted up near Shah Amanat Bridge at Yeakubghat that narrowed down the river near port channel.

Karnaphuli losing navigability

Port channel clogged by shoals and silt

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

The movement of ships in Chittagong Port channel has become risky as navigability of the river Karnaphuli has been badly affected due to massive siltation.

Lack of proper maintenance and the irregular dredging of the port channel have further worsened the situation, experts said.

They suggest immediate dredging of the channel up to the estuary to avoid future disaster and ensure existence of the Chittagong port, lifeline of the country's economy.

A concerned official of the Hydrography Department, however, has had the different view. He said, "It is not fact that we don't conduct regular dredging in the channel."

"We do conduct dredging on regular basis and have to keep data of every 15-day to know the actual navigability," the official said.

But recent research studies by Marine Science Department of Chittagong University and

Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) revealed that the Karnaphuli and the port channel are losing navigability due to massive dumping of wastes and rise of charland (shoal) on the river.

"The port city still doesn't have any underground sewerage pipeline system and treatment plant to release wastes.

About 1050 tonnes of wastes are dumped daily at the Karnaphuli and around 1.50 lakh tonnes of silt, resulting from torrential surge, used to pile up at the river mouth at Patenga every year that reducing the navigability," the study said.

And ship movements to and from port channel are disrupted quite often. Sometimes, the movement of ships depends on the rise and fall of the sea. Foreign ships with higher draft are to suffer most due to this.

They can move or enter without hassle into the port channel during high tide. In reverse situation, they had to wait for five to seven hours at their respective jetties, sources said.

Same thing goes with the ships at outer anchorage, waiting for their berthing turn into the port jetty.

The length of Chittagong port's navigational channel at Karnaphuli is around 15km. Of this, charlands have been developed at areas no less than 8kms. Huge shoal developed on the river Karnaphuli near Bangla Bazar, Shah Amanat Bridge, Bakalia, Shikalbaha and Firingee Bazar areas. Besides, depth of the river on the estuary is also reducing fast.

Sources at Marine Science Department said, the depth of navigational channel is now around six metres which is very much insufficient for round the clock and uninterrupted movement of ships to and from Chittagong Port.

"The channel depth should be at least eight metres to enable ship movement for 24 hours," said the sources.

Senior Hydrographer (Planning) of Chittagong Port Kazi Aminul Haq said at least 10-metre depth is needed for 24-hour ship movement.

Int'l Trade Fair draws thousands

NURUL ALAM

Thousands of visitors streamed regularly into the International Trade Fair, the 12th of its kind, that began on February 18 at Polo Ground in the port city.

The month-long fair organised by the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) drew huge crowd particularly on weekend Friday, witnesses said. Chittagong is a city of three and a half million people.

About 20,000 to 30,000 people visit the fair daily either to purchase goods or for recreation, CCCI sources said. The number of visitors crossed 50,000 on Friday because of weekend holiday. It was the biggest fair held in the port city.

Most of the people along with their family members

visit the fair. The fair venue was colourfully decorated amid playing of hot music to create lively vibration in and around.

CCCI Vice-President Ershadullah said, we arrange the fair annually to promote local industrial products and other goods. "Our trade fair is really a success one as it was able to draw response from people from home and abroad and our entrepreneurs got a chance to display their products for sale," he said.

"With the holding of such a fair our trade will undoubtedly be promoted in regional countries as some foreign countries also took part to showcase their goods. So its a good sign for us to boost export of our goods," Ershad said.

The trade fair housed four mega pavilions, four mini mega pavilions, 42 normal pavilions and 400 booths at the Pologround.

Thailand took part in the fair as a partner country and installed two pavilions and 63 booths. Thai products including handicrafts, jewellery, cosmetics and other imitation items were displayed in the pavilions.

United States, Canada, Sri Lanka, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Iran, Pakistan and India also took part in the fair.

The products displayed in the fair include computers, handicrafts, food stuff, home apparels, garments, leather goods, cottage industry items, electrical goods, ceramics, aluminium, jute and jute goods, cosmetics and other local items.

Mohibullah, manager of a stall of textile goods, said, "Though visitors are seen in large number but all are not shoppers. A section of them comes for recreation or to move around".

"So in our stall we find

average sale of goods worth Tk 10,000 daily as we have more competitors this time here in the fair. We had a daily average sale of Tk 30,000 last year," he said.

Kutub Uddin, a salesman of a stall of plastic goods, said, "Somehow we are running well. Our sale is not bad compared to last fair".

However, young couples were not lagging behind as they attired in different fashion with bollywood haircut, regularly crowded the fair.

Meanwhile, CCCI took special measures to ensure security and safety of the visitors and to avert any untoward incidents. Private security men were engaged to do the job.

Some of the visitors were reportedly injured due to poor brick-soling works on the fair ground.



Statues of young women greet the visitors at Thai Pavilion at Chittagong International Trade Fair at Polo Ground in the city.

the week that was

Turtles of Bayezid Bostami Mazar to be preserved

A meeting exchanging views on preservation of the rare species of turtles at Bayezid Bostami Mazar was held on the shrine premises here on Sunday.

Addressing the meeting as the chief guest, State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury said that the rare species of turtles in Bayezid Bostami (Rd.) shrine pond were reducing fast due to lack of measure for proper preservation.

He said, the steps were taken to preserve the turtles at Bayezid Bostami pond and Safari Park lake at Dulahazari under Chakoria Upazila in Cox's Bazar. Besides, different steps for renovation of shrine pond and development of breeding places on its bank were taken under Dulahazara Safari Park, Cox's Bazar (second phase) in collaboration with the shrine committee and Chittagong district administration.

Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Md. Shafiqul Islam presided over the meeting. ADC (Revenue) Ahmad Morshed, Conservator of Forest, Chittagong region Abdul Motalab, Professor Dr. M Farid Ansan of Chittagong University and Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife Preservation) Tapan Kumar Dey were present.



Baul (folk) singer Chumki Haq enthralled the audience at a cultural function at DC Hill Park marking the third founding anniversary of Bangla daily Bir Chattagram Mancha on Friday.

Make Char Jabber upazila

The people of Char Jabber thana of Noakhali district residing in the port city organised a rally on Chittagong District Council building premises on Sunday demanding upgrading of it as an upazila.

The speakers at the rally said, Char Jabber is a huge area where some 2.23 lakh people live. But a racket of five land-grabbers and some 2,000 armed goons control it as it is far off the upazila headquarters of Noakhali, keeping all the inhabitants captivated.

They said, the national committee on administrative reforms in its 753rd meeting decided to upgrade the huge thana as an upazila back in 1991. But the decision to upgrade Char Jabber as upazila, was not implemented even after a decade, they resented.

They drew attention of the prime minister, law minister who is also the district minister for Noakhali, and local lawmaker Md. Shahjahan for immediate implementation of the decision. Chittagong University Central Students Union (Cucus) Assistant General Secretary Mahubur Rahman Shamim chaired the rally while Coaster and Hedge Samity President Jebol Haq, Char Jabber Thana Muktijuddha unit Commander Abu Taher Bishwash, and local leaders Md. Alauddin, Alhaj Jainal Abedin and Md. Shahidul Islam spoke.

Mobile children's park at Cox's Bazar

Ananda Ghurni, a mobile children's park under the management of Neptune Amusement Centre Limited, was inaugurated in Cox's Bazar on Thursday.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md. Nasir Uddin inaugurated the park as the chief guest.

State Minister for Communication Salahuddin Ahmad, also the local lawmaker, attended the inaugural ceremony chaired by Neptune Amusement Centre Limited Managing Director Rafiq Ahmad.

Dairy farm staffs demand arrears of 22 months

The officials and employees of Dairy and Livestock Development Farm at Hathazari of the district began a three-day agitation programme on Saturday to press for their nine-point demand including payment of arrears.

They observed the agitation programme including work abstention, meeting and wearing black badge at the call of Bangladesh

Livestock Non-Cadre Officer-Employees Welfare Association.

The association called the agitation programme, as the salaries of officers and employees of dairy farms under the department of livestock at Chittagong, Bogra and Barisal remained pending for last 22 months, sources said.

During the programme they observed two-hour work abstention and held rally at Hathazari farm everyday.

At a rally on Saturday with Md. Moshin in the chair, the speakers urged the authorities concerned to meet their demand immediately and pay the arrears salaries. Otherwise, they threatened to go for tougher action programme.

Madrassah complex inaugurated

A newly constructed building of Omar Jahan Jame Masjid and Madrassah Complex at Halishahar Sabujbag area was inaugurated here on Saturday. While inaugurating the complex building State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md. Nasir Uddin called for making proper reflection of religious values in every spheres of social and political life.

It would help establish morality and peace and remove disorders and irregularities from the country, the

minister said. Complex Motowalli Shaheed Md. Chowdhury chaired the inaugural ceremony.

Reunion

Amid festivity and grandeur the ex-students' reunion of Accounting Department of Chittagong University (CU) was held at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong Centre auditorium here on Friday.

Addressing the reunion as the chief guest Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury lauded the graduates of accountings for playing significant role in the economy, trade and commerce as well as overall development of the country.

He called upon the accounting graduates for facilitating control on economic policy, introduction of planning, preparation of budget, assessment of expenditure and its control to help maintain transparency in accounting.

Khosru also urged for making the academic curriculum of accounting updated and more applicable.

Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) AMM Shahadat Hossain, Dr. Monjoor Morshed Mahmud, Dr. Sultan Ahmed and Dr. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury also spoke at the ceremony with Professor Amal Bhushan Nag in the chair. Later, Professor Dr. Ali Imdad Khan and Professor Dr. Md. Abdul Hye were accorded reception at the ceremony for their outstanding role in the field of accounting.

Jamal Khan Health Care Centre opens

A newly constructed building of Jamal Khan City Corporation Urban Health Care Centre was inaugurated at Jhaoutla under Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) on Sunday.

While inaugurating the building constructed at a cost of Tk 44 lakh as the chief guest, Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury said that the health care centre would provide medical service to some 60,000 people of the locality and for which no municipal tax would be increased.

The city mayor said that constructions of 35 primary healthcare centres out of 40 financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) were already completed.

Jamal Khan Ward Commissioner Advocate M A Naser chaired the inaugural ceremony. CCC Chief Health Officer Dr. Sarfaraz Khan, woman ward commissioners Hasina Zafar and Shahnaj Malik, ward commissioners Md. Hossain, Nurul Alam, Kafiluddin Khan, Professor Aslam Hossain and Md. Sahabuddin were present.