

Circular waterway gets a way out

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The second phase of a circular waterway has got under way after a financial hitch, as Titas Gas Company Limited agreed to bear the cost of reinstalling gas pipelines at Aminbazar and Tongi points.

The work on the waterway came to a halt after a divide surfaced between Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Titas Gas over who would bear the reinstallation cost.

"The gas pipelines will go 12 feet below the riverbed as the rivers need dredging as many feet deep to facilitate river traffic," a project executive engineer said.

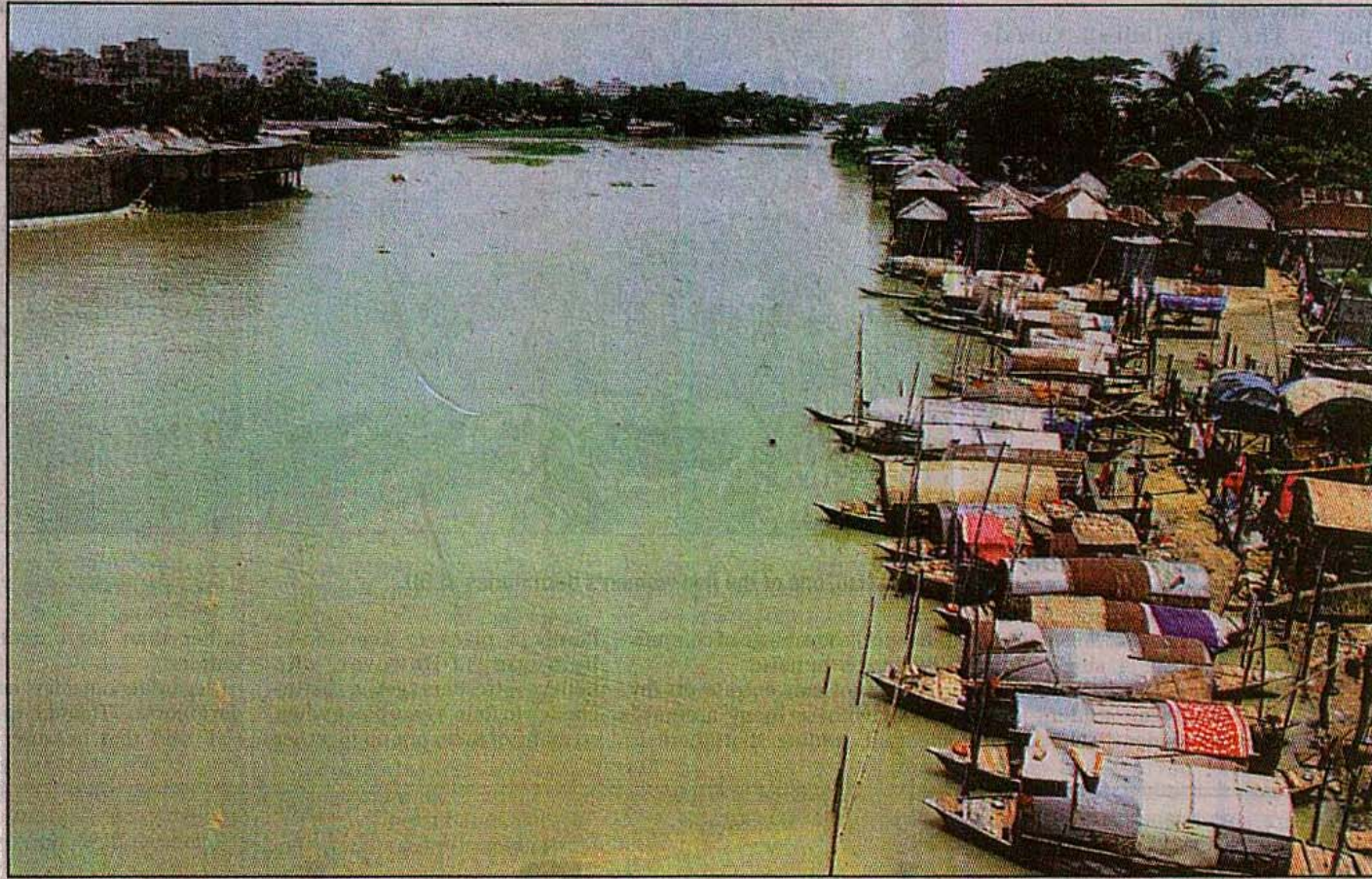
Earlier, Titas insisted that the BIWTA bear the additional cost of Tk 22 crore in pipeline reinstallation in the Tk 146.83 crore second phase of the project. But Titas at a July 6 meeting agreed with the BIWTA to fund the reinstallation.

The BIWTA submitted the project concept paper on the second phase of the circular waterway to the shipping ministry after it asked the water transport authorities to submit a proposal by April 27.

"The proposal is expected to get into the revised ADP (Annual Development Programme)," Project Director Abul Kashem said.

The BIWTA took up the project to develop a water transport system in

Second phase starts as financial hitch over gas pipelines resolved



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

and around the capital, revive the dead and dying rivers and canals and build landing facilities.

The first phase of the project includes the Buriganga and Turag rivers from Sadarghat to Ashulia covering 29.50km of the waterways and the second phase that combines the Balu and Shitalakhya rivers from Ashulia Bridge via Tongi to Kanchpur Bridge covers 40.50km of waterways.

The government will provide the second phase with Tk 44.04 crore and the remaining Tk 102.78 crore will come from multilateral lending agencies.

According to the second-phase concept paper, there will be a river port at Tongi and six major landing stations at Rampura, Trimukh, Ichhapur, Fakirkhali, Demra and Kanchpur.

Nine minor landing stations will be built at Harbaid, Beraid, Khokri, Gajaria and Kaitpara, Meradia, Trimohoni, Vatar and Nampara.

A BIWTA hydrographical survey says the depth and width of most points of the 40.50km waterway from Ashulia to Kanchpur have shrunk making navigation impossible.

To restart navigation, 30 lakh cubic metres have to be dredged to have a depth of eight feet and a width of 120 feet.

The project was discussed at a meeting of the committee on good

governance and development on March 6 where the BIWTA was instructed to work with Dhaka Urban Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) to make the transport system multimodal.

Accordingly, the BIWTA had a meeting with DTCB Executive Director Qamrul Islam Siddique on April 24 and the DTCB suggested that the landing station sites shown in the concept paper along with the roadmap of the city should be superimposed with GIS (geographical information system).

The connecting roads to the landing stations need to be constructed, reconstructed and repaired. The areas under Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) have to be managed by the DCC and Rajuk will manage the area outside the DCC.

The BIWTA will have to acquire 35 acres for parking yards and bus terminals close to landing stations.

The DTCB also suggested inclusion of inner canals in the project scheduled to be implemented in five years from July 2004 to June 2009. The first phase is expected to be complete by December 2004.

A BIWTA report says 64 percent of the work has been complete, including river dredging from Sadarghat to Mirpur Bridge, and river commuters now use five landing stations.

Tongi bridge point of the circular waterway. The project aims to develop a water transport system around the capital and revive the dead and dying rivers and canals.

College admission terms baffle students

FAIZUL ATANIM

Students who passed the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination this year and their guardians are facing uncertainty, as most colleges are yet to come up with a decision about admission procedures.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education recently decided not to conduct admission tests this year.

The results of the SSC examination were published on June 26.

Students who passed this year total to 48.03 percent a 12 percent increase from last year's, while 8,957 students accumulated a GPA of 5.0 with approximately 940 scoring 5.0 without a fourth subject.

"A meeting of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, chaired by Professor Md Junaid, principals of several colleges, chairmen of education boards and other dignitaries, decided that students would be enrolled in colleges on the basis of their examination

results," said Aminul Islam, public relations officer of the Ministry of Education.

"No admission tests will be required. However, some colleges might take viva if the applicants exceed the number of seats each

I am not sure whether I will be granted admission to a reputed college."

Registrars and principals of reputed colleges said that they have not yet come to a decision about how many seats will be

authorities are taking a longer time than required to come to a conclusion. My family is frustrated," said Shah Nawaz Islam from Mohammadpur.

"We are confused whether colleges will count the fourth

to a 2004 student of 4.8 GPA, when the person faces an interview board," she added.

As most parents and students spoke to Star City in disagreement of the new system, the Administration Officer of a renowned college expressed a different view.

"I have spoken to other college administrators and they have wholeheartedly accepted the new system. Being a parent myself I think this is a welcome change, provided, that students' cheating tendency at exams is brought down to a minimum." He hoped that students now would have time to relax rather than run to coaching centers preparing themselves for college entrance examinations.

"My elder child who passed SSC in 1999 ran after coaching centers without enjoying a holiday. These centres are minting money out of these sessions. But this time our family went on vacation and life for my youngest one seemed easy," commented

Registrars and principals of reputed colleges said they have not yet come to a decision about how many seats will be made available and what GPA would be required for a student to apply for admission

colleges," he added.

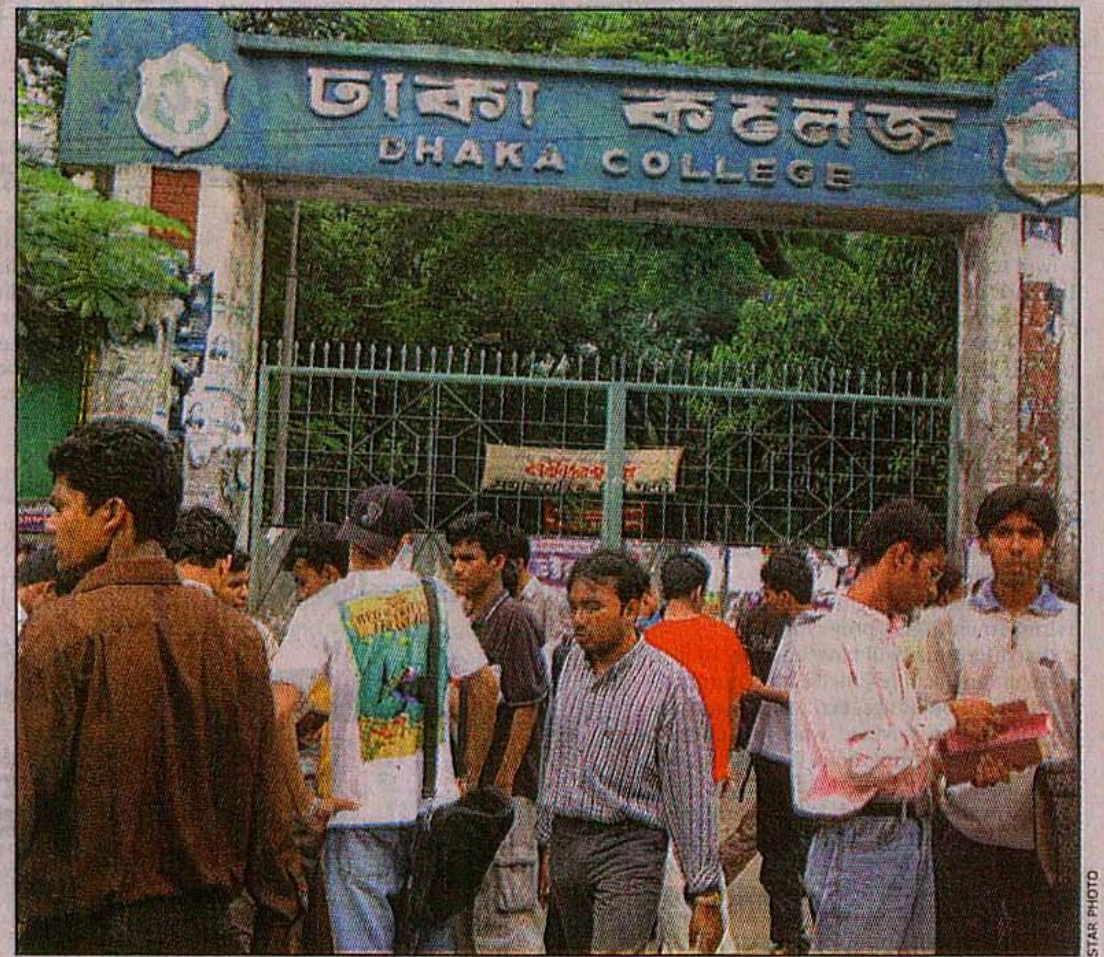
Students and guardians are baffled with this decision. Afzalul Islam, a student of Wills Little Flower School said: "My grade point is 4.94 and I missed five by a small margin and the numbers with GPA of 5.0 students are large.

made available and what GPA would be required for a student to apply for admission. "We will reach a decision by the end of this month," said one principal.

Meanwhile, parents are anxious. "I do not know where my daughter will get in. The college

subject as a means for GPA 5," she said.

"The change in the system each year not only causes problems, but also has a disastrous effect on a student's life. We will soon hear stories that a 1999 First Division student will be preferred



STAR PHOTO

Mominul Hoq whose child secured GPA 5.0.

Another concerned guardian said that Dhaka has about 15 public and private colleges that can accommodate around 3,000 students. Students from all parts of the country will seek admis-

sion, and those from Dhaka might be deprived. "This may turn out to be a grave problem," he said.

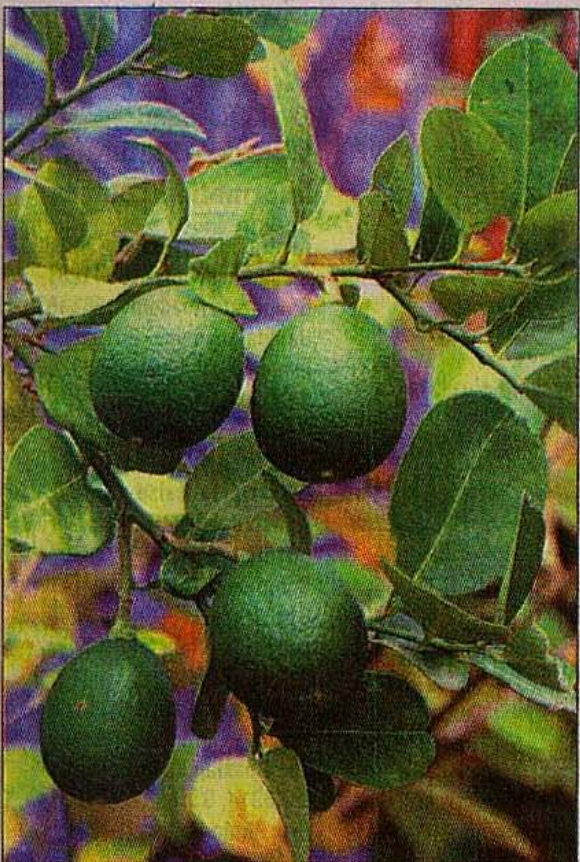
"This year's results have been outstanding and that is why we want to reward them. Plenty of students got GPA 5 and that is why we want to do away with the

admission test system," said Professor Md Junaid.

"We have to follow instructions given by the authorities and colleges will have to follow such instructions," said Aminul Islam from the Ministry of Education.

'PARADISE' ON THE ROOFTOP

People gasp for fresh air and a touch of green as trees getting rare or parks disappearing in this city of concrete jungle. Like a few others, Abu Sayeed Ilyas, a government official in Mohammadpur, is building his own paradise on the rooftop—with fruit and flower plants bought from the local nurseries.



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