

Eastern bypass project returns to limelight

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Floodwaters deluged the eastern fringe of Dhaka, as no flood control dam was built on the eastern side, experts said.

The water resources ministry took up a project known as the "eastern bypass project" in 1998 to protect the eastern side of the capital from flooding, but it stalled because of fund shortage.

"The project grabbed the limelight again, as the eastern part is reeling under water. But Mirpur and other areas are dry thanks to a dam on the western side," said Project Officer Shahidul Islam of the Water Development Board (WDB).

The floods affected about five million people in the city of about 13 million. The areas such as Sayedabad, Motijheel, Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Paltan, Gopibagh, Madartek, Mugda, Goran, Rampura, Malibagh and Badda could have been saved from the

floods if the eastern dam had been built.

This year, the sewerage system was overwhelmed and the capital was swamped by stagnated sewage that could have been pumped out if there had been a dam on the eastern side, the experts said.

On the other hand, the western part remained dry as WDB workers pumped out water into the Buriganga and Turag rivers thanks to the flood control embankment there.

The eastern bypass project was included in the Annual Development Programme with 2004 as the deadline for implementation.

"The World Bank (WB) imposed a condition that the project should envisage how the government will profit from the bypass and stopped funding the project," said Habibullah Mojumdar, joint secretary (development) of the water resources ministry.

A meeting on July 18 at the Prime Minister's Office, chaired by Prime

Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, decided that Dhaka Urban Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) would coordinate the project.

"Although the project was under the water resources ministry, the DTCB will now coordinate it. Wasa, Roads and Highways, Dhaka City Corporation and LGRD and land ministries are also involved in the project," Habibullah said.

The Water Development Board will be responsible for dam construction and roadwork and other organisations will build railways.

The DTCB is working on the project concept paper submitted by the water resources ministry and will have a presentation on how the government will profit from the project that will cost Tk 2,476 crore.

The project will protect the city from floodwaters of the Balu river that runs from Tongi Bridge to Demra Road and cut traffic jam. The total area of the project is 124 square

kilometres.

The vehicles from northern and southern regions will use the bypass through Tongi-Joydevpur and Demra.

A road has already been constructed from Joydevpur to Chittagong Road as part of the project. Project officials said four pump houses to pump out stagnant water, a sluice gate, a drainage and an embankment are likely to be completed at a cost of Tk 1,500 crore.

"Constructing a dam is more important and other work could be done in phases," a project official said.

A visiting team of the Asian Development Bank's board of directors at a meeting with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda on July 29 expressed interest in constructing the bypass for protection of Dhaka city from flooding in future. The minister called for unconditional help.



Badda-Satarkul point of the proposed eastern bypass project.



A stretch of road from Science Laboratory to Azimpur yesterday.

Dilemma delays plan for fresh ban on rickshaws

SULTANA RAHMAN

The Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) is in a dilemma over its decision to free rickshaws from two major city roads due to diametrical pressure from the government and the World Bank (WB).

The latest deadline to ban rickshaws from the roads in question is August 15, which has been fixed over an Agreed Aid Memoir with the WB. But it has been extended by two days to August 17 due to the current floods. This happens to be the fifth time that the deadline had to be shifted. The fresh deadline has been sent to the mayor for approval.

The stretches of roads to become off-limits to rickshaws were Kalabagan crossing to Azimpur via Newmarket and Science Laboratory to College Road (next to Bangabazar) via Shahbagh and National Press Club. Originally, the roads were supposed to become rickshaw-free in December 2003.

Senior officials in the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) DTCB's implementing agency said that the plan has become a political issue which has thrown it into uncertainty. Both the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and the communication ministry have objected to implementation of the rickshaw-ban as the government

fears the step could make it unpopular and create a negative impact in the national elections scheduled for 2006.

In the wake of situation, the communications minister at a meeting on July 29 called for cabinet approval to enforce the ban, sources said.

DTCB's executive director Quamrul Islam Siddique however,

make the roads earmarked for the ban free of rickshaws on time.

Sources said that following the WB's observation, the chief executive officer of DCC on July 26, sent a letter to the DTCB asking it to take initial preparations including arrangement of sufficient public transports, awareness campaign etc.

"This is just an eyewash from

The latest deadline to ban rickshaws from two major city roads has been extended again. But DUTP officials believe the plan has become a political issue, for which the project now faces uncertainty

told the Star City that the plan to ban rickshaws has become stalled because of the flood.

"If we try to implement the plan now, it will bring inconvenience for the people," said Siddique.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka recently told reporters that the plan would be delayed as many poor rickshaw-pullers will

become unemployed, which will be inhuman under the present circumstances.

The DTCB has plans to make three more major thoroughfares rickshaw-free next year. These are Progati Sarani to Mouchak, Bangla Motor to Mouchak and Rokeya Sarani to Farmgate. Earlier, the stretch of Mirpur Road connecting Gabtali to Russel

ever, it is alleged that the plan had to be set back following instructions from a top government office.

Officials fear that this time too it will be a case of fund misuse.

Rickshaws have become a major headache for city planners. The Dhaka Integrated Transport Study (DITS), a government survey funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), found that rickshaw fare is almost double in comparison to bus fare for the same distance. But some 19.2 percent passengers use rickshaws as their favourite mode of transportation while only 9.5 percent travel by buses.

According to the records of the Wheel tax Department of DCC, there are nearly 89,000 licensed rickshaws and vans plying in Dhaka. But the Mayor has admitted that unofficial numbers are nearly four lakhs. The illegal rickshaws are believed to be the prime cause for constant traffic jams and violation of traffic rules.

The police began a drive to seize unlicensed rickshaws from the capital last year. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)'s estimates show that around 10,000 rickshaws were taken in from September 2003 to June this year.

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Bamngladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Emen 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, Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpkala 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
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
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax 880-2-9112068

TIPS

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

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

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No. Route
1 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12
2 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2
3 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakali-Airport-Azampur
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattar- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoli
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswas Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakali-Tongi Bridge
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammedpur
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur
14 Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12
24 Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakali-Airport-Uttara-Bipole

Starts from
Golap Shah Mazar
Phoolbaria bus station
Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur
Sayedabad
Kamalapur
Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachattar
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ranimahal
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Syedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan