



Not even the islands on the Buriganga River have escaped the hands of encroachers

BURIGANGA PERMANENT PROTECTION

Ministry asks BIWTA to trim down project

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The shipping ministry has asked Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) to trim down the Tk 94 crore project to protect the Buriganga river permanently from encroachment.

The BIWTA submitted the revised project concept paper (PCP) at a meeting with the ministry on February 2, but the ministry sent it back to the BIWTA suggesting further changes in the proposal.

Sources said Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain at the meeting directed BIWTA officials to cut unnecessary components of the project. Citing shortage of funds,

he asked for recasting the project proposal.

"The PCP has been approved in principle with some revisions. We are recasting the PCP and the budget will now come down to about half," said Syed Monwar Hossain, director, port and transport of BIWTA.

According to a BIWTA source, the project cost has now been re-estimated at Tk 42 crore. The total fund will be mobilised by the government.

The ministry suggests exclusion of the harbour for vessels for oil changing and garbage dumping, from the project. The harbour was included in the project to protect the river from pollution due to garbage dumping.

"The Buriganga offshore permanent protection feasibility committee of the shipping ministry advised us to include the harbour in the project, but now we are advised to exclude it," said a project official of BIWTA.

According to the original plan, the harbour was to be constructed at Kamrangirchar on a channel of the Buriganga to facilitate vessels in dumping garbage on a floating tank which will be emptied on the shore.

While revising the PCP, the BIWTA excluded from the project some components including a 60-bed rest house for launch staff, terminal building, transit shade, health centre, jetty, parking yard, dockyard and recreation centre.

The ministry however

approved construction of a 34km walkway on both sides of the river. Open yard will be kept and toilet will be constructed for the people.

The BIWTA prepared the PCP at the directive of the Prime Minister's Office and submitted it to the ministry on May 19 last year. But the approval was delayed for the ministry's query about the estimated cost of dredging the river.

Then the ministry wanted some changes in the PCP to include a harbour for vessels at Kamrangirchar and exclude a dockyard at Mirerbag. The BIWTA took another six months to revise the PCP to bring the changes in the project.

Communications ministry wants to control traffic department

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The Ministry of Communications wants to get the traffic department under its authority to better the city's traffic management.

The activities of the traffic department are being hampered due to the 'communication gap' between the ministries of communications and home affairs, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said.

"The communications ministry should be the supervising authority of all departments related to communication. At present, we have no control over the traffic department,"

Huda told Star City.

The minister said they are now preparing papers to inform the home ministry, the present authority of the traffic department, about the communications ministry's plea for taking control of the department.

"I will soon sit with the home ministry to place our demand and I believe the ministry will realise the reasons," Huda said.

The minister believes that the traffic system has improved in recent weeks after the installation of automatic signals in the capital.

The huge number of policemen involved in controlling the traffic in the city is now just wastage of manpower, he said, adding, a

very few traffic officials are now needed to be deployed to see the violation of traffic rules only.

Asked how the communications ministry will improve the traffic management if the traffic department comes under its command, Huda said: "I will withdraw most of the traffic police and ask them to keep the city roads free from encroachments and illegal parking."

He believes if the footpaths can be kept free for the pedestrians, the city's traffic situation will improve a lot.

At present most of the footpaths are occupied by hawkers. In some areas, shopkeepers keep their goods on display on the footpaths.

"We will modify the traffic rules and encourage people to abide by the rules," said the communications minister.

How will the communications ministry recruit and train the traffic policemen who come from Bangladesh Police under the home ministry? The minister said they are also thinking about the matter.

"The communications ministry would recruit the traffic personnel. And for training, we can send them to the police department. We need to discuss the matter with the home ministry," he said.

"We are also thinking about combined operations by the two ministries which will be discussed with the home ministry," Huda added.

When asked, an official of the home ministry termed the communications ministry's concept 'absurd.' He believes that disconnection of traffic department from the police will make the department inefficient.

"I don't think the home ministry will accept the proposal for various technical and practical reasons. Let the proposal come, we will see," said the official.

The empty truth of shopping malls

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

Luxurious high-rise shopping malls that have popped up across the city over the last four or five years, still have the majority of shops on fourth and fifth floors vacant.

No less than eighteen new shopping plazas were inaugurated ahead of the Eid ul-Fitr in December but that has not necessarily guaranteed an influx of customers. Most of these markets are centrally air-conditioned with capsule lifts and escalators. But these amenities mean that the maintenance cost is more which makes the rent of shops high also. Shop owners have little option but to put an increased price tag on their products to cover their expenses. Because of the high price most customers opt for window-shopping only.

While new shopping centres have continued to emerge, the existing ones have struggled to fill up their spaces. Shop owners at a number of these malls said that most empty shops were owned by expatriates who bought them before leaving the country and did not rent them out. Some others who have bought shops, were concerned about opening a business fearing losses.

Some customers have alleged that on the vacant floors, undesirable elements gather and at times harass the shoppers.

"Quite often you find only a handful of shops on the fourth or fifth floors while most remain vacant. The escalators do not run up to those floors as only one or two shops are open," said Nilia



Shopping complexes sprout at every nook and cranny of the city, but most of the shops remain vacant.

Rahman of Dhanmondi.

Assistant manager, sales and marketing of Garden View Consortium Ltd, Taufel Imam Khan felt that it requires at least five to seven years for a shopping complex to become popular.

"Although the first two floors fill up quickly, the top floors take a bit longer. These shopping malls are comprised of a variety of shops

unlike other commercial buildings which offer office space. As each shop has a different owner, they often delay in opening a business," said Taufel.

"I had bought five shops at different malls around the city and at the moment three of them are vacant. There are too many shopping complexes and not all of them are doing good business. I

now realise that it was a great mistake to invest in these shops," lamented a shop owner.

One such shopping plaza is the Concord Arcadia near Science Laboratory area. Owners of different shops of that complex admitted that that were selling off their shops or just closing them down as there was absolutely no profit from business there.



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Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
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Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636
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DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

Overseas Courier Service-

9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
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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
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

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

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4, 9886395
The 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
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141, 8850142
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

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

LIBRARY & INFO-

OUTING

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-Mahakhali-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 chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoili
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur
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-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile

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Phoolbaria bus station
Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur
Sayedabad
Kamalapur
Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachattr
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ranimahal
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Syedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan