

## Privatisation makes lighter jetty profitable

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

The lighter jetty of Chittagong port might be put up as an example of turning a losing government enterprise into a profit making one through privatisation.

The jetty that incurred around Tk 90 lakh loss a year is now earning an annual revenue of Tk 1.10 crore for Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) after it went under a private management since 2003.

CPA started construction of the jetty on over two acres of land along the river Karnaphuli at Sadarghat point in 1980 to ease pressure on Chittagong port through handling imported bulk cargoes from lighter vessels at a different place.

The lighter jetty was inaugurated on June 28 next year to handle bulk cargoes from small lash barges with carrying capacity of 750 metric tons.

But, a very little handling activities took place, reportedly as the barges were reluctant to

go there, while authorities spend Tk 7.50 lakh a month as maintenance and other cost of the jetty manned by 82 traffic, security and other staffs.

The situation worsened when a vessel detained with stolen sugar was kept anchored there for long time to decrease the navigability of the river at the jetty point in 1987.

The faltering activities at the jetty came to a halt after the 1991 cyclone that damaged it severely, sources said.

The authorities took an initiative to lease out the jetty without much success in 1992 and the effort was revived once again in 2001.

One KVM Warehousing took the lease of the jetty at Tk 1.56 crore per year only to wind up stealthily after operating eight months. Tk 60 lakh, excluding the security deposit of Tk 30 lakh, the firm owed to CPA remained unpaid.

The jetty remained abandoned for some 12 years (since 1991) until its management was

handed over to Great Bengal Enterprise, a private company, on May 1 in 2003, sources said.

CPA leased it out to the firm for 20 years for an annual revenue of Tk 1.10 crore. The lease agreement is to be renewed after every five years with a 5 per cent rise in annual rent, sources added.

Under the management of Great Bengal, the jetty handles around two lakh metric tons of bulk cargoes annually, said MA Mannan, Manager (operations) of the firm.

"We developed a 400-ft jetty and improved the shed on 45,000 sq-ft of land initially," he said, adding "Besides, we are carrying out dredging of the river in front of the jetty at our own cost to facilitate movement of the lighter vessels turning up here."

Many, however, feared that the jetty under the private management might create scope for importing contrabands or evading taxes.

Mannan said there is no

scope of exercising such a practice as the lighter vessels are allowed to offload cargoes at the lighter jetty only after they get clearance from the authorities concerned of customs and port after payment of duties and revenue.

"Moreover, contrabands can hardly be carried with the bulk cargoes like cement clinkers, iron billets, gypsum and slag handled at the Jetty," Mannan told the correspondent.

Ahsanul Kabir, CPA director (Traffic), said the lighter vessels report at the Sadarghat Lighter Jetty after obtaining required clearance from them.

He said after handing over to a private management the lighter jetty, which remained almost abandoned for over a decade, is now fetching some revenue for CPA.

"It also reduces pressure on Chittagong port, at least to some extent, through handling of bulk cargoes there," Kabir said this while he was talking to The Daily Star on Thursday.



Workers offload cargoes from lighter vessels at the lighter Jetty at Sadarghat Bangla Bazar.

ZUBAIR HASSAN SKYER

## Road accidents on rise in city

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The number of road accidents marked a sharp rise in the port city recently due to reckless driving.

The accidents that left 13 people killed and at least 40 others injured in last 18 days since January 9, is attributed to reckless driving in violation of traffic rules.

The buses of City Special Service driven mostly by young persons without driving skills and sufficient knowledge about traffic rules are responsible for the mishaps.

Off the accidents, the most shocking one occurred at Bahodderhat intersection. Chittagong (north) district Awami League leader Mohammad Sadek Chowdhury was killed in the accident as a bus of City Special Service hit him on January 20.

Only a day before, reckless driving of City Special Service bus killed elderly teacher Md.



Wild and risky competition of city special service buses has become a common scene in the city streets.

Harun, also the father of journalist Saifullah Chowdhury, at Badamtali intersection of Agrabad.

The other accidents where City Special Service claimed lives during the period took place at Wasa, EPZ and GEC intersections on January 16, 23 and 24.

CNG-run auto-rickshaws were the second in the murderous race killing three people on January 19, 25 and 26 at different city streets.

Trucks followed CNG-run auto-rickshaws killing two people in the city at this time.

The concerned people as well as the passengers alleged that untrained drivers with fake licenses and lack of traffic management mostly responsible for the accidents.

Many of the drivers of the city special service buses once worked as assistants or helpers and with fake license, said Saidul Haq, a regular passenger of the service.

"Instead of driving slowly the drivers are sometimes even seen to raise the speed up to 60km/h in front of schools, colleges or crowded public places," he said.

"City special service buses very often engage in a deadly competition of overtaking one another, said Abida Ali, another daily passenger.

"They force the passengers to get off the running bus. The buses sometimes stop just at the middle of the intersections blocking the way of other vehicles posing a risk of accident," she said.

Lack of proper control on vehicular movement in violation of traffic rules and absence of strict measures are also responsible for these frequent road accidents, said a transport owner.

He said, "If an accident leaves some one/ones killed the owner or driver of the vehicle concerned remains outside the scene."

"The leaders of the transport

owners' association make all the arrangements to get the vehicle released and the driver saved from legal punishment," he said preferring anonymity.

"The existing law awards a driver a financial penalty of at best Tk 20,000 for killing someone in road accident," he said.

Harun, a driver of a special service bus, said he does not have any idea about speed limit on certain roads.

The City Bus-Minibus Human Hauler Owners' Association leaders blamed the authorities concerned for not putting up signboards on roads about speed limits of the vehicles.

Abdul Hakim, secretary of the association, admitted reckless driving by a section of drivers.

He said development of streets with separate lanes for different types of vehicles might have lessened the risk of accidents in the port city.

Mahabub Hakim, Deputy

Commissioner (DC Traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), blamed the untrained drivers with fake license and the vehicles without route permits for the frequent accidents.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials said they do not issue any driving license to untrained person.

"The driving licenses we issue might be forged later. We might cooperate, but it is not our responsibility to find out the fake license holders and take action against them," said Mujibur Rahman, assistant director of BRTA, Chittagong.

The BRTA and traffic police sources said they seized some 600 fake licenses and detained 68 vehicles for plying without route permits in joint drives during the last two months.

The commuters, however, said more frequent and strict drives against reckless driving and violation of traffic rules are needed to check the accidents.

### the week that was

#### Ibsen's death anniversary observed

The 100th death anniversary of Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen was observed in the port city on Thursday.

To mark the day, Ibsen's Death's Centenary Celebration Committee, Chittagong organised a daylong programme, including a discussion on "Ibsen's Life and his works" and screening of his drama.

Norwegian ambassador Dr. Mahbub Aziz was the chief guest at the discussion at the Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC).

Social Scientist Dr Anupam Sen, former Chittagong University vice-chancellor Prof Abdul Mannan, Ibsen specialist Seti Eangs Hawgor and actor Kamaif Uddin Nilu were the guests with Sowren Biswas in the chair.

Moinul Islam Chowdhury and Dr. Mahbub Aziz presented two key-note papers titled "Henrik Ibsen's Word and Doll-wives of Bangladesh" and "Ibsen:

"Proyan-Shatabarshie" at the meeting. Dr. Masud Mahmud, Masiur Rahman Adnan, Santanu Biswas, Ovik Osman and M. Saiful Alam Chowdhury participated in the discussion.

A drama "Echha Mritu" edited and directed by Kuntal Barua, was screened with the support of Ibsen's Rostimar Sholom drama.

Chittagong Eye Infirmary and Training Complex (CIETC) accorded a reception to Rosi Gollman, founding president of German donor agency Andri Heifl, on Monday.

CIETC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

commerce between the two countries. He stressed the need for technology transfer in health and agriculture sectors and called for investment in the potential tourism sector.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CIETC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in the district.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CEITC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in the district.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CEITC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in the district.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CEITC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in the district.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CEITC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in the district.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CEITC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in the district.

CEITC of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) and seven other eye hospitals were established in the country with the help of Andri Heifl.

CEITC Managing Trustee Prof Dr Rabul Hussain thanked Rosi for her 30 years' involvement and continued support to CIETC's efforts to fight blindness in Bangladesh.

The reception was held at the CIETC Imran hall at Pahartali.

Chairman of the Trustee Board Prof MN Amin, Engineer Mahmud-Ul Islam, members of the board, doctors and nurses of the CIETC were also present.

Later, a name plaque in recognition of Rosi's support was unveiled at the Child Outdoor of the hospital.

Earlier, Rosi inaugurated a newly

opened Eye Treatment Centre at Child Medication Centre at Katachhara village under Mirsarai upazila in