

ARREST OF MAYOR MOHIUDDIN CHOWDHURY

Most CCC projects come to a standstill

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Implementation of over 90 per cent of projects under Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) has come to a halt following the arrest of Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury on March 7.

The contractors have kept their work suspended fearing delay in payment of bills and non-payment of bills for the projects under the mayor where work orders were given without floating any tenders, sources said.

The construction has been suspended in several projects worth over Tk 15 crore, said the sources.

Work in some 20 projects is

going on while at least 30 others are under process at 41 wards under the city corporation.

CCC is to implement the projects with the lump sum grant of some Tk 2 crore for construction and repair of roads at different wards.

Implementation of some other projects financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) also remained suspended due to irregularities.

Development of Port Connecting Road is one of such projects involving over Tk 5 crore.

Drains and footpaths along some five kilometres of road stretching from Olanker to Nimali intersection is to be developed under the project with an ADB

grant of Tk 2 crore.

Implementation of the project started in February, eight months after the scheduled time of completion of the project work that expired on June last year, to irk the ADB.

CCC reportedly appointed as many as 16 contractors in haste to complete the work in a month.

A lot of irregularities, including use of sub-standard materials, were reported in the project.

The members of joint forces stopped implementation of the project as the local people alleged that CCC had continued beautification work without developing the roadside drains and footpaths under the project.

CCC Superintendent Engineer

Nizam Uddin Chowdhury, however, said the development of drains and footpaths under the project has almost been completed.

Blaming a section of contractors for suspension of work under different projects under CCC, he said, "They fear delay in payment of bill and refrain from work, which is unjustified."

He hoped that they would be able to implement the projects smoothly as soon as they get a head of the institution.

Besides, implementation of a good number of turn-key projects involving around Tk 10 crore is being hindered seriously in absence of head of the city corporation.

CCC is constructing markets, apartment houses and different institutions, including educational ones under these income generating turn-key projects.

A lot of allegations, including construction in deviation of building construction rules and practice of irregularities, were reported in such projects, in which the work orders were mostly awarded to a handful of contractors favoured by CCC.

Premier University buildings and markets at Probartak intersection, Dewanbazar Ward Commissioner's Office at Siraj Ud Dowla Road are among such turn-key projects, which remained suspended for the last few days.



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Construction work of an academic building of Premier University at Probartak Intersection remains suspended following the arrest of Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Fire incidents haunt Ctg slum dwellers

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Around 30, 000 people are living in 600 slums in densely populated South Bakalia area in the port city, risking their lives as fire breaks out here every year.

Besides, the fire causes huge loss of property.

Local people and fire service authorities blamed the unplanned construction of roads, lanes and housing of the slums for the fire incidents.

The area could not draw attention of the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) or other authorities after it comes under the city corporation area during the Ershad regime, they said.

There are too many zigzag roads and lanes linking the entire ward with other wards like East Bakalia, West Bakalia,



STAR PHOTO

A slum in Bakalia Boubazar area.

Dewanbazar and Bakshirhat.

The roads are Boubazar DC Road, Mia Khan Road, Abu Jafar Road, Ismail Foyz Road, Hazi Mansur Ali Road, Hafijia Road and Ibrahim Mia Lane.

These narrow and damaged roads and hundreds of lanes increase the extent of damages and casualties and the suffering of residents as the fire fighting units cannot reach the spot during the fire incidents.

The fire fighters faced serious difficulties to control the recent deadly incident of fire that left 21 people burnt alive at Khalek Sawdagar Colony at Boubazar area on March 6.

The deaths could be checked if the fire fighters would reach the spot immediately, said Shariful Islam, Station In-charge of nearby Chandanpura Fire Station.

The local people said the

demand for construction and expansion of the busy roads and lanes to the authorities goes unheeded.

Thousands of people, including garment workers, maids, rickshaw-pullers, push cart pullers, vendors, hotel employees and owners of small shops live in the congested slums, built without any plan.

There is no enough passage for entrance in these slums where houses are built side by side in a very congested way.

In most of the cases, the slum people have no bathroom, toilet and other facilities where they are to pay around Tk 800 to Tk 1200 per month for only a 10 square feet room as rent, sources said.

There are around 200 slums at Boubazar. The slums accommodate over 200 shanties, mostly of tin-roof and thatched,

at Bajal Colony, around 200 at Hasan Member Colony, 150 at Kabir Colony and 100 at Jafar Colony.

There were only nine shanties in the Khalek Soudagar Colony where most of the deaths occurred, warning a bigger casualty if a fire incident happened at large slum, said Abdul Aziz, a dweller of Kabir Colony.

There are 200 slums at Nur Hossain Balur Math area, 100 at Ibrahim Mia Lane and 30 at Osi Mia Road in South Bakalia ward.

Local ward commissioner Yasin Chowdhury Asu said a rickshaw can hardly enter these areas.

Hundreds of shops have been set up illegally on the roads at Mia Khan Road, occupying the government khas land, narrowing the main roads, he said.

Around 300 godowns and shops of jhut (rag) have been set up at Boubazar and about 5000 labourers work here.

Illegal jhut godowns and shops that run without any licence in many of the congested slums or around the slums are main causes of the devastating fire.

Besides, fire fighters also face water crisis during the incident for lack of water bodies in the area like other city areas.

There were around 60 to 70 ponds and four canals, including Rajakhali Khal, Mirja Khal, Birji Khal and Hafijia Khal in the ward, said Irfanul Hoque, a resident of Boubazar.

But there is no pond in the area now and the canals are occupied by the land grabbers, he added.

theweekthatwas

Int'l Women's Day observed

Chittagong Zonta Club observed International Women's Day at Chittagong Club auditorium on Friday.

On the occasion, a discussion meeting was held where a good number of representatives from different women's organisations participated.

Noted writer Begum Mushtari Shafi was the guest speaker with the Club President Suhani Hussain in the chair.

Mushtari in her speech focused how women are being repressed traditionally and culturally in our society for long.

Suhani highlighted on Zonta activities primarily focused on advancing the status of women.

Zonta International Director Dilruba Ahmed and cultural activist Shurav Biswas was also spoke.

Later, Shuvra Biswas enthralled the guests with her recitation from Tagore's "Streer Potro".

Students visit CSE

A group of students of Chittagong Public School and College visited Chittagong Stock Exchange on Monday with a view to acquiring knowledge about capital market and stock exchange functions.

CSE Head of Compliance Mohammed Atiquzzaman in his speech during the visit termed capital market the barometer of country's economy development and said development of more industries is not possible without it.

He said the next generation will have to be well informed about the Bangladesh capital market for the

economic development.

CSE Corporate Development Deputy Manager Shahroze Alam briefed the students about the capital market while Investors' Information Cell Deputy Manager Kamal Uddin Jalal was present.

The students, led by teachers Nurul Alam and Hosney Shamim, asked different questions on the capital market.

Training on disaster management

A two-day training workshop on disaster management concluded at Jalalabad Ward Commissioner's Office on Wednesday.

Non-government organisation World Vision Bangladesh, Chittagong organised the training for members of the

disaster management committee of the Jalalabad.

Chittagong ADP, World Vision Manager Prodig D Kosta inaugurated the training on Tuesday.

Chittagong ADP Programme Officer Babul T Gomez, Khadem KM Abul Forkan Hashemi, Ward Secretary Mohammed Shahid Akhter and social worker Mohammed Shah Alam Babul were present at the inaugural ceremony.

ADP Disaster Management Officer Chotan Barua was the resource person while Red Crescent Deputy Director Abdul Odud Mian assisted him.

Inter-school art competition held

An Inter-School Art Competition was

held at Chittagong International Trade Fair ground on Thursday.

Pakistan High Commission, Dhaka organised the competition where 46 competitors from different schools participated.

Fahmida Islam of Chittagong Grammar School (CGS) stood first while Yafis Siddique of Ispahani Public School and College and Tania Alam of the CGS became second and third respectively.

Razia Akhter of Mastermind International School got the special prize.

Ghajala Babar, wife of Pakistan High Commissioner, was present as the chief guest with Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Monwara Hakim Ali as the special guest.

Pakistan Airlines International (PIA) Director (Operation) Syed Sadat Ahmed, the High Commission Commercial Secretary Rubina Towfik Shah and Artist

Hasi Chakrabartiya were also present. PIA assisted in the competition.

CU annual sports concludes

The concluding and prize giving ceremony of Chittagong University (CU) Annual Sports 2007 was held on Wednesday.

Vice-Chancellor Prof M Badiul Alam was the chief guest in the ceremony.

F Rahman Hall became champion obtaining 55 points while Alaol Hall runners-up with 42 points in different events.

Pritilata Hall stood first obtaining 44 points among the girls while Shamsunnahar Hall runners-up with 24 points.

Mohammed Al Faisal of F Rahman Hall became first in the events for the boys while Nasrin Popy of Pritilata Hall second among the girls.

Arts Faculty Dean Prof Mansur Uddin Ahmed, Alaol Hall Provost Prof Dr Mohammed Ali Azadi, Proctor Prof Dr Didarul Alam Chowdhury, Physical Education Department Director AMM Raqib Qoreshi and Trainer Rashed Bin Amin Chowdhury spoke at the ceremony.

Later, the VC distributed prizes among the winners.

Ctg Diabetic Assoc AGM held

The 31st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Chittagong Diabetic Association was

held at its Hospital Complex conference room on Friday.

Association President Prof LA Kaderi presided over the meeting.

Association General Secretary Prof Jahangir Chowdhury presented annual report while Treasurer Mohammed Shahabuddin audit report and budget.

Lifetime Member Wahedul Alam, Mohammed Mosleh Uddin, Moinuddin Kaderi Shawkat, MA Sattar, Kazi Anwarul Haq, Mohammed Jasim Uddin Chowdhury and Dr MA Jafar participated took part in the discussion on the reports.

The meeting adopted the proceedings of 30th AGM and proposed budget.

Later, the members prayed for salvation of the departed souls of their late colleagues who passed away in 2005.



Members of Zonta Club, Chittagong pose for photograph with the guests at a programme marking the International Women's Day at Chittagong Club auditorium on Friday.



STAR PHOTO

Ustad Mihir Nandi performs at the National Classical Song Conference-2007, organised by Sadarang Sangskritik Parishad at Chittagong Theatre Institute on Thursday.



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Visitors at an exhibition of photographs by French photographer Pascal Monteil at Alliance Française, Chittagong on Saturday.