

CDA drive only benefits street vendors, shop owners

One third of evicted portions of Andarkilla-Chawk Bazar Road occupied

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Street vendors and roadside shop owners have occupied one-third of the evicted portions of the Andarkilla-Chawk Bazar Road from Andarkilla to Dewan Bazar.

The Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) in 2006 bulldozed parts or whole of over 1,000 structures, hotels, dwelling houses, pharmacies, departmental stores or grocery shops, commercial buildings and apartments to widen the one-and-half-kilometre Andarkilla-Chawk Bazar Road.

The four-day massive eviction drive along the road, one of the oldest thoroughfares in the port city, was launched also to remove the unauthorised structures and recover valuable government lands to lessen suffering of the commuters and pedestrians.

But the entire stretch of the road remained uncared for since then and it has now virtually

become inaccessible for the commuters and pedestrians, thanks largely to the inaction of CDA.

The road, interlacing some densely populated localities such as Andarkilla, Nawab Sirajuddoula Road, Dewan Bazar, Didar Market, Ghat Farhabeg, Masua Jharna Lane, Chandanpura, Chittagong College area, parts of Rahmatganj, Chawk Bazar and Kapashgola, was quite good and smooth for vehicular movement before the drive, despite its narrowness.

After the drive that started on February 12 in 2006, the road appeared as a nightmare to the commuters as well as the pedestrians with hundreds of cracks and holes, not to mention the untold sufferings of several thousand people of the localities.

Sumi Akhtar, a college student, said being a frequent traveller on the road for the last few years she is to experience heavy

tilt and jerk everyday while goes to college by a rickshaw or any other vehicle due to multiple cracks and holes. The problem has been created after the CDA ends its eviction drive on the road in 2006, she added.

She said the objective of CDA may be good but what is the benefit of such a drive if the road is left uncared for around two years?

Yakub Sawdagar, who was evicted during the drive, said they do not see any positive outcome of the CDA drive yet. He said he runs his hardware business now from a small rented store at Telipatti Road at the northern most part of Chawk Bazar since 1985.

Mohammad Mohsin, owner of the Concrete Traders near College Road, said was quite happy during the drive believing that it would expand the road and benefit the pedestrians and commuters. He said he is now frustrated as due to the dilapi-

dated state of the road.

Mainuddin Quadery Shawkat, president of Sirajuddoula Road Resident and Shop Protection Committee, expressed his displeasure at the pitiable state of the road. He said most of the evicted people have not got the compensation as of yet. He urged the authorities to pay their compensation as per the current market value.

The CDA, of late though, started some repair work at few sites few days ago. Locals said the CDA work is just an 'eyewash' to cool down the growing anger of the people.

CDA Chief Engineer MA Halim said the development or repair work of the road couldn't be started due to fund constraints.

He said work for developing a drainage system along both the sides of the road have started last week while the development work of the road will continue simultaneously.



The Andarkilla-Chawk Bazar road remains uncared for for around two years.



New coaches for inter-city trains of the Bangladesh Railway East Zone.

Move to launch smooth train service

Fifty new coaches for Railway East Zone by December

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Fifty new coaches will be added to the Bangladesh Railway East Zone by December with a view to launching a smooth train service on different routes in the region.

The Railway authorities are importing these coaches from China under a project of Tk 130 crore in three phases. These include several spacious and comfortable chair coaches, railway sources said.

The coaches, manufactured by China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation, include 29 Shobhan chair coaches, seven air-conditioned (A/C) chair coaches, three A/C sleeping coaches, seven dining-cum-break coaches and four power cars.

Eleven coaches have reached at Chittagong Port on October 23 under first phases while 17 are scheduled to arrive on the first week of December and 22 more by December-end, said the sources at Mechanical Department.

Of 11 coaches, three are A/C chair coaches, one A/C sleeping coaches, three dining-cum-break, two Shobhan chair coaches and two power cars.

Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME) of Bangladesh Railway (East Zone) Khalilur Rahman, also the project director, said the coaches are spacious and comfortable ones and will surely attract the passengers.

He said the coaches will replace the inoperative ones and two more inter-city services might be launched on Dhaka-Chittagong and Chittagong-Sylhet routes with the new additions, he said.

The decision, however, will be taken in this regard after arrival of all 50 coaches, he added.

Khalil said 30 A/C more coaches under a Tk 106 project are scheduled to arrive in February next year to launch a complete air-conditioned express train on Dhaka-Chittagong route.

General Manager (GM) of Bangladesh Railway (East Zone) Md Iqbal Molla said the new coaches will be helpful but not enough. He said they need more coaches and trains to cater the need and demand of the passengers and make the service attractive.

Meanwhile, the railway officials at the East Zone said the new coaches will be a support for them to some extent in maintaining the service that is running with serious shortage of coaches.

Four inter-city trains -- including Subarno, Mohanagar Prabhati, Mohanagar Godhuli and Tugna-Nishitha -- ply on Chittagong-Dhaka route while Paharika and Udayan on Chittagong-Sylhet everyday, said railway sources.

One Chandpur-bound inter-city train, Meghna Express, also plies everyday.

Five mail trains ply on Chittagong-Dhaka route, one on Chittagong-Sylhet and one leaves Chittagong for Jagannathganj while two local trains ply up to Chandpur and Akhaura.

Besides, two other trains ply on Chittagong-Nazirhat and Chittagong-Dohazari routes.

Railway East zone needs 686 coaches, including 368 for inter-city trains and 318 second class coaches for mail and local trains, for smooth services, said Abdul Wahab, chief operating superintendent of Railway East Zone.

About 45 percent of coaches in the zone are now lying out of service, said an official of oper-

ating (traffic) department preferring anonymity.

He said, "To keep the service operative on inter-city routes we require 290 coaches, including 53 spare coaches for replacement in case of problem when we can hardly provide 270".

The worst situation prevails in providing coaches for mail and local trains, used by common people.

For mail and local trains, 239 coaches and 48 spare coaches are needed while the East Zone can provide at best 174 during the busy hours, causing immense sufferings to the passengers, sources said.

Sometimes local trains ply with only one or two coaches on Chittagong-Chandpur and Chittagong-Akhaura routes and on the local branch lines like Chittagong-Dohazari and Chittagong-Nazirhat routes due to shortage of coaches, passengers said.

Rezaul Rahman, a passenger from Akhaura, said he did not get coach on many occasions even after buying tickets.

Many coaches that are not in good condition are being used on different routes, posing risk of accident.

Five coaches of the Dhaka-bound Mohanagar Prabhati that derailed on October 13 near Baro Takia Railway Station, leaving three people dead on the spot were in bad condition, said a member of one of the four probe bodies.

A total of 49 coaches used in inter-city trains have recently been sent to the Carriage and Wagon Repair Workshop at Pahartali for converting their vacuum-break system into air-break system to improve the braking system.

Of them, 15 are out of order now.

Sanitation fair concludes

A two-day long 'Sanitation Fair' concluded in the port city on Friday with a call for sanitation for all.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) organised the fair in cooperation with NGO Forum and Water Aid Bangladesh on the occasion of 'National Sanitation Month'.

The other programmes included procession, discussion and cultural function. Care Bangladesh, World Vision Bangladesh and other local NGOs took part in the programmes.

Speakers at a discussion at JM Sen Hall in the port city on the concluding day emphasised creating mass awareness to bring the people under the sanitation facilities.

They called for combined efforts to bring the whole area of the CCC under the proper sanitation system by 2010. CCC Chief Revenue Officer Syeda Sarwar Jahan was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony with Health, Family Planning and Sewerage Standing Committee Chairman Mohammad Hossain in the chair.

CCC Chief Conservancy Officer Saifuddin Mahmud Katebi, NGO representatives Monwara Begum, Doyal Kanti Das, Shirin Ara Begum and Mohammad Moksedur Rahman also spoke.

Relief for flood-hit people

Jubilee Road Merchant Association distributed relief among the flood-hit

people of Rangunia upazila on Friday.

The association leaders distributed the relief among 600 distressed families of Kodala and Sarafbata unions under the upazila.

Association President Nasir Uddin Ahmed led the relief team. Association General Secretary Humayun Kabir, members Emdad Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Anwarul Haq, Mohammad Karim Uddin, Mohammad Arif and Kodala Union Chairman Abdul Kayum also took part in the relief operation.

They pledged to continue to extend helping hands to the flood-affected people in future as well.

'Come to aid of autistic children'

Speakers at a workshop in the port city on Saturday called upon all to come forward to the aid of the autistic children.

Chittagong Autistic Foundation organised the workshop on 'Autism' at the school run by the foundation at Mirzar Pole.

Specialist Therapist Nurunnahar Nupur conducted a training on increasing the sense among the autistic children for the teachers of the school and the guardians.

Addressing the programme Lieutenant Colonel Tofayel Ahmed, one of the organisers of the foundation, said there are many autistic children who need cooperation for leading a better life.

He said at least two to four children come to the school for admission

every day. Due to lack of accommodation they can't enroll them in the school, he added.

He said the foundation, however, has a plan to shift the school on its land when all the autistic children will be able to get admission.

The guardians of autistic children attended the workshop at the school at the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Urban Health Centre.

New NBR chairman visits customs house

New chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) Mohammad Abdul Mazid visited Chittagong Customs House here on Wednesday.

During the unscheduled visit on the third day of his taking office, Mazid inspected the taxation and DTI (Direct Trade Input) activities, long room and computer and exchanged views with the high officials of customs and executives of C&F Agents Association at Customs House (Import) conference room.

He called upon all concerned to work without fear maintaining transparency with honesty and help continue NBR's ongoing revenue collection activities.

Customs House (Import) Commissioner Md Lutfur Rahman and Customs House (Export) Margub Ahmed were present at the meeting. High officials of customs, income tax and National Department of Saving in Chittagong region, non-cadre officials of both the import and export customs attended the meeting.

Mobile court realises Tk 2 crore

A mobile court in separate drives realised Tk 2 crore from domestic vessels as arrears port dues, fine and compensation here in the last nine months until September.

The court also penalised 55 vessels for movement in violation of maritime law.

In the drives, the mobile court realised Tk 1.35 crore as pending mooring charge, Tk 50 lakh as river and port dues and Tk 10 lakh as compensation, said the sources.

It also served notices to all the owners and local agents of vessels having the mooring charges, port and river dues pending for immediate payment of the dues and alerted them against tax dodging mentality.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Muhammad Munir Chowdhury led the drives where members from Port Security Force and Marine Department assisted him.

Ctg Div Sports Assoc executives

The fifteen-member panel led by Colonel (Retd) Waliullah was declared winner of Chittagong Divisional Sport Association Executive Committee Election - 2007 on Thursday.

Commissioner of the election and Additional Divisional Commissioner

Mohammad Mohiuddin Ahmed announced it as there was no other panel for contesting.

The office-bearers are Vice-Presidents: Colonel (Retd) Waliullah, Ali Abbas and Kazi Mohiuddin Bulbul, General Secretary: Sirajuddin Mohammad Alamgir, Assistant General Secretary: Dewan Arshad Ali, Joint Secretary: Moin Uddin Chowdhury Kamru and Aminul Islam and Treasurer: Abdul Khalek.

Members are Nazmul Ahsan Romen, ANM Wahid, Mohammad Abdur Rab Shamim, Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Fazle Rabbi Khan Sajjad, Begum Lili Aziz and Sharmistha Roy.

'Ensure women's rights'

Speakers at a view exchange meeting urged the government to formulate policies and implement them for ensuring women's rights.

Economic development of a country is not possible keeping the women in dark, they said.

They were addressing the meeting organised by Bangladesh Mohila Parishad at Islamabad Memorial Hall on Saturday.

Women leader Chitra Biswas presided over the meeting while Prof Ashok Saha, Prof Kanai Lal Das, Prof Mohammad Jahangir, Daily Independent Staff Reporter Nazim Uddin Shyamal, women leaders Jesmin Sultana Paru, Nur Jahan Khan, Sugata Barua and Shirin Akter Hena spoke at meeting.



Artistes of Proma, a cultural organisation, perform a group recitation on Sojan Badiyaar Ghat of poet Jashim Uddin at Shilpakala Academy auditorium on Friday.