

## CCC moves to remove waterlogging

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

At least 70 per cent dredging and widening works of 100 canals, out of 144, have been completed this year to rid the city dwellers of serious waterlogging, said the sources at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC).

CCC started the dredging and widening of the city canals and drains under a project of Tk 5 crore in December last year.

Ten sophisticated excavators were used for the first time to accelerate the work of dredging the canals up to 12 to 15 feet deep and 20 to 30 feet width, said the sources.

Acting Mayor M Manjur Alam said with the dredging already completed CCC will be able to lessen suffering of the city dwellers by 60 to 70 per cent this year.

"The sophisticated excavators helped us widen and dredge the canals at a rate much more

faster," he said.

He, however, sought cooperation from all the authorities concerned to address the waterlogging completely through developing a drainage system with 39 tidal regulators at the entry points of the city canals according to the drainage master plan.

"Digging of new canals in many areas is essential for proper drainage of the rainwater as many of the water bodies have

been filled up reducing the total catchments in the city," said the mayor, adding that they have already sent a proposal to the LGRD ministry in this regard.

CCC Superintendent Engineer (Division I) Mohammad Abu Saleh said they have conducted renovation work at around 100 canals until last month (May) and will also continue the work during the rainy season.

"We are forming a team that will rush for instant dredging to help drain out logged-water from the city area during the rainy season," he said.

The major canals, which were dredged and widened, include Mohesh Khal near Police Line at Halishahar, Rampur Khal at Rampur, Gahona Chhara at Halishahar, Bahar Khal at Saraipara, Shital Jharna at Panchlaish, Bamunshahi Khal, Mirza Khal and Dom Khal at Chandgaon, Birza Khal at East Sholoshahar, Tripura Khal at West Sholoshahar, Chashma Khal at Sholokbahar, Bongshal Para Chhara at North Pathantuli and Nasir Khan Chhara at North Agrabad and Chaktai Khal at different points, Saleh added.

Ward Commissioner Siddique Ahmed Chowdhury said the Mohesh Khal and Gahona Chhara Khal in his ward have been dredged and widened this year. He hoped that the area would not inundate like the

previous year following the dredging and widening of the canals.

"Construction of walkways to protect encroachment and concrete bed to help remove wastes and retaining walls are needed to put a permanent end to silting up of canals and repeated renovation by the CCC," he said.

Ward Commissioner Dost Mohammad said regular maintenance is needed to save the canals from getting silted up and contain the waterlogging without dredging every year.

The people living along the canal banks said due to lack of proper maintenance for around two years until December 2007 caused the canals silted up, disrupting normal passage of rainwater and sewage to the river Karnaphuli and the Bay.

As a result, the city dwellers witnessed unprecedented waterloggings on June 11 and on October 16 last year that caused immense suffering to the people as well as damages to life and properties.

On both the occasions, most of the city areas went under waist-deep to chest-deep water while normal activities as well as wheel of economy came to a total halt as inundation and waterlogging caused damages to machineries and raw materials at different industrial units.



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Traders carry bamboo from Banbarban forests through the Matamuhury River. Most bamboos produced in the remote forests of Chittagong Hill Tracts wither as they could not be transported out of the forest due to lack of communications. The photo was taken from Chakaria upazila.



Workers dredge Mirza Khal as part of the on-going renovation of canals by Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) to reduce waterlogging.

## Dried-up canals bring sorrow to Sitakunda

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Most of 13 canals in Sitakunda upazila have been filled with earth or dried up for years, seriously affecting thousands of people living near the canals during every monsoon and summer.

As a result, Boro cultivation on around 20,000 acres of land in the upazila couldn't be possible this year, sources said.

The canals, once known as the boon of nature, has now

turned into bane to us, some affected villagers said, adding that if steps are taken to recover the canals through regular digging or renovation these would surely be the sources of great benefit again.

"We have been experiencing double blow from nature for the last five to six years due to the dried canals. In heavy monsoon, canal-adjointing villages used to get inundated while in the dry season (summer) villagers can't get sufficient irrigation for culti-

vation," said SM Tahidul Hoque Chowdhury, a leader of Sitakunda Association in Chittagong of a village near Mohalinga Khal at No-2 Baroiyadhala Union of the upazila.

He said another monsoon is just looming ahead and we too are now living on fear to face another brunt of flood.

Mohalinga apart, the other canals of the 13 that gradually dried up or filled most are Domekhali and Bakkhali Khals

in Syedpur union; Gupta, Naralia and Kamania Khals in Barabkunda union; Sikder, Boalia and Bhatarkhil Khals in Bansbaria union; Badan Khal in Baroiyadhala, and Antar and Numachhara Khals in Chhoto Kumira union, sources said.

Affected people said a regulator was supposed to be set up on the mouth of each of those canals to prevent the tidal water of sea from entering the localities but the regulators are yet to install.

The canals in Baroiyadhala, Syedpur, Bansbaria and Kumira unions have turned into earthen roads being gradually dried up in a period of last two years. Some farmers cultivated various types of vegetables, including potato, pepper and aubergine in many of such canal-turned-roads.

Iqbal Ahmed, who cultivated pepper and aubergine in Badan Khal, said the canal had a depth of above 12 feet even six to eight year ago that became filled for

lack of renovation.

"The villages adjacent to Gupta khal get inundated with the overflowing water in every monsoon," said Md Abdus Salam.

Bansbaria UP Chairman Ali Ahsan said the villagers face untold sufferings especially in heavy monsoon as flood water hardly gets any space to subside quickly through the canals.

He called for digging some sub-canals as an alternative measure keeping in consider-

ation the ensuing monsoon.

"In dry season, cultivation of crop is possible if the authorities take step to preserve water by developing small embankment at some points of the canal that will benefit the farmers immensely," said Mobarak Hossain, a schoolteacher of Barabkunda.

Kumira UP Chairman Mofizur Rahman said the canals couldn't be renovated or recovered due to non-availability of grant from the ministry concerned.

UP chairmen Mofiz and Ahsan said that they had on many occasions appealed in vain to the authorities for immediate grants against the canals.

According to official data, Sitakunda has a total of 32,300 acres of arable land and only 12,800 of this are under irrigation facility. The upazila is predominantly an industrial zone with public and private textile mills, jute mills, cement factories, glass and steel factories, and ship breaking yard.

## the week that was

### 'Ensure uninterrupted power supply'

Traders of printing sector urged the Power Development Board (PDB) to ensure uninterrupted power supply to help them run the business.

They said due to frequent power outage caused problem in preparing orders and delivering them in due time. Leaders of Printing Industries Traders' Association made a call at a meeting with the PDB executive engineer Mostafa Iskandar Arif at his office at Reazuddin Bazar on Thursday.

Arif assured the traders of taking steps in this regard.

Association Convener Rafiqul Islam, Joint Convener Chowdhury Golam Rabbani, Member Secretary Syed Md Nazrul Islam, members ANM Tyeb Ali and Zakir Hossain were present at the meeting.

### Call to ensure Bangla as medium of education

Chittagong University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr M Badiul Alam underscored the need for ensuring Bangla as the medium of education in every sphere.

"There is no alternative to Bangla in learning and teaching in every stage of our education to build the country as a prosperous country," he said.

He was addressing the opening ceremony of a three-day view exchange meeting between the teachers of the university and Bangla Academy at the Central Library auditorium on Saturday.

Bangla Academy organised the meeting with a view to making a



STAR PHOTO

Activists of social, cultural and professional organisation form a human chain organised by Ektattor Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee in front of Pahartali Badhyabumi on Friday, protesting construction of a building by a private university on the mass killing ground.

groundwork for publishing books of higher education in Bangla.

Prof Badiul urged the educationists, researchers and authors to write academic books in Bangla and translate foreign books to help the noble and contemporary initiative of Bangla Academy.

Bangla Academy Director Dr Md Syed Mohammad Shahed presided over the function where Dr Mahbubul Hoque made the address of welcome.

Director of the Academy MA Wahab, Dr Md Habib, Prof Dr Gazi Salahuddin, chairmen of different departments of

Chittagong University were present at the ceremony.

### CCC workers demand promotion

Leaders of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Workers' Union demanded promotion and confirmation of jobs of its officers and employees immediately.

They were addressing a press conference at Chittagong Press Club (CPC) on Monday.

The leaders said jobs of around 7,000 officers and staffs who have been working in the CCC for 20 years on day basis are not confirmed or promoted.

They said the CCC authorities have started the process of promotion and confirmation of jobs around four months ago and also prepared lists of staffs at different departments according to seniority and efficiency.

But it was suspended on May 7 due to reported interference by some ward

commissioners alleging irregularities in making the lists, they added.

They demanded intervention of chief adviser and adviser for the local government and rural development.

### Ctg FFs meet

Speakers emphasised the need for introducing multi-purpose activities for the socio-economic development of the freedom fighters.

They said there is no alternative to

taking such programme to change condition of the greatest sons of the soil.

They were speaking at the extended meeting of Institutional Command Coordinating Committee of the Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the office of railway unit command on Sunday.

Coordinating committee convener Fazal Ahmad presided over the meeting where its member secretary Abul Kashem Bhuiya discussed on the meeting agenda.

The meeting decided to form a cooperative society named Chittagong Freedom Fighter Institutional Cooperative Society with a view to promoting the socio-economic devel-

opment of the freedom fighters who are working at different institutions in the region.

Speakers urged the government to take steps to meet their 11-point demand, including extension of age for job for freedom fighters to 65.

### School for slum children

Speakers at a meeting urged the rich people to help ensure education, health and other facilities for the distressed children living in the slums.

They said the united initiatives

might help remove illiteracy, crime, drug addiction as well as poverty to some extent.

They said these while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of a school at Millarbill slum in Sabpara area under Double Mouring Police Station on Thursday.

Manabsheba Multi Purpose Cooperative Limited, a non-government organisation, established the school to offer education free of cost to the children living in the slum.

Acting commissioner Jahedur Rahman Tipu of Ward 30 was the chief guest at the ceremony with organisation chairman Ananda Biswas in the chair.



STAR PHOTO

Children stage a street drama organised by Jono Udyog and IIED in front of Department of Environment (DoE) office on Wednesday as part of their campaign to raise awareness about hill cutting and river pollution.