

CCC move fails to prevent waterlogging

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

The dredging and widening of canals have failed to bring about any positive change in the city life as the rain-induced inundation continues to cause suffering to the city dwellers from the very beginning of the rainy season.

The city dwellers said the low-lying areas of the port city go under knee-deep to waist-deep water even during the short-lived rainfall lasting only two to three hours that aggravates the suffering.

The commuters have to experience serious gridlock due to inundation of the main thoroughfares of Sholoshahar, Muradpur, Bohodharhat and Halishahar areas, forcing them to pay transportation fares two or three times higher as the rickshawpullers and auto-rickshaw drivers cash in the situation keeping them hostage, they said.

The latest rainfall on Sunday and Monday marooned the people of lowlying Halishahar, Muradpur, Chawk Bazar, Kapasgola, Badurtala,

Chandgaon Residential Area, Katalganj, Sholokbahar, Bakalia, Prabartak Intersection and Agrabad CDA Residential Area in their houses under knee-deep to waist-deep water for several hours.

Rashedul Hasan said the Halishahar areas are now popularly known as a flood-affected area. Just a two to three hours' rain forced the residents to remain stuck up in their houses while the ground-floor people usually bear the brunt of waterlogging, who are always found to be battling with rainwater to save their properties of being soaked or damaged.

Rehena Akter, an official of a non-government organisation, said shortage of transports during the waterlogging in the city also add suffering to the commuters.

The rickshawpullers and auto-rickshaw drivers take no time to exploit in such a situation and charge high fares, she added.

The CCC started the dredging and widening work of 144 canals and drains of the port city at a cost of around Tk 5 crore with a

view to addressing the waterlogging in December last year and claimed to have completed work of over 100 canals by June. It also expected to improve the situation by at least 70 per cent this year than the previous year.

But due to lack of retaining walls and concrete bed of the canals and tidal regulators at the entry points, the dredged and widened canals are now rapidly being silted up with mud and wastages flowing with the rainwater and thus the canals are returning to its previous condition, sources said.

Engineer Ali Ashraf, president of Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Chittagong, said digging of new canals and their regular maintenance, construction of retaining walls and concrete bed, tidal regulators at the entry points of the canals, renovation of the sluice gates and linking the secondary canals to the main canals and removal of stagnant water are badly needed to address the problem of waterlogging.

CCC Executive Engineer Rafiqul Islam said lack of tidal

regulators is one of the main causes of waterlogging in Halishahar and Agrabad CDA Residential areas.

Superintendent Engineer (Division-1) Mohammad Abu Saleh claimed that the situation has improved in most parts of the city compared to last year.

Sources said a committee headed by Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhteruddin at a meeting on July 13 decided to implement the first phase of the Drainage Master Plan-1995 in this regard.

The committee comprising high officials and engineers of the CCC, CDA, Railway, Department of Environment (DoE), district administration, Water Development Board, Wasa and PDB suggested immediate digging of three new canals alongside other recommendations, said the sources.

The unprecedented waterloggings caused immense suffering to the city dwellers as well as deaths of over 125 people on June 11 and October 16 last year.



A file photo of waterlogged Muradpur-Bahodderhat Road. The photo was taken on July 13.

Ctg BTV centre in disarray

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Mismanagement leaves the Chittagong centre of Bangladesh Television (BTV) in disarray, with the dream of its viewers in the region remaining unfulfilled even after a decade.

Quality of programmes has declined due to lack of proper care and monitoring when reported practice of irregularities has gripped the state-run organisation, said the sources.

The BTV authorities launched an installation at a cost of Tk 80 crore on December 19 in 1996 to fulfill the long cherished dream of some one crore viewers in the region.

Abu Naser Salahuddin, a diploma engineer, has taken the helm of the centre in the country's second city as acting general manager.

Naser, also acting head of the engineering section, took charge eight months ago when the then GM Enamul Haq Chowdhury (now the assistant chief engineer at BTV head office) was transferred to Dhaka.

Usually a producer, either from programme or news sections, is supposed to be appointed as the general manager, said the sources.

The post of Producer (programme) has been lying vacant for long while an assistant producer is all to take care of the programme section that was supposed to have two producers.

BTV Director General Kamal Uddin said the authorities are looking for a competent person from programme section for the post.

"But, such competent person are not available as most of the senior officials want to stay in the BTV headquarters in Dhaka," said Kamal while talking to The Daily Star on July 1.

He, however, said they will be able to appoint a senior official as the GM there soon and the process has already started in this regard.

The authorities have taken measures to reorganise the total set-up and rejuvenate the centre.

Some positive changes recently took place at the news section where a cameraman, Mohammad Hossain, had been serving as the acting producer (news) with a teleprinter operator, Alauddin, acting as the second in command since long.

Appointed as a grade-2 officer back in 1986 Hossain was promoted to the post of senior

cameraman as a grade 1 officer and transferred to Dhaka in 1998. But, he managed to stay back on deputation and continue service at the same station for over two decades until he along with teleprinter operator Alauddin were stand released on July 3.

Hossain had been serving as the acting producer (news) at the centre for around four years in three phases since 2000.

The duo were stand released for their alleged involvement in irregularities like wider coverage of less important news, renting out personal camera for covering news and drawing money in the name of overtime bill.

DDG (news) Monwarul Islam said absence of qualified officials forced the authorities to run the Chittagong centre somehow with whatever manpower the latter had.

He said there is a shortage of news producers that BTV makes up in different ways like reshuffling of existing one and recruiting guest producers from outside.

BTV appointed Mezbahuddin Chowdhury Farhad as a guest producer and attached him to its Chittagong centre on January 1 this year. But, he was suspended on June 12.

Mezbah also served as BTV correspondent in Chittagong earlier and got Asia Vision Award in the first week of July last year.

He was sacked on July 16 the same year. Shahida Alam, the then DDG (News) of BTV, sacked him without showing any reason, Mezbah said.

He said he was appointed the guest producer (news) on January 1 this year after an interview. But, on June 17 he received a suspension letter with effect from June 12 this year.

"This time also the reason behind the suspension remained unknown to me, said Mezbah accusing a high official of information ministry of playing role on both the occasions.

"The official, who hails from my neighbouring Lohagara upazila in Chittagong, made the interference and put pressure to get me removed on both the occasions due to previous enmity and at the instigation of a section of people working at BTV Chittagong centre," he alleged.

When asked about the guest producer, Monwar said they will look into everything and reorganise the total set up of BTV Chittagong centre.



This photograph of 'Nilgiri Resort' in Bandarban taken by Shoeb Faruque, inset, won the best award at the tourism photography exhibition jointly organised by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) and Shilpakala Academy held in Dhaka recently. Faruque is a freelance photographer.

theweekthatwas

Mass hunger strike observed

Workers Party, Chittagong district unit, observed a token mass hunger strike for three hours at JM Sen Hall on Thursday protesting spiralling price hike of fuel, rice and other basic commodities.

"In the name of international market, the present caretaker government is increasing the price of all essential items, much to the sufferings and concern of the common people" the leaders alleged during the strike that

lasted from 10.00am to 1.00pm.

Party General Secretary advocate Abu Hanif chaired a brief rally during the strike. District leaders Amrita Barua, Indra Kumar Nath, Hossain Shahid Mufti, transport workers leader Siddiqui Islam, Chittagong Hawkers Association leader Shambhu Nath Chandra and Chhatra Moitree President Kaiser Alam addressed it.

Ctg Jubo Union council held

Noted economist Dr MM Akash said the

caretaker government's 'minus-two' formula has now turned into a 'manage-two' formula and the government is compromising with the bourgeoisies for it.

"Establishment of democracy is not possible through a closed-door culture," he said and demanded immediate withdrawal of emergency and declaration of schedule for parliament election to ensure the democratic environment across the country.

He was addressing the Chittagong district council of Bangladesh Jubo Union as the chief guest at Muslim Hall on Friday.

The organisation's Chittagong District President Shihab Chowdhury Biplob presided over the council while CPB Central Member Ruhin Hossain Prince, Jubo Union Central President Abdullah Kafi Ratan and General Secretary Hasan Hafizur Rahman Soheli spoke.

A 29-member new committee of the district was formed with Arif Ullah Hye as president, Rajib Dev as the general secretary and Sunandan Sikder organising secretary.

BMSA leaders meet CPA chairman

A team of Bangladesh Master Stevedores Association (BMSA) on Thursday called on the newly appointed Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Commodore RU Ahmed and exchanged views with him on different issues relating to the port.

The BMSA leaders assured the port chairman of full cooperation on behalf of the berth and ship-handling operators to bring more dynamism in the port activities.

RU Ahmed also thanked them on behalf of the CPA.

BMSA Vice Chairman Sarwar Hossain Sagar led the team. CPA Member (Finance) Md Harun Mia, Secretary Syed Farhaduddin Ahmed, BMSA First Vice Chairman Azim Rahim Chowdhury and members Sufi Ahmed Bhuiyan, MA Mabud and MA Rashid were also present during the meeting.

Singer Krishnakoli performs at a cultural function organised by Jubo Union at the Muslim Institute Hall in the port city on Friday on the occasion of the council of its Chittagong district unit.



PHOTO STAR

Release of Mohiuddin demanded

Leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on Saturday demanded immediate release of city Awami League President and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

The demand was made at an extended meeting of city BCL with its President MR Azim in the chair at Darul Fazal Market office. Vice presidents Reaz Khan Rofi and Mainul Hoque Limon, General Secretary Md Salahuddin and Organising Secretary Nurul Alam Mia spoke among others.

They condemned the attack on a freedom fighter by the cadres of Jamaat-Shibir and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. They also urged the education adviser to take

steps to increase the number of seats in the educational institutions of the port city.

The BCL leaders also paid tribute to veteran journalist Muhammad Idris.

UCBL managers' conference held

United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCBL) Chairman Jahangir Alam Khan urged all

officials and staffs of the bank to try their level best to make the bank one of the leaders in the sector.

He made this appeal while speaking as the chief guest at the conference of branch managers and senior branch officers at a local hotel on Saturday.

Managing Director M Shahjahan Bhuiyan and Chittagong Regional Head and Executive Vice President Nurul Alam also spoke at the conference.



Visitors at a tree fair organised by the district administration at Laldighi ground on Saturday.