

WATERLOGGING

CCC to clear canals, drains before rains

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) will start work for widening and dredging around 300 canals and cleaning drains in the port city before the rainy season to rid the city dwellers of waterlogging.

Sources at the CCC said the authorities have completed dredging of canals and cleaning drains in June this year. But the rain hampered the work to a large extent and the canals and drains were silted up shortly after completion of the work.

The CCC started Tk 5 crore work in December last year after an interval of two years. It used ten sophisticated excavators for the first time to dredge over 100 canals and clean the drains, they said.

Acting mayor M Manjur Alam said process to

dredge and widen the canals and drains have been completed and work will start in this regard by December.

He said they will be able to avoid 60 to 70 percent of waterlogging this year compared to previous years following the renovation work.

The councillors of 41 wards submitted list of canals and drains need to be dredged and widened, he said, adding that the work would be done as per demand of the councillors.

Sources said the canals that were dredged in the last season would also be brought under the work and the small canals would be cleaned just before the rainy season. A section of city dwellers dump household wastage in the canals instead of the designated dustbins blocking the normal flow of rainwater.

CCC Superintendent Engineer Mohammad Abu Saleh said they would use the sophisticated excavators also this year to accelerate the renovation work.

He said they have finalised a list of canals and drains for renovation and the tender would be floated within shortest possible time in this regard.

Saleh said they have sent a proposal to the government for constructing a road alongside the Chaktai Khal (canal) from Chamra Gudam to Bohoddarhat area to save the canal from the occupants. The project is under process, he added.

He said the walkway would help run excavator for renovation work during the rainy season while the people would be able to reach Bohoddarhat area through a short way.

The CCC has already constructed around three kilometres of six-kilometre walkway along the Chaktai Khal, he said, adding that acquisition of more lands is needed to complete the work.

The major canals, which would be dredged and widened this season, include Chaktai Khal and Diversion Khal at different points, Mohesh Khal near Police Line at Halishahar, 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, Gohona Chhara at Halishahar and Nasir Khan Chhara at North Agrabad, Saleh informed.

The city residents experienced serious waterlogging on June 11 and October 16 last year.



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

South Chittagong-bound buses from Bahoddarhat Bus Terminal park haphazardly in front of the Chandgaon Police Station everyday for passengers causing serious gridlock in the area. But the authorities concerned are indifferent to the problem.

Tk 10 crore timber rotting in Khagrachhari



STAR PHOTO

Timber is lying under open sky at a range office of the Forest Department at Jamtali under Dighinala upazila in Khagrachhari district.

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Timbers worth about Tk 10 crore are being damaged at various range offices of Forest Department in Khagrachhari due to negligence of officials concerned and a High Court 'stay order' on inviting tender to sell them.

The forest officials seized the timbers during their routine raids while being smuggled or from illegal possession. The wood is lying under the open sky uncared for at different range offices, sources said.

Besides, the Ministry of Forest and Environment recently introduced a system called 'Sealed tender

system' instead of the open auction system to sell the seized timbers. Under the new system, it asked the forest department to arrange and conduct all its tender bidding and selling procedure at Kalurghat Central Depot in Chittagong instead of respective range offices.

The timbers were stockpiled on the range office premises as the traders of Khagrachhari filed a writ with the High Court against the new system. It will not be possible to sell the timbers until disposal of the writ, sources said.

The new system is a major hurdle for the small traders as they will not be able to participate in the tender due to financial

constraint, traders alleged.

The small traders said under an open auction system all could participate and purchase timber according to their requirement and demand.

The timbers kept uncared for and unprotected for several months are being decayed gradually and both the government and the merchants are counting loss.

"Timbers worth around Tk 10 crore are being damaged in Khagrachhari and similar situation is prevailing at ranges of Rangamati and Bandarban too," alleged Mohammad Shahajuddin, general secretary of Khagrachhari Timber Merchant Welfare Association.

He said the government should take necessary steps to resolve the problem to pave way for selling of the seized timbers as early as possible.

"The government every year buys timber from abroad in exchange for huge foreign currency to meet the internal demand. Import of such costly timber would not be required if the government takes initiative and introduce an effective system like open auction," Shahajuddin said.

Deputy Ranger of Chittagong North (Naranchhari range) said they seized 46,434 cubic feet timber worth about Tk 6.55 crore and those are kept under the open sky on

the range office premises at Jamtali under Dighinala upazila in Khagrachhari.

He said they couldn't call tender to sell the woods due to stay order by the High Court and the valuable timbers are getting rotten.

Besides, timber worth about Tk 1 crore (7,000 cft) and Tk 70 lakh (5,000 cft) are kept on the Hazachhara and Merung range premises respectively, sources said.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ali Kabir said they seized around 15,000-cft timbers worth over Tk 2 crore from eight range areas, but could do nothing due to the court order. He said the higher authorities should take immediate action to solve the problem.

the week that was

Quality education underscored

Chittagong Education Board (CEB) Chairman Dr Mohammad Yusuf underscored the need for quality education to achieve the expected advancement and progress of the nation.

He was addressing as the chief guest the launching ceremony of Oxford National School at Halishahar K-block on Saturday.

The CEB chairman called for proper management and efficient leadership to ensure quality education in the schools.

Founding Chairman MA Bashar Abu of the newly established school presided over the launching ceremony at a community centre.

Chittagong Press Club former president Abu Sufian and Halishahar H-block Social Welfare Committee Abul Bashar were guests at the ceremony where academician Sunil Chakrabarty also spoke among others.

'Form salt board'

The salt farmers bear 97.7 percent of production cost to get only 54 percent of the sale money of their products when the land owners and brokers get the rest spending a very little, revealed a report of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Sachetan Nagarik Committee (Sanak) in a survey report.

The report suggested inclusion of salt farming in agricultural sector instead of industrial sector

and formation of a separate Salt Board to save the salt farmers from the indiscrimination.

The report was published at a view exchange meeting organised by TIB and Sanak at Cox's Bazar District Council auditorium on Sunday.

AM Shamsuddoula Patil and MM Alam Miltan of TIB and Sanak conducted the survey at 102 coastal villages under seven upazilas in Cox's Bazar and coastal Banshkhali upazila in Chittagong.

The survey report said around 44,500 families are engaged in salt cultivation on 70.05 acres of land in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.

The country produces around 13 lakh metric tons of salt every monsoon against the yearly demand of 12.5 metric tons, it added.

TIB Executive Director

Iftekharuzzaman, Cox's Bazar ADC (General) Omar Faruk and Sanak convener Engineer Rafiqul Haq were present at the meeting.

Call to implement fisheries policy

Speakers at a workshop urged the government to implement the National Fisheries Policy-1998 with a view to ensuring livelihood of the hundreds of fishermen leading miserable lives at coastal belts.

They said the fishermen community depends on others to realise their demands as they are not organised. They called upon all to come forward in this regard.

They were addressing a divisional workshop on "Review on Fisheries Law, Policy and

Rights of Fishermen" organised by Community Development Centre (Codec) in cooperation with Manusher Jonno Foundation at a local hotel on November 19.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil was the chief guest at the workshop chaired by Codec Deputy Executive Director Komol Sen Gupta.

Marine Fisheries Department Director JK Biswas and Manusher Jonno Foundation Director (Human Rights) Rina Roy were present as special guests. Researcher Dr Hamidul Haque presented a research report on the "Fisheries Law, Policy and Rights of Fishermen".

The speakers said the fishermen are neglected socially and culturally since long and fighting for survival in an adverse environment of fishing due to several reasons, including a decrease in quantity of fishes in the sources and attacks by the pirates in the sea.

The research report was prepared through fieldwork at nine districts and 20 upazilas in the coastal areas from November 2007 to September this year.

CSE training programme begins

A month long training programme on stock market began on Sunday with a view to educating the people interested in the trade.

Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) is organising the training

programme as part of its regular initiative for the development of the sector.

CSE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) AB Siddique inaugurated the programme at the CSE conference room.

Speakers emphasised on training courses to create skilled manpower in the stock market.

Managing Director of Island Securities Limited, a member of CSE, discussed on 'Stock Market in Bangladesh: Idea and Formation' at the inaugural session.

Students from different universities and colleges, managers and executives from different financial firms are participating in the training.

CSE General Manager Abdul Motalib, Mohammad Abuzazzaman, Company Secretary Ahmed Daud, manager of CSE Market Development Department and Course Coordinator Kamal Uddin Jalal also spoke at the function.

Workshop on packaging industry

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCI) President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury underscored the need for proper training on packaging industry for the development of the sector.

He said Bangladesh can earn lot of foreign currency through exporting packaging items if the quality is ensured and the people



STAR PHOTO

Participants pose for photograph at a workshop titled 'Build corrosive and hazard-free structure' organised by Berger Paints Bangladesh Chittagong for the civil engineers in the port city on Monday.

related to the sector are trained.

He was addressing as the chief guest an international workshop titled 'Bangladesh: Development of Packaging Industries' held recently.

Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), International Trade Centre (ITC) and Bangladesh Corrugated Carton and Accessories Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BCCAMEA) jointly organised the workshop with BCCAMEA President Shafiqullah Chowdhury in the chair.

Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) First Vice President MA Salam was present while BCCAMEA First Vice President Taslim Uddin Chowdhury made the address of welcome.

ITC National Project Coordinator Brigadier General (Retd) Md Mafizur Rahman, ITC Expert Rajib Dhar, Prof Firoz I Faruque and Customs Bond Commissioner (Chittagong Hossain Ahmad addressed among others.

Tribute paid to FF Majher

Speakers at a discussion underscored the need for making the young generation aware of the courageous role of the freedom fighters during the War of Liberation to imbue them with the spirit of liberation war.

They said the nation will not progress if it fails to show proper

respect to the freedom fighters.

They were addressing a meeting in memory of freedom fighter Majher Ullah Bir Uttam organised by Khelaghar Chittagong city unit at Buddhist Foundation on Thursday.

Khelaghar city unit President Dr AQM Sirajul Islam Chowdhury chaired the meeting.

Speakers urged all to play active role in building a non-communal Bangladesh.

They said young people could learn a lot from Majher who had firm faith in truth and justice. Khelaghar Vice President Poet Ashis Sen, General Secretary Ripon Barua, Principal Md Jahangir, Engineer Rupak Chowdhury and Arshad Hossain spoke among others.