

Fresh initiative to dredge Karnaphuli

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

An initiative is underway to dredge the river Karnaphuli to free the lifeline of the port city from siltation and construct a 2.5km marine driveway along the river.

A Development Project Proforma (DPP) has been prepared in this regard to implement a project at an estimated cost of Tk 411.72 crore to be funded by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

A project proposal is likely to be finalised immediately after recasting the DPP to reduce the project cost substantially, said the sources concerned.

The project aims at removing the silt deposited in the river Karnaphuli due to construction of two bridges over the river, Shah Amanat Bridge and the Third Karnaphuli Bridge, sources said.

Under the project some 2.9 million cubic metre of dredging work would be done over a three-kilometre stretch from the Shah Amanat Bridge in the upstream to Sadarghat in the downstream. At the same time, a 2.5km marine driveway with bank protection wall would also be constructed along right bank of the river stretching from Sadarghat to upstream.

As per an estimation made by Bureau of Research and Testing Authority (BRTA), Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), the dredging work would cost Tk 92.92 crore, construction

of the bank protection wall and driveway Tk 282.03 crore while Fender and Bollard Works would cost Tk 1.62 crore.

Besides, Tk 7.70 crore was kept for physical contingency and Tk 19.00 crore for price contingency, informed BRTA and Buet through a letter on July 1, 2008.

The project was scheduled to start on January 1, 2009 to be completed on December 31, 2011, said the sources.

CPA took a Tk 74 crore capital dredging project under a Japanese Debt Cancellation Programme for the same dredging and bank protection work in 2005.

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the project concept paper (PCP) for capital dredging on February 27, 2005 while the Department for Project Evaluation Committee (DPEC) approved the PP on May 11 the same year.

But, a Revised Development Project Proforma (RDPP) prepared in June in 2006 inflated the project cost by a staggering 345 percent to Tk 255.30 crore.

The inflated cost prompted the ministry for shipping to cancel the previous project and preparing a DPP afresh for the dredging and marine driveway last year.

Fresh initiative has been taken for implementation of the capital dredging and the marine driveway at the directive of Shipping Minister Afsarul Amin, who during a visit in May witnessed the serious silting up and emerging shoals reducing navigability of the river.

However, with the DPP showing an estimated cost of Tk 411.72 crore for the project, the shipping ministry is now recasting the DPP.

In response to a query from Shipping Secretary Md Manjoor Elahi, the BRTA, Buet through a letter last week informed that RCC pillars can be used for construction of the bank protection wall of the marine driveway.

The BRTA, Buet in its letter said compared to sheet-piling, which it suggested earlier for the bank protection wall, RCC is less costly, user-friendly and can be made locally.

BRTA also mentioned in the letter that it earlier suggested for sheet-piling under pressure from the then project director of the project, said the sources at CPA.

Manjoor directed the CPA for making query about the dredging cost which has been estimated at Tk 360 per cubic metre in the DPP.

Besides, CPA would revise estimated cost and several other aspects of the project while recasting the DPP that would bring down the project cost significantly, said the sources.

The project is likely to be finalised within a very short time and its implementation would also help CPA reclaim huge land through landfill along the bank," said CPA Member (Engineering) Captain Zobaer Ahmed.



A road in front of the passport office in the city's Panchlaish area becomes dilapidated due to downpour, causing suffering to the city dwellers. The picture was taken on Sunday.

Amropali paves way for economic prospect in CHT



An Amropali tree at a mango orchard in Rangamati.

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

Mango farming in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is gradually gaining popularity among the indigenous people instead of traditional jhum cultivation as it paves way for economic prospect for them.

The indigenous people get inclined to mango cultivation, popularly known as Amropali, as it ensures brighter prospect and offers handsome return than traditional jhum cultivation.

With technical support from a local NGO, Development Concern, which played a vital role in

reducing pest attack on the mango farms, the farmers in Rangamati got a bumper yield of 'Amropali' this year.

Amropali farming has already helped a good number of mango growers in Rangamati change their wheel of luck.

Some 1350 hectares of hilly slope in Rangamati were brought under mango farming so far under Horticulture Development Project of Department of Agriculture Extension. A total of 5100 mango farms have been created in three hill districts under the project.

According to sources in DAE, some 14,850 metric tons of mangoes mostly

'Amropali' have been cultivated so far at 100 orchards involving 7000 people in Rangamati.

"I got only five mounds of mangoes from 200 trees last year due to severe pest attack. However, I have already harvested 12 mounds from my farm and expect to harvest double from rest of the trees," said Ful Kumar Chakma, a mango farmer at Sapchhari in Rangamati Sadar upazila.

He said he is getting good yield of Amropali due to technical support of Development Concern. "Timely spray of proper pesticide as per their suggestion helped me save the farm from pest attack and

get the good harvest," he said.

Dipen Dewan, adviser of Development Concern, said they are giving technical support to the farmers for achieving expected result. This year many growers harvested bumper yield of mangoes since they could save their farms from pest attack.

He said they have given technical support to at least 20 farms this year and hope to expand it next year.

During visit to different mango orchards at Wagga, Chhilchhari and Chitmorong in Kaptai, Sapchhari, Balukhali, Bondukbhanga, Jibitali, Mogban in Sadar upazila,

Kalampati and Betbungia in Kawkhali upazila, this correspondent found a large number of orchards with plenty of mangoes.

Md Lise Uddin, deputy director of DAE, said Mango can be produce in large scale in hills bringing thousands hectares of fallow land under fruit orchards. There is huge potential for mango farming in the hills that are enough to meet the demand of whole country, he said.

About the pest attack on the mango farms, he said the pest attacks the farms as the farmers do not clear their gardens timely and they are almost ignorant about pest attack.

theweekthatwas

Felling of trees protested

A human chain was formed here on Sunday demanding an end to felling trees at Sitakunda coastal belt in Chittagong.

Non-government organisation Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) organised the human chain in cooperation with developing organisations Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (BELA), Nawjowan, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Sangshaptak, UTSA and Ship Breaking Trade Union Forum in front of Chittagong Press Club.

Speakers at a rally during the programme said the coastal green belts are now being damaged to build ship-breaking yards through felling trees in the coastal forests for long.

They expressed strong resentment and protested felling of around 18,000 trees in a most unethical way in the coastal areas over last few days.

They demanded shifting of the ship-breaking yards from the coastal area and emphasised on afforestation in the area.

YPSA Programme Coordinator Mohammad Ali Shahin, the Ship Breaking Trade Union Forum President Tapan Dutta, Jana Udyog Coordinator Sharif Chauhan, social worker Shahidul

Islam and cultural personality Akbar Reza spoke at the rally.

Tree plantation programme held

A tree plantation programme was held on the Global Scholar School and College campus at Khulshi on Thursday.

Chittagong Education Board Inspector Prof Ali Hossain inaugurated the tree plantation programme and distributed saplings of different fruits, medicinal and timber-yielding trees among the students as the chief guest.

The School Trustee Board Member Secretary Abul Basher and Member (Academy) Dilshad Ahmed were the special guests at the ceremony with Acting Principal Nahid Ishrat in the chair.

Later, a fruit festival was held where different species of fruits were put on display.

Meanwhile, Ghashful, a non-government organisation, also organised a tree plantation ceremony in Patiya on Wednesday.

Some 2000 saplings were distributed among 450 Ghashful students at the programme organised in association with British American Tobacco Bangladesh.

Local Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Abul Hossain was the chief guest at the programme with Ghashful Vice President Dr Manjur-Ul Amin Chowdhury in the chair.

Call to train up seamen

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) President MA Latif MP underscored the need for training up seamen for working in foreign vessels and creating employment opportunities abroad to earn foreign currency.

Addressing a view exchange meeting with leaders of Seamen Association at CCCI auditorium in the port city on Monday, Latif said there is a great employment opportunity for the trained seamen in Middle East and European countries.

But, the sector has remained neglected and many seamen are unemployed for lack of attention of the authorities concerned, he said.

He called on the authorities concerned to arrange training workshops on seamanship and remove problems of the seamen to help them find job in foreign vessels and earn foreign currency.

Seamen Association President SM Shafiqur Rahman, vice presidents Md Wahidul Alam and

Golam Mohammad also spoke at the meeting.

Discussion on eve teasing

Speakers at a discussion on Thursday emphasised the need for waging a social movement against eve teasing as it became a social menace now.

"Being bold and confident, the girls should protest the eve-teasing on their own," they said. The discussion on eve teasing organised by Sirajul Islam Patwary Foundation in cooperation with Chittagong Social Development Forum (CSDF) was held at Housing and Settlement Public School in the city.

Woman Ward Councillor Rehena Kabir Ranu was the chief guest at the discussion with Headmistress Jahan Ara Begum in the chair.

The speakers urged the girls to inform the guardians about any incident of eve teasing and later to people's representatives and administration to help address the problem.

They called upon all of the society to come forward to protest the ill practice since it is not possible to overcome overnight.

CSDF Coordinator Shampa Kamrunnahar was the main speaker at the discussion while the foundation Executive Director

Moinul Islam Maruf Patwary was the special guest.

The girl students also spoke at the discussion. A documentary on eve teasing titled "Pathar Badha" was screened.

Five held for pilfering crude edible oil

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered 191 litres of crude oil while being pilfered on the way to

refinery and arrested five people in this connection here on Thursday.

Other members of the gang managed to flee jumping in the river.

Members of the elite force made the seizure during a drive at TSP jetty adjoining area under Patenga police station.

The criminals were stealing the crude palm oil on the way to refinery depot from the vessel MT Sulu Wind, sources said.

The arrestees were identified as Jane Alam, 50, Noor Alam, 45,

Md Nezam, 45, Md Iqbal, 30, and Md Jasim, 22.

Rab sources said a syndicate of some 50 criminals are engaged in pilfering crude edible oil on the way to refinery or depots from the vessels with the help of some dishonest crew.

Workshop for engineers

A workshop on "Build corrosive and hazard-free structure" was held in the port city on Saturday.

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited organised the workshop for the engineers of the leading developer Mishmak Development Limited at its sales office.

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, Chittagong Factory and Jensen Nicholson (Bd) Limited General Manager Nazimuddin Helali, Quality Control Manager Jasim Uddin, Area Sales Manager Syed Mohammad Nasim, Mishmak Executive Director Mozammel Haque and other officials of the companies participated in the workshop.



Engineers pose for photograph with the guests at a workshop titled "Build corrosive and hazard-free structure" organised by Berger Paints in the port city on Saturday.