

# Unplanned bridges obstacle to circular waterway

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Unplanned bridges without required vertical and horizontal clearances are the foremost obstacles to making the circular waterway around the capital city a successful alternative route to cargo and passenger movement.

Besides, lack of proper link roads and fast-moving transportation modes (waterbus) have so far hindered the purpose of the circular waterway to free the city from life-paralysing traffic mess, said the transport experts.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), the implementing agency for the Circular Waterway Project, has identified 14 low-height bridges, including 10 already built and four other under-construction on the rivers Turag and Balu.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Local Government Engineering Division (LGED) and Bangladesh Railway constructed some of the bridges in the past and are now building the rest without compliance with the required clearance.

As per a government circular issued in 1969, any agency is required to obtain formal clearance from BIWTA before embarking on the construction of a bridge over a river as per category of the rivers, said the officials.

"Unplanned bridges without inadequate clearance are the foremost obstacles to make the circular waterway a successful project," said BIWTA Chairman Md Abdul Mannan Howlader.

Maintaining required depth of the river channel for normal navigability is another vital task against massive earth filling and grabbing.

During the recent eviction drives against river grabbers in the Turag, BIWTA could not mobilise its medium size tugboats due to inadequate vertical and horizontal clearances of the bridges over the river causing delay in the drive and wastage of resources.

"We cannot even mobilise a big



The Kamarpara Bridge initiated by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) on the river Turag near Ashulia. The RHD has embarked on construction of the bridge without compliance and clearance from BIWTA. (Inset) Yellow lining indicates first phase of the project implemented from Sadarghat to Ashulia. The red lining indicates ongoing 2nd phase from Ashulia to Kanchpur.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

dredger to excavate the riverbed due to low-height bridges," said Howlader.

"Though we are not supposed to write letters regarding compliance with the vertical and horizontal clearances, we wrote eight times to RHD and five times to LGED but none of them bothered," he said.

Rivers including the Buriganga, Dhaleswari, Turag, Balu and the Shitalakhyia encircle the capital city.

According to the government circular, there is a set standard of vertical and horizontal clearances for rivers of such category.

The Dhour bridge (actually a culvert)

on Tongi-Ashulia link road is a worst example of low-height structure across the circular waterway. It has 1.52 and 12.19 metres of vertical and horizontal clearances respectively instead of required 7.18 and 30.48 metres of vertical and horizontal clearances.

According to BIWTA findings, Mirpur

Bridge built by RHD on the river Turag has 4.88 and 27.43 metres of vertical and horizontal clearances respectively although as per the rules it has to have 7.62 and 30.48 metres of vertical and horizontal clearances.

Dhour Bridge-1 on the river Turag has 1.52 and 12.19 metres of vertical and

horizontal clearances although it has to have 7.18 and 30.48 metres of vertical and horizontal clearances.

Kamarpara Bridge on Turag has 2.44 metres of vertical clearance although it should have 7.62 metres of vertical clearance.

Tongi Railway Bridges 1 and 2 have 0.91 metres of vertical height from the high water mark during August but the required clearance is 7.62 metres.

The Ichhapur Bridge on the river Balu has 2.62 metres of vertical clearance though it should have 7.62 metres of vertical clearance.

RHD Additional Chief Engineer Golam Mostafa said he is not aware of it.

Additional Chief Engineer of RHD Bridge Division Ashraf Islam said, "It is a matter that happened long ago." However, bridges are built under Road Division, he added.

Director General of Bangladesh Railway Belayet Hossain said, "I am not aware of the matter."

The BIWTA implemented the 30-kilometre-long Sadarghat-Ashulia route along the rivers Buriganga and Turag at a cost of Tk 36 crore under the first phase of the circular waterway project which began in July 2000 and ended in early 2005.

The second phase of the project from Ashulia to Kanchpur in Demra is now being implemented at a cost of Tk 65 crore.

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) at a meeting on June 16 approved the project.

Under the second phase of the project which will continue as of 2012, 40-kilometre river route along the Turag and Balu would be dredged.

A terminal and landing facilities will be developed at Tongi river port under the project.

Besides, three landing stations will be set up along the route and the river channel will be dredged eight feet deep.

## PM stresses cardiology units at govt hospitals

### Cardiologists say 73 percent of population lives with risk of cardiac diseases

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said every medical college hospital and public hospital of the country should have a cardiology unit with surgical facilities, as cardiologists said 73 percent of the population lives with the risk of cardiac diseases.

She made the remark when a delegation of Bangladesh Cardiac Society called on her at her office in the city, when overall situation of the country's healthcare sector came up for discussion.

She also underscored the need for introducing cardiology department at the National Children's Hospital (Shishu Haspatal).

She asked the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) and the authorities of medical colleges to formulate specific project papers for setting up cardiology units and send those to the authorities concerned.

"Send us the project papers and the government will take every necessary step to set up cardiology units up to the

periphery levels," she said.

Hasina said the government will take measure to set up cardiology units outside the capital city, but, at the same time, the doctors will have to be sincere about the imperatives for working in the rural areas.

Taking into account a huge pressure on the few hospitals equipped with cardiac surgery facilities in the capital and the traffic congestion in the city, the prime minister said extended units of NICVD could be set up at the entry points of Dhaka.

She said the previous Awami League government had withdrawn taxes on many items of medical equipment which had helped enormously in modernising the country's medical sector.

"But," she deplored, "after that no mentionable development took place as the subsequent government showed indifference to health sector."

The Cardiac Society placed 10-point suggestions before the prime minister to ensure proper cardiac treatment for the people as the physicians

said some 73 percent of total population lives with the risk of cardiac diseases.

The suggestions include setting up full-fledged cardiology and cardiac surgery department in every medical college, creation of posts of senior and junior consultant to set up cardiology units in all district hospitals, setting up separate cardiology hospitals in the divisional headquarters.

The Cardiac Society also requested the PM to allocate land for setting up its office and academic building to make the BCS a centre of excellence.

One-minute silence was observed in memory of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other victims of the August 15 tragedy.

Cardiac Society President Prof M Amanullah in his introductory speech paid homage to the memory of the martyrs and to the late Dr MA Wazed Miah, a noted nuclear scientist and the Prime Minister's husband.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister MA Karim, PMO Secretary Mollah

Waheeduzzaman, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, society Secretary General Prof Khawaja Nasiruddin Mahmood, Treasurer Dr Kaiser Nasrullah Khan, chairman of Cardiology Department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof KMHS Sirajul Haque were present.

### Proper probe into death of Humayun Azad demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of late Prof Humayun Azad yesterday demanded proper investigation into the cause of his death, saying that he was killed by Islamist extremists in a pre-planned way.

"At present, the pro-liberation force is in power. We categorically demand impartial investigation into his death," said Mouli Azad, daughter of Humayun Azad, at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, just a day before of his 5th death anniversary.

Prof Humayun Azad died in Germany in 2004 several months after Islamist extremists launched a machete attack on him at the Ekushey book fair, leaving him grievously injured.

At the press conference, Mouli announced that 'Dr Humayun Azad Poetry Award' would be introduced next year in his memory.

The award will be given to a young Bangalee poet, living at home or abroad, every year for his or her outstanding literary works. To qualify for the award, the poet must have three publications and should not be over 45 years.

The winner will be awarded Tk 20,000 and a crest.

Osman Gani, publisher of Agamee Prokashani, and family members of Prof Humayun Azad were present at the press conference.

As the weather shifts and the season changes, the trends adapt and transform. With the year's biggest religious festival just preceding the party months, this is the right time to think about updating your wardrobe, and that's where we come in.

**The Daily Star** is launching its **Star FASHION** **EID 2009**

This colourful compilation features the season's special collections by leading fashion houses, as well as tips on the current trends. The publication hits the stands very soon. Book your copy now!



PHOTO: STAR

Mouli Azad, daughter of Humayun Azad, speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her right is Ananya Azad and on her left are Osman Gani and Ismita Azad.



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