

# Pangaon ICT likely to start operation by '10

## Container movement in river route to reduce transportation cost and time remarkably

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

The Inland Container Terminal (ICT) at Pangaon in Narayanganj is likely to go into operation by the end of next year, sources said.

With a view to introducing container movement through river route, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) took the project in July 2000 at an estimated cost of Tk 154 crore.

Sources at CPA and BIWTA said the project is being delayed due to bureaucratic tangle and it took six years before only the infrastructural works like land-fill and bank protection under first and second phase could be done by December 21, 2006.

Sources said main construction of the project started on March 10 in 2008.

The ICT, funded by CPA, is being constructed on some 64 acres of land of BIWTA along the river Buriganga at Pangaon.

Under the project, jetties and sheds are being constructed on 35 acres of land and roads on 29 acres under the supervision of BIWTA engineers while an executive engineer will represent CPA as deputy project director (DPD).

The ICT would have a storage capacity of 3500 TEUs (Twenty Equivalent Units) of containers and handle 1.16 lakh TEUS containers annually.

Process is also under way

to procure low-draft vessels to carry containers between Chittagong port and the ICT through the river route to bring down transportation cost and time of containers remarkably.

"We expect to complete the construction by the scheduled time of June next year if everything goes smoothly. Otherwise, it may take a few more months," said Project Director Hasan Mahmud, also additional chief engineer of BIWTA.

Hasan said, "Though started with an estimated budget of Tk 154 crore implementation cost of the project may rise to Tk 177 crore since we are now going to install generators due to non-availability of gas."

While talking to The Daily Star CPA Chairman Commodore RU Ahmed said, "After constructing the ICT on BOT (Build, Operate and Transfer) basis CPA would appoint berth operator to operate it while BIWTC (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation) would have the responsibility to engage ten vessels each with a capacity ranging from 80 to 100 TEUs containers."

"CPA would operate the ICT until the investment is recovered after that on profit-sharing basis," he told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, BIWTC has completed a tender process to give work order for construction of four low-draught vessels in ten months, said the sources.

The vessels have to be suitable for movement in 4-metre draught to be main-

tained in the river in front of the ICT.

The rest six vessels might be engaged and operated through private sector later on, they said.

CPA sources said over 10 lakh TEUS containers are handled at Chittagong port annually. Of them, only ten percent can be taken to the lone Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Kamalapur in the capital by train. A train can transport at best 32 TEUs containers in each trip when single-line rail track on Dhaka-Chittagong also hinders its movement.

In this regard, port users said as carrying cost of a container in both rail (Tk 10,000) and road (Tk 12,000) almost the same, importers mostly get their cargo unloaded (from containers) and taken to Dhaka by trucks or covered vans to save time.

But, transportation by trucks or vans causes tremendous pressure and damages to roads alongside creating serious congestion on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, they said.

"If river route is opened transportation of cargo in container would increase by several times and ease congestion on Dhaka-Chittagong highway to a great extent," said Shiba Prasad Dey, managing director of freight forwarding firm Visual Trade System.

"It would also bring down incidents of road accidents and risk of theft alongside saving time and money of the importers," he added.



JASIM MAJUMDER

Vehicles use unfit bailey bridges on Khagrachhari-Chittagong Road and Khagrachhari-Dhaka Road, risking lives of passengers. The picture has been taken from Sapmara under Matiranga upazila in Khagrachhari recently. The bridge has collapsed four times last year killing two people.

## Khagrachhari bailey bridges death traps

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

At least 73 bailey bridges in the hilly district of Khagrachhari are at risk of collapse that could cause loss of lives and property.

The bridges lie in a most dilapidated condition on eight roads -- two inter-districts and six internal ones connecting eight upazilas with the district headquarters.

Sources said Roads and Highways Department (RHD) set up 14 temporary bailey bridges in 1980 on Khagrachhari-Dhaka road, 12 on Khagrachhari-Chittagong road, six on Khagrachhari-Rangamati road and 41 on some 16 internal roads.

The commuters blamed indifference of the RHD authorities for dilapidated condition of the bailey bridges, which the officials denied, saying that they have told the communications ministry for several times to replace the risky bridges.

In this regard, a project worth Tk 195 crore was also sent to the ministry on November 27 last year for constructing 38 PC girder bridges, 16 RCC bridges and 19 box culverts replacing the bailey bridges, the RHD officials said.

Truck driver Abul Kashem said they are scared while cross the bridges since iron plates have caved in and vehicles get stuck on the bridges on different occasions.

"We have also sent a letter to

the communications ministry for permanent bridges replacing these bailey bridges considering the sufferings caused to the people following accidents taking place frequently, said SM Shafi, a local transport association leader, while talking to The Daily Star.

Sub-Divisional Engineer Mohammad Shahabuddin of local RHD office said the ministry through RHD local units built the bridges in 1980 to facilitate communications of over five lakh people, including the indigenous ones in the hilly district.

As the bailey bridges are usually set up for a temporary use of 15 years, these bridges were not sup-

posed to be in use after 1995, he said.

Besides, the ban on movement of vehicles over three metric tons is also ignored to worsen the condition of the bridges, Shahabuddin said.

RHD Executive Engineer Rana Priya Barua said despite repeated repair the bridges have become death traps for the passengers.

He said accidents occurred on these bridges over 80 times and left at least three people killed and 60 others injured in last one year, he said.

Barua said if the proposed project is approved it would take five years to construct permanent bridges replacing the bailey bridges.

## theweekthatwas

### BSRM group gets rebate

To encourage timely adjustment of loan, Agrani Bank organised a

rebate awarding ceremony at its Laidighi East Corporate Branch in the port city on Tuesday.

The bank awarded rebate to BSRM Group at the function for timely adjustment of loan.

Addressing the ceremony as

the chief guest Agrani Bank Director Shahjada Mohiuddin emphasised modernising the bank and timely adjustment of loan to help achieve the goal of Vision 2021.

Agrani Bank Chittagong

circle General Manager Obaidullah Al Masud was the special guest at the ceremony presided over by AAM Shahjahan, deputy general manager of Laidighi East branch.

Receiving the rebate award, BSRM Chairman and Managing Director Ali Hussain Akber Ali called upon the government for easing the process of providing loan and relaxing banking policy to

help create congenial business atmosphere.

### Bangla Sommilan meets

Bangla Sommilan, an organisation of ex-students of Chittagong University Bangla Department, held a reunion preparedness meeting on Friday.

Chittagong College Principal Shekhar Dastidar, a former student of the department, presided over the meeting held at Islamabad Memorial Hall.

The meeting decided to hold the second reunion of Bangla Sommilan in January next year and meeting at Islamabad Memorial Hall at 7:00am on every Thursday for registration of the intended participants of the reunion.

Chittagong Chamber Secretary Osman Gani Chowdhury alias Ovik Osman, journalist and poet Bishwajit Chowdhury, Jinnah Chowdhury, Ruhiya Habib and Azad Bulbul spoke at the meeting.

### Cuta demands renovation of Road

Chittagong University Teachers' Association (Cuta) leaders demanded immediate steps to renovate busy Oxygen-Hathazari Road and upgrade it as a four-lane one.

The Cuta leaders at a press conference on Sunday said the busy road that connects the city with north Chittagong and the hill districts of Rangamati and

Khagrachhari developed numerous potholes hampering vehicular movement and causing serious suffering to the commuters.

They blamed indifference to the problem of Roads and Highways authorities and demanded steps to renovate the 12-kilometre road before admission tests of CU beginning November 8 when some 20 thousand admission seekers would be travelling to the campus everyday.

Cuta General Secretary Dr Md Kamrul Huda read the written statement at the press conference at Cuta office at the university.

Cuta President Dr Md Kamal Hossain, Vice President Md Abu Taher Chowdhury and Joint Secretary Md Ali Asgar Chowdhury were present among others.

### Seminar on renewable energy held

Speakers at a seminar in the port city on Saturday said Bangladesh can use the solar energy as an alternative source of power.

They called for making more utilisation of renewable energy that has a great potential for setting up projects like solar and biogas plant in the country.

Mechanical Engineering Department of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) and Bangladesh Society of Mechanical Engineering (BSME) jointly organised the seminar titled, "Renewable energy and safety management" at Cuet

campus. BSME President Prof Dr MH Khan was the chief guest at the seminar with Cuet Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Shyamal Kanti Biswas in the chair.

Islamic University of Technology (IUT) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Imtiaz Hossain, Cuet Mechanical Engineering Department Head Dr M Mahbubul Alam and Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) Chittagong Centre Engineer Delwar Hossain were present as the special guests.

### Publication ceremony of Salim's book held

Chittagong Society for the Disabled (CSD) on Thursday observed the first death anniversary of its founder general secretary Salim Nazrul, a writer and an activist of the rights of persons with disabilities.

On this occasion, CSD organised a publication ceremony of Salim Nazrul commemorative book and a discussion at Chittagong Shipakala Academy.

Abul Momen, resident editor of the Prothom Alo in Chittagong, unveiled the cover of the book as the chief guest. CSD General Secretary Mostafa Kamal Jatra compiled the book.

Jasmin Sultana Paru, Mahfuzul Haq Chowdhury, Kamrul Islam Shimul, Shahidul Islam Sajjad, Ahmad Kabir and Utpal Barua were the special guests at the ceremony chaired by CSD Chairperson Arifur Rahman.



STAR PHOTO

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan lays the foundation stone of Kazir Dewry Kitchen Market-cum-Apartment Complex of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) on Tuesday. City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and CDA Chairman Abdus Salam were present.