

Tk 739cr projects to improve Ctg road network

DWAIPAYAN BARUA
Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has taken several projects worth over Tk 739 crore to rid the city of gridlocks and develop road network in the port city in the wake of increasing number of vehicles as well as population.

The projects -- construction of five flyovers at busy intersections, expansion of five roads and construction of a new road -- are scheduled to be completed within 2013.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the flyovers at a ceremony on January 2.

CDA initially will construct a 1665 meter-long flyover at Bahodderhat intersection at a cost of Tk 86.5 crore to be completed by 2011, said CDA Chairman Abdus Salam.

Salam said a tender has already been invited for recruiting consultant for the Bahodderhat flyover. He hoped to complete all the projects within next three years.

The flyovers will be built at a cost of Tk 260 crore on Bahodderhat, Muradpur, Sholoshahar 2 No. Gate, GEC and Kadamtali intersections. Of the intersections, four are located on the CDA Avenue.

Vehicles from Patiya, Anwara, Banskhal, Lohagar Satkania, Bandarban, Cox's Bazar and Teknaf enter the city through the Bahodderhat intersection creating a serious traffic jam at the point.

The traffic situation would be deteriorated after the inauguration of the 3rd Karnaphuli Bridge in the middle of this year.

With increasing number of vehicles, traffic is becoming difficult since the total traffic system depends on the lone

thoroughfare stretching from Kalurghat to Patenga.

Vehicles from Dhaka, northern parts of the district, Rangamati, Khagrachhari, southern parts of the district as well as Bandarban and Cox's Bazar are to cross the road as there is no alternative way to the city.

City dwellers especially office goers, students and garment workers face the intolerable sufferings while travel to their destinations due to acute gridlock at all the points across the city.

The traffic jam is now a common scene at Bahodderhat, Muradpur, Sholoshahar 2 No. Gate, GEC, Dewanhat, Choumuhony, Agrabad Badamtali, Saltgola Crossing and EPZ Moor (Free Port). Apart from this, New Market, Chawbazar, Station Road, Kadamtali, Badurtala Road, Pathantuli, Patharghata, Madarbari remain gridlocked all the day.

Al Mamun, resident of Mohra of Kalurghat who crosses the Bahodderhat point everyday to go to his office at Agrabad, said he is to remain stuck in vehicle for over 30 minutes here for intolerable congestion.

It takes around one and half an hour to reach the office due to gridlock at different points, Mamun said.

Commuters said with the construction of the Bahodderhat flyover, the traffic congestion will only be shifted to Muradpur, Sholoshahar and GEC.

CDA Chairman Salam said, "To avert such a problem we have planned to build three other flyovers at the next three busy points." "We will also construct a flyover at Kadamtali to make an alternative way to Dewanhat over bridge, the only route for most of the vehicles," he said.

CDA has also taken plans to expand



Vehicles get stuck in a gridlock at the GEC intersection on Tuesday.

ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

and renovate five important roads at a cost of Tk 307.11 crore with a view to improving the road network in the port city. The roads are Dewanhat-Olonker Road, Pathantuly Road, DC Road (Didar Market-Mousumi Residential Area), Oli Khan-Muradpur Road and

Sagarika Road. A new road stretching from Sirajdoulah Road to Shah Amanat Bridge will be constructed for expansion and development of secondary road network of the city.

People living on the other side of the river Karnaphuli will easily be able to enter the city without any congestion at Patharghata area after construction of the new road, said Salam.

The Development Project Proposal (DPP) for expansion of Pathantuly Road and Oli Khan-Muradpur Road

has been sent to the Planning Commission on December 2 last year after approval of the Housing and Public Works Ministry on October 10 the same year, said the CDA sources. DPPs of three other expansion projects will be sent to the ministry soon.

No standard testing for imported agri items

Chittagong port department only conducts quarantine tests

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD
The imported agri items like food grains, spices and fruits are released from Chittagong port without any standard testing to see if they are fit for human consumption or not.

Absence of such testing deprives the people of quality food and the government of revenue.

Chittagong port releases the items only after quarantine tests conducted by its Quarantine Department run under Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

Contrary to the general belief, the department only conducts quarantine test, not standard testing, said the

sources. According to sources, DAE has 13 centres across the country to conduct quarantine test of around 250 types of agro items, particularly rice, wheat, pulse, spices and fresh or dried fruits after import or before export.

Most of the import or export of these agro items are made through Chittagong port.

Samples of the imported items are collected from containers or hedges of vessels at the outer-anchorage area for quarantine test.

After obtaining quarantine clearance, the items get customs clearance for release from the port without any standard testing.

"In many occasions such imported agro items are found worm-eaten or not fit for human consumption. But, we have nothing to do with this since the responsibility of testing standard is supposed to lie with Bangladesh Standard Testing Institution (BSTI), department of health or radiation department," said Entomologist Md Belayet Hossain Khan of Chittagong Port Quarantine Department.

He said they are to conduct test and issue quarantine clearance certificates following specific set of rules. Belayet said the quarantine test is done only to prevent entry of food grains or agro items carrying worms or insects, which are alien to us and feared to attack and

damage plants in the country. He was talking to this correspondent at his office on Sunday.

BSTI conducts tests and give clearance to 16 food products like milk powder, biscuits, jam, jelly, soya bean, sugar, vegetable juice, pineapple juice, chips, honey, tomato ketchup, noodles and soft drinks, sources at BSTI said.

BSTI cannot go for standard testing of the food grains tested by Quarantine Department, they said.

BSTI Deputy Director SM Ishaq said standard testing should be done for all food or agro items since quarantine tests do not check entry of rotten or substandard food grains that may pose health hazard.

He said a three-year import policy is likely to be declared soon and it is up to the government to make mandatory of standard testing for such items if they are of standard quality or unfit for consumption. "As far I know standard testing of imported food grains is yet to be included in the policy", he added.

Meanwhile, Quarantine Department is also struggling hard to keep pace with the outside world in quarantine tests.

Though there is a remarkable change in packaging, preservation, handling and transportation systems of such items, the department conducts tests following a set of rules amended in 1989.

Export and importers alleged that backdated and time consuming quarantine tests delay export or import process and cause suffering to them.

Belayet said lack of required equipment and materials as well as technicians hampers issuance of correct clearance in time.

"In most of the cases the field level DAE officials are deployed in Quarantine Department and are transferred when they just start growing experienced," he said.

"So, the department could not be developed as a full-fledged one equipped with experienced and skilled manpower," he said.

theweekthatwas



As the winter sets in, both the demand and price of warm clothes marked a sharp rise. To the low-income people, shops along the footpaths become the best place to find warm clothes. Crowd and sale at such shops are also larger than those in markets. The photo was taken from Sholoshahar area on Monday.

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CU teachers urged to remove session jam

Chittagong University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abu Yusuf urged the teachers to perform their duties with utmost sincerity and integrity to remove the session jam at the university by this year.

Terming the Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) as a respectable organisation Prof Yusuf said everybody expects that the association will work as representative of all teachers upholding image of the university. He was addressing the annual

general meeting of Cuta as the chief guest at Social Science Faculty auditorium on Monday.

Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mohammad Alauddin was the special guest at the meeting with the Cuta President Prof Dr Kamal Hossain in the chair.

Cuta General Secretary Dr Kamrul Huda presented the annual report of the association while Joint Secretary Ali Asgar Chowdhury, Political Science Department Chairman Siddique Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Dr Hasan Mohammad, Prof Dr Mohammad Abdul Hossain and lecturer Syed Mohammad Sajjad Kabir spoke at the meeting. Later, the guests accorded floral reception to newly elected members of the association.

Decision to repatriate 9000 Rohingyas hailed

Arakan Historical Society hailed the decision at a foreign secretary level meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar for repatriation of 9000 Rohingyas refugees from Bangladesh. Leaders of Arakan Historical Society, a Chittagong-based organisation of Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh, at a statement on Friday said the decision of repatriation bears signs of successful diplomatic activities of the

Bangladesh government. The grand alliance government's continuous move will help all the Rohingyas to go home with full human rights soon, they hoped. The statement signed by Society President MA Kalam also called upon Bangladesh government and all international organisations, including the United Nations to come forward to help stop oppression on Rohingyas in Myanmar and thus check their infiltration here.

Call to raise quota for FFs' children at CU

Chittagong Muktijoddha Coordination Parishad demanded increase in number of seats for the children of freedom fighters' (FFs) under quota system at Chittagong University. The Parishad leaders led by its President Jitendra Prasad Nath Montu and Chittagong South District

Tazkia, a self-development organisation, distributed warm clothes among the distressed people on the

'Work to make KPM profitable'

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury urged the workers and staffs of Karnaphuli Paper Mills (KPM) to work sincerely with a view to making the state-owned paper mill profitable. He said due to lack of proper marketing the KPM-produced paper is losing markets in spite of its better quality and low price compared to

'Engage local experts to fight climate change'

Speakers at a discussion titled 'Climate change' on Thursday emphasised the need for engaging local experts to fight climate change. They said developed countries mainly responsible for contributing to global warming through discharging 90 percent wastage and emitting 74 percent carbon every year. Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) organised the discussion at a local restaurant. Former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University (CU) Dr Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin was the chief guest at the discussion moderated by Dr Shafiq Haider. Prof Dr Maksudur Rahman presented the key-note paper at the discussion while M Hafizul Islam Khan of BELA briefed about laws related to environment. Prof Shah Alam, Prof Sikander Khan, Dr Obaidul Karim, Prof Dr AQM Sirajul Islam, Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) (North) Mizanur Rahman, senior reporter of local daily Purbokone Saiful Alam, CCC Councillor Rekha Alam Chowdhury, Sabiha Musa, BELA Chittagong district Coordinator Advocate Anwarul Islam Chowdhury and Advocate Kamrun Nahar spoke at the discussion.

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Prof Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin addresses a publication ceremony of a book titled 'Agnijhara Dinguli' on anti-British movement veteran Binod Bihari Chowdhury at Chittagong Press Club auditorium on Friday. Shabdachash Prokashan published the book. Binod Bihari Chowdhury, extreme right, was present at the ceremony organised by Shabdachash Prokashan.