

MIRZARPOOL BRIDGE

# Delay in construction causes suffering to commuters

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Vehicular movement on the Panchlaish-Muradpur road in the city remained suspended for last eight months due to delay in construction of a 60-foot bridge on the Mirza canal, causing sufferings to thousands of commuters everyday.

Plying of heavy vehicles along the road stopped in the middle of 2008 when crack developed in the bailey bridge, popularly known as Mirzarpool Bridge.

However, movement of light vehicles continued till construction of the bridge started in July last year.

The bailey bridge constructed by Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) in 1992 at a cost of Tk 92 lakh became unusable within eight years. The authorities concerned put up iron bars on both the ends to limit vehicular movement on the bridge in 2001 due to dilapidated condition of the bridge.

Since then the bridge was repaired for thrice to allow limited movement of vehicles until it was removed for construction of a four-lane pre-stressed bridge last year.

Mezba Associates, a construction firm, got the work order to build the bridge involving Tk 3.25 crore, CCC sources said.

The firm started construction in July last year after removing the old bailey bridge, forcing the vehicles to travel several times higher distance using diverted route of narrow and twisting lanes and by-lanes in densely populated areas.

Thousands of people from Hathazari, Fatikchhari and Raozan as well as from Rangmati and Khagrachhari face difficulties when enter the city for the under-construction bridge.

Residents of both sides of



Pedestrians cross a makeshift bridge over Mirza canal on the Panchlaish-Muradpur road. Vehicular movement on the road remained suspended for the last eight months due to delay in construction of a bridge over the canal, causing immense suffering to the commuters.

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the road, including Sugandha residential area, are the most sufferers as they have no alternative way of vehicular movement.

Dr Sharmila Chowdhury said they are to face intolerable sufferings everyday when they go to the workplaces and return home as the authorities broke the bailey bridge without keeping alternative way of vehicular movement.

Dr Sharmila said she uses the busy Muradpur-GEC route that takes more than half an hour to reach her clinic at Probortak due to lack of any alternative way.

People from Panchlaish intersection and Chawkbazar areas were using the adjoining Abdul Hamid road as an alternative way to go to Muradpur Road. But it also remained for last three months since piling of a pillar of the bridge started on the southern side of the canal.

Patients from Muradpur, Mohammadpur, Bibirhat, Hamjebag, Aturer Depot, Oxygen and northern parts of the district are to cross long routes through Sholohahar 2 No. Gate or GEC intersection to reach Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Shimul, a resident of Sugandha residential area, said it is really unfortunate that a 60-foot bridge could not be built in seven months.

Engineer Delwar Hossain Majumder of Mezba Associates attributed the delay to numerous power supply lines and water, gas and telephone lines running beneath the canal.

He said it took longer time to remove electric poles, make new alignment and shift power supply lines in several phases. Shifting of underground gas and water supply lines also hindered the construction work while

shifting of telephone lines is still going on, Delwar added. Eviction of structures to widen the bridge also caused the delay, he said.

"However, the authorities concerned and local leaders helped us a lot to continue the work even during shifting of these power, gas, water and telephone lines," he said.

"Construction of such pre-stressed bridge also takes a longer time than that of normal bridges," he said.

"However, we have completed piling work with required load testing, capping of 48 pillars and we are

now proceeding with girders of the bridge," he said, adding that they are making sincere efforts to complete the bridge, causing the least inconvenience to the people. "With the complex and time-consuming work almost done, we hope to complete the bridge before June," he said.

CCC Chief Engineer Abul Hasnat blamed removal and shifting of power lines and underground water, gas and telephone lines for the delay. "However, construction is going on in full swing and it might be completed as per the schedule," Hasnat said.

## Radioactive portal at Ctg port by June

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Chittagong port is likely to install radioactive portal at its four gates by June to check export and import of radioactive materials.

Ahead of launching the portal, a 24-member team of customs officials will receive training on radioactive portal operation at US Mega-port Initiative Headquarters in the US soon.

Sources said process for installation of the portal involving 13 million US dollar started at Chittagong port under the US Mega-ports Initiative around a year ago.

US Mega-ports Initiative is a project under which the US is installing such portals around 200 ports across the globe, they said.

The US would provide the radioactivity detection equipment for the portal and get those installed by their experts and technical teams, said the sources.

Three technical teams from US Mega-ports Initiative visited Chittagong port and have already selected sites to start installing the equipment at four gates in the port soon, said Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Secretary Syed Farhaduddin Ahmed.

"As the implementing authority, CPA is providing all the necessary support for installing the portal," he said, adding, "Installation of the portal has become obligatory as well as indispensable since many countries are reluctant to import goods without radioactivity test."

Sources in Chittagong customs house said as the preparation of installation was going on, the US Mega-ports Initiative made arrangement to train up officials to be entrusted with the operation of the radioactive portal at Chittagong port.

US Mega-ports Initiative recently requested the shipping ministry to send a team for training in a five-day course at its headquarters from March 29.

Since customs officials would be taking care of regulatory and legal aspects of the radioactive portal, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) selected 24 officials from both the import and export divisions of Chittagong Customs House.

The team includes four high officials -- commissioner (import), additional commissioner (export), Joint Commissioner (Import), and Deputy Commissioner (Export) -- and 20 preventive officers and appraisers.

Of the preventative officers and appraisers, 17 are from export and three from import division of Chittagong Customs House, said the sources.

However, sources said the US Mega-ports Initiative set a condition of selecting officials who would not be transferred elsewhere in 18 months after the training.

Before finalising the list it would be wise to check if any of the selected officials awaits promotion and consequent transfer, said a customs official preferring anonymity.

Joint Commissioner (Import) Md Moazzem Hossain said Mega-ports Initiative through an e-mail message on January 7 requested for providing its training centre in the US with the passport numbers and duly filled-in prescribed forms of the selected officials by February 1.

"Installation of the portal would be helpful for us as well since it would check both the export and import of any radioactive goods," Moazzem said.

## theweekthatwas

### Solar eclipse observation camp held

Amid enthusiasm and festivity a solar eclipse observation camp was held in the city on Friday.

Shishu Kishore Mela, Bigyan Andolon Mancha, National Science and Museum and Sky Watchers' Club jointly organised the camp at Saint Placid's School.

The camp facilitated students, guardians and enthusiastic people to observe the solar eclipse through telescope.

On the occasion a scientific workshop was also held.

Bigyan Andolon Mancha Convener Al Quaderi Joy, Shishu Kishore Mela Secretary Satyajit Bishwas and Sky Watchers' Club leaders Md Rasel, Shahid and Shimul spoke at the workshop.

Shishu Kishore Mela also distributed filters and books on solar eclipse in eight schools in the city. Besides, camps and discussion were also held at Railway Public School, Khaza Ajmeree School and at Goshiledanga in the city.

### Sonali Bank branch opens ATM booth

With a view to offering customers modern banking service Sonali Bank Limited launched an ATM booth in front of its Agrabad office building here on Sunday.

Inaugurating the ATM booth, Deputy Managing Director Pradeep Kumar Datt said modernisation of Sonali Bank and overall development of the banking sector became imperative to play due role in building a digital

Bangladesh declared by the prime minister.

He urged the bank officials and employees to work with competitive attitude changing conventional mindset and speed up investment activities and uninterrupted flow of deposit collection.

He also called for achieving confidence and trust of the customers through providing modern, updated and expected best services.

### Call to raise fund through cooperatives

Anti-British movement veteran Binod Bihari Chowdhury on Saturday said cooperatives are proven ways for rural development, poverty alleviation and economic development.

He called for raising fund through cooperatives society and investing in profitable work to create self-employment and bring in socio-economic development.

Binod made this call while addressing as the chief guest the 92nd annual general meeting of Chittagong Urban Cooperatives Society Limited at Anderkilla.

He also lauded the cooperatives society for making contribution to the society through its work for such a long time.

Society President Dulal Kanti Majumder presided over the meeting. Former presidents Engineer Parimal Kanti Chowdhury and Subhash Chandra Lala, Society Secretary Tinkori Chakraborty and Swadhin Bishwash also spoke.

The society that made a net profit of Tk 10 lakh 19,597 in the last financial year declared 40 percent dividend.

### Adequate teachers demanded

The students of Diploma in Environmental Engineering Course at Chittagong Polytechnic Institute on Saturday demanded appointment of adequate teachers and logistics for their course.

At a press conference at Chittagong Press Club, the students said they have three permanent teachers for the course when it was introduced in 2006.

They said there is only one permanent teacher for the course as two other teachers are now abroad. Two part-time teachers who hardly take class under additional charge, they alleged.

They said there is only one lab for the course against two labs for any other courses. Besides, the lab lacks equipment while library has no sufficient books, they added.



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SHIKDER

A cold wave has been sweeping over Chittagong for over a week, paralysing normal life. The photo shows two women on their way to their workplace amid dense fog.

### 'Govt gives priority to education'

Industries Minister Dilip Barua said the present pro-people government provided the students with books free of cost giving importance to the education. Barua said this while he was addressing a reception and annual prize ceremony of three educational institutions and orphanage at Satkania here on Wednesday.

Successful students of Gatiadenga Alhaj Shafia-Mamtazul Haq High School and College, Purba Gatiadenga Habibul Ulm Madrasa and Shah Jabberia Shafia-Mamtazul Haq Hefzkhana and Orphanage were accorded reception at the function.

Chittagong City Corporation

Councillor Advocate Rehana Begum Ranu was the special guest at the function with chairman of the institutions and IMS Group Chairman Abul Basher Abu in the chair.

Additional Police Super (Satkania circle) Rabiul Hossain, local Awami League leader Faridul Alam, principal Fazlul Haq, Barrister Bidyut Barua and Upazila Nirbahi Officer Azad Sallal also spoke at the ceremony.

### Boat procession on Karnaphuli

Different water transport owners and workers took out a procession on Saturday on the river Karnaphuli with their transports to create awareness against pollution.

Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation (BHRF), Chittagong branch organised the procession. Over 300 environment conscious people on board boats, launches and steamer took part.

The participants carrying banners and festoons with slogans for saving environment travelled over the Karnaphuli from Manohorkhali jetty to Kaptai.

A rally was also held before the procession at Sadarghat in the city with freedom fighter Abdul Aziz in the chair.

BHRF Chittagong branch President Advocate Zia Habib Ahsan, Secretary Advocate Mohammad Sharif Uddin, Prof Noman Siddiqui, Prof Dr Mohammad Ali Azadi and journalists Mamunur Rashid, Aliur Rahman, Shamim Hamid and Mostafizur Rahman spoke at the rally.



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Minister for Primary and Mass Education Afsarul Ameen speaks at a discussion on 'Complexities of income tax laws' organised by the International Business Forum of Bangladesh at Hotel Agrabad on Saturday.