

Karnaphuli dredging project gets stuck

DWAIPAYAN BARUIA, Ctg

The capital dredging of the Karnaphuli river, a vital project for the smooth operation of Chittagong port, remains incomplete even three and a half years after the deadline.

About 80 percent of the project was completed before the appointed Malaysian contractor left it in 2013.

Though nearly two third of the sand and mud were dredged up from the riverbed by that time, the official concerned fear that the riverbed is now completely strewn with silt and that they would have to start the dredging all over again.

On the other hand, the contractor, Malaysian Maritime and Dredging Corporation (MMDC), took Tk 166 crore from the Tk 229.54-crore project, according to Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) officials.

In April 2011, the CPA awarded the project, titled "Capital Dredging and Bank Protection with Jetty Facilities in the Karnaphuli River from Sadarghat Jetty to Third Karnaphuli Bridge", to the MMDC and asked the firm to complete the work within 20 months.

The MMDC started their work later in May and was supposed to end it by January 2013.

The project work include, dredging up 3.6 million cubic metres of silt from

around two kilometres of riverbed stretching from Sadarghat Jetty to some 500 metres off the Third Karnaphuli Bridge as well as constructing a 2,615-metre marine driveway with bank protection and a 400-metre jetty.

Though over 95 percent work of the construction of the jetty and the bank protection was completed before the work suspension, around 38 percent of the dredging was still incomplete, according to the port officials.

The MMDC dredged up around 2.23 million cubic metres of silt from the riverbed.

The CPA extended the deadline several times after the 2013 deadline but the contractor failed to show satisfactory progress, said the officials.

In May 2013, the port authority issued a notice to the MMDC, mentioning the delay as a fundamental breach of contract and warned it that further failure to achieve satisfactory progress would entail harsh action.

Following repeated warnings, the CPA scrapped the deal in 2014. Later on, it moved to complete the project on its own or through another contractor.

However, the move went in vain as the MMDC filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the deal cancellation and got a stay on it.

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Silt accumulates in the Karnaphuli river in Chittagong as capital dredging of the river has remained stalled for more than three years. The river, a lifeline for Chittagong city and the port, is losing navigability due to silt deposition, which is hampering smooth movement of vessels. The photo was taken from Shah Amanat Bridge area yesterday.

PHOTO:
ANURUP KANTI DAS

Bangladesh, India set model in cooperation

Visiting Indian foreign secretary tells Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar yesterday said Bangladesh and India set a "model" in bilateral cooperation.

"The model is being highly appreciated in India," he said while meeting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence the Gono Bhaban yesterday evening.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

While talking about Indian commitments made during its Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh in June last year, the secretary said eight out of the 14 pledges had already been fulfilled.

"We've been able to make a good progress as eight commitments have already been fulfilled in nearly one year and we're vigorously working to meet other pledges," he said.

Jaishankar pointed out that there had also been a good progress in the

power and LNG/LPG sectors cooperation by the two countries.

He said a number of Indian companies showed interest in setting up a deep seaport in Bangladesh.

Over the matter, Hasina said the deep seaport could be established through a consortium.

Jaishankar thanked the Bangladesh government for its support to India in its initiatives for launching a Saarc satellite.

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Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO:
PID

Pakistan again sides with war criminals

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In December 2013, it passed a resolution after the execution of convicted war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah, another leader of Jamaat, the party that worked fiercely against the birth of Bangladesh.

Earlier yesterday, Pakistan foreign ministry issued a statement that reads: "Pakistan is deeply saddened over the hanging of the Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami Bangladesh, Mr. Moti-ur-Rehman Nizami..."

The resolution and the statement came two days after Dhaka reacted sharply to Pakistan's May 6 statement on the dismissal of Nizami's review petition. It had summoned the Pakistan High Commissioner Shuja Alam to register its strong disapproval.

Nizami, the chief of Al-Badr, an auxiliary force of Pakistan army in 1971, was executed early yesterday, for committing crimes including the killing of intellectuals and mass murders in Pabna during the nine-month war.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said Pakistan should realise that Bangladesh has been an independent country for the last 45 years and that it is not a part of Pakistan.

He observed, "Pakistan should learn not to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. Pakistan should thank Bangladesh for the magnanimity it showed by allowing occupation soldiers to return home after their surrender in Dhaka, even though they had committed genocide and other heinous crimes in 1971."

"I hope good sense will prevail and they [Pakistan] will keep their mouth shut..."

"Lastly, I want to say that Pakistan is the last country that should talk about human rights. We do not need a lesson on human rights from Pakistan."

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq said, "I want to ask Pakistan to stop interfering in our internal matters. Otherwise, it will affect our diplomatic relations, and the government will be compelled to cut ties with it, as demanded by the people."

Talking to The Daily Star, he added, "We always said the war criminals don't believe in Bangladesh's existence and they are the citizens of Pakistan. Pakistan's reactions after each of the verdicts proved our claim."

Referring to Pakistan foreign ministry's statement, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shariar Alam said Pakistan continues to make comments supporting these convicted war criminals.

"Their statement is an utter lie and absolutely unacceptable," he said, adding, "They can't be our friend or partner... those who stand against our independence and the history of our independence."

About Pakistan's claim on the 1974 agreement, he said the essential spirit of the agreement was to create an environment for good neighbourliness and peaceful co-existence.

The agreement never implied that the masterminds and perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity

and genocide would continue to enjoy impunity and eschew the course of justice.

He said the verdicts in Nizami's case had been delivered through an independent, sound, fair, impartial, open and transparent judicial process, and without any political interference.

The trial only considered the crimes committed by Nizami in 1971 and it had nothing to do with his political identity or affiliation.

ASM Feroz, chief whip of parliament, said that by passing such a resolution, Pakistan attempted to interfere in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. "We strongly denounce it."

Prominent war crimes trial campaigner Shahriar Kabir said Bangladesh "must adopt an aggressive diplomacy against Pakistan."

In response to Pakistan's reactions, Bangladesh should immediately start the trial of the Pakistani high command in 1971 and its army officials for committing crimes during the Liberation War, said Shahriar, the acting president of Ektattor Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, an organisation campaigning for the war crimes trial since the early '90s.

Referring to the tripartite agreement, he said Pakistan itself violated the agreement, as it did not take back the stranded Pakistanis living in Bangladesh.

Besides, the agreement had no validity as neither Bangladesh nor Pakistan parliament endorsed it, he said. As per the Vienna Convention, to

Mathematics the key

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subject. But this year, students have been able to master the techniques and it is reflected in the results, said the officials.

In Dhaka Board, the success rate in mathematics rose to 93.1 percent from last year's 92.8 percent. In Jessore Board, the pass rate went up by 7.77 percentage points, according to the statistics provided by the boards.

Apart from mathematics, the students did well in English. The average pass rate in the subject is 97.41 percent.

The results came in less than two months after the exams.

Yesterday, schools across the country took a festive look. Many of the students and parents, who looked anxious for some time, erupted into jubilation as soon as they received the results.

Some danced while some showed victory signs. Happiness was writ large on their faces.

"I cannot express in words how happy I am," said a jubilant Raisa, a student of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College. She got GPA-5.

Thanking her teachers, she said, "They taught us very well throughout the year and we also worked hard. And it paid off."

"I give credit to my parents for their constant support."

More than 13 lakh students from 28,107 institutions took this year's SSC exams under the eight education boards. Of them, 11,53,363 passed the tests and 1,46,921 failed.

The pass rates of boys and girls are 88.77 and 88.68 percent in eight boards.

The combined pass rate under 10 education boards, including madrasa and technical boards, rose to 88.29 percent from last year's

87.04 percent.

However, the number of GPA-5 achievers in the 10 boards dropped to 109,761 from last year's 111,901. Only 76 examinees secured GPA-5 in 2001 when the grading system was introduced.

Overall, girls have done slightly better in terms of pass rate this year.

Announcing the results at a crowded press conference at his ministry, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the exam success was the culmination of a combined effort from all.

"We are not saying the result is perfect, but it shows that we are improving gradually. If we can continue our efforts, we would be able to do better in future."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

Nahid said most of the students flunk English and mathematics. Keeping this in mind, the ministry asked the schools to arrange extra classes on the subjects and also provided training to teachers from around 8,000 schools.

This year, some 4,734 institutions saw a 100 percent pass rate. No student passed from 53 institutions, 37 of which are madrasas.

Like the previous year, Rajshahi Board topped the chart in terms of success rate (95.7 percent) while Barisal Board was at the bottom (79.41 percent).

As in past several years, students of

SSC RESULTS

BOARD	PASS RATE 2016	PASS RATE 2015	GPA-5 2016	GPA-5 2015
Dhaka	88.67	88.65	40,833	36,801
Rajshahi	95.70	94.97	17,594	15,873
Comilla	84.00	84.22	6,954	10,195
Jessore	91.85	84.02	9,444	7,181
Chittagong	90.44	82.77	7,666	7,116
Barisal	79.41	84.37	3,113	3,171
Sylhet	84.77	81.82	2,266	2,452
Dinajpur	89.59	85.50	8,899	10,842
Total	88.70	86.72	96,769	93,631

"I'm happy but I would like to be happier," he said, congratulating the students.

On the introduction of a creative method in mathematics despite opposition from parents, the minister said, "The method was introduced on the recommendations of educationists and teachers who are the main formulators of the method."

Earlier, the education minister handed over a copy of the results to

science group with a pass rate of 95.89 percent did better than those of the other two groups. The pass rate is 83.36 percent in humanities group and 88.98 percent in business studies group.

Two of the eight centres abroad saw 100 percent success with 112 of 395 students securing the highest grade point. The children of expatriate Bangladeshis took the exams in those centres.

MADRASA BOARD

Pass rate drops after 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a five-year uptrend, the Madrasa Education Board has seen a drop in success rate and the number of GPA-5 achievers in this year's Dakhil examinations.

The pass rate has come down to 88.22 percent from last year's 90.20 percent. A total of 5,895 examinees have obtained GPA-5 this year. Last year, the number was 11,338.

Officials of the board attributed students' poor performance in two subjects -- Social Sciences and Islamic History -- to the decline in the success rate.

Asked, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "We will analyse the reasons behind the fall and act accordingly."

Some 2,29,666 examinees took the Dakhil exams under the Madrasa Education Board this year. Of them, 2,17,314 have passed and 3,748 male and 2,147 female students have secured GPA-5.

The pass rate of the SSC (vocational) and Dakhil (vocational) exams under the Technical Education Board is 83.11 percent this year. It was 83.01 percent last year.

The number of GPA-5 achievers this year has also increased to 7,097 from last year's 6,932.

Some 81,928 students have passed the exams out of 98,581 candidates.

In terms of GPA-5 achievers, male students lagged behind the female students.