



Left, the lining work at the sides of the Ibrahimpur canal has not only reduced its width but also made it a garbage destination, while the U-channel work on the Gerani canal has narrowed down its width reducing the water carrying capacity.

PHOTOS: SK ENAMUL HAQ, PRABIR DAS

CHT people to receive safe water through gravitational flow system

UNB, Dhaka

The government has planned to supply drinking water to the ethnic communities living in remote areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) through installing a "gravitational flow system", an innovative approach to tap the water seepage along hill slopes without using electricity.

A project proposal has already been sent to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives for its approval, Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) Md Wali Ullah said.

Once approved, the project will be implemented in three districts -- Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

Primarily, 50 "gravitational flow systems" will be set up in Bandarban and Rangamati involving around Tk 16 crore. Under the project, about 3,600 deep tube wells and a number of community-level latrines will be installed in the region.

In Gravitational Flow System, a reservoir is first set up through constructing a check-dam in an up-hill position to store water that seep from hills. And then the stored water is channeled to a water plant installed in a locality through a pipeline using the natural force of gravity. Finally, the water is purified in the plant and is dispensed to people directly through taps installed along with the plant.

Nazia Tasmin, a DHPE assistant engineer, said sometimes the water supplied through the "gravitational flow system" does not require to be purified since it comes from hills through seepage.

Water is very precious in the CHT region since there is no alternative source to surface water. Groundwater cannot be lifted through tube wells within miles in many areas since it is not available there due to unique land formation of the CHT and moreover, water crisis becomes severe in dry season.

BANK LINING KILLS CANALS

Wasa U-channels also reducing water carrying capacity

EIGHTH REPORT on DHAKA CANALS

HELEMUL ALAM

Though it is essential to recover the city canals from encroachers and increase its width to save Dhaka from flood and waterlogging, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) has turned around 13 canals to concrete drains which significantly reduced the canals' water carrying capacity.

Experts said Wasa in the name of protecting and demarcating those canals through U-channels and trapezoidal CC block lining (an impermeable layer provided at the sides of canal to improve its life and discharge capacity) virtually reduced their widths.

During construction of those U-channels and lining work, in most of the cases, Wasa did not follow the CS maps to protect the canals properly, and the work also created scopes for grabbers to encroach the canals.

Though the lining and U-channels protected the canals from encroachers but it reduced the canals' width in many cases; the work should have been done keeping it wider, said experts.

Wasa took the initiative of constructing RCC U-channel and trapezoidal CC block lining on 13 canals under "Dhaka Water Supply and Sanitation Project", funded by World Bank, which started in 2009 and continued till 2016.

The canals where RCC U-channels were constructed are Khilgaon-Basabo khal (canal), Khilgaon-Basabo upstream, and Gerani, Sahjadpur, Mohakhali and Segunbagicha khals.

Block lining work was done in Sahjahanpur, Kalynapur main khal, Abdullahpur branch khal, Abdullahpur

and Segunbagicha khals.

Apart from those, earth cutting and demarcation work were done in Digung and Sutivola khals under the project.

More canals also partially came under Wasa's CC-block lining work, including Katasur, Ramchandrapur, Kalyanpur Ga, and Ka and Ibrahimpur khals out of the project.

During a recent visit it was found that most of these canals were not demarcated following the actual width of the canals which were much wider even in the 70s or 80s.

"The Gerani canal was huge even in the 90s as big size boats used to run through it. The canal had a link with Trimohini," said Md Jobbar, a Manda resident. "I went to Trimohini through Gerani in the 90s on a launch during the rainy season," he said.

Even in the dry season its width was around 40 feet and rest of the land would dry up and turn to a paddy field, he said.

Segunbagicha and Khilgaon-Basabo canals were also huge and had a link with the Gerani canal, he said.

But Gerani was turned to an 8.2 metre U-channel, Khilgaon-Basabo to a 9.5 metre U-channel and Segunbagicha canal was turned to a 19 metre U-channel with CC block lining.

All the three canals now confluence at Manda and fall into the Balu river through Manda khal which also became very narrow, said locals.

But according to a CS map record, width of the Gerani canal, which was under Dakkhingon Mouja, was 25 to 120 feet, which started from Trimohoni and ended at Manda, where its width was 40 to 45 feet.

But it was seen that Wasa has constructed U-channels keeping around 25 feet (8.2 metre) width.

Even according to the list of canals at

the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office in Dhaka, the Gerani canal is mentioned as Dakkhingon-Nandipara canal and its width is 60 to 130 feet.

The other canals will be more or less the same since Wasa did not try to maintain their actual widths as per the CS map during the construction of the U-channels.

Managing Director of Wasa Taqsem A Khan, however, said Wasa followed the CS map during construction of the U-channels and lining work.

"If a canal comes under the lining work it remains protected from encroachment most of the cases," he said, adding that after the work encroachment becomes easily visible.

"Without the lining work, it is easier



A child runs by the Katasur-Ramchandrapur canal, which has lost its width due to the lining work and encroachment.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

U-CHANNEL, BANK LINING WORK FOR CANALS
Work done on 13 canals
Funded by World Bank
Duration 2009-2016
WHAT WASA SAYS
Provide encroachment protection
Walkways work as demarcation
Infringement becomes visible
WHAT EXPERTS SAY
Shrink canals' width
Reduce storm water carrying capacity
Turn canals to drains
SUGGESTIONS
Reassessing U-channel construction
Region based runoff
Connectivity between water bodies
Proper govt initiative
Strict enforcement of law
Recover canals based on original CS map

for encroachers to fill one or two feet of a canal and afterwards confusion arises as to whom the land actually belongs." So the decision taken at that time was a right one, he said.

Taqsem said lining and setting up walkway is very necessary after the bank protection work since a walkway also does the work of demarcation.

Prof Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh University and Engineering Technology (Buet) said the capacities of the canals are seriously reduced due to the U-channels.

"When it is imperative to increase the canals' capacity to manage storm water, Wasa reduced the capacity of the canals. Through the work they have turned the canals into drains," he said.

Wasa through the U-channels has reduced the storm water carrying capacity of the canals drastically, he said. "When experts are criticising the concept of box culvert, how could Wasa go for this kind of concrete drain again?"

Regarding Wasa's claim of doing the work for the canals' demarcation, Prof

Mujibur said it is wrong to assume that encroachment will not be done this way.

"We suggest increasing a canal's width to 100 feet when it remains 60 feet; 70 feet if it is 40, but during the U-channel work they turned around 80 feet wide canal to 20 feet."

Prof Mujibur suggested stopping construction of U-channels replacing canals and reassessing its conveyance capacity considering present and future runoff.

Architect Salma A Shafi, joint secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said a canal should be kept natural.

Salma, who carried out a survey on the city canals around five years back, said revival and proper management of a canal has to be planned. "A canal is a natural entity and it is a tributary of river. But Wasa has turned them to drains."

"When a canal turns to drain, people will dump waste; they will connect sewerage line and it will remain no longer a canal," she said.

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Men accompanied by women lifting hilsa from boats in Chandpur ghat, a major fish landing centre in the country, which sees 2,000 maunds of hilsa a day. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ALAM POLASH

JS session begins today

BSS, Dhaka

The 12th session of the 10th Jatiya Sangsad will begin at 5:00pm today.

Parliament secretariat sources said the duration and proceedings of the 12th session will be finalised at a meeting of the business advisory committee of the parliament this afternoon. Fifteen bills will be discussed in the session where four bills are new and 11 are old. The four bills are: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Bill-2016, Bangladesh Rural Development Academy Bill-2016, Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council Bill-2016 and Bangladesh National Cadet Core Bill-2016.

5 waiting beside bus die as covered-van hits it

CITY DESK

Five people, including a student of Cuet, were killed yesterday as a covered-van hit a bus beside which they were waiting after it broke down on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Mirsarai upazila of Chittagong.

The deceased were Tawkir Tajammul Shusmit, 22, of Dinajpur, Syed Ahmad, 55, of Natore, Md Sarowardy, 65, of Dhaka, Shahida Akhter, 23, of Pirojpur and Mohammad Ali, 40, of Munshiganj.

Shusmit was a first-year student of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), Ahmad was the general manager of Karnaphuli Paper Mills Ltd and Sarowardy was its former GM, said police.

Mohammad Ali was the bus supervisor. Father of Shusmit said among his two sons Shusmit was the eldest. He was return-

ing to Chittagong after Eid vacation. Shusmit was supposed to attend his last examination today, said Prof Moshikul Huq, student welfare director of Cuet.

KPML Managing Director Khan Javed Anwar said Ahmad went to Dhaka for official purposes and was on his way back.

Sub-inspector Farid Uddin, in-charge of Joraganj Highway Police Station, said the Shyamoli Paribahan bus went out of order in the area and the passengers stepped outside.

As they were waiting, a covered-van, losing control, rammed into the bus, and both vehicles skidded off the road, hitting the people beside the bus, he said.

Four died on the spot while Sahida was declared dead at a local hospital, he added.

Drivers of the vehicles fled, said police.

Ex-army man found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered the body of a former army man from a hotel in the capital's Motijheel yesterday morning.

On information, police recovered the body of Hamidur Rahman alias Mozibur, 38, a resident of Shahjahanpur area of the city.

Hamidur was a heart patient, said Officer-in-Charge of Motijheel Omar Faruk. On Thursday, he along with a girl rented a room of Hotel Arena introducing themselves as husband and wife. Police detained the girl for interrogation, he said.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

Dhaka must realise SDGs global pledges

CPD executive director tells symposium

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh needs to keep fighting at global forums to realise the commitments made by the developed nations for implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at national level and achieve global peace, said a leading economist yesterday.

"We need to continuously hammer the partnership issues at the global stage and continuously put pressure [on global partners] so that they live up to their commitments," said Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Prof Mustafizur Rahman.

He said there can be no sustainable development without peace, and there can be no peace without the SDGs. "That means we won't be able to achieve SDGs without

peace and we need sustainable development to achieve peace."

The economist said the world will have to go through a "transformative journey" through coordination of three desires -- economic development, social inclusiveness and environmental sustainability.

Prof Mustafizur was addressing as keynote speaker the symposium "SDGs: Building Blocks for Peace", organised here by United Nations Association of Bangladesh (Unab) with its President Justice Kazi Ebadul Hoque in the chair, marking the International Day of Peace.

National Information Officer at the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) M Moniruzzaman read out the message of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the event

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A Chittagong City Corporation official hands over a trash bin to a store owner in the port city's Patharghata area yesterday as part of its "door to door" cleaning campaign. The corporation started providing these bins to residents and business owners from August to collect garbage from them on a daily basis.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS