COUNTRY



A broken bridge on the local road in Alisarkul area of Moulvibazar's Srimangal upazila poses fatal accident of commuters.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Broken bridge woe for villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

People in Alisarkul area of Srimangal upazila in the district are suffering a lot as a bridge on a canal on the local road has been lying broken for the over eight years.

The bridge is located on a road leading to Alisarkul on the side of Srimangal to Mirzapur road in Bhunobhir union of the upazila.

Local people said the 20-foot-long concrete bridge became vulnerable due to lack of renovation for long, making it difficult for vehicles and pedestrians to pass.

Especially elderly people and critical patients are the worst sufferers due to the communication problem during monsoon, they said.

Accident may take place anytime if a new bridge is not constructed immediately, said the villagers

Although fatal accident can happen any moment and local people have already informed the matter to the authorities concerned, any step is yet to be taken in this regard so far, they added.

correspondent found that the bridge remained in a vulnerable condition.

The pillars on both sides of the bridge were found broken and hanging. The walls above the lightning got damaged and the inner rods came out. In this situation, people were seen crossing the bridge amid risk of accident.

Private cars, CNG driven auto rickshaws and rickshaw vans are also plying the bridge amid risk. In addition to the locals, people from other areas travel to Hail Haor over this bridge.

Kawser Ahmed, a local resident, said thousands of people pass through the Srimangal to Mirzapur road every day. There are many fish farms in the area. People use this bridge on the local road for agricultural work.

He further added that the bridge remains in an awful condition for over eight years. When it rains, the bridge on the canal remains under

village next to this bridge face immense suffer due to the communication problem, said Kawser, adding that due to the inability of heavy local road," said the UZ chairman.

During a recent visit to Alisarkul area, this vehicles to move, it is very difficult to carry the agricultural products.

If the bridge lies in such bad state, it may collapse at any moment, said local commuters.

Sumon Mia, driver of a CNG-run autorickshaw, said they are crossing the broken bridge amid risk of accident as it may collapse at any moment.

Abdur Rashid, chairman of Bhunobhir Union Parishad, said hundreds of residents in the area are using the ramshackle bridge amid risk

He has already urged the upazila parishad and the local administration to build a sustainable concreate bridge on the canal considering the sufferings of the local commuters here.

Srimangal Upazila Parishad Chairman (Acting) Premsagar Hazra said the government is doing a lot of development works in remote areas of the villages.

"I will discuss the matter in the monthly More than 4,000 people who live in Badalisa meeting of the upazila parishad this month. A new bridge will be built here. We are taking all the necessary steps to build a new bridge on the

2,781 homeless families get houses in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday handed over 2,781 houses to landless and homeless families in Patuakhali district as houses nationwide yesterday (Sunday), under the second phase of the Ashrayan-2 project, according to the office of the Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner (DC), Matiul Islam Chowdhury

in Galachipa, 225 in Mirzaganj, 200 in Dashmina, 110 in Kalapara, and 50 each in Dumki and Baufal upazilas.

Earlier, on January 23, the PM handed over 2.131 houses to homeless and landles

Thousands in Pirojpur without protection of embankment for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pirojpur*

Thousands living alongside the Kacha, Baleshwar, Sandhya and Kaliganga rivers in Pirojpur experience flooding especially during the monsoon every year. But till date, no steps were taken to bring them under the coverage of comprehensive embankments along the rivers.

The villages by these rivers in Pirojpur Sadar, Indurkani and Kaukhali upazilas even get flooded every day by tidal waters.

Mirazul Islam, a resident of Togra village by the Kacha river in Indurkani upazila, said, "The entire embankment running beside our village was damaged by Super Cyclone Sidr in 2007.'

But even after 14 years passed by, no step was taken to repair or reconstruct the embankment, he lamented.

"Every day, we face difficulty when the village goes under tidal floodwater. We have to pull up our clothes and carry our shoes in our hands while going from place to place," said Sirajul Islam, resident of the same village.

The sufferings worsen when people cannot prepare their meal at home after their kitchens also get flooded -- a phenomenon that has become their way of life through all these years, he added.

Cooking food has been a challenge, as most of the villagers have to raise their stoves temporarily with bricks, said villager Amina Khatun.

Locals said many villagers living along the Kacha river already moved out permanently to other areas.

For the other thousands of inhabitants, the authorities need to take urgent steps to build a permanent embankment in Chandipur, Balipara and Sadar unions in Indurkani upazila and Sankarpasha, Shariktala-Dumuritala and Kalakhali unions in Pirojpur Sadar upazila, they also said

Togra village resident Zakir Hossain said, "If a permanent embankment with concrete blocks and geotextile bags are not constructed here, it will be difficult to live in the villages beside the river in Pirojpur Sadar and Indurkani upazilas.

Another local, Julu Hossain, said, "Sometimes officials from Water Water Development Board (WDB) as well as journalists visit these areas, but there has been no progress as far as the construction of an embankment is concerned."

> "Every day, we face difficulty when the village goes under tidal floodwater. We have to pull up our clothes and carry our shoes in our hands while going from place to place."

Contacted, WDB Executive Engineer in Pirojpur Mahbube Moula Md Mehedy Hasan said out of the total of 315 kilometres of embankment in the district. the condition of the entire embankment along the Kacha river in Indurkani and Pirojpur Sadar upazilas is the worst.

Another 100 kilometres of embankment is needed to protect all who live alongside the river, he said, adding, "A process is underway to prepare a development project proposal (DPP) for the construction of an embankment from Indurkani to Hulerhat in Pirojpur Sadar upazila."



part of her government's campaign to bring all such destitute families under a housing scheme.

The premier inaugurated the houses during a virtual handover ceremony of total 53,340

Each of the new houses were built at a cost of Tk 2 lakh, the DC said.

A total of 870 houses were given in Patuakhali Sadar, 776 in Rangabali, 500 families in the district under the first phase of the project on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Inhabitants of Togra, a village by the Kacha river in Pirojpur's Indurkani upazila, in this recent photo, use a makeshift footbridge to cross an area submerged by tidal waters of the river. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

