

A road only bikes and horses can use

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, back from Sunamganj

The beauty is spellbinding around the 20-kilometre road that connects Madhyanagar Sadar to bordering Mohish Khola bazar in Sunamganj.

But the commuters can hardly appreciate the beauty as the hellish road causes immense sufferings to them

Decades ago, the brick-paved road was constructed for the people of four disconnected unions under Dharmapasha upazila. On July 26 last year, these unions were combined together and the new upazila—Madhyanagar was formed.

However, the road remains the same; even more battered.

While visiting to Madhyanagar last

month, this correspondent witnessed the miseries of around two lakh people of the remote haor territory beside famous Tanguar Haor.

Layer of bricks has been washed away in most parts, the road has turned into narrow passage in some strips and culverts are missing.

The condition of the road is so battered that motorcycle is the only means of communication during dry season. Horse-carriages and pushcarts are used for transporting commodities.

The upazila is also disconnected from the national road network as there are no bridges to connect the road.

However, the people rely on boats during the rainy season.

Mohammad Mojibur, a resident

of Chamardani village in the upazila, said, "For decades, the road remains the same. Sometimes repair work takes place which doesn't change the scenario at all."

The elderly and sick persons suffer the most, he said.

Another villager Mohammad Sumon Miah, 40, said "I have been seeing this road the same since my childhood. Many parliamentarians promised us a good road but we are still waiting and don't know how long we have to wait."

The wait is about to end finally as there are four bridges under construction that will connect this marooned upazila with the mainland. And the project of the road's construction was approved by the Executive Committee of the

National Economic Council (ECNEC) on November 23 last year.

Under the 'Construction of Important Bridge in Rural Roads' project, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been constructing the bridges since 2019 which are scheduled to be completed by May this year.

Mouazzam Hossain Ratan, lawmaker from Sunamganj-1, said the approval of the road with the elevated way over the haor is a dream come true and the construction work will start soon.

"Though the construction of the bridges got delayed during the nationwide shutdown due to pandemic, I am hopeful that the newly-formed upazila will thrive in a couple of years," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

This worn out iron bridge at Karatia in Tangail Sadar upazila has turned awfully risky.

Decades-old bridge poses risk

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A decades-old iron structured bridge on a canal at Karatia in Sadar upazila has turned awfully dilapidated, posing risk of accidents any time.

Hundreds of vehicles, including passenger buses, still ply the risky 80-year-old bridge on old Dhaka-Tangail road every day.

Elderly locals said the bridge was constructed on Sundari Canal during the British era.

"Freedom fighters blew up the bridge partially during the Liberation War in 1971 to resist movement of the Pakistani forces through the road," valiant freedom fighter Bir Protik Habibur Rahman Khan Khoka said.

After the independence, the bridge was repaired and road communication was restored once again.

After that the bridge was renovated on only a few occasions, several senior locals said.

During a recent visit to the area this correspondent saw the worn out bridge starts shaking whenever a heavy vehicle crosses it. The foundation deck and many other parts of the old bridge also got rusty.

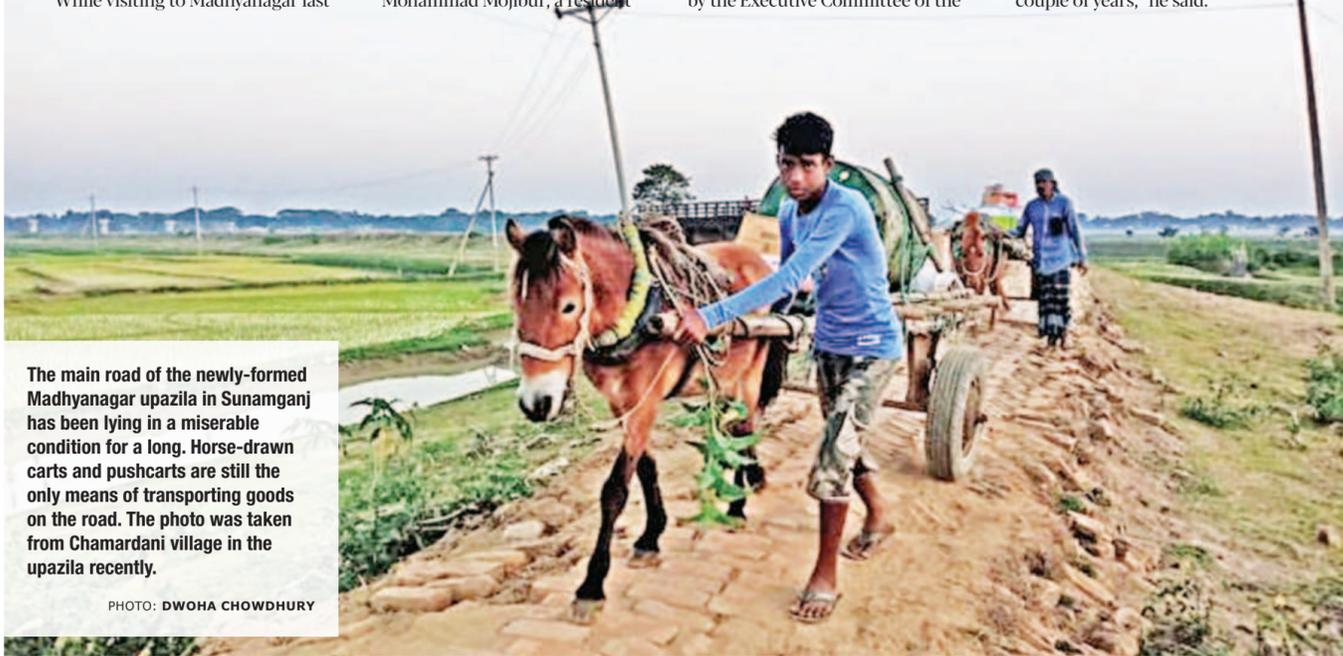
"I get scare every time I cross the shaky old bridge with passengers," bus driver Saiful Islam said.

Besides, hundreds of students of nearby Government Saadat College and two other schools and people, who come to the century-old Karatia Bazar, also use the bridge.

Contacted, Tangail Sadar Upazila Parishad Chairman Shahjahan Ansary, also a local resident, said as far he remember the bridge was built in 1940.

The authorities concerned should construct a new bridge in place of the older one immediately to avoid any fatal accident, he said adding that he already raised the matter on several occasions.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach any of the Roads and Highways Department officials for their comment.



The main road of the newly-formed Madhyanagar upazila in Sunamganj has been lying in a miserable condition for a long. Horse-drawn carts and pushcarts are still the only means of transporting goods on the road. The photo was taken from Chamardani village in the upazila recently.

PHOTO: DWOHA CHOWDHURY

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