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BRT set to miss new deadline

Slow pace of work, controversies over safety issues holding the project back

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from Gazipur

With the project authorities of BRT Line-3 having already failed to achieve their revised target, a recent tragedy has left them in further difficulties in meeting the proposed deadline of December 2022.

While the physical work on the Dhaka-Gazipur corridor remains suspended for about two weeks, the authorities cannot clearly say when it can fully resume.

They said the two Chinese contractors of the project have to take measures to ensure 100 percent safety of the site. Then, the consultants will inspect and if they are satisfied, the work will resume.

But the contractors have not submitted their safety plan yet, 11 days after five people were crushed to death on August 15 when a crane toppled over, making a box girder segment fall on their car on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Uttara.



- Original deadline 2016
- Revised deadline June 2022
- Proposed new deadline December 2022
- Authorities now target completion of physical work by March next year and make BRT functional by June

"They [contractors] might think they have done enough regarding safety, but we think there is scope to do better."

RHD Chief Engineer AKM Manir Hossain Pathan

Two children were among those killed in the incident, which occurred due to negligence in ensuring safety, according to experts and officials.

While visiting the project site in Gazipur yesterday, this correspondent saw safety barriers made of corrugated sheets and cautionary signboards at different points. But some areas remained unprotected.

Contacted, RHD Chief Engineer AKM Manir Hossain Pathan, who visited the site yesterday with several directors of Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Ltd (DBRTCL), said there is still a lack of safety arrangements there.

"They [contractors] might think they have done enough regarding safety but we think there is scope to do better," he told this correspondent.

Replies to another question about the project delay, he said, "We can't allow them to work until foolproof safety is ensured."

The Tk 4,268.38-crore project was undertaken to build a 20.50km dedicated bus service road from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Gazipur. It was supposed to be completed at a cost of Tk 2,037.85 crore by December 2016, the original deadline.

The deadline was extended to June this year but the project made 78 percent progress by that time.

The authorities, at a press conference in September last year, announced that the physical work of the project would be completed by September this year and the BRT service would be operational from December this year.

Earlier this year, they again sought to extend the deadline to December this year, with a one-year defects liability period. The proposal is now pending with the planning ministry, sources said.

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DEMO OVER PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

55 BNP activists hurt in 'attacks by AL men' in 3 dists

STAR REPORT

At least 55 BNP leaders and activists were injured in attacks allegedly by Awami League men in Munshiganj, Noakhali and Narayanganj yesterday.

The attacks were made when the BNP men were organising protests against the price hikes of fuel and daily commodities.

In Munshiganj's Sreenagar upazila, around 20 BNP leaders and activists were wounded as Chhatra League and Jubo League men swooped on them, said Hafizul Islam Khan, member secretary of the upazila unit BNP.

He said they were gathering to stage demonstrations at Jashurgoan against the price hike of daily commodities.

To foil the programme, police provoked BCL and Jubo League men to attack around 10:00am, he alleged.

He said, "I was also pushed to the road and beaten up by a group of Chhatra League and Jubo League men."

He said the attackers were equipped with sticks and sharp weapons.

Joyal Abedin James, president of the upazila unit Jubo Dal, alleged that police first started beating them up and then Chhatra League men joined.

A video clip of the attack has gone viral in social media.

In the clip, Saddam Hossain, a member of the upazila unit Jubo League, was seen beating up BNP leader Hafizul.

It also shows some other Jubo League and BCL men wielding sharp weapons and sticks.

Contacted, Saddam said BNP leaders first barred them when they brought out a procession observing the

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A BNP supporter covers his head with his arms as three AL activists attack him in Sreenagar, Munshiganj yesterday. Ruling party men swooped on a BNP rally organised to protest the price hikes of fuel and essentials.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Asia Cup begins today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cricket fanatics will brace themselves for some exhilarating T20 contests over the next 16 days as the 15th edition of the Asia Cup is set to begin today with the game between hosts Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

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Dear Readers,

Opinion page will come out twice a week - Friday and Saturday, to accommodate an extra Sports page for cricket's Asia Cup. We will revert to regular Opinion page after the tournament ends on Sept 11. We apologise for the inconveniences caused. We will, however, make it up by publishing more opinions digitally.