



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CTG ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

Sufferings to linger for 2 more years

“We, the port city residents, now pray for the completion of this project to get rid of such regular sufferings.”

MUINUL ISLAM
Economist and former professor of Chittagong University.

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The deadline to complete the construction of the Chattogram elevated expressway has been extended for two more years. Meanwhile, the immense suffering of the port city residents in their daily commute is to continue.

The long delay in implementing the project taken in 2017 has become a headache for the city dwellers since the bad shape of roads in many parts, coupled with the gridlock along the main thoroughfare that is narrowed down for the works has been subjecting them to daily difficulties.

Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) is implementing the expressway stretching over a 16-kilometre length from Lalkhan Bazar to Shah Amanat International Airport.

Commuters are currently facing problems while crossing Lalkhan Bazar to Tigerpass as pilling recently started at this half-kilometre area narrowing it down and causing an acute traffic jam.

Kalam Mia, driver of a city bus plying on Route-10, said crossing this part is a hectic job as it sometimes takes more than half an hour

due to gridlock.

Moreover, the road has been damaged badly with hundreds of potholes, he said.

Abdul Kader, staff of a clearing and forwarding agent who needs to travel from his residence at Muradpur to Chattogram Customs every day, said he has been facing problems while travelling between his residence and workplace twice a day for the last three years due to construction at 2-kilometre-long Sheikh Mujib Road part from Dewanhat to Barik Building Moor.

As fences in that area have been removed a few months back, the gridlock situation improved a little. However, the road remains in a bad shape in many portions even after repair works, he said.

Apart from facing acute gridlock and a bumpy journey, there is the issue of dust pollution as well.

Towhidul Alam, who works at a private bank in Agrabad Commercial area, said, “It is hard to get a CNG-run autorickshaw to travel the road as most of them are unwilling to cross the area. Even if you find any, the fares are almost unaffordable.”

They (three-wheeler drivers) also charge an additional Tk 20 to 40 if you request them to take alternative roads via Commerce College or Pathantooli roads for avoiding the main thoroughfare, he said.

While admitting it, Malek Shah, driver of an autorickshaw, said the alternative roads also remain stuck all day as most vehicles opt to use those.

The government approved the project in July 2017, aiming to ease traffic gridlock in the city as well as ensuring smooth travel between the city centre, two export processing zones and the international airport at Patenga.

The construction work started the following year.

The original cost of the project was estimated at Tk 3250.84 crore while the



deadline to complete the project was fixed by June 2020.

The deadline has been extended two more times.

CDA, for the third time, proposed to extend the deadline till June 2024 and Ecne last week approved the proposal.

CDA executive engineer and also project director Md Mahafuzur Rahman said a major change in the alignment was needed due to opposition from the Chattogram Port Authority since a vital area of the port lies in the project site.

A senior official in the Housing and Public Works Ministry said the project was taken hastily without conducting a feasibility study thoroughly and that is why alignment and designs needed to change as problems faced at the construction stage, delaying the construction further.

To date, the project saw 75 percent physical progress.

Noted Economist and former professor of Chittagong University Muiunul Islam said, “We, the port city residents, now pray for the completion of this project to get rid of such regular sufferings.”

The economist, however, thinks that people may have to suffer a few more years as the work is progressing slowly.

Dengue cases on rise in Ctg

ARUN BIKASH DEY

The number of dengue patients is on the rise in Chattogram despite the city corporation regularly conducting anti-mosquito drives.

According to Chattogram civil surgeon's office, at least 15 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals in the district yesterday.

The hospitals are Chattogram Medical College Hospital, Chattogram General Hospital, upazila health complexes and different private hospitals.

However, the number of admitted patients at CMCH could not be known immediately.

With yesterday's figure, a total of 371 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals in Chattogram this year.

Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Elias Chowdhury said, “Apart from the city, dengue cases are also being found in upazilas.”

He stressed the need for being aware about the situation. The hospitals are ready to provide treatment to patients, he added.

Five people were infected with dengue in Chattogram in January and one in February. After that, no dengue patients were found for the three consecutive months. In June, 17 were infected.

The figure increased to 50 in July. In August, 76 were infected with dengue and as many as 100 people were infected in September till Wednesday.

The number is increasing due to rain, which creates more scope for Aedes mosquitoes to breed, according to the civil surgeon.

Brig Gen Shamim Ahsan, director of CMCH, said a separate corner has been arranged at the hospital to treat dengue patients.

Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) started a programme in July to eradicate Aedes mosquitoes. Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury inaugurated it in Nasirabad Housing Society area on July 26.

CCC Acting Chief Conservancy Officer Abul Hashem said, “We also published a warning notice in newspapers. Owners should make sure that there is no stagnant water in under-construction buildings.”

Entomologist Entajer Ferdous said the CCC staffers spray insecticides to kill mosquito larvae during daytime. But the effective time would be right before evening.

“In our study, we have found that the density of mosquitoes remains high an hour after sunrise and an hour before sunset,” he said.



‘We are gardeners’

Tree plantation campaign launched in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

“Durbar Tarunnya”, a social organisation, has launched a tree plantation campaign in Moghadiya Union under Mirsharai upazila of Chattogram recently to play their part in preserving the environment.

They are calling this initiative “Amra Mali” (We are Gardeners), and have fixed “Amar Jotne, Amar Gach” (My tree under my care) as the slogan of this movement.

President of the organisation Muhammad Abu Abid inaugurated the programme by planting over a hundred of trees.

“We have over 8,000 members and volunteers across Bangladesh. Each of them will plant a tree and take care of it like a gardener.

The organisation's central vice-president Sheikh Muhammad Arif Ullah Chowdhury, organizational secretary Md Jihadul Islam, Md Ibrahim, Md Saddam Hossain, Md Rubel and Md Ahidul Islam were present at the ceremony among others.

An enlightening initiative

Libraries set up in 16 police stations in port city

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Whenever one thinks of a police station, they would imagine police vans sitting outside, ready to roll out. They would think of seized vehicles, piles of documents sitting on the desks and criminals behind bars.

But of all things, one would not think of a library there.

However, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) has taken an initiative to change that. CMP has set up libraries for all in the 6 police stations within its jurisdiction, with an aim to induce a reading habit among all stakeholders.

CMP's former commissioner Saleh Mohammad Tanvir took the initiative during his tenure in an effort to make sure that the force can brainstorm better reading different kinds of books between intervals of their work.

He is now the director of Central Police Hospital in Dhaka.

The libraries have been decorated with various kinds of books on poetry, crime fiction, law, Liberation War and policing, among others. Every police station has 300 to 600 books in their respective libraries.

This correspondent visited several police station libraries including Kotwali, Khulshi and Double Mooring police stations. The



Kotwali Police Station library has 600 books.

It was set up on the station's ground floor inside a room.

Sub-inspector Mominul Islam of the police station said, “I used to read many books. After joining the force however, it became difficult to read as much. But now, it's quite easy as the library is located at my office.”

Khulshi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sontosh Kumar Chakma said, “Not just police personnel, sometimes, the accused read books inside the cell as well.”

“We've collected different kinds of books to meet the readers' demand. Due to a space crisis, we installed the library at the entrance of the police station,” he said.

Hope for hills

DoE to conduct ‘field survey’ in Chattogram

SIFAYET ULLAH

After so many years, the Department of Environment (DoE) has finally taken an initiative to conduct a specialised survey with an aim to protect Chattogram's hills.

DoE officials claimed the survey will help stop hill cutting and grabbing.

The survey, titled “Contour survey and mapping of hills and hillocks of Chattogram district”, has already been sent as a proposal to Natural Resource Management division of the DoE by its district office.

The cost of the survey is estimated at Tk 75 lakh.

Ferdous Anwar, deputy director of DoE Chattogram, said, “There's a survey that's based on documents on the Chattogram hills. As a result, while operating in the field, we encounter numerous issues. We are planning a contour survey because this requires a field-based survey.”

The DoE official said the main objective of conducting contour survey is to identify any noticeable difference in elevation of the existing hills.

“There are mainly two methods of locating contours. We will conduct this survey with a direct method,” he said. “In this method, the contours to be located are directly traced out in the field by



locating and making a number of points. These points are then surveyed and plotted and the contours drawn through those points,” he added.

According to Bangladesh Environment Forum data, a total of 120 hills disappeared from Chattogram city in four decades. In 1976, there were 32.37 square km of hills in the port city and it decreased to 14.02 square kilometers in 2008.

The data showed that there were 200 hills in the port city 40 years ago and

60 percent of those have disappeared now. Of them, Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) cut 15 hills due to Bayezid Link Road construction.

Meanwhile, green organisations of Chattogram city welcomed the DoE's survey initiative.

Aliur Rahman, general secretary of Bangladesh Environment Forum, said, “A field-based survey will reveal details about the hill's true shape. And in this way, hill cutting may be avoided.”