

Road subsides a week after construction

Locals blame use of substandard materials

The construction work could not be started after contractor Rubel and his brother were arrested in a case on June 7, 2020. Later, a fresh tender was called at the beginning of this year and Faridpur Jannat Construction Ltd got the work order.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Hardly a week after construction, parts of an important road at Aizuddin Mridhar Dangi in Faridpur Sadar upazila collapsed on June 30.

Local people, however, blamed use of substandard materials in the construction work that led to the collapses.

Construction of 800-metre portion of the two-kilometre road, stretching from Double Bridge area to Balu Dhoom via Alzal Mandal's Haat, started in March this year and completed in June 21.

During a recent visit to the area this correspondent saw parts of the newly constructed road have collapsed in at least eight separate places.

There is a large pond on one side of the road and vast farmland on its other side.

Villagers said construction of the road was completed on June 21, but within couple of days parts of the road suddenly collapsed at several places on June 30.

The incident occurred due to use of low-quality construction materials and lack of proper monitoring by the authorities concerned, they alleged.

According to Faridpur Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), construction of the two-kilometre-long road, at a cost of over Tk 2.17 crore, was scheduled to be started in 2020.

Intiaz Hasan Rubel of Faridpur municipality got the work order.

But the construction work could not be started after contractor Rubel and his brother Sajjad Hossain Barkat were arrested in a case on June 7, the same year.

Meanwhile, a fresh tender was called at the beginning of this year and Faridpur Jannat Construction Ltd got the work order.

Later, Mujibur Rahman, a resident of Decrerchar area in the upazila, implemented the construction work as a sub-contractor.

Ishak Matubbar, a resident of Aizuddin Mridhar Dangi village, said parts of the newly constructed road collapsed due to use of substandard materials.

Char Madhabdia Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Tuhin



Part of this road in Faridpur Sadar upazila has collapsed just a week of its construction.

PHOTO: STAR

Mandal said he urged the contractor concerned on several occasions to conduct the work properly, but he did not pay heed to his words.

As a result, the newly-constructed road started to collapse within couple of days of its construction, the UP chairman added.

Contacted, Sub-contractor Mujibur Rahman said there

were no irregularities in the construction work.

He also denied the allegation of using low-quality materials in the construction work and said the collapses occurred due to continuous rainfall in the last couple of days.

The collapsed parts will be repaired soon, he added.

Faridpur LGED Assistant Engineer Monir Hossain, also

supervisor of the work, said heavy rainfall has triggered the collapses at different spots of the newly-constructed road. Besides, the soil underneath the road is sandy that led to the collapses, the engineer said, adding that the contractor concerned will not get the rest amount of the bill unless he repairs the collapsed parts of the road.



Over 200 hundred trees have already been felled on Habiganj-Shayestaganj regional highway in the name of road widening work.

PHOTO: STAR

Trees felled for road widening work

MENTU DESHWARA

The forest department is chopping down some 1,246 trees, planted under the government's social afforestation programme, on both sides of Habiganj-Shayestaganj regional highway for widening the road.

Local people said over two hundred trees have already been cut down in the name of the road widening work.

Protesting the incident, local residents have organised several agitation programs, including blocking the regional road, but to no avail.

Shah Ahmad, range officer at Shayestaganj Forest Office, said the trees were planted on both side of the 10-kilometre-long Habiganj-Shayestaganj road in 2011 as part of the government's social afforestation programme.

Habiganj Forest Department called a tender to cut down some 1,246 trees, including Akashmani, Sheel Karai, mahogany and many other varieties, on January 26 this year.

Besides, three individuals got the work order and purchased the trees for Tk 21.5 lakh, he said.

Later, when different social organisations contacted the forest department in this regard, they said the trees are being cut for widening the Habiganj-Shayestaganj regional road.

On June 6, people from different walks of life formed a human chain in front of Habiganj Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office, protesting the tree felling.

The following day, members of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA), Habiganj unit, submitted a memorandum to Habiganj deputy commissioner urging him to stop the trees felling.

BAPA General Secretary, Habiganj unit, Tofazzal Sohel said by cutting the year-old trees the forest department is not only destroying the local environment, but also harming habitats of different species of birds.

Professor Mohammad Ikramul Wadud, president of BAPA, Habiganj unit, said the forest department she must have thought of other alternatives instead of cutting down the trees.

Vice Chancellor of Sylhet Metropolitan University Prof Dr Mohammad Jahirul Hoque Shakil, also BAPA national committee member, said by absorbing carbon dioxide trees play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance, providing oxygen and mitigating climate change.

When a large number of trees are removed, it can destroy wildlife habitat and disrupt local ecosystem.

Contacted, Habiganj Roads and Highways Department (RHD) Executive Engineer Shakil Mohammad Faisal said the forest department is cutting the trees after taking approval from the district forest and environment committee. They have sent a development project proposal to the higher authorities to expand the Habiganj-Shayestaganj road in two lanes, he added.

Afghanistan seal historic series win

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Zadran played with the kind of solidity and controlled aggression that quickly raised question marks about the Tigers' plans. Gurbaz was the early aggressor as he took the Tigers' attack to the cleaners, reaching his ton in the 28th over. The duo strung together a 256-run stand – Afghanistan's highest partnership for any wicket in ODIs – before Gurbaz departed to Shakib Al Hasan, out leg before after a 125-ball 145 laced with 13 fours and eight sixes.

Afghanistan allowed Bangladesh to get a foot in the door as Ebadot Hossain got Rahmat Shah before Mehedi Hasan Miraz struck twice. Zadran too fell after completing his ton and a flurry of wickets in the death overs saw Afghanistan reach 331 for nine in fifty overs.

Bangladesh could not pressure the Afghan openers during the first 30 overs and the 33 extras given away by the hosts showed the indiscipline in

their bowling effort.

With the bat, Bangladesh's chase unravelled pretty quickly as they felt the pressure of a 300-plus chase. Liton and Mohammad Naim both fell to Fazalhaq Farooqi while Najmul Hossain Shanto fell prey to Mujeeb Ur Rahman.

Towhid Hridoy struggle to pick the Afghan spinners before being bamboozled by a Rashid Khan googly, out for 16. Eight deliveries later, Shakib's fight ended, falling leg before to Mohammad Nabi after scoring 25. Afif Hossain immediately followed suit, out for a first-ball duck to Rashid next over, leaving Bangladesh tottering at 72 for six.

Mushfiqur Rahim showed there were no demons on the pitch during a battling 69. He and Mehedi strung together an 87-run seventh-wicket stand with Mehedi (25) but ran out of partners as Bangladesh finished on 189 for nine with Ebadot unable to bat due to a muscle strain.

Trucks kill more

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Of all vehicles that were involved in accidents, trucks, pickups, lorries, and lorries accounted for 23.5 percent; followed by motorcycles at 22.37 percent; battery-operated rickshaws, easybikes, vans, bicycles at 17.57 percent; buses at 15.75 percent, cars, micros, jeeps at 10.27 percent; nasimon, karimon, tractor, laguna, mahendra (human hauliers) at 5.47 percent; and CNG auto-rickshaws at 4.56 percent.

The report also looked at the different types of accidents based on where they happened. It found that 36.46 percent of accidents happened on national highways, 29.24 percent on regional highways, 29.60 percent on feeder roads, and 1.8 percent in Dhaka city.

Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury,

secretary general of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, expressed concern over the increasing prevalence of motorcycle and easy bike accidents.

He said, "Hospitals are witnessing a significant influx of road accident victims, accounting for 30 to 35 percent of patients. Despite the existence of new road transport laws, several factors including a lack of research on road safety, flaws in identifying the true culprits in accidents, weak investigations, and lengthy legal processes have hindered road safety measures."

He further criticised the authorities for their passive role in addressing traffic congestion on the northern route and the exploitation of extra fare charges on specific routes, attributing these issues to planning mistakes.

BNP to unveil it

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a BNP standing committee member told The Daily Star last night wishing not to be named.

The BNP's like-minded political parties are also likely to make announcements on the one-point movement on July 12.

A BNP delegation is likely to go to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police office today to seek permission for the rally.

In the standing committee meeting, senior BNP leaders discussed the proposals put forward by the like-minded political parties on the movement programmes. The leaders agreed that they will not go for any tough programmes like hartal, blockade, and non-cooperation at this stage.

"But if we are compelled, we will think of tougher agitation programmes," said the standing committee member.

On Friday, the BNP held meetings with two alliances and two political parties. The meetings agreed to go for a one-point movement.

The BNP announced 10-point demand from its rally in Dhaka on December 10 last year. The party and its allies launched a simultaneous movement from December 24 to press home the 10-point demand.

Meanwhile, a European Union delegation, which is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today, is going to hold talks with the BNP leaders.

Party leaders said they want to convey a message to the delegation that the BNP is in the final phase of an anti-government movement and it won't take part in any election under the incumbent government.

Astronomers

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condensation process in which some of the sun's fiery material clumps together due to sudden, localised temperature drops.

The sun's corona – the outermost part of its atmosphere – is formed of gas at million-degree temperatures.

Rapid drops in temperature produce super-dense clumps of plasma up to 250 kilometres wide, and gravity pulls these balls back towards the sun at more than 100 kilometres per second.

Outsiders trying to impede the elections

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country," he said, while urging journalists not to assist foreigners in such efforts.

A six-member EU exploratory mission will be visiting Bangladesh for two weeks starting today for assessing the election environment.

A high-level delegation led by US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights Uzra Zeya will be visiting Bangladesh from July 11 to 14. EU Special Representative on Human Rights Eamon Gilmore will also visit Bangladesh at the end of the month.

"Some of them may be trying to impede the elections. If they do that, it will be inauspicious for us all and the country. We must remain cautious about it so that they don't destroy the election process."

Destroying the election process would be damaging to Bangladesh's future.

The comment comes when the ruling says the polls due in December or January next year will be held as per the constitution, but BNP, the major opposition party, says it won't go for polls without restoration of the caretaker government.

"Neither the US president nor the UK prime minister resigns before the elections. We have laws for elections. We will do it transparently and fairly."

The EU wants genuine dialogue among the main political parties to

break the impasse.

"These are useless calls. There is no dialogue between the Democratic and Republican parties before the US election."

The Awami League-led government is unwilling to hold any dialogue with opposition parties on how the polls would be conducted.

"The government does not want to talk to the terrorist party. The US does not talk to the Nazis or allow them to participate in the polls."

There was not much progress in the past when the UN facilitated dialogue among political parties.

"The government is committed to holding free and fair elections. Bangladesh, despite weaknesses, is a true believer of democracy, peace and stability, which is why the country progressed over the last years."

There may be discussions on representational parliament, but this should be discussed in the parliament, he said.

Asked about the recent comments on Bangladesh by China and Russia regarding the Western countries' calls for elections in Bangladesh, he said these are their comments and he has nothing to say.

Bangladesh's progress and geostrategic location in the Bay of Bengal have made it a focus of many countries, according to Momen.

"Our policy here is very clear. We want open, free, secure and inclusive rules-based navigation for all in the Indo-Pacific. Other countries like Japan and India also want it."

Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific outlook has the word "inclusive" in it.

"Some dislike it. But our policy is friendship to all and malice to none. Many think that Bangladesh is tilting towards China, but it is not."

As much as 86 percent of the trade in the Indo-Pacific takes place through the Bay of Bengal.

"Because of trade, China is a rising star. Many want to contain China, and one of the ways it can be done is if the seaway trade can be hindered."

Many countries want Bangladesh to allow them to use the Bay of Bengal for various reasons.

"We have not fallen into that trap. We are maintaining our independent policy. Thus, recently the government has become an eyesore to many. Many raise complaints and many believe in those. They raise the issues of democracy and human rights, enforced disappearances etc."

Momen did not specify who "they" are but said many of the allegations of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances are not true.

DCAB President Rezaul Karim Lotus and General Secretary Emrul Kayesh also spoke.

Rohingyas in panic at camps

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in Cox's Bazar, said they were waiting for the victims' families to file a case.

The killings took place following a feud between Rohingya criminal gangs over establishing supremacy, he said.

Ebadullah, 40, a sub majhi (community leader) at Camp-1, was stabbed to death on Thursday morning when the ICC prosecutor was talking to Rohingya at another part of the same camp.

The deceased was believed to be a supporter of Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO). The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) was blamed for the killing.

On Friday morning, five Rohingyas were killed in a gun battle between two gangs at Camp-8 in Ukhiya.

Amir Zafar, commanding officer of APBn-8, said the five were killed in a gunfight between ARSA and RSO members around 6:15am at Balukhali Camp 8.

The deceased were members of ARSA, he added.

In another incident at the same camp, police recovered the body of 45-year-old Sanaullah from a drain around 5:00pm on Friday. His throat was slit and there were multiple stab wounds on the body.

Speaking to this newspaper at the morgue of Cox's Bazar General Hospital yesterday, Sanaullah's younger brother Irfan Ullah said his brother was tortured to death.

A video clip in Irfan's phone viewed by this correspondent shows that

Sanaullah was being tortured and the perpetrators calling him a member of Al Yakin, widely known as ARSA.

Among the five killed in the Friday's gun battle is Abdus Sukkur. His identity was confirmed yesterday morning.

Sanaullah and Sukkur were residents of Camp 5. They left home the night before the day they were killed. Their family members said they didn't know why the two went to Camp 8.

According to police and Rohingya leaders, at least 57 Rohingyas, including 17 community leaders and 11 ARSA members, got killed in clashes over the last six months.

Around 1.2 million Rohingyas are living in the camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas of Cox's Bazar.