

Ctg expressway renamed after July uprising martyr

Toll collection begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Chattogram

Toll collection on Chattogram's first elevated expressway began yesterday.

Adilur Rahman Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, inaugurated the toll collection system at an event held at the expressway's Patenga end.

The expressway, initially named after former mayor and freedom fighter ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, has now been renamed in honour of Wasim Akram, a martyr of the anti-discrimination student movement in Chattogram.

Speaking at the event, Mahfuzur Rahman, project director and executive engineer of the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA), said four toll booths have been set up at the Patenga end to facilitate toll collection.

He said ten types of vehicles, excluding motorcycles and trailers, are permitted to use the

expressway.

Toll rates range from Tk 30 for CNG-run autorickshaws to Tk 450 for covered vans. Rates for other vehicles include Tk 80 for cars, Tk 100 for jeeps and minibuses, Tk 150 for pickups, Tk 200 for minibuses and four-wheeled trucks, Tk 280 for buses, and Tk 300 for six-wheeled trucks.



The 16-kilometre expressway, stretching from Lalkhan Bazar to Patenga, was constructed by the CDA at a cost of Tk 4,298.95 crore to improve connectivity and boost the regional economy. It was inaugurated by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in November 2023.



Preparations are ongoing for the month-long flower festival at the DC park in Faujdarhat. The event, organised by the Chattogram district administration, will kick off from today.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Moderate quake jolts parts of country

No casualties reported

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A moderate earthquake, measuring 5.0 on the Richter scale, shook parts of Bangladesh at 10:32am yesterday.

Farzana Sultana, an assistant meteorologist at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), said the tremor was felt in Dhaka, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Cumilla, and Dighinala in Khagrachhari, among other northeastern and eastern regions.

No casualties or damages have been reported as of the filing of this report.

The earthquake's epicentre was in Myanmar, located at Latitude 24.92°N and Longitude 94.97°E, approximately 482 kilometres from the BMD Seismic Centre in Agargaon, Dhaka.

"An earthquake with a magnitude between 5.0 and 5.9 is considered moderate," Farzana added.

2 UPDF camps found in Rangamati: ISPR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army has found two training camps of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF-Main) on hilltops in the Paglichhari and Yamchuk areas in Rangamati.

The camps were found during an operation conducted by the army in the Bandoobhanga Range yesterday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a press release.

The release said the UPDF men fled the scene, abandoning the camps.

A spread-out camp, with observation posts, training grounds and residences, was found on the top of a hill in Paglichhari area.

Another camp with bunkers was found in the Yamchuk area.

Such operations will continue to prevent terrorist activities by regional groups to maintain law and order in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, according to the ISPR press release.

PATUAKHALI-MIRZAGANJ ROAD

5 bridges at risk of collapse

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Five bailey bridges connecting the 11-kilometre-long Patuakhali-Mirzaganj road are in a rundown state due to lack of renovations for years.

The road is the lone thoroughfare between Patuakhali town and Mirzaganj upazila. Hundreds of vehicles use the route daily, including heavy goods-laden ones, amid heightened risk of accidents.

The Roads and Highways Department constructed the iron bailey bridges on the route in the 1990s to enhance regional connectivity.

Recently, RHD put up warning notices on the bridges, instructing vehicles weighing

has continued ignoring the warning notices, increasing risk of accidents happening any time," said Md Idris Hawlader, 63, a local.

Md Al-Mamun, 46, another local, urged authorities concerned to demolish these dilapidated bridges and construct new ones on the spots.

"The warning signboards are too small for us to notice while driving," said Md Musa, a truck driver carrying more than 22 tonnes of dried fish from Mahipur area of Kalapara upazila.

Salahuddin, another trucker from Kalapara carrying 30 tonnes of iron rods to Dhaka, echoed him.

Executive engineer of RHD in Patuakhali,



more than five tones not to ply those. However, heavy goods-laden vehicles, including trucks weighing over 20 tonnes, are still using the bridge in absence of alternative route.

Locals alleged that heavy trucks, especially those from Patuakhali to different other areas of the country including Barishal, use the route via Mirzaganj for access to the Payrakunja ferry crossing.

"Built around 30 years back and left without any renovations, these bridges have become vulnerable, while plying of heavy vehicles

Md Jamil Akhter Limon, said, "The tender process for reconstruction of three of the bridges is underway, while proposals have been sent to the head office for the rest two. Once the necessary procedures are completed, we will construct new bridges to replace the dilapidated ones soon."

Contacted, Abu Hasnat Muhammad Arefin, deputy commissioner of Patuakhali, said he would speak to RHD and the UNO of Sadar upazila to make sure that heavy vehicles do not ply the route until new bridges are constructed.

Save Habiganj from industrial pollution

Speakers tell event

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Habiganj is facing a severe crisis caused by industrial pollution, which has severely impacted local communities and the environment. Yesterday, Dhara (Dhariuri Rokhai Amra) and Khawai River Waterkeepers conducted an inspection and organised a public meeting in the Satparia area of Madhabpur upazila to address the escalating situation.

The inspection team, led by Sharif Jamil, member secretary of Dhara and coordinator of Waterkeepers Bangladesh, observed alarming levels of pollution in Rajkhal and surrounding villages.

They said the contaminated water has led to the death of livestock and destruction of crops, creating a significant humanitarian crisis for four villages. The pollution is spreading further through the Balbhadra river to the Meghna, exacerbating the disaster.

Sharif Jamil said no industrial factory is legally permitted to discharge untreated waste into natural waterways or open

spaces. He called for immediate action, urging the interim government to address the crisis without delay.

"The people's grievances have reached a breaking point. It is time for everyone to take action and protest against this industrial pollution," he stated. Local



residents, including Abdur Noor, Abdur Rouf, Md Azdu Shah, former teacher Abu Yusuf, Motaheer Hossain, Md Oli Mia, and Mostu Mia, shared their experiences during the meeting.

They spoke of the devastating impact on their lives and livelihoods, highlighting the urgent need for solutions to this ongoing environmental and humanitarian disaster.

13 Himalayan vultures rescued last month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Throughout December last year, wildlife rescue teams in the Rangpur division rescued 13 near-threatened Himalayan griffon vultures, along with an eagle and a barn owl (Laxmi Pecha).

Among the rescued vultures, two were found in Rangpur, two in Kurigram, four in Nilphamari, two in Gaibandha, and three in Lalmonirhat.

The vultures, known for their enormous size with wingspans ranging from 7.5 to 9 feet and weighing around 10-12kg, migrate to Bangladesh's northern plains from the Himalayas, covering over 600km in search of food during the winter months.

Exhausted and malnourished from their long journey, many vultures collapse, making them vulnerable to predators and



A rescued Himalayan griffon vulture at the vulture care centre in Dinajpur. The rescued birds will be released into their natural habitat once they regain strength.

PHOTO: STAR

human interference. Lizen Ahmed Pranto, finance secretary of the Wildlife and Snake Rescue Team in Bangladesh, said every year, Himalayan griffon vultures fly to the northern regions of

Bangladesh seeking food, as the Himalayas remain snow-covered in winter. However, they often grow weak from prolonged flights and lack of food.

He said the rescued birds were weak but are now receiving

treatment to regain strength before being released into their natural habitat.

After providing them with preliminary treatment, they were sent to the country's only vulture care centre in Dinajpur for specialised rehabilitation. In addition to vultures, eagles and barn owls were also among the rescues. A rescued eagle has already been rehabilitated and released, while a barn owl is currently under care, he said.

Mosharraf Hossain, a range officer of the Rangpur Forest Department, said Himalayan griffon vultures migrate to northern Bangladesh every winter, with most returning to the Himalayas after the season.

Since 2014, the government's Forest Department and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have collaborated to conserve the Himalayan griffon vultures.



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e-Tender Notice

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