



BANSHKHALI IN CTG

Parts of embankment collapse in just 2yrs

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

A Tk 293 crore embankment in Chattogram's Banskhali upazila has partially collapsed just over two years after its completion, raising serious concerns about the quality of construction and oversight.

At least three sections of the structure have already eroded. With the monsoon season approaching, hundreds of coastal residents now fear floods and crop losses.

"I had to rebuild my house four times over the last three decades due to coastal erosion," said Ali Ahmed, a 55-year-old resident of Kadamasul area. "Now the new embankment, which was supposed to protect us, is already breaking apart."

The embankment, constructed by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB), was inaugurated in late 2022. The 15-kilometre embankment project along the Bay of Bengal and Sangu river in Banskhali was approved by Ecom in May 2015, with a budget of Tk 293 crore.

During a recent visit, it was found that several points along the

embankment have been damaged, particularly in Kadamasul and Khanhannabab areas.

Geo-bags and tubes had been dumped at the damaged embankment sites to prevent tidal and cyclone-driven water from entering nearby communities.

Rafiqul Islam, an assistant teacher at Hamidia Dakhil Madrasah in Kadamasul, said, "The embankment has started to fail in just over two years. This clearly points to substandard work. The government must take action against those responsible."

The Khanhannabab Union Parishad had a population of over 33,000 people as per the 2022 census.

Sohidul Islam Shikder, acting UP chairman, said several villages have become increasingly vulnerable, especially during high tides and storms.

Mentionable, a team from BUET identified 3,787 of the 11,036 concrete blocks as substandard and recommended their rejection in 2020. Acting on the recommendation, the WDB later

discarded the faulty blocks.

Contacted, KM Julfiqar Tareq, superintending engineer of the BWDB, acknowledged the damage.

However, he denied allegations of substandard work. "We had the blocks tested by a team of experts and rejected only those that met the required standards. So, there was no scope for irregularities."

He attributed the collapse to changes in Sangu's course. "The most severe erosion has occurred along an 800-metre stretch near the river's estuary, where newly formed sandbars have altered its course. As a result, strong currents are hitting the embankment directly, causing sections to collapse," he said.

He said the embankment was constructed a few years ago under severe budget constraints.

"At that time, we could only afford to build a basic structure. Now, we are working on a more sustainable embankment, with a focus on integrated river management. The damaged portion will be reinforced under the ongoing project aimed at strengthening the embankment in vulnerable areas," he added.

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