Tk 4cr bridge remains unusable without approach roads

MINTU DESHWARA

Around 15,000 people from at least 12 villages in Moulvibazar's Rajnagar upazila still have to cross the Laghata river by boat or makeshift bamboo footbridges as a Tk 4 crore bridge, built nearly five years ago, remains unusable due to a lack of approach roads.

"We urge the authorities to build the approach roads and open the bridge without further delay," said Hosna Begum, a local resident.

The 60-metre reinforced concrete bridge on the Kamarchak Government Primary School-Dhalai ferry terminal road in Kamarchak union remains disconnected from roads at both ends.

According to the Local Government Engineering Department, construction began on July 6, 2020, at an estimated cost of Tk 4,04,03,449. Contractor Prince Mamun (JV) was given until November 18, 2021, to complete the work.

Sajjad Hossain of Islampur village said residents have to take detours of several miles as rickshaws, vans, bicycles, motorcycles and auto-rickshaws cannot use the bridge.

Farmers struggle to transport their produce to markets, while taking critically ill patients to hospitals is also difficult, he said.

The affected villages include South Islampur, Khas Premnagar, Mitipur, Bhola Nagar, Shyamerkona, Nowagaon, Alalpur, Hatikraiya, Gobindpur and Kalaikuna.



The 60-metre reinforced concrete bridge on the Kamarchak Govt Primary School-Dhalai ferry terminal road in Kamarchak union remains disconnected from roads. PHOTO: STAR

Residents also face difficulties reaching schools, the Kamarchak Union Parishad, a bank, mosques and madrasas. A visit to the site found the main bridge structure complete but without connecting roads at either end.

Brinda Namasudra of Bhola Nagar said students, elderly people and patients requiring emergency medical care were among the worst affected. Farmers and traders also face additional costs and delays in transporting goods.

"Despite spending crores of taka, our suffering remains unchanged. During the monsoon, boats and bamboo footbridges are still our only means of crossing the river," said local businessman Suleman Mia.

Repeated attempts to contact the contractor, Prince Mamun (JV), for comment went unanswered.

Rajnagar Upazila Engineer Abdul Gani said construction of the approach roads had been delayed due to difficulties in sourcing soil during the monsoon and legal complications over land acquisition. "We have decided to complete the approach roads within the existing arrangements," he said.

"We hope to complete the work and make the bridge usable within the next month," he added.

See business potential, not disability: speakers

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"Most of all, they need our confidence that they can be part of the mainstream," he said, stressing the importance of accessible infrastructure.

Representatives of financial institutions, including Kanti Kumar Shaha, chief executive officer of Alliance Finance PLC; Shakil Ahmed of Eastern Bank PLC; Zeeshan Kingshuk Huq, chief communications officer of United Commercial Bank PLC; and a representative of Upay, discussed financial products and services available to entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Debashish Roy, director of Impact Investment Exchange, called for greater visibility of financial services available to people with disabilities.

Zahidul Kabir, lead of BRAC's Disability Inclusion Programme, and Aziza Ahmed, director of operations at Bangladesh Business and Disability Network, discussed the responsibilities of organisations working in the sector.

Syed A J Rizvi, founding chairman of Alliance Finance, said banks could adopt a more flexible and proactive approach to supporting entrepreneurs with disabilities while complying with existing regulations.

Bappi Sarker of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation said his organisation had developed a forum to promote the economic development of people with disabilities with support from different sections of society.

Shormi Roy, founder of catering business Ahona Rondhonshala, said banks had been responsive when she followed the required procedures, but entrepreneurs needed clearer information on accessing loans and other banking facilities.

"Today's disabled community wants to be treated as entrepreneurs first," she said.

The workshop concluded with a decision to prepare documents explaining procedures for obtaining banking facilities. Participants also called for policies supporting underserved sections of the economy.

Rotary Club of Dhaka North Secretary M Hasanuz Zaman was also present.

Successive regimes used the constitution to retain power

FROM PAGE 3

Firoz said the concentration of power persisted under later rulers. Although Ziaur Rahman had introduced provisions for referendums and a Supreme Judicial Council, he did not substantially change the centralised power structure, he said.

He also argued that the introduction of one-party rule in 1975 reflected not just a constitutional crisis but a failure of governance, as the ruling party became increasingly detached from the people.

He called for addressing the constitution's shortcomings without abandoning its progressive ideals and its roots in the Liberation War.

Supreme Court lawyer Qazi Zahed Iqbal said several amendments had been made to accommodate particular individuals rather than reflect the people's will.

Although the constitution contained the essential features of parliamentary government, the country had still experienced authoritarian rule, he said, adding that the problem also lay in political culture and the reluctance of leaders to relinquish power.

Qazi cited the Eighth Amendment, which introduced Islam as the state religion under HM Ershad, as an example of using constitutional change for political advantage.

He said the 1990 mass uprising had restored parliamentary government, but its gains were not sustained. The 2024 uprising had offered another opportunity to introduce reforms in line with people's aspirations.

Regarding the present reform debate, Qazi said changes through parliament could face legal challenges, while reforms through a separate council might also be challenged for going beyond the existing constitutional framework.

The interim administration, by taking oath under the constitution after the 2024 uprising, had entered that framework, he argued. The intervening period therefore needed ratification through an 18th amendment, he said.

However, the prospect of future legal challenges should not prevent necessary changes. "You cannot bind future generations to today's values," Qazi said, arguing that each generation should be free to adapt the constitution to its needs.

Supreme Court lawyer and constitutional researcher Arif Khan said the constitution's origins lay in the Liberation War and earlier political struggles in East Bengal.

He said Pakistan's prolonged failure to establish stable constitutional rule explained why the Awami League had moved quickly to frame a constitution after independence, seeking to avoid a similar deadlock.

Demands for education, food, clothing and other basic rights had featured in political programmes before independence, he said. The principles of the 1972 constitution therefore did not belong exclusively to the AL.

"The Liberation War was not any party's war. It was a people's war," Arif said, criticising the party for claiming ownership of the war and the constitution.

He argued that the AL subsequently weakened the framework it itself had established, first through the 1973 amendments on international-crimes cases and emergency powers, and then through the Fourth Amendment of 1975, which introduced one-party rule.

Arif credited former president Ziaur Rahman with restoring several provisions on elections, judicial powers and the press, bringing the constitution closer to its earlier form, although some provisions were changed.

He linked the events of November 7, 1975, to that process.

The constitution could be amended or rewritten where necessary, but severing its link with the Liberation War could benefit those who opposed independence, he warned.

PRAYER TIMING
NOVEMBER 08

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-00	12-45	3-45	5-25	7-00
JAMAAT	5-35	1-15	4-00	5-30	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Govt revises CSA draft, worries stay

FROM PAGE 1

rumour as "unsupported or unverified" information, news or claims that caused, or could cause, public confusion, panic or unrest.

Under the revision, information must be false to qualify as a rumour.

However, the revisions disclosed by officials do not indicate any reduction in the penalty of 10 years' imprisonment or a Tk 40 lakh fine, or both, for spreading "rumours" and "misinformation".

The government also plans to define and penalise defamation in line with the Penal Code, 1860, which provides for up to two years' simple imprisonment, a fine, or both.

The earlier draft proposed five years' imprisonment or a Tk 20 lakh fine, or both.

The modifications will further distinguish defamation, belittling and bullying from offences involving sextortion and other forms of sexual abuse under Section 25.

The revised draft requires approval of a competent court to arrest journalists and news outlet owners over their coverage. Media outlets will receive prior notice and an opportunity to defend themselves before action can be taken against them.

On content blocking, authorities would have to inform affected individuals or organisations of the reasons within three days, and applications for the release of blocked content would have to be disposed of within 15 days.

The government also plans to remove a provision that allowed online content to be blocked for being derogatory towards the state, and to delete the words "any other agency" from Section 8(2), which refers to authorities empowered to seek content blocking.

Under the existing law, authorities must obtain tribunal approval within three days of blocking content. If approval is not obtained or is refused, the content must be restored.

However, the proposed protections have drawn criticism for distinguishing between journalists and other citizens.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), acknowledged that journalists and media owners were being given some exemptions but asked why the same protections would not extend to everyone, and whether the same law would discriminate against all other citizens.

"Such divide and rule should not be ideally acceptable to media professionals themselves," he said.

Supreme Court lawyer Priya Ahsan Chowdhury said freedom of expression should be protected equally for journalists and other citizens, raising constitutional concerns about selective safeguards.

She also sought clarification on what kinds of "action" would require prior notice.

Referring to Section 29 of the previous draft, under which a court may suspend, cancel or prohibit an organisation's registration, licence or activities following its conviction, she said cancelling an organisation's registration or licence for an individual's offence would be disproportionate, particularly when the offence is defined broadly.

The Editors' Council's 12-point recommendations include court approval for journalists' arrests, searches, seizures, surveillance, and device access; confidentiality of sources; safeguards for public-interest reporting; protection against penalising entire outlets for individual reports; and handling of defamation complaints by the Press Council.

Prothom Alo executive editor Sajjad Sharif said the government had responded to some concerns by proposing advance notice and time limits for disposal of applications.

"But the new draft should have also addressed sections 33, 34 and 35, which specifically deal with investigative powers, search, seizure and arrest without warrant," he said.

On defamation, SC lawyer Priya Ahsan said it did not need to be defined twice. The existing criminal defamation provisions, inherited from the colonial era, had themselves been misused, and imprisonment was a disproportionate response to reputational harm, she said.

She also criticised the continued inclusion of rumour as an offence, citing the misuse of such loosely defined speech under Section 57 of the ICT Act and other predecessors of the cyber security law.

She welcomed the removal of provisions allowing mobile courts to try certain cyber offences.

Iftekharuzzaman said the issue was not merely how defamation was defined, but whether cyber security or criminal laws should be used at all to regulate defamation, fake news and disinformation. He argued that such an approach was neither appropriate nor effective.

"Cyber security laws are meant to protect cyber infrastructure, data integrity, and online safety such as preventing hacking or digital fraud rather than to police information, speech or reputation," he said.

Civil courts would be more appropriate for addressing reputational damage, misinformation and fake news, he said, rather than using this law to control free speech through unaccountable use of police and state power.

National Revolution and Solidarity Day observed

FROM PAGE 3

He said those who had attempted to undermine the country in the past would not succeed in suppressing pro-democracy people this time either.

He added that the people would resist such conspiracies just as they had done before.

The procession passed through Nightingale intersection, Kakrail, the Chief Justice's residence, Hare Road, Minto Road, Hotel InterContinental intersection, Banglamotor, and Farmgate before reaching Manik Mia Avenue in front of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

At one point, he led the crowd in chanting, "Not Delhi, not Pindi, nor any other country -- Bangladesh first, Bangladesh for all."

"Let our revolution begin today," he said, concluding his speech.

Earlier, BNP leaders and activists began gathering in Nayapaltan in small processions from noon. At one point, crowds filled the streets from Kakrail intersection to Fakirerpool.

Many carried the national flag and placards featuring portraits of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, former prime minister Khaleda Zia, and Tarique Rahman. Several participants wore colourful caps and party T-shirts.

Leaders and activists from BNP units in Dhaka North and South, as well as different districts under Dhaka division, took part in the rally.

Earlier in the morning, President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman paid floral tributes at the graves of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and the party's former chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Meanwhile, the BNP rally and procession brought parts of the capital to a standstill yesterday afternoon, causing severe traffic congestion.

VILLAGE POLICE TO GET HIGHER SALARIES

Earlier in the morning, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman attended a national gathering of village police at the National Parade Ground, where he announced increases in their salaries, retirement benefits, and allowances.

He said the monthly salary of village police members had been raised from Tk 7,500 to Tk 10,500, while that of village police chiefs had been increased from Tk 8,000 to Tk 11,000.

Members will also receive a monthly mobile phone allowance of Tk 150. The new benefits took effect yesterday, he said.

The retirement gratuity for members has been increased from Tk 50,000 to Tk 80,000, while that for chiefs has been raised from Tk 80,000 to Tk 1 lakh.

Weekly allowances for travel to police stations have also been increased. Members will now receive Tk 500, up from Tk 300, while chiefs will get Tk 600 instead of Tk 300.

CONCERT AT MANIK MIA

A concert titled "Concert for Solidarity" was organised at Manik Mia Avenue to mark the day.

Organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the event was held under the management of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, with support from the Bangladesh Musical Bands Association.

James, Miles, Warfaze, Feedback, Artcell, Shironamhin, and Mechanics performed at the concert.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Police Telecommunication Organization
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
web: telecom.police.gov.bd

Invitation for International Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for Supply of HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories for FPU in FY 2026-2027

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affair's
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Police
3.	Procuring Entity Name	SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization
4.	Invitation for	Supply of HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories for FPU in FY 2026-2027
5.	Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.057.11.008.26/9152/Betar
6.	Date	05-11-2026
Key Information		
7.	Procurement Method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) - (International)
Funding Information		
8.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB)
Particular Information		
9.	Tender Publication date	08 November 2026
10.	Tender last selling date	21 December 2026.
11.	Tender closing date and time	22 December 2026 at 12:00 hrs.
12.	Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	22 December 2026 at 12:30 hrs.
Name & address of the office		
13.	Name & address of the office	Bangladesh Police, Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
	Selling tender document	ASP (Procurement), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
	Receiving tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
	Opening tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
14.	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	22 November 2026, at 12:00 hrs. at Police Telecom Conference Room (1st Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
15.	Eligibility of Tenderer	1) Up to date Export license (2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal (3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability (4) Original full Brochure of products of the Principal (5) Other requirements described in the tender document (PG 5A).
16.	Brief description of goods:	Supply of HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories for FPU in FY 2026-2027

Sl. No.	Description of Good	Price of tender document (Non-refundable)	Tender security	Completion time
1.	HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories	5,000/- (Five Thousand) Taka only.	TK-6,34,500/- or USD-5,100.00	150 days from the Date of Opening L/C.

Procuring Entity Details		
17.	Name of official inviting tender	Shahriar Bin Saleh
18.	Designation of the official inviting tender	SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
19.	Address of official inviting tender	Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
20.	Contact details of official inviting the tender	Phone: +880 2-8301253 FAX: +880 2-8301404, Mobile: + 88 01320-020041, e-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd
21.	The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.	
Special instructions		
22.	a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.	
	b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.	
	c) The Procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.	
	d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.	
	e) Evaluation will be done by Lot by Lot basis.	
	f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.	
	g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.	
	h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.	
	i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2025.	

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(Shahriar Bin Saleh)
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