

# **Demand for 6-lane on South Bengal highway, the procession of deaths on the road does not stop**

**Md. Riazur Rahman, Patuakhali::** Main demand from the new government Social organizations, transport owners-workers and locals have been continuously protesting and forming human chains at various times demanding the upgrade of the Bhanga-Barisal-Kuakata highway to 6 lanes. As the project has been slow due to financial crisis and complications in land acquisition, the people of Patuakhali and Barisal regions of South Bengal have strongly demanded that the new government start the construction of this highway as soon as possible.

When will the Dhaka-Barisal 6-lane road see the light of day? Road accidents have become a long-term national crisis in Bangladesh. Hundreds of people lose their lives every year on the Dhaka-Barisal, Patuakhali and Kuakata highways, many are permanently disabled, and there is also a reckless movement of vehicles on narrow roads. Road accidents often occur due to untrained drivers and unfit vehicles. More road accidents occur on the Dhaka-Bhanga-Faridpur-Barisal-Patuakhali and Kuakata highways every day.

However, these road accidents do not occur for any single reason, it is the result of a collective failure.

To stop the procession of deaths, this highway should be upgraded to 6-lane soon and every driver, pedestrian, and administration must be vocal. Safe roads are not only the

responsibility of the government, but the collective responsibility of everyone. Meanwhile, if more lives are lost on the Dhaka-Barisal highway, the road will be upgraded to 6-lane.

In this regard, the administration said that there will be strict surveillance by the administration to ensure smooth movement of people, as well as taking legal action against reckless drivers, restricting the speed of mechanical vehicles, and bringing the drivers of vehicles with more passengers and those concerned under the law. However, if the Dhaka-Barisal highway is upgraded to a 6-lane road, road accidents will be reduced to a great extent.

The higher authorities will be informed about this. Meanwhile, the people of all levels of Barisal division have demanded the Prime Minister to upgrade the Dhaka-Barisal highway to a 6-lane road in order to implement safe roads, seeking the Prime Minister's good will.

Although these demands have been made many times over the past 55 years after independence, no one has paid attention to the southern region. As a result, this area of the Dhan River Canal has remained neglected despite all the potential. However, the economy of the entire southern region can change around the tourist center Kuakata, Bholā natural gas and Payra seaport here. Therefore, in the current situation, the people of Barisal division have once again raised their demands to the new government.

Patuakhali Sadar Upazila Jubo Dal Joint General Secretary, Saiful Mridha said, Bhangā, Faridpur-Barisal-Kuakata 6-lane highway used to cross the Padma from Kuakata to Barisal to the capital Dhaka, and people from the southern region had to cross a total of 14 ferries.

Those ferries no longer exist.

A bridge has also been built on the Padma River. As a result, communication with the capital by road is much easier, but the narrow highway from Bhanga in Faridpur to Barisal and Kuakata is an obstacle. This highway, which connects 10 southern districts including the tourist center Kuakata and Payra port, is still 18 to 36 feet wide.

Patuakhali Bus Owners Association President Khandaker Imam Hossain Nasir and Barisal Bus Owners Group President Ziauddin Sikder said, "I cannot express how much sorrow this highway is for us. Earlier, there were ferries, vehicles used to ply intermittently, and there were no complications. Now the cars want to reach their destinations from Dhaka in one go. I demand that the highway be upgraded to 6 lanes as soon as possible.

Then, due to fast transportation, many industries will be built in this region. Economic prosperity will come.'

Dhaka-Barisal-Kuakata railway line: Barisal is the only division of the country where there is no railway line. Yet it has the world-class tourist center of Kuakata and the Payra seaport. During the Awami League government, stories were told of establishing a railway line from Bhanga in Faridpur to Kuakata via Barisal, but nothing actually happened. Only a survey was done to show people. Nothing was done except putting up red flags and boundary marks in the name of land acquisition. Yet, if the railway line goes to Kuakata via Barisal, the wheels of the economy of this region will turn.

Patuakhali Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Md.

Kamal Hossain said, 'An initiative was once taken during the British period to establish a railway line from Dhaka to Barisal. The lands acquired by the railway are still there. "It cannot be overstated how important the railway line is for us. It is regrettable that this demand has to be made even after 55 years of independence. I hope the current government will pay sincere attention to this."