

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WATCH

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A Unique Example of Civic Observation in a Tourist City

—Md. Sarwar Jahan Bhuiyan

The project of Kalatali Adarsha High School was taken as the 5th project of DIMAPPP in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila. Chakaria, Ramu and Cox's Bazar Sadar already had 14 projects ongoing by the LGED. Later on, this project was screened and selected by the EED (Department of Education Engineering, Cox's Bazar District). Kalatali Adarsha High School is located just behind the Sayeman



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Hotel, Kalatali Beach Point, in a completely commercial area. Due to the school's location, next to various sea beach-centered business establishments, such as residential hotels, restaurants etc., it was difficult to form a citizen monitoring group at the beginning. Later on, with the help of the headmaster and stand-in teacher Anwar Hossain Parvez, an 11-member citizen monitoring team consisting of 3 women, one college student and respected people from the neighborhood was formed. Among the women there was also a local architect from BUET. The orientation and sightseeing was attended by 26 people including the citizen monitoring group members and all the teachers of the school. On March 10, 2021, 11:30 AM a site meeting was held in the presence of 42 local citizens, as well as Babul Ahmed, Senior Assistant Engineer, Cox's Bazar District EED and the designated Upazila Engineer in charge of the school. The layout of the work was inaugurated in the presence of everyone.

On 23rd March 2021, a work supervision schedule was prepared by the soil excavation monitoring team under the management of Mr. Anwar Hossain Parvez for Base Box to supervise the work. Mr. Parvez was given the responsibility of sharing the work by communicating with the citizens regularly. He shifted his residence to an abandoned room of the school for the convenience of supervising the work. He monitored the construction work with other citizens as per schedule from there. A member of

the citizen monitoring team would accompany him during the work routinely and the female architect from the citizen monitoring team would be notified when the construction materials reached the site. The Architect used to examine the quality of construction materials. She also examined whether the map, design etc. was correct. The construction work was supervised in a systematic and routine process by the citizen monitoring team from the beginning to present. This is an exemplary supervising work done by citizens in the DIMAPP project.

In conclusion, it is very important to form an effective monitoring team for citizen engagement in public procurement. Updating the concerned agencies about the effective role of their work in overseeing, keeping a close watch on the contractor, random quality ensuring of construction materials, as well as troubleshooting capacity and coordination can lead to a successful completion of a quality work.

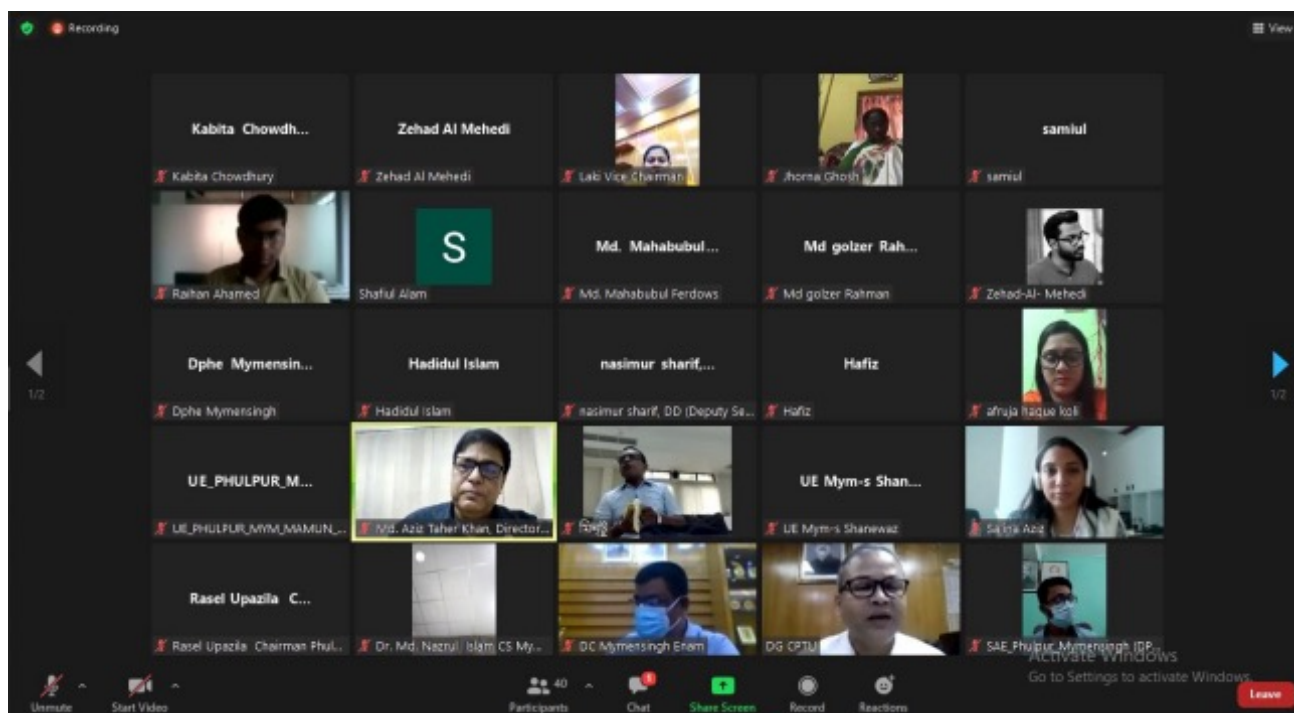
In order to ensure sustainable development, prevention of corruption, and the implementation of vision, mission and goal of DIMAPPP, a team of citizen monitors, especially conscious citizens like Mr. Parvez is as important as taking effective account of the problems and complaints by the government implementing agencies.

The DIMAPPP project in Cox's Bazar district is working towards that goal and I feel very proud to be a part of this.



Bringing Back Citizen Engagement Forums virtually

Due to COVID-19, Citizen Engagement Forums (CEF) were brought to a halt for months. Hence, it was decided to shift the forums to online platforms to ensure they were running again.



Mymensingh

The first virtual CEF was held in Mymensingh on 26th August 2021. Md. Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury, Director General, CPTU, IMED, Ministry of Planning, acted as the President of the event. He welcomed the change to online platforms as it helps to carry forward the goals of DIMAPPP and allows everyone to continue having conversations with all the stakeholders. The event was opened by Md. Aziz Taher Khan, Director (Joint Secretary), CPTU, who shared the purpose of these forums and informed everyone on the E-GP help desk and Citizen Portal. Salina Aziz, Senior Programme Manager, BIGD, BRAC University, gave a presentation to enlighten everyone on the field-level work being undertaken by citizen monitoring groups and the success that have been brought. Special guest, Md. Enamul Hoque, Deputy Commissioner, Mymensingh, thanked BIGD for presenting the real picture of the field for everyone to understand. He then spoke about the necessity to expand and involve citizens during designing to reduce any confusion from the citizens.

He then encouraged all the participants to speak from their heart.

Nilphamari

Nilphamari CEF took place on 20th September, 2021 virtually. The event was attended by Pradip Ranjan Chakrabarty, Secretary, IMED, Ministry of Planning; Md. Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury, District Commissioner, Nilphamari; panelists from CPTU and a team of officials from BIGD, alongside others. As the special guest, Md. Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury suggested syncing upazila service providers, engineers, contractors and citizens in every aspect was imperative in order to make this project sustainable and accelerated. Gita Rani, a member of the Citizen Monitoring Group from Khalishadhulia Babupara, raised her grievances at the exchange of views. She stated that the construction of the school in her area has been at halt for over a year. She added that there was a risk of construction equipment being damaged due to the closure of school work. She further added that



she had reported construction materials being stolen from the site. Upazila Chairman, Nilphamari Sadar stated that the DC and other officials of different agencies do not take proper observations of the projects they oversee, especially the “Ashrayan” project by the government. The panelists took note of the participants and promised to resolve the issues raised.

Field Updates

August 12, 2021

Upon site visit of Satiajuri High School building in Satiajuri Union, Chunarughat Upazila, Habiganj District, it was found that work was progressing in full swing, despite starting late. Citizens Committee members were overseeing the work. They said that they monitored the work even during Corona. There was an issue of mixing the ratio of construction materials disproportionately but could not do it because the citizen monitoring group members and teachers interfered. When met later, the head teacher was content about the quality of the work.

September 19, 2021

After visiting the site during mid-August at Patuakhali Sadar Upazila’s Madhya Uttar Badarpur Government Primary School, the construction work was found to be stopped. When the Deputy Assistant Engineer in charge was questioned, he said that the contractor had let him know that upon the improvement of the Covid situation, the work would resume in one month. As part of the regular visit, on 19/9/2021, the field officer saw that two or three of the contractor’s men were preparing all the goods to resume the rest of the work. And within the next few days, work would be up and running.



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