

Flood threatens supply chain as Dhaka-Ctg transportation disrupted

[Bangladesh](#)

TBS Report

22 August, 2024, 10:30 pm

Last modified: 22 August, 2024, 10:47 pm



Train services from Chattogram to other parts suspended



Some parts of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway has gone under knee-deep water, disrupting vehicular movement and causing traffic gridlock today (22 August).

Officials fear supply chain disruptions due to flooding that has affected road and rail transportation between Dhaka and Chattogram with several points of the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway being submerged, and train services being halted, leading to delays in goods movement.

Mohammad Nazmul Islam, general manager of the Eastern Railway Zone, said the authorities decided to suspend train services to ensure passenger safety and protect railway assets.

"Water is flowing over the railway lines and bridges in Feni. The same was observed at a railway bridge in Sylhet. There has also been a landslide on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar railway line. Given these conditions, operating trains is deemed dangerous; therefore, the decision has been made to suspend train services," he said.

Many vehicles on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway were seen stalled today as their engines were flooded, leading to severe traffic congestion at several points. There is a growing concern that road communication between the port city of Chittagong and the rest of the country could be completely cut off at any moment, which could result in a breakdown of the supply chain, officials concerned said.

Khairul Alam, the superintendent of police for the Cumilla Region Highway Police, told TBS that floodwaters are flowing over several sections of the highway from Lalpool in Feni to Chauddagam in Cumilla. Vehicles are moving slowly, and traffic jams have formed in many areas due to stalled vehicles.

Several army teams were working to ease the traffic congestion, he said. "However, unless the floodwaters recede, the situation is unlikely to improve. There is a possibility that traffic could come to a complete halt at any moment."

According to local officials, several kilometres of the highway from Nobogram Road to Chauddagam Bazar under Chauddagam upazila were submerged underwater. Many vehicles stalled and became stranded on the flooded road. Some drivers were attempting to use the opposite lane, worsening the situation. Passengers were facing extreme hardship as they remained stuck in their vehicles. Despite the arrival of police and fire services, little progress was made. A 10km long traffic jam was formed on the Cumilla section of the highway in the afternoon.

Goods transportation affected

The slowdown and traffic congestion on the highway have already caused a shortage of goods transport vehicles in Chattogram. Consequently, the number of trucks arriving at the port for deliveries decreased, and loading and unloading operations at private container depots were on the verge of being halted, port officials said yesterday.

Chowdhury Zafar Ahmed, general secretary of the Bangladesh Truck-Covered Van-Prime Mover Owners Association, told TBS, "Many of our vehicles are stuck on highways. Although traffic is still moving, the speed is very slow. Due to gas-powered vehicles' engines shutting off, traffic jams have also formed at several points on the highways. In such flood conditions, there is no way to remove the stuck vehicles from the roads."

Expressing the fear that traffic on the highways might completely come to a halt at any moment, he said that the number of vehicles in Chattogram has already significantly decreased. "No vehicles are leaving Chattogram, leading to concerns about cargo transportation. Loading and unloading have been halted at several container depots."

Meanwhile, due to extremely heavy rainfall since the morning today, Omar Faruk, the secretary of Chattogram Port, reported that cargo discharge from mother vessels to lighterage ships at the outer anchorage of the port was suspended.

Although container handling at the port is normal, delivery is being hampered due to a shortage of vehicles, he said. "If traffic on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway comes to a halt, it will have an adverse impact on the port."

He added that the political instability over the past month has already caused container congestion at the port. "If traffic is disrupted on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway due to the flood, the congestion, which had somewhat eased, will increase again."

However, Ruhul Amin Sikdar, the general secretary of the Bangladesh Inland Container Depot Association, said there have been no reports of the highway traffic disruption affecting the depots so far. "Due to the heavy rainfall, there might be temporary suspensions of cargo loading and unloading at some depots. However, the operations at the depots remain normal."

Train communication snapped

Due to the worsening flood situation in Feni, Cumilla, and Mirsarai in Chattogram, the railway authorities yesterday decided to suspend train services from Chattogram.

The Subarna Express bound for Dhaka and the Paharika Express bound for Sylhet departed from Chattogram station yesterday morning.

However, due to the flooding, these trains were unable to reach their destinations.

According to officials, the railway line from Feni to Fajilpur was submerged in water. Water was flowing over many railway bridges, and there were reports of the railway line being uprooted in Cumilla due to the floodwaters. Water accumulated at Feni station.

From Chattogram, 11 intercity trains operate daily to destinations including Dhaka, Jamalpur, Sylhet, and Chandpur. Additionally, local and commuter trains regularly run to Cox's Bazar, Nazirhat, Chandpur, Dhaka, and Mymensingh. In total, 20 passenger trains and 5-6 freight trains operate.

Since Wednesday, the flood situation in Cumilla and Feni has been deteriorating. Continuous heavy rainfall, along with mountain runoff from India, has caused flooding in various areas including Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, Cumilla, Feni, Noakhali, Khagrachari, and Chattogram.