Global Journal of Human-Social Science - Section E
GJHSS

Costly Roads, Short Lives: A Case for a Performance-Based SOP at RHD

Professor Dr ABM Siddique[§ ‡ ϑ *]

Affiliations
§ Department of Business Administration, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology [(OA)]
‡ Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Dhaka, Bd [(OA)]

Qualifications / Designations
ϑ Adjunct Faculty

Abstract

Bangladesh spends roughly Tk 37,000-38,500 crore a year through the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD), of which more than four-fifths is development spending. Independent assessments consistently place the unit cost of Bangladeshi highways far above regional comparators, while reports from the press, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) point to contractor concentration, weak supervision and premature deterioration. This case study examines the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) budget for FY2021-22 to FY2026-27, the contracting framework in force, and the evidence on quality and externalities. It finds that (i) unit costs are exceptionally high; (ii) maintenance is chronically under-funded and under-spent; (iii) contracts do contain defects-liability, retention and performance-security provisions, so the problem is their short duration and weak enforcement, not their absence; and (iv) no single consolidated SOP links design life, supervision, warranty and payment. The paper proposes a lifecycle-based SOP and discusses its implications for public financial management.

Keywords: *accountability, Bangladesh, defects liability, negative externalities, Public procurement, road construction cost, Roads and Highways Department*

EARLY

*** Corresponding Author**
Professor Dr ABM Siddique

1. Introduction

Roads are the backbone of Bangladesh's freight and passenger movement. The finance minister's FY2024-25 speech recorded that district, regional and national highways had grown from 12,018 km to 32,678 km (The Business Standard, 2024b), and the transport and communication sector now receives the largest share of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) (BSS, 2026). Yet the public discourse is dominated by three concerns: the cost per kilometre, the short life of road surfaces, and the absence of consequences for poor work.

From an economic perspective these concerns are linked. When a road fails early, the public pays twice: once to build and again to repair, while road users bear the delay, vehicle damage and crash costs that Pigou (1920) would classify as externalities imposed on third parties. This case study asks:

1. What has the RHD/RTHD budget looked like over the last five years, and how is it composed?
2. What does the evidence say about cost efficiency and quality?
3. What accountability mechanisms exist in procurement and contract documents, and where do they fail?
4. What SOP would reduce waste and negative externalities?

2. Research Design and Method

This is a single, embedded case study (Yin, 2018), with the RHD as the unit of analysis and budget cycles, contract documents and project episodes as embedded units. The method is documentary: budget speeches and ADP reports, the Public Procurement Act 2006 and Public Procurement Rules (PPR) 2025, Standard Tender Documents (STDs) published by the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA), RHD manuals, World Bank statements, and investigative reporting. Triangulation across independent sources follows Eisenhardt (1989). The author's starting propositions were:

- P1: Road construction costs in Bangladesh are among the highest in the world.
- P2: Quality is poor and accountability minimal.
- P3: Contracts contain no warranty or guarantee clause.
- P4: Authorised contractors routinely sub-contract the work.
- P5: No effective SOP exists to enforce cost and quality discipline.

2.1. Limitations

The study relies on secondary sources. Budget figures come from different stages (proposed, original, revised), so they are indicative rather than strictly comparable. No field audit, contract-level data

Table 1. RTHD budget allocations

Fiscal year	RTHD total allocation (Tk crore)	RTHD development / ADP allocation (Tk crore)	Basis and source
2021–22	n/a	28,042 in BDT crore (one crore = 10 million)	Proposed development allocation (Prothom Alo, 2022)
2022–23	36,647 in BDT crore	31,296 in BDT crore	Proposed budget and ADP (Dhaka Tribune, 2022a; 2022b)
2023–24	34,819 in BDT crore	n/a	As cited in later reporting (The Business Standard, 2024b)
2024–25	38,143 in BDT crore	32,042 in BDT crore	Proposed; remainder Tk 6,101 crore operating (The Business Standard, 2024b)
2025–26	38,496 in BDT crore	32,329.6 (original); 31,772 (revised)	Proposed budget and ADP (BSS, 2025a; 2025b; The Business Standard, 2026b)
2026–27	36,918 in BDT crore	30,741 in BDT crore	Approved budget; ADP (bdnews24, 2026; BSS, 2026)

Figures mix proposed, original and revised stages. Gaps (n/a) should be filled from the Ministry of Finance budget documents.

or RHD internal records were available, and no systematic national dataset on pavement life was located. Propositions that depend on such data are flagged.

3. Institutional Context

The RHD, established in 1962, is responsible for constructing and maintaining the national highway and bridge network and operates under the RTHD (Roads and Highways Department, no date). Its procurement is dominated by works contracts, managed through a central procurement circle (BPPA, no date). The legal base is the Public Procurement Act 2006, now supplemented by the PPR 2025, gazetted on 28 September 2025 with 154 rules and 21 schedules, and by new e-GP standard tender documents issued in October 2025 (Wikipedia contributors, 2026; BPPA, 2025a). The RHD's own expectation is that a road should remain serviceable for about 20 years (Prothom Alo, 2023).

4. Five Years of Budget: FY2021–22 to FY2026–27

Table 1 assembles the available figures for the RTHD, under which the RHD is the main implementing agency.

Several patterns emerge (author's calculations from Table 1):

- **Nominal stagnation.** The total allocation moved from Tk 36,647 crore (FY2022-23) to Tk 36,918 crore (FY2026-27), a rise of under 1 per cent over four years. After inflation this implies a real decline, even as the network and traffic grew.
- **FY2026-27 contraction.** The total is about 4 per cent below the FY2025-26 proposal, and the development allocation is about 3 per cent below the revised FY2025-26 ADP.
- **Development bias.** In FY2024-25 roughly 84 per cent of the Division's budget was development spending (Tk 32,042 crore of Tk 38,143 crore). The pattern is similar in FY2026-27 (about 83 per cent).
- **Weak execution.** Nationally, ADP implementation fell to 67 per cent across FY2021-22 to FY2024-25, and was expected to stay below 80 per cent in FY2025-26 (The Business Standard, 2026a). Under-execution means projects drag on, which the World Bank identifies as a cost driver.
- **Maintenance neglect.** In FY2024-25 only Tk 1,095 crore (42 per cent) of Tk 2,615 crore allocated for road maintenance was spent, leaving about 1,200 km of a 2,200 km repair target undone (The Business Standard, 2025). The allocation itself is only about 7 per cent of the Division's total budget (author's calculation; the maintenance figure may relate to the RHD alone, so treat the ratio as indicative).

The budget therefore leans toward new construction while the existing asset deteriorates, the pattern the World Bank describes as a "build, neglect, rebuild" mindset (Global Highways, 2021).

5. Cost Efficiency

5.1. Evidence for P1

In 2017 the World Bank compared per-kilometre costs of four-lane roads. Bangladeshi projects ranged from USD 2.5 million (Dhaka–Chattogram, Dhaka–Mymensingh) to USD 6.6 million (Rangpur–Hatikumrul), USD 7 million (Dhaka–Sylhet) and USD 11.9 million (Dhaka–Mawa), against USD 1.1–1.3 million in India, USD 1.3–1.6 million in China and about USD 3.5 million in Europe (bdnews24, 2017; The Daily Star, 2017). The Bank's economist attributed the gap largely to limited tender competition and corruption, alongside delays (The Daily Star, 2017). The interim government's White Paper later put the average at USD 6.35 million per km, 4.4 times India's, 2.15 times Pakistan's, 1.6 times China's and 3.7 times Turkey's (The Daily Star, 2025).

Recent projects show little relief. Elenga–Rangpur is costing about Tk 100 crore per km, Dhaka–Sylhet–Tamabil about Tk 115 crore and part of Chattogram–Cox's Bazar about Tk 306 crore (Prothom Alo, 2025a). The two-lane Cox's Bazar–Matarbari road was reported at Tk 476 crore per km, more than double the cost of the 55 km Dhaka–Bhanga Expressway, itself widely criticised at roughly Tk 200 crore per km (The Daily Star, 2025).

5.2. Assessment

P1 is supported, with a qualification: the evidence supports "among the highest in the world" and "several times regional benchmarks"; a strict ranking of "the highest" rests on a single 2017 comparison. Terrain, soft soil and flooding explain some premium; the CPD's Mustafizur Rahman argued that even after adjusting for geography the costs remain unusually high (Bonik Barta, no date). Collier, Kirchberger and Soderblom (2016) identify inadequate tender competition, delay and corruption as general drivers of road costs in low-income settings, a pattern consistent with the Bangladesh evidence.

EARLY VIEW

6. Contracting Framework and the Warranty Allegation

6.1. What the Documents Say (P3)

The author understood that contracts carry no warranty or guarantee. The published documents show otherwise:

- The BPPA standard tender documents define a Defect, a Defects Liability Period (DLP) and a Defects Correction Certificate. The DLP is stated in the contract data, the contractor must correct defects notified before it ends, and it is extended while defects remain uncorrected (BPPA, 2025a).
- The contractor must keep retention money and performance security that remain available for claims during the DLP; security is returned only after the Project Manager certifies correction (BPPA, 2025a). Under the 2025 documents for smaller works, retention is addressed explicitly, and the DLP "shall usually remain between 6 and 12 months" (BPPA, 2025b).
- The older RHD Conditions of Contract likewise require that the contract is not complete until a Defects Liability Certificate is signed (Ministry of Communications, no date).

6.2. Assessment

P3 is not supported as stated. Bangladesh's contracts do contain defects-liability, retention and performance-security provisions. The real weaknesses are:

1. **Duration mismatch.** A DLP of 6–12 months for smaller works sits against an RHD design expectation of about 20 years (Prothom Alo, 2023). Failures that appear in year two or three fall on the public purse.
2. **Enforcement.** Provisions work only if supervising engineers record defects, withhold payments and call securities. The ACC found engineers and officials colluding with influential persons and contractors to build sub-standard roads (The Daily Star, 2022).
3. **Capped liability.** Standard conditions limit the contractor's aggregate liability to the contract price (BPPA, 2025c), which is rarely a binding constraint but offers no incentive for lifecycle performance.

6.3. Sub-Contracting (P4)

The standard documents restrict sub-contracting of the whole of the works and require disclosure of sub-contracting arrangements. The sources reviewed contain no published data on how much RHD work is actually sub-let, so P4 is unverified. Indirect evidence points to a concentrated market: five companies won 51 per cent of RHD contracts in FY2022-23, which TIB's executive director described as collusion among politicians, engineers and contractors (Prothom Alo, 2023). In 2025 the RHD blacklisted 43 contractors after scrutiny, and the resulting disruption was one reason maintenance spending stalled (The Business Standard, 2025). Individual cases illustrate the risk: a contractor allegedly won an RHD laboratory package by bidding 13.5 per cent below the estimate with understated line items, then substituted high-value works (Prothom Alo, 2026); an Indian-financed Dhaka–Sylhet section was left in disrepair after the contractor failed to deliver (Prothom Alo, 2025b). Field audit or interview data are needed to test P4 properly.

7. Quality and Negative Externalities

7.1. Quality (P2)

Press and investigative evidence repeatedly report repairs shortly after construction (Prothom Alo, 2023), and implementing agencies have attributed more than 2,000 km of annual repair needs to overloaded vehicles (The Financial Express, 2017). However, the sources reviewed contain no systematic national dataset on pavement life, so P2 is partly supported; the claim that quality is "the worst in the world" cannot be substantiated and should be rephrased.

7.2. Externalities

Premature failure and weak maintenance impose costs beyond the budget:

- **Crashes.** Road crashes cost Bangladesh an estimated 2–3 per cent of GDP a year by World Bank estimates (Global Highways, 2021), with higher estimates of 5.1 per cent (World Bank, 2022) and about 5 per cent in 2021 (Asian Transport Observatory, 2025). An annual investment of about 0.2 per cent of GDP could save around 11,000 lives a year (Asian Transport Observatory, 2025).
- **Logistics.** Congestion across the national logistics system is estimated to double standard trucking costs, and crashes represent about 11 per cent of truck operating costs (Global Highways, 2021).
- **Fiscal.** Repeated resurfacing diverts public funds from new capacity, and the maintenance under-spend described in Section 4 compounds the backlog.

Crash causes are multiple (driver behaviour, vehicle condition, enforcement), so road quality is one contributor among several. The point is that infrastructure defects, poor maintenance and overloaded axles all raise the social cost per kilometre beyond the budget line.

8. Existing Procedures: Is There an SOP?

P5 is partly supported. The sources reviewed show a rule-based architecture, but not a single operating procedure that binds cost estimation, supervision, warranty and payment (Table 2):

The author has not located any published RHD instrument that requires independent cost benchmarking, third-party quality verification, public disclosure of sub-contractors, or reporting of post-completion pavement performance. These are the elements the SOP below proposes.

EARLY VIEW

Table 2. Existing instruments and gaps

Instrument	What it provides	Gap
Public Procurement Act 2006; PPR 2025; e-GP STDs	Tender methods, performance security, retention, DLP, debarment up to two years	DLP short; weak linkage to design life; enforcement relies on RHD discretion
RHD Construction Practices and Procedures Manual	Contractor responsible for method and quality; regular materials testing; escalation to the Engineer (RHD, no date)	Guidance, not a binding, auditable workflow
RHD Conditions of Contract	Defects Liability Certificate before completion (Ministry of Communications, no date)	Dated; period set per contract
Road Master Plan 2009 (under update)	Strategic planning (BSS, 2025c)	Not a quality or cost control tool

Table 3. Proposed SOP

Stage	Control	Evidence / output	Responsible
1. Planning	Whole-life cost estimate (construction + 20-year maintenance + user costs); independent per-km benchmark against comparable projects and the World Bank reference range	Published cost-benchmark note; justification required above the benchmark	RHD planning wing; Planning Commission; IMED
2. Tender	Open e-GP tendering as default; contractor-concentration and related-party screening; disclosure of beneficial owners; abnormally low bid review	Bid-evaluation report on the e-GP portal	RHD procurement circle; BPPA
3. Contract	Performance security and retention that run through a DLP linked to the type of work; sub-contracting only with prior written approval, a public register and joint liability for the prime contractor	Signed contract with DLP, security and sub-contractor schedule	Procuring entity
4. Construction	Independent supervision engaged and paid separately from the contractor; mandatory test frequencies; core sampling by an accredited laboratory; geo-tagged and photographic stage records	Digital quality log; stage-payment only against passed tests	Supervision consultant; RHD laboratory; accredited university labs
5. Handover	Joint inspection; as-built drawings; baseline pavement condition survey	Handover certificate with baseline roughness and strength data	Project Director; supervision consultant
6. Warranty	Annual condition survey during DLP; defects notice and repair at contractor's cost; security called on default; blacklisting for repeated default	Annual public condition report	Zone/circle engineers; BPPA debarment
7. Maintenance	Ring-fenced maintenance budget; axle-load enforcement at weigh stations; planned periodic maintenance	Maintenance execution rate published each quarter	RHD; RTHD; traffic and highway police
8. Accountability	Named engineer-in-charge for each road section; citizen sign-boards (as used in rural maintenance guidance); annual external audit; disciplinary action on proven negligence	Annual road-performance and audit report to Parliament	RTHD; ACC; Comptroller and Auditor General

EARLY VIEW

9. Proposed Standard Operating Procedure

The SOP is a proposal for discussion, not an existing RHD document. Its logic is to tie money to road performance over time, not to completion on paper (Table 3).

9.1. Design Choices for Discussion

First, the DLP should reflect the intended performance of the work (a short period for minor patching, a multi-year period for rehabilitation and new pavement), rather than a uniform 6–12 months. The specific durations are a policy choice, for which the author suggests a pilot of three to five years on selected corridors, with the evidence reviewed after two cycles. Second, payment of a final instalment should depend on the baseline-versus-end-of-DLP condition comparison. Third, the SOP should be introduced through the standard conditions of particular contract (PCC/TDS), which the PPR 2025 framework already allows, so no new law is needed to begin.

10. Suggested Measures for the Roads and Highways Department

The RHD can improve contractor accountability and quality, and so shrink negative externalities, through eleven measures that can start under the existing PPR 2025 framework. Table 4 groups them by timing.

10.1. Accountability Ladder for Contractors

The measures create graduated consequences: (i) a defect notice during the DLP, with repair at the contractor's cost; (ii) withholding of retention and payment; (iii) calling the performance security; (iv) debarment, which the standard tender documents allow for up to two years on termination for fundamental breach (BPPA, 2025a); and (v) referral to the ACC where collusion or corruption is suspected.

Table 4. Suggested measures and timing

Measure	What the RHD should do	Timing
Benchmark costs	Publish a whole-life cost estimate and an independent per-km benchmark before tender; require written justification above it	0–6 months
Tailored warranty	Replace the uniform 6–12 month Defects Liability Period (DLP) with periods set by type of work (short for patching, multi-year for new pavement or rehabilitation); pilot on selected corridors	0–6 months (pilot)
Security through the warranty	Keep performance security and retention money until the final condition survey passes; call the security on default	0–6 months
Sub-contracting control	Allow sub-contracting only with prior written approval and a public register; keep the prime contractor jointly liable	0–6 months
Independent supervision	Hire and pay the supervising consultant separately from the contractor; set mandatory test frequencies and core sampling by accredited laboratories (RHD laboratory, university laboratories)	6–18 months
Pay against evidence	Release stage payments only against passed tests and geo-tagged records; link the final instalment to the baseline-versus-end-of-DLP condition comparison	6–18 months
Contractor performance record	Keep a public performance record for each contractor; screen related parties and beneficial owners; review abnormally low bids; monitor each firm's share of awards	6–18 months
Protect maintenance	Ring-fence the maintenance budget and publish quarterly execution rates (FY2024-25 execution was 42 per cent)	0–12 months
Axle-load enforcement	Enforce limits at weigh stations with highway police, since overloading shortens pavement life	6–24 months
Named responsibility	Name the engineer in charge of each road section; install citizen sign-boards; commission an annual external audit; act on proven negligence	6–12 months
Open data	Publish per-km cost, contractor, supervision and condition data for every major project on the e-GP or RHD portal	6–12 months

The timing is the author's proposal.

EARLY VIEW

10.2. How Success Would Be Measured

Suggested indicators are cost per km against the benchmark, the share of roads needing repair within the DLP, the maintenance execution rate, the share of contracts won by the top five firms, and crash and delay costs on treated corridors.

11. Discussion

The case illustrates a classic principal–agent problem: the public (principal) cannot observe construction quality, while the contractor and supervising official (agents) have incentives and opportunities to under-deliver. High unit costs, concentration of contract awards and weak post-completion follow-up are consistent with limited competition and monitoring, as the World Bank has argued. The propositions tested in this paper can be summarised as follows (Table 5).

Table 5. Summary of findings

Proposition	Finding
P1 High costs	Supported (qualified: "among the highest", not proven rank)
P2 Poor quality, low accountability	Partly supported; systematic data lacking
P3 No warranty clause	Not supported; DLP exists but is short and weakly enforced
P4 Routine sub-contracting	Unverified; needs field evidence
P5 No effective SOP	Partly supported; fragmented rules, no integrated SOP

11.1. Policy Implications

(a) Publish per-km cost and condition data for every major project. (b) Lengthen and tailor DLPs, and enforce them. (c) Ring-fence and execute maintenance. (d) Make supervision independent. (e) Report outcomes to Parliament annually.

11.2. Questions for Classroom Discussion

1. How should a public agency set the benchmark for a "reasonable" per-kilometre cost where terrain differs?
2. Which incentives would make a contractor care about road condition in year five?
3. What are the trade-offs of a longer DLP for small domestic contractors?

12. Conclusion

Bangladesh's roads budget is large, stagnating in nominal terms and tilted toward new construction, while unit costs are several times those of neighbours and maintenance money goes unspent. The contract framework is not empty of warranty provisions, but the provisions are short, loosely tied to design life and weakly enforced. A lifecycle-based SOP that links cost benchmarking, independent supervision, sub-contractor transparency, a performance-linked DLP and published condition data would shift accountability from completion to performance and reduce the negative externalities borne by the public. Future research should obtain contract-level data and conduct field audits to test sub-contracting practice and pavement life.

REFERENCES

[1] Asian Transport Observatory (2025) Bangladesh road safety profile 2025. Available at: https://asiantransportobservatory.org/analytical-outputs/roadsafetyprofiles/bangladesh-road-safety-profile-2025/ (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[2] Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) (2025a) Standard Tender Document e-PW2B, October. Dhaka: BPPA. Available at: https://www.bppa.gov.bd/upload/standarddocument/2025-11-10-16-42-50-e-PW2B.pdf (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[3] Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) (2025b) Standard Tender Document e-PW1(a), October. Dhaka: BPPA. Available at: https://www.bppa.gov.bd/upload/standarddocument/2025-10-26-15-23-29-e-PW1(a).pdf (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[4] Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) (2025c) Standard Tender Document e-PW2A, October. Dhaka: BPPA. Available at: https://bppa.gov.bd/upload/standarddocument/2025-11-10-16-39-02-e-PW2A.pdf (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[5] Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) (n.d.) Procurement review: Roads and Highways Department. Available at: https://www.bppa.gov.bd/upload/policyandprocedure/2025-07-09-16-21-04-S-9_RHD.pdf (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[6] bdnews24 (2017) 'Bangladesh infrastructure is world's costliest, says World Bank', bdnews24, 14 July. Available at: https://bdnews24.com/economy/bangladesh-infrastructure-is-worlds-costliest-says-world-bank (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[7] bdnews24 (2026) 'Bangladesh approves Tk 9.38 trillion budget for FY2026–27', bdnews24, 11 June. Available at: https://bdnews24.com/budget2026-27/af480897762f (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[8] Bonik Barta (n.d.) 'Mega projects construction costs one of the highest in the world', Bonik Barta. Available at: https://en.bonikbarta.com/exclusive/RWZXOIEj6Gt3qJ1q (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[9] BSS (2025a) 'Govt allocates Tk 38,496cr for roads, highways', Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), 2 June. Available at: https://www.bssnews.net/national-budget-2025-2026/279475 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[10] BSS (2025b) 'Tk 2,30,000cr ADP earmarked in budget for FY26', Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), 2 June. Available at: https://www.bssnews.net/national-budget-2025-2026/279468 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[11] BSS (2025c) 'Govt allocates Tk 38,496cr for roads, highways', Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), 2 June. Available at: https://www.bssnews.net/national-budget-2025-2026/279475 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[12] BSS (2026) 'Proposed budget for FY27 keeps ADP allocation of Tk 3 lakh crore', Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), 11 June. Available at: https://www.bssnews.net/national-budget-2026-2027/394878 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[13] Collier, P., Kirchberger, M. and Söderbom, M. (2016) 'The cost of road infrastructure in low and middle income countries', World Bank Economic Review, 30(3), pp. 522–548.

[14] Dhaka Tribune (2022a) 'Budget FY23: Transport sector given highest priority, again', Dhaka Tribune, 9 June. Available at: https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/272113/budget-fy23-transport-sector-given-highest (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[15] Dhaka Tribune (2022b) 'What are the priorities on developing an affordable transport system?', Dhaka Tribune, 10 June. Available at: https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/272222/what-are-the-priorities-on-developing-an (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[16] Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) 'Building theories from case study research', Academy of Management Review, 14(4), pp. 532–550.

[17] Global Highways (2021) 'Bangladesh moves forward with US$735 million highways programme', Global Highways, 14 September. Available at: https://globalhighways.com/bangladesh-moves-forward-us735-million-highways-programme (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[18] Ministry of Communications (n.d.) Conditions of Contract. Dhaka: Roads and Highways Department. Available at: https://www.rhd.gov.bd/Documents/ContractDocuments/Conditions%20of%20Contract.pdf (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[19] Pigou, A.C. (1920) The economics of welfare. London: Macmillan.

[20] Prothom Alo (2022) 'Allocations for road, railway will increase, bridges decrease', Prothom Alo, 3 June. Available at: https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/allocations-for-road-railway-will-increase-bridges-decrease (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[21] Prothom Alo (2023) 'Five companies get 51 pc of the contracts', Prothom Alo, 18 November. Available at: https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/yn713xbf5h (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[22] Prothom Alo (2025a) 'Highway construction costs higher in Bangladesh than neighbours', Prothom Alo, 14 January. Available at: https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/x820tijuk0 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[23] Prothom Alo (2025b) 'Indian contractor fails to deliver, 11.5 km of highway in disrepair', Prothom Alo, 22 March. Available at: https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/o4ppet0poe (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[24] Prothom Alo (2026) 'Roads department's building extravagance with highway project's fund', Prothom Alo, 10 February. Available at: https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/rdwn2yg32n (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[25] Roads and Highways Department (RHD) (n.d.) Construction practices and procedures manual. Dhaka: RHD. Available at: https://rhd.gov.bd/Documents/ConvDocs/ConstructionPracticesAnsProceduresManual.pdf (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

EARLY VIEW

[26] The Business Standard (2024a) 'No new major road dev projects in FY25 as budget squeezed', The Business Standard, 5 June. Available at: https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/transport/no-new-major-road-dev-projects-fy25-budget-squeezed-854891 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[27] The Business Standard (2024b) 'Tk67,485cr proposed for transport sector', The Business Standard, 6 June. Available at: https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/budget/tk38143-crore-proposed-road-transport-and-highways-division-870481 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[28] The Business Standard (2025) 'Highways crumbling amid repair delays and contractor blacklisting', The Business Standard, 28 February. Available at: https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/infrastructure/highways-crumbling-amid-repair-delays-and-contractor-blacklisting-1218886 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[29] The Business Standard (2026a) 'Budget 2026–27: Govt plans Tk3 lakh crore ADP', The Business Standard, 20 May. Available at: https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/budget/budget-2026-27-govt-plans-tk3-lakh-crore-adp-1410051 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[30] The Business Standard (2026b) 'FY27 ADP: Higher allocations proposed for health and education', The Business Standard, 1 June. Available at: https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/fy27-adp-higher-allocations-proposed-health-and-education-1418001 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[31] The Daily Star (2017) 'Road construction cost way too high', The Daily Star, 15 July. Available at: https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/road-construction-cost-way-too-high-1423132 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[32] The Daily Star (2022) 'Why is RHD hiring firms with poor records?', The Daily Star, 29 December. Available at: https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/editorial/news/why-rhd-hiring-firms-poor-records-3192211 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[33] The Daily Star (2025) 'Will the construction of roads paved with gold continue?', The Daily Star, 18 February. Available at: https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/will-the-construction-roads-paved-gold-continue-3854761 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[34] The Financial Express (2017) 'Building quality roads with low costs', The Financial Express, 4 October. Available at: https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/views/building-quality-roads-with-low-costs-1507125904 (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[35] Wikipedia contributors (2026) 'Central Procurement Technical Unit', Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Procurement_Technical_Unit (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[36] World Bank (2022) World Bank helps Bangladesh improve road safety, press release, 28 March. Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/28/world-bank-helps-bangladesh-improve-road-safety (Accessed: 16 October 2026).

[37] Yin, R.K. (2018) Case study research and applications: design and methods. 6th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

EARLY VIEW