

Notice: Molesey Amateur Regatta 2017: river restriction notice

River Thames restriction information for Saturday 15 to Sunday 16 July 2017 from 8am to 6pm.

Notice: National Sea Scout Regatta 2017: river restriction notice

River Thames restriction information for Saturday 1 to Sunday 2 July 2017 from 8am to 6pm.

Notice: Kingston Rotary Club Dragon Boat Event 2017: river restriction notice

River Thames restriction information for Sunday 16 July 2017 from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

Press release: Report 10/2017: Partial collapse of a bridge at Barrow upon Soar

Summary

At around 23:50 hrs on 1 August 2016, a bridge carrying Grove Lane in Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire, over the Midland Main Line, partially collapsed and a large volume of masonry fell onto the railway lines below. At the time

of the collapse, core sampling work was being undertaken to investigate localised subsidence in the footpath on the south side of the bridge. The bridge was closed to the public when the collapse occurred, but the railway lines below were open to traffic.

When the coring had reached about 1.4 metres below ground, water appeared at the surface and shortly afterwards, the adjacent wall fell away from the side of the bridge, taking with it part of the footpath, a length of cast iron water main and the core sampling rig. Five workers were able to get clear as the collapse occurred and no-one was injured. Two of the four railway lines through the bridge were completely obstructed and there was debris on a third. There were no trains on the immediate approach to the bridge at the time of the collapse.

The RAIB investigation found that the incident occurred because the bridge wall, built around 1840, was not designed to resist overturning. It had also been weakened by a full-height vertical crack. The water main, which ran close to the vertical crack, probably had a slow leak which was causing on-going subsidence in the footpath. Prior to 1 August, however, there was no evidence that the wall was at risk of imminent collapse.

The coring work on the night of the incident disturbed the pressurised water main and it ruptured. The consequent release of water behind the wall quickly overloaded it and caused the wall to overturn about its base.

Underlying the incident was the lack of understanding of the risk posed to the structure and to the open railway from coring in proximity to the water main.

Recommendations

The RAIB has made two recommendations to Network Rail. The first relates to the competence of its staff and contractors, and the availability of information to enable them to manage the potential risk to its structures from breaches of water utilities. The second relates to the provision of appropriate engineering input to risk assessments for intrusive investigations and masonry repairs on bridges carrying water services. A further recommendation is made to Network Rail's contractor, Construction Marine Limited, about the improvement of processes relating to street works and the location of water services.

The report has identified a learning point to reinforce the requirement for bridge examiners to report evidence of underground services and any changes since the previous inspection to enable a possible connection to be drawn between a water main and observations of defects on the bridge.

Notes to editors

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner.

While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.

3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

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Speech: “These are the cold, calculating actions of a regime that chooses to starve its fellow Syrians into surrender.”

Thank you Mr President, and thank you Stephen for your powerful briefing and for all that you do on this crucial issue.

We’re meeting today exactly five months since a ceasefire was declared in Syria. Sadly, as Stephen has set out, it’s a ceasefire that exists in name only. The past five months have seen continued fighting, continued atrocities, continued destruction. Throughout, civilians have been maimed and killed, starved and besieged. And in towns like Khan Sheikhoun, they’ve been exposed to the very worst of humanity.

Like many others here in this Chamber, we cautiously welcomed the ceasefire and the Astana agreement on de-escalation zones. After six years of fighting, we’re all ready to support a genuine effort to bring an overdue end to the bloodshed. But the fact is, Mr President, the Astana plans have done little to help the people of Syria. Instead, so far, they have done a great deal to help the regime and its allies. The guns have fallen silent only where it has suited them. The guns have been deafening elsewhere.

So in some places, yes, there has been an overdue reduction in the violence. But only where it suits the regime. We need only ask the people of Daraa province, one of the four so-called de-escalation zones, what the ceasefire

feels like on the ground. Last week barrel bomb after barrel bomb, airstrike after airstrike rained down on opposition-held areas there. Is that what the regime means by ceasefire? Is that what they mean by de-escalation?

And just as the attacks have continued, so have the sieges. At the end of April, the UN estimated over 620,000 people were living under siege in Syria, the overwhelming majority in towns and villages besieged by the regime and its allies. How can anyone claim there is a ceasefire in place when the equivalent population of Las Vegas is being besieged? Quite simply, you can't.

Going hand in hand with continued attacks and continued besiegement is the continued failure to improve humanitarian access. As Stephen said, in the last two months, just only one aid delivery to an area besieged by the regime. That delivery was too little, too late, providing supplies for the bare minimum of the population.

And yet it doesn't have to be this way. The United Nations is standing by, ready to deliver aid and medicine to those in critical need. They know the route they'll take. They have the assurances they need from the opposition. And they have the mandate to act; all of us around this table have agreed, in countless resolutions, that access must be granted.

But instead, the UN teams are forced to wait. Not for aid, not for supplies, but, instead, for the regime's letters of approval; letters that never arrive. So the children continue to go hungry and the sick and wounded continue to die in pain. This isn't about bureaucracy or about paperwork; these are the cold, calculating actions of a regime that chooses to starve its fellow Syrians into surrender. You can see why the UN judges that this kind of behaviour constitutes war crimes.

In light of these continuing atrocities, it's clear that the guarantors of the Astana process need to do more, so much more, to make the ceasefire and de-escalation zones a reality.

This must mean a genuine end to the violence – a ceasefire in deed and not just in thought. It must mean effective and impartial monitoring mechanisms, ideally reporting to this UN Security Council, so that those who violate the ceasefire are named and held to account.

And it means sustained humanitarian access for the UN and its partners, with the UN being allowed to assess what each de-escalation zone needs. Those with influence over the regime, must ensure that this access is given; it is long overdue.

Above all, Mr President, if there is to be long-term peace in Syria, there has to be full implementation of Resolution 2254, as our Egyptian colleague has just said, and there has to be justice. There has to be justice for the people of Khan Sheikhoun, for the people of Aleppo, for the people of so many places across Syria who have endured for so many years.

Without these steps, there simply isn't a credible plan; there is just the

fiction that we have today. It is a fiction where ceasefires exist and yet bombs still fall. It is a fiction that has endured for too long.

Thank you.