

66 teachers for 15,000 students at Patuakhali Govt College

The 63-yr-old institution is plagued with manifold problems like shortage of classrooms and accommodation, lack of suitable library

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Academic activities at Patuakhali Government College is badly hampered as only 66 teachers are working there for around 15,000 students.

The 63-year-old institution is also plagued with various other problems including shortage of classrooms and residential arrangement for teachers and students, and lack of library building, auditorium, teachers-students centre, quality canteen, medical centre and gymnasium.

Incomplete boundary walls coupled with insufficient internal roads is yet another problem.

Set up in 1957, the college was nationalised in 1970.

Currently running with honours course in 16 subjects and master's course in 15 subjects, it is one of the 30 A-grade colleges in the country.

The college was selected as the best college in Khulna division in 1987 while its two teachers Dr Mojibur Rahman and M Nurul Islam achieved the best teacher's award at the national level in different times.

Former students of the college include Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, immediate past secretary of public administration ministry Md Faiz Ahmed, and former information secretary Abdul Maleq, said Zafar Iqbal, secretary of teachers association at the college.

Of the posts of 94 teachers including the principal and the vice principal, 28 area vacant for long.

In view of the increasing number of students, the authorities initiated a process to create 85 more posts of teachers for the college a few years ago but the process is yet to be complete.

The English department, which has to conduct a number of classes for students of intermediate (compulsory subject), degree and master's courses, is running with only three teachers.

Two lecturers are working against the posts of seven teachers in soil science department, while five of the nine posts in chemistry department, and three of the seven posts in accounting and economics departments each are lying vacant for long, said sources at the college.

Najir Hossain, assistant professor of



Patuakhali Government College.

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English department, and Md Rashedul Islam, lecturer of soil science, said they are struggling to hold classes regularly as there is acute shortage of teachers.

In absence of residential arrangement for teachers at the campus, they live in rented houses in the town.

Over 200 students are staying in 39 rooms of 'degree hostel' that has the usual capacity to accommodate 78 students, said hostel Superintendent Ali Hyder, also an associate professor

of philosophy.

No new building was made after the hostel meant for intermediate students was declared abandoned years ago, he said.

The 150-seat capacity lone hostel for female students now accommodates 250 students, said Salina Akhter, superintendent of the hostel.

A large number of students coming from outside have to stay in rented dormitories at different

places of the town.

Classroom crisis took a serious turn after three old buildings of the college were declared abandoned in 1992.

The Education Engineering Department later constructed two buildings for humanities and business studies faculties.

As no separate arrangement was made for the science students, they have to attend classes in different rooms of the two buildings.

Around 26,000 books are kept in a seminar room of political science department as there is no separate building or arrangement for the college library.

Contacted, Prof Joydeb Sajjan, principal of the college, said, "We informed the higher authorities on several occasions to solve the manifold problems including shortage of teachers and accommodation but to no positive response yet."

Chased by BSE, Bangladeshi man drowns

Youth found dead at Jhenidah border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Chased by Indian Border Security Force (BSF), a Bangladesh national jumped into Jhinjirum, a bordering river of Kurigram, to avoid arrest and drowned yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Khaibur Ali, 42, a resident of Harindhara village in Datbhanga union under Rowmari upazila of the district.

Locals and sources at Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) said a dozen of Bangladeshi traders entered no-man's land in Datbhanga union to bring Indian cattle.

At the time, BSF and BGB men were patrolling the border area. Seeing their presence, except Khaibur, everyone managed to flee the scene.

Chased by BSF men, Khaibur then reached the bridge over Jhinjirum and jumped into the river to avoid arrest and drowned.

On information, BGB men rushed to the spot and recovered the body with the help of locals, said Lt Col SM Azad, director of 35 Billiton of BGB.

The body was later handed over to police, said Dilwar Hasan Enam, officer-in-charge of Rowmari Police Station, adding that the body was sent to Kurigram General Hospital for autopsy.

Meanwhile, police yesterday recovered the body of a Bangladeshi youth from the Ichamati river adjacent to Polianpur, a bordering area of Bangladesh and India, under Moheshpur upazila of Jhenidah.

The deceased was identified as Hridoy Hossain, son of Sabur Ali of Palianpur village.

Locals found the body floating on the river in the morning and informed police, said Atiqul Haque, additional superintendent of police (Kotchandpur Circle) of Jhenidah.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body, said

The youth might have drowned, said the police official.

The actual reason behind the death would be known after autopsy, he added.



A few of the rice growers who were in dismay to find out about a slump in the price of paddy after they took their harvest to Bhelabari rice market in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila. The photo was taken in the last week of December, 2019.

PHOTO:STAR

Paddy prices dip Tk 100 in Aditmari

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Rice growers in Lalmonirhat are feeling distressed after paddy prices in Aditmari, one of five upazilas in the district, fell below their average cost of production in a span of only two weeks.

In mid-December, they sold a maund of paddy for around Tk 670 at local markets, including Bhelabari rice market in Aditmari, against the production cost of Tk 600 each maund.

But on January 3, the price dropped to Tk 560 per maund at the markets.

Farmer Fazlul Haque from Bhelabari village in the upazila harvested 135 maunds of paddy from 10 bighas of land this season. After going to Bhelabari rice market on that day with 20 maunds of paddy, the rice traders there paid him only Tk 560 for each maund.

"I don't know why the paddy

prices keep falling," wondered Fazlul.

Another rice farmer, Nabin Chandra Barmon, from Doljor village in the same upazila, was at the same market that day.

He said, he got Tk 16,750 for 25 maunds of paddy at Tk 670 for each maund, but at the same market, the price came down to only Tk 560.

"I had hoped that the price would go up, but it fell even lower than it was a couple of weeks back," said the farmer who received a total yield of 208 maunds of paddy from 15 bighas of land this Aman season.

The fall of price below the production cost will discourage farmers from growing paddy in the upcoming season, said Sekendar Ali, a farmer from Hajiganj village of the upazila.

At the present rate, a rice farmer would incur a loss of at least Tk 2500 to Tk 3000 out of each bigha of land, he also said.

Asked about the reason of the

price fall, a paddy trader, Atiar Rahman, at Bhelabari rice market, said they could not pay a higher price to rice growers as they were getting low prices from paddy merchants from different districts.

"The paddy prices fell as no paddy merchants from other districts are coming to the market for paddy. Besides, rice prices also fell at local markets," he explained.

Nur Islam, another trader at the market, said rice mill owners were not procuring paddy at the moment, resulting in a huge stockpile of paddy in their warehouses and that also contributed to the decline in prices of paddy.

As an evident result of falling demands, the prices of paddy might fall further within a month, he speculated.

This paddy harvest season, a total of 3,83,800 tonnes of paddy was produced on 65,290 hectares of land in five upazilas in Lalmonirhat.

Move to free four Mathbaria canals stalled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Water Development Board (WDB) had taken a decision to remove dams and roads built across four canals in Mathbaria upazila of the district about two months ago, but it is yet to implement its decision.

In November last year, WDB authorities took a decision to conduct eviction drives to free the occupied canals as per the government's direction.

At least seven dams and roads have been built across the canals by local influential people or government departments.

The canals include Bharani Khal and Bhutar Khal in Dhanisafa and Mirukhali unions under the upazila.

Locals said nearly 16 years ago, late Mosharruf Hossain Akan, a former chairman of Dhanisafa union



A road has been built across Bharani Khal, obstructing water flow of the encroached canal in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila.

PHOTO:STAR

people, they added.

Later, some other structures, including the dams, were built across the four canals to grab the natural water bodies, they said.

The dams and roads are yet to be removed as a group of local influential persons have grabbed the canals, said the villagers.

Contacted, Md Shah Alam Bali, sub-divisional engineer of WDB in Pirojpur, said as there is no embankment beside the canals, they cannot remove the structures.

If the structures are removed without construction of any embankment, the villages will be flooded during the rainy season, he said.

They have already informed the higher authorities about the matter, but to no respond yet, said the WDB engineer.



A variety of large fishes are brought for sale in Moulvibazar's Sherpur, here a two-day fish fair, arranged marking Poush Sangkranti, the last day of the Bangla month of Poush, ended on Wednesday. The century-old traditional fair, saw sale of fish as well as homemade cakes and other delicacies, furniture, toys etc worth over Tk 16 crore, said Oliur Rahman, president of the fair organisation committee.

PHOTO:MINTUDESHWARA