

Patuakhali health care in awfully poor health

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Amid acute shortage of manpower and accommodation, hospitals and health complexes in Patuakhali district are struggling to provide medical service for about 17 lakh people in seven upazilas. A staggering 142 of the 183 posts of doctors are lying vacant in the district. During a visit to Patuakhali General Hospital on Wednesday, this correspondent saw over a hundred child

patients lying on the floors of Child Ward, passages and corridors.

Congested and dirty, the environment is far from being healthy, especially for child patients.

On an average, around 150 patients stay at the Child Ward daily although there are only 48 beds.

Twenty-eight child patients with diarrhoea got admission to this ward while only five patients were released on Wednesday.

"On April 18, I came with

my one and a half year old son Mahim as he is suffering from diarrhoea. Since then we are staying on the floor of an indoor passage. My son feels disturbed as patients' attendants always move there," said Mizanur Rahman of Kalapara.

Arshed Ali of Kalikapur, who came to the child ward on April 17 with his diarrhoea-affected two-year-old son Nafiz, is also staying on the floor of the ward.

Only two doctors are serving at the ward while posts of a few others including that of the

senior surgeon is lying vacant.

"We get exhausted to deliver service to so many patients here. More room is needed to accommodate patients in the ward and we earlier informed the civil surgeon of the matter," said ward in-charge Dr Mizanur Rahman.

Dasmina upazila health complex is running with only two doctors as 13 of the 15 doctors' posts are vacant. In Mirzaganj upazila 23 of 27 doctors' posts, in Kalapara 28 of 31, in Galachipa 31 of 37, in

Baufal 18 of 23, in Dumki 6 of 9 posts are lying vacant.

In Patuakhali General Hospital 19 out of 33 posts including senior surgeons of child and ENT are vacant while all two posts at the TB clinic vacant.

The vacant posts include that of medical officer at the civil surgeon's office and another post at District Reserve Store.

All the posts of 66 assistant surgeons at union level are also vacant.

Visiting Dasmina upazila health complex, this correspondent saw that many patients were returning home as they failed to meet doctors after waiting for long.

"I brought my one and a half months old child Salman to the health complex as he has been suffering from fever for several days. I came here at about 9:30am today but I could not visit any doctor after four hours. Yesterday also, I collected ticket from the outdoor but returned home without any treatment. Only two doctors are working here for so many patients," Masuma, 35, of Bashbaria village said yesterday.

Indoor treatment is also being badly hampered due to lack of doctors.

"We have to serve both outdoor and indoor patients although only three doctors are working here against nine posts. Some 150 to 200 outpatients come for treatment daily. Sometimes patients and their attendants become annoyed as we cannot give proper attention to them," said the upazila health officer.

When contacted, Patuakhali Civil Surgeon Dr Shah Alam Sharif said, "We sent several letters to the higher authorities concerned asking for steps to fill up the vacant posts but to no effect."



PHOTO: STAR

People taking relishing saline water during the daytime hot spell as Rajshahi City Corporation authorities have taken the programme to save city dwellers, especially those who have to work outside, from dehydration.

Saline the saviour in unbearable hot spell

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

People of Rajshahi are experiencing an unbearable hot spell with the daytime temperature hovering around 40 degrees Celsius, much over the district's average April temperature of 35.7 degrees while erratic power supply coupled with water crisis compounds the problem.

The met office yesterday recorded the district's highest temperature at 39.8 degrees Celsius while it was 40.6 degrees on Wednesday and 40.5 degrees on Tuesday. The season's highest temperature was recorded at 42.5 degree on April 10.

Under a programme to save poor people from dehydration, two teams employed by Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) had some 27,000 people take saline at different city points since April 12, said RCC officials.

Drying up of rivers and water bodies due to the adverse effect of climate change are responsible for the reduction in rainfall and

rise in temperature in the region, experts said.

Rainfall in Rajshahi region was 2042 millimetres in 2007 and it reduced to 1,269 millimetres in 2008 while the region experienced the record low rainfall of 960 millimetres in 2009, said Dr Golam Sabbir Sattar, a teacher of geology and mining department of Rajshahi University.

The hot weather also hampers harvesting of boro paddy as labourers are unable to stay in the crop fields for long.

Rajshahi city and nine upazilas of the district are facing average 35MW of load shedding against the daily demand for 80MW now, said sources at PDB.

Acute water crisis resulting out of the depletion of groundwater in many areas adds to the sufferings of people.

RCC is managing to supply some 130 lakh gallons of water daily against the demand of 226 lakh gallons.

Patients and commuters are the worst sufferers due to the heat wave.



PHOTO: STAR

A large number of child patients with their mothers have to stay on the floor for treatment as Patuakhali General Hospital limps with various problems including accommodation crisis and shortage of doctors.

FARMERS IN MOULVIBAZAR HAORS MEET SAME FATE

Boro on vast areas goes under water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

About two-thirds of the standing boro crop in Kawadighi and Korayer haor areas under Rajnagar upazila of Moulvibazar district have gone under water due to heavy rainfall and onrush of water from hills across the border.

Farmers in the affected areas are cutting unripe boro, fearing further loss as water levels in the haors continue to rise, inundating new croplands.

The affected Kawadighi haor areas are Harirkun, Kashimpur, Pealarkandi,

Rangadhivi, Rokkharban, Jainergup, Alirgup, Niamaterban, Kushuabil, Bhubannacha, Boroiuri and Ulauli.

The areas under Korayer Haor are Kamarchak, Tarapasha, Khas Premnagar, Shahidnagar and Brahmangaon.

Three pump machines installed at Kashimpur to pump water out of Kawadighi Haor still remain inoperative as Monday night's storm damaged power supply lines.

When contacted, Rajnagar Upazila Agriculture Officer Abul Kalam Chowdhury said boro on 1605 acres of land in Kawadighi Haor areas and on

988 acres in Karayer Haor areas have gone under water. Boro in some of the submerged Kawadighi Haor areas has become ripe and farmers are cutting the crop to avoid further loss, he added.

While visiting Kawadighi Haor area yesterday, this correspondent saw farmers were cutting boro paddy, using country-made boats.

They said if water level continues to rise, the extent of the damage of boro crop will increase. They demanded immediate resumption of power supply to the pump machines.

Nikhil Ranjan Som, executive engineer (mechanical) of the Water Development Board at Moulvibazar, said he has already told the authorities concerned to restore power supply to the pump machines as early as possible.

Sirajul Islam Chawdhury, executive Engineer of the PDB Moulvibazar office, said electric poles were badly damaged by Monday night's cyclonic storm. PDB workers are working round the clock to restore power supply to three pump machines at Kashimpur, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers cutting and lifting onto a boat nearly ripe boro crop from a field in a haor of Rajnagar upazila under Moulvibazar district as heavy rainfall coupled with water from the hills across the border inundated the area.

Expat abducted, schoolboy rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals abducted an expatriate from bus stand area of Meherpur town on Wednesday evening and demanded ransom while Rab rescued an abducted Magura schoolboy from Boraigram in Natore yesterday.

Police said expat Mahirul Islam, 45, hails from Kanaydanga village in Sadar upazila of Meherpur.

Mahirul returned home to solemnise the wedding of his daughter. He along with his relative Alauddin went out in the evening to buy things for the marriage scheduled for Friday. A gang led by Zahid

and Rony of Meherpur town picked up Mahirul as they reached the bus stand area at about 7:30 pm.

They took Mahirul to an unknown place. About two hours later, the gang phoned the expat's wife Monwara and demanded Tk five lakh for his release.

Monwara filed a case with Sadar police station accusing seven including Zahid and Rony.

In another incident, Rab rescued a Magura school student from Boraigram village in Natore yesterday and arrested two abductors.

Rab said the criminals abducted school student Rassel Arefin Khan, 12,

son of Serajul Arefin Khan from Kamlapur of Sreepur upazila in Magura on April 17. Rassel was a student of class eight at Sreepur Boys' School.

The abductors later demanded Tk 15 lakh ransom from Rassel's family.

Serajul, however, filed a case with Sreepur police station the same day.

On information, a team from Rab-12, Kushtia unit raided the house of Krishnapur in Natore district at about 1:30 am and rescued the schoolboy.

Rab also arrested Salim Mollah, 28, son of late Sattar Mollah and Liton Sarker, 30, son of Mokbul Hossain of Boraigram in Natore.

Later the elite force handed over the boy to his family.

KPI student commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A first year student of Kushtia Polytechnic Institute (KPI) committed suicide at a mess in Talipara area in the town on Wednesday evening.

Saddam Hossain Rokon, 18, son of Aftab Uddin of Digholkandi in Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia was a first year student of Electrical Science at KPI.

His father Aftab is a banker. Police and his messmates said Saddam came to the mess from his village home at about 6:00pm on the day. After sometime he locked his room from inside and started to talk loudly on his mobile.

At about 7:30 pm hearing the groaning of Saddam his messmates broke open the door of his room and found Saddam hanging from the fan.

The students rushed Saddam to Kushtia General Hospital where he died at about 8:00pm.

4 Ruet BCL men hurt in rival faction's attack

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Four activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured in an attack yesterday by the activists of a rival faction at Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet).

The injured are Niloy, fourth year student of mechanical engineering, Shamim Khan, third year student of computer science and engineering, Shuvo Boshak, fourth year student of civil engineering and Nixon, second year student of civil engineering.

Witnesses said a group of BCL activists led by Al-Amin attacked the activists loyal to Razaul Karim Reza at Selim Hall after midnight branding them as Shibir activists, leaving Niloy and Shamim injured.

They also attacked Shuvo

Boshak and Nixon at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall. The two have been admitted to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital in critical condition.

Reza claimed that a group of cadres led by Al-Amin, Harun and Faisal made the attack on his supporters as they protested Harun's move for recruitment of a female teacher at the university in an unfair way.

Both factions, however, traded blames that the opponents were sheltering Shibir activists.

Ashrafur Alam, student welfare adviser of Ruet, termed the incident unfortunate and said they would take legal steps after investigating the incident.

Sources said there was a longstanding conflict between the two groups over establishing supremacy on the campus.

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