

## RELOCATING FOOTHILL DWELLERS Most utility services remain at end of deadline today

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, Ctg

Hundreds of people on many risky hillsides in Chittagong continue to have access to utility services at the end of a seven-day deadline today to cut power, gas and water supplies to discourage habitation there.

The directive had come from the divisional Hill Management Committee (HMC), formed in 2007 following a devastating landslide that left 127 people dead on June 11, at a meeting in Chittagong Circuit House on July 2.

Chittagong Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Cwsa), Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDCL), and Power Development Board (PDB) had disconnected some lines during the timeframe, beginning July 3.

But spot visits by this correspondent in many of the risky areas, including Batali and AK Khan hills and Tigerpass, Lalkhan Bazar, Ambagan, Biswa Colony and Chattaswari road areas confirmed that the utility services were still intact.

Cwsa Magistrate Quazi Mohammad Hasan said they disconnected around 600 water supply lines at Motijharna, Firoz Shah Colony and Akbar Shah areas.

"Only five among some 100 water supply lines at Motijharna area were found to be legal. Some technicians had used plastic pipes to draw water from Cwsa's main supply pipes to the slums.

"A powerful gang of goons under a local councillor are reconnecting the lines at Motijharna area," he said.

Hasan said they could not disconnect the supplies in many areas as some non-government organisations have helped to connect the lines to the slums with permission from a certain ministry.

PDB officials said they had disconnected only 45 power supply lines at Motijharna, Bangla Bazar, Akbar Shah and Firoz Shah Colony areas.

PDB Chief Engineer Raisuddin Sarkar said they would no longer supply power to residents of risky slopes and continue disconnecting the lines.

Meanwhile, KGDCL officials said they had disconnected six lines at Firoz Shah Colony and Akbar Shah Colony.

A local of Motijharna at Lal Khan Bazar, Abu Musa, said, "Many house owners rent houses out to poor people and are reconnecting water and power lines in the houses with the help of local goons."

"It seems to me the utility service providers are not coming forward with all their logistic support," said Department of Environment, Chittagong Director Jafor Alam.

HMC Member Secretary Ismail Hossain said, "The drives would continue to evacuate the people this monsoon."



The main hostel for males of Chittagong Medical College is in a decrepit condition. (Inset) The doors of the bathrooms and toilets are unhinged with sanitary pipes leaking overhead.

PHOTO: STAR

## CMC main male hostel in bad shape

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Residents of the main hostel for male students of Chittagong Medical College (CMC) are suffering immensely as the building is in a dilapidated condition with unhinged doors and leaking sanitary pipes in bathrooms and toilets among many other problems.

According to the residents, water supply to the hostel is also very poor, and there are frequent incidents of theft as well.

Sometimes water supply remains stopped for all day long, and the crisis deepens on Fridays and national holidays, they said.

Preferring anonymity, a fourth-year MBBS student said they often get wet by filthy water dripping from leaking pipes of toilets on upper floors.

The hostel consists of five blocks -- Zakir Block (A), Sadik Block (B), Jashim Block (C), East Block (D), and West Block (E).

Zakir Block and Jashim Block can accommodate 128 students each, East and West blocks can accommodate 96 students each, and Sadik Block can accommodate 120 students.

During a recent visit to the West Block, where mainly foreign students reside, The Daily Star found that its bathrooms and toilets were in a bad condition with unhinged doors, and filthy water dripping from overhead sanitary pipes.

A Sri Lankan student, preferring anonymity, said they face embarrassing situations while using the bathrooms and toilets.

"There is no door at the bathrooms and toilets adjacent to our rooms," he said.

Another fourth-year MBBS student, seeking anonymity, said many portions of Zakir Block and Sadik Block have been dilapidated too.

Window sunshades of many rooms of the blocks have been damaged, he said.

Only the walls of the hostel were white-washed during a renovation work carried out last year, he added.

Shahidul Islam, a fifth-year MBBS student, said their clothes are frequently stolen from the corridor where they hang those from clotheslines for drying after washing.

Their mobile phone sets and other valuables are also stolen from their rooms quite often, although two security guards stay on

duty in two shifts at the main entrance of the hostel round the clock.

Many students complained that they do not have any lounge or waiting room for guests, so they have to take their guests outside to sit and talk.

The hostel's main entrance is also in a bad condition. It needs to be reinstated soon. The road to the college campus from the hostel also needs repair, they added.

Mafizur Rahman Jumma, vice-president of Chittagong Medical College Central Students Union (CMCCSU), also a representative of students at the hostel, said they submitted an application to the college authority demanding solution to the problems.

"We also demanded a waiting room, a basket ball court, and a badminton court," he said.

The college authorities, however, have taken steps to set up a deep tubewell to solve the water crisis, he said adding that the authorities also assured them of resolving all the problems step by step.

Dr Hafizul Islam, assistant professor at the biochemistry department of the college, also the hostel super, said Public Works Department (PWD), under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, looks after the maintenance work of the hostel.

"We have written to PWD and provided to the officials of the department a list of work that needs to be done," he said adding that an engineer from PWD recently visited the hostel.

"They assured us that they will begin the repair work soon," he said.

"We can feel the problems of the students. We fully sympathise with them," he said adding, "The students are like our children. So we feel very bad for their sufferings at the hostel."

Dr Selim Mohammad Jahangir, principal of CMC, said they formed a committee to find out the problems of the hostel.

"Digging of a deep tubewell is going on now. It will be completed soon," he said adding, "We have informed PWD requesting the beginning of maintenance work as soon as possible."

"Maintenance work is a continuous process in such a big hostel," said Dr Selim adding, "PWD does the work regularly."

## MIRSARAI TRAGEDY

# Victims remembered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Grief-stricken people of different unions under Mirsarai upazila yesterday commemorated the deaths of 44 school students and a local guardian who died owing to a road accident on Abu Torab road on July 11 last year.

They urged the government to formulate strict laws that deal harsh punishment to reckless drivers to avert such tragic deaths in future.

In an inaugural programme, Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday afternoon inaugurated a monument named "Aabeg" (emotion), constructed on the premises of Abu Torab Bahumukhi High School.

Prof Saiful Kabir, Institute of Fine Arts at Chittagong University, designed the monument displaying portraits of the 45 victims.

Mirsarai upazila Chairman Md Gias Uddin chaired the programme, which was organised by the upazila parishad.

Dilip Barua said that no human being can escape death but the shock of such a tragic accident and the huge loss is unforgettable for the bereaved family members.

Terming the loss "irreparable", the minister said the memory of these victims would be everlasting and the monument would continue to display this loss forever.

The minister ensured the victims' family members of providing all kinds of support to them.

Jafar Sadek, headmaster of Abu Torab Bahumukhi High School, said the tragic death of the students in the accident brought a 'mountain like' grief for the people of the locality.

He thanked the government and the local administration for extending immediate help to the victims' families.

The whole locality showed grief through carrying banners, which displayed the photographs of the dead students.

Upazila Vice Chairman Rehana Akter also spoke, among others, at the programme.

On July 11 last year, a truck carrying over 60 students skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch.

Of the forty five victims, thirty one were students of Abu Torab Bahumukhi High School and four were its former students. There were also three students of Abu Torab Government Primary School, two of Abu Torab Fazil Madrasa, two of Abu Torab SM Government Primary School, and two students of Abu Torab Prof Kamal Uddin Chowdhury College and a local guardian.

The students were returning home after enjoying a football match held at Mirsarai upazila stadium.

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## BDR CARNAGE TRIAL Accused also witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two accused jawans of the BDR carnage case, confined to Dhaka Central Jail, were also listed as witnesses in the case.

BDR jawan Shamsul Haq, a carpenter working in Pilkhana's construction wing, was listed as both accused number 641 and witness number 605 while chef Habibur Rahman was listed as accused number 555 and witness number 997.

"It proves that the investigation agency was utterly negligent in their investigations. The charge-sheet placed before the court is defective," said one of the defence counsels, Shameem Sardar.

It was a mistaken by the investigation officer, said prosecutor of the case, Mosharraf Hossain Kajol.

Metropolitan Sessions Judges' Court, holding the trial in the capital's Bakshibazar, yesterday recorded the testimonies of five witnesses. This took the number of witnesses giving testimonies to 283.

### MOEEN U AHMED UNABLE TO APPEAR

Chief prosecutor of the case, Anisul Haq, yesterday said former army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed would be unable to come and give his testimony as a witness to the carnage at the Pilkhana BDR headquarters on February 25-26, 2009 that left 74 people, including 57 army officers, dead.

"Moeen U Ahmed rang me and let me know that he was now in New York taking chemotherapy and of his inability to appear before the court now due to illness," an ATN Bangla report quoted Anisul.

A Dhaka court, on July 1, had asked Moeen and three other high-profile witnesses to give their testimonies in the case.



Bangladesh Mobile Phone Recharge Traders Association forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday to realise their 11-point demand, including a raise in commission.

PHOTO: STAR

## Fund for climate victims demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion urged the government to form a compensation fund to provide support to climate change victims to cope with the loss and damages.

The discussion was held at Jatiya Press Club. CARE Bangladesh, ActionAid Bangladesh, WWF and Germanwatch jointly published a report titled "Into Unknown Territory: the Limits to Adaptation and Reality of Loss and Damage from Climate Impacts" at the event.

The report mentioned that the people of some regions of the country are having social impacts with special phenomena like, "salinity-induced diseases in Khulna region have introduced a new social stigma, making marriage within the community impossible for young women".

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said initiatives of making compensation fund to help the climate change victims to cope with loss and damages, would be appreciated at international level.

CARE Bangladesh Country Director Nick Southern, CARE Director Selim Reza Hasan, ActionAid Bangladesh Deputy Manager Tanjir Hossain and Germanwatch Policy Officer Hafizul Islam also spoke.

## Three arrested in connection with BCL infighting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested three activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Omar Gani MES University College unit in Chittagong on Sunday and yesterday.

The arrestees are Biplob Kumar Das, Md Sajjad Hossain and Mohammad Sreetap. They all are first year students at higher secondary level of the college.

Earlier, on Sunday, the supporters of the college's Chhatra Sangsad Vice-President Wasim Uddin and General Secretary Arshadul Alam Bachchu locked into a clash on the college premises. In the clash, six were injured.

The college Chhatra Sangsad is controlled by the BCL of the college unit.

Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge (OC) of Khulshi Police Station, said Biplob and Sajjad were arrested from in front of the main gate of the college yesterday. A knife was recovered from Biplob's possession, the OC added.

Sreetap was arrested Sunday afternoon with a knife in his possession.

A case was filed against them under arms act.

## Two die as trains hit them

METRO DESK

Two people were killed as trains hit them in two incidents in Dhaka and Sirajganj on Sunday and yesterday.

Staff correspondent reports, an unidentified youth died as a train ran over him at Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital yesterday.

Railway police said a vacant train hit the man after shunting around 9:30am.

In Sirajganj, motorcyclist Abdul Aziz, 65, of Ghoshgati village in Ullapara upazila, was killed as a train knocked his motorbike in the upazila on Sunday evening.

Ullapara police said a Dhaka-bound intercity train, Lalmony Express, rammed the motorbike while it was crossing rail line at Charchatana.

Aziz died on the way to a



Roads of Khilgaon, Mouchak and Rampura adjacent to Malibagh level crossing witness traffic jam all day long due to digging at the intersection as a part of development project. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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