



A number of major intersections of the city, like the Gate no.2 area, got waterlogged by 74.4mm downpour yesterday, putting pedestrians and transport workers alike in misery. An excavator, inset, attempts to clean up a clogged drain at the Prabartak intersection.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



WATERLOGGING PROBLEM

Rain ruins port city residents' day

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Cg

Most low-lying areas in Chattogram city went under knee-to-waist-deep water yesterday due to incessant rain, causing immense sufferings to city dwellers.

In the 24 hours before noon yesterday, the Chattogram Met Office recorded 74.4mm of rainfall, said Met officer Jahurul Islam.

During a visit to different areas, this correspondent saw roads, lanes, and by-lanes in Katalganj, Shulakbahar, Prabartak intersection, Bahaddarhat, Muradpur, Sholashahar Gate No. 2, Kapasgola, West Bakalia DC Road, KB Aman Ali Road, Rahamatganj, Agrabad, Halishahar, Chandgaon, and Saraipara under knee-to-waist deep water.

What's worse, the water even entered tin-roofed houses and breached the ground floor of buildings located in these areas.

Drains across the city became an additional source of pain, as pedestrians were forced to traverse the filthy water overflowing from the drains, some of which also entered residences.

Patients and attendants at Agrabad's Ma o Shishu Hospital fell into suffering as water entered the ground floor of its premises.

Rezaul Karim, treasurer of the hospital, said whenever it rains,

waterlogging occurs on the road in front and makes its way into the hospital.

At West Bakalia's DC Road, this correspondent caught Ratan Saha wading through knee-deep water to enter his house.

"I cannot explain to you how miserable we are during monsoon. Even a moderate amount of rain means we're going to get flooded and our valuables are going to get damaged. We have been facing this woe for 10 years," he said. "I cannot even move to another place due to financial insolvency."

In the aftermath of heavy rainfall, people living in low-lying areas have to bear the brunt of waterlogging, which has become a regular cause of misery for them every year during monsoon for over a tersedecade.

However, many point their fingers at the authorities concerned, especially the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA).

Four years ago, CDA initiated a mega project to address the waterlogging woes of the city, but city dwellers are yet to see any effects.

"I don't understand what is taking CDA so long to complete the project," said Aminul Islam, a banker residing in Saraipara.

West Bakalia's Phooltola resident Dhiman Ghosh said, "It's been more

than three years. They really should complete the project soon to relieve us of the waterlogging."

The project includes clearing the city's canals, building roads on their banks, as well as bridges, culverts, silt traps and more.

As per the project profile, a total of 9.50 lakh cubic metres of mud will be extracted from 36 canals, while 85.68 km of roads will be built on the bank of the more important ones.

In addition, 48 PC guarder bridges, six culverts, five tidal regulators, 42 silt traps, 200 cross-drain culverts, and 10.77 km of new drains will be built, while another 15.5 km of side drains will be expanded.

CDA initiated the Tk 5,616 crore project in July 2017, with the initial deadline set for June 2020.

But in June 2021, CDA officials said only around 50 percent of the works have been completed.

According to sources, the government has increased the tenure for two more years.

While the delay in the project's completion is one issue, in many areas residents also complained that the project works made waterlogging worsen in their areas.

The complaints have been levied by residents of Agrabad, Chandgaon, Prabartak intersection, and more.

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Have dredging projects followed due procedure?

Former river commission chairman questions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concerned ministry and relevant authorities should look into whether projects taken for the country's river dredging have followed due procedure, former chairman of National River Conservation Commission Muzibur Rahman Howlader said yesterday.

It should be looked at whether those who are undertaking the projects have done their pre-work conducting hydro-morphological and geophysical studies, he told a webinar.

"There has to be consistency between [river's] width and depth...at a proportional rate," he said.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) organised the webinar on "River Management in Bangladesh and Dredging" marking World Environment Day, which was observed globally on Saturday.

Addressing as a guest speaker, Muzibur said if a river's width is narrowed by earth fill and depth is deepened by excessive dredging, then it might trigger erosion.

The condition of rivers in Bangladesh

turns horrible in the dry season, said the former chief of the national river conservation commission.

The horrible condition of the river Teesta affects many other rivers, he said, adding, "We need to overcome such situation."

Muzibur said Bangladesh lacks a proper design for silt and sedimentation management of rivers. Having such design and planning is a necessity, he added.

For sedimentation management one needs to know its engineering, while necessary manpower and professionalism are the other prerequisites in this regard, he added.

He stressed for ensuring accountability and transparency in river management, saying good deeds done for rivers will ultimately uphold the government's image.

Muzibur said the Supreme Court Appellate Division in a judgement in 2020 ordered that agencies working on river dredging and development have to

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Found unconscious in room, female DU student dies in DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University student died yesterday after fire officials found her unconscious in a sublet room at government staff quarters in Palashi area and rushed her to a hospital.

The deceased is Ishrat Jahan Tushiti (20), a second year student of English department of the university.

As the university dorms remained closed, Ishrat along with three others lived in the sublet room of the building. Saiful Islam, station officer of Palashi Fire Station, said they were informed about the incident through a call at national helpline 999.

"We broke open a bathroom door which was locked from inside and recovered the girl in an unconscious state around 7:15am. She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead," he said.

Her roommates said they called 999 as she was not responding despite repeated knocking on the door, he said. Sumaiya Parveen, a roommate of the deceased, said hailing from Netrakona district, Ishrat was attached to Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall.

Ishrat had cold related problems. She was feeling unwell since she along with others got drenched in the rain on Saturday, Sumaiya said.

Proctorial team of DU visited the spot after the incident. The body was kept at the hospital for autopsy.

Cry for ICU beds at RMCH

Delayed test results, relaxed restrictions spreading the virus; rapid antigen testing begins

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

On May 31, Niamat Ali (70) of Naogaon's Niamatpur upazila, who was suffering from breathing complications, died while waiting for ventilator support at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital's (RMCH) intensive care unit (ICU).

A day later, Niamat's family came to know that he had Covid-19, and by that time, the virus spread to seven of his family members. Right now, health authorities in Rajshahi are struggling to manage the increasing number of patients with limited ventilators and high-flow oxygen beds, and simultaneously, are trying to deal with rising Covid-19-positive test results.

Amid this situation, some people have alleged that they could not know their test results at the proper time, while others said results do not reach people who give samples, leading to further spread of the deadly virus.

In 24 hours till Friday morning, at least 16 people died at the Covid-19 unit of RMCH. Of them, 10 were Covid-19 positive, while the six others were suspected to be infected.

Friday's death toll at RMCH was the highest in a day since the outbreak. Among the dead, nine were from Chapainawabganj, six from Rajshahi and one from Naogaon.

From May 24 to June 4, a total of 93 people died at RMCH's Covid-19 unit. Of them, 58 were Covid-19 positive, while the rest were suspected to have Covid-19.

Meanwhile, six more died at the coronavirus unit of RMCH in 24 hours till 8am yesterday. Two of them, who were from Chapainawabganj, were Covid-19 positive.

Earlier in the day, health authorities in Rajshahi started random rapid antigen tests at five points in the city -- Shaheb Bazar Zero Point, Haragram Bazar, C&B intersection, Laxmipur intersection, and Talaimari. A total of 297 samples were collected from these points and of these, 27 tested positive for Covid-19. The infection rate is nine percent at the moment.

RMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani said he predicted the spread of coronavirus two weeks back and requested health authorities to impose "complete lockdown" in four districts of Rajshahi division.

District authorities in Chapainawabganj have imposed lockdown since May 24. The district's Covid-19 detection rate was 54

percent; at least 82 were found Covid-19 positive in the district out of 152 tested on Friday.

Restrictions imposed in Rajshahi and Naogaon districts have been relaxed for mango trade, but the infection detection rate in those districts was around 30 percent.

The restrictions, however, could not keep people inside their houses, as streets and highways were full of people, who were searching for jobs or involved in mango trade.

Meanwhile, inter-district transport remains suspended.

The district administration in Natore was yet to take any decision about lockdown till yesterday, while the district's Covid-19 detection rate increased to 40 percent.

Naogaon's Niamat Ali was taken to RMCH on May 29, when his condition was stated to be critical by local hospital doctors, his son Moyen Uddin said.

"Doctors prescribed ICU support for my father, but there were some 35 other critical patients waiting for the service. My father died long before it was time for his name to be called," he told this correspondent over phone.

On June 1, after his father died, Moyen got a text message stating that his father was Covid-19 positive. He said the message took four days to arrive, since his father's samples were taken on May 29.

Text messages of test results are supposed to reach individuals within three days.

"My father had been suffering from asthma for the last two years, so when he got fever, we thought it was the common cold. We didn't think much of his condition," Moyen said.

When he got the message, they decided to have the whole family tested, and out of 17 members, seven were found to be Covid-19 positive on Friday, he said.

The infected family members decided to isolate themselves in their homes in the upazila's Kanoil Dangapara village, Moyen said.

The RMCH director said at least 225 patients were undergoing treatment at the Covid-19 unit on Friday, while more than 40 patients were waiting for an ICU bed.

The hospital has been functioning with 17 ventilators at the ICU, which needs more ventilators.

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BANGABANDHU BRIDGE

Tk 6,434cr toll collected so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of Tk 6,434 crore has been collected as toll so far from Bangabandhu Bridge since its inauguration in 1998, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader told the parliament yesterday.

The loan taken from the development partners -- for the bridge -- will be repaid by 2034, he also said while replying to a query from Awami League MP Habibur Rahman from Bogura-5.

In a scripted answer, the minister also said Tk 4,104.21 crore had been spent due to operational, maintenance and payment of DSL of the bridge at that time.

Earlier around 11am, the sitting of the ongoing budget session began and Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, in the chair, tabled the question-answer session scheduled for the ministers.

In reply to a question from Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari from Gaibandha-1, Quader said the construction cost of Bangabandhu Bridge was Tk 3,745.60 crore.

Six-point Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The historic Six-point Day, marking the demand for autonomy for the then East Pakistan, is being observed today virtually across the country amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

On June 7 in 1966, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had launched a massive movement against the misuse of the Pakistanis on the basis of the 6-point demand.

Eleven people, including Manu Mian, Shafique and Shamsul Haque, were gunned down by the police and paramilitary EPR on that day in Dhaka and Narayanganj during a hartal called for the release of Bangabandhu and other leaders detained over launching the six-point movement against the then barbaric ruling clique.

Bangabandhu had launched his historic six-point political and economic programme in Lahore on February 5 in 1966, aiming at attaining greater autonomy for the East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, in the backdrop of exploitation and discrimination by the then Pakistani rulers.

The six-point demands were: creating provision in the constitution for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense based on the Lahore resolution; the federal government will deal with only two subjects: defence and foreign affairs; introduction of two separate, but freely convertible currencies for East and West Pakistan; vesting the power of taxation and revenue collection with the federating units; maintaining two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings; and creation of a separate militia or paramilitary force for East Pakistan.

'Every record has to be archived'

Nat'l Archive Bill placed at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bill titled "The Bangladesh National Archive Bill, 2021" was placed in Parliament yesterday, keeping provisions that no record can be destroyed.

The Bill was brought to repeal the National Archive Ordinance, 1983 in line with a High Court judgment.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid placed the Bill which was sent to the respective Parliamentary Standing Committee for further examination.

The provision of destroying any record was dropped from the proposed law. So, no record in the archive can be destroyed.

According to the proposed law, there will be a 17-member advisory council for a three-year tenure.

As per the proposed law, National Archives will provide records to any individual upon application.

In regards to sending any file abroad, which is over 75 years old and has historical, cultural, and literature value, permission from the director-general will be required.

Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people, including a freedom fighter, were killed and four others injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Dinajpur, two persons were killed and four injured as a speeding truck hit a motorcycle and a battery-run easy bike in Birol Upazila.

One of the deceased was identified as Abdul Maleq (50). Identity of the other person could not be known.

Maleq was killed on the spot, police said. Birol Fire Service and Civil Defence rushed to the spot and sent the injured to the upazila health complex, where the unidentified person died, said Azharul Islam, station officer of the fire station.

Police seized the truck but the driver and helper fled. In Mymensingh, a freedom fighter was killed as a motorbike hit him in Tarakanda upazila, said police.

The victim was identified as Poshor Uddin (75). Tarakanda Police Station OC Md Abul Khayer, quoting locals, said Poshor was injured critically after being run over by a motorbike while on his way to a local mosque in the early morning.

Immediately, his family members and locals took him to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 8am, said the OC. His namaz-e-janaza was held after the Asr prayers yesterday. He was buried at his family graveyard with state honour, said the OC.



Trading Corporation of Bangladesh yesterday resumed its open-market truck sale of groceries in the capital, the first time since Eid. People queued up at selling points to buy essentials at a subsidised rate. The photo was taken from the Secretariat Link road.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

FREEZING AWAL'S BANK ACCOUNT HC questions legality of lower court order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned a lower court order that asked the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to freeze bank accounts and seize property documents of former Awami League lawmaker AKMA Awal and his wife Laila Parvin in connection with two corruption cases.

The HC issued two rules asking ACC to show causes in four weeks why the order should not be declared illegal. The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir issued the rules after hearing two petitions filed by Awal and Laila, seeking its directives to scrap the lower court order.

In the petitions, they also requested the HC to order ACC to release their bank accounts and property-related documents, ACC's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan, who received copies of the petitions, told The Daily Star.

Lawyer Sheikh Awsafur Rahman appeared for the petitioners while lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan argued for ACC.

On May 25, the HC upheld the lower court order that asked ACC to freeze bank accounts and seize Awal and his wife's property documents.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka on January 17 ordered ACC to freeze 18 bank accounts and seize documents of 40 scheduled immovable properties of the two in the cases.