



Empty since mid-2020, jute mills across the country have become eerily similar to ghost towns. As many workers have been driven out of their quarters, the residential areas replicate that same, empty feeling. While almost no temporary and substitute workers are yet to have their dues cleared, even some permanent workers bear the same fate because of identification mistakes on their official documents.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Nat'l Jute Day NOT FOR WORKERS

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Nilufa Akhter is a 36-year-old single mother of two who lost her husband six years ago. For most of this time, she managed to provide for her family with her job at Khalishpur Jute Mill, though this was no easy task. Throughout this duration, her wages were often delayed, but she persisted, for her family. But on July 1 last year, the mill shut down completely, and so began her days of misery. While a few relatives stepped up to support her initially, it soon started running dry, to the point that Nilufa was having difficulty putting food on the plate. Coronavirus made the situation worse, as Nilufa and women like her couldn't just go and work as house help. She had no choice but to take up the harder life of a day-labourer, all for her 16-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son. Her daughter was supposed to sit for SSC exams, but Nilufa can't even bear her educational expenses anymore. "All day long, all I can think about is how to manage food for the family," she told this correspondent. In the 20 months since the mills closed, she has received no money, which includes six bills due from last year, racking up around Tk 2.5 lakh in arrears. Nilufa is among over 22,000 jute workers from seven state-owned jute mills in the Khulna and Jashore industrial belt, all of whom have plunged into dire straits after the mills closed.

The government assured them of clearing their dues within two months of the closure, which the textile and jute ministry announced at a press conference, but none of that money has come by yet. The notice issued by Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) at each mill gate around the start of the closure added further uncertainty to their lives. Not mentioning closure, all the notice said was that the mills were "stopping production". At the aforementioned press conference, the minister also said the mills will be reopened within three months after modernising their fixtures, in joint venture, PPP, or G2G agreements, but that has not materialised as well. Besides the mills in Khulna and Jashore, there's another 18 mills across the country. In total, more than 50,000 permanent, substitute and temporary workers have been laid-off. Visiting at least four jute mills of Khalishpur including Platinum and Crescent yesterday, this correspondent found the areas are mired in silence. But before the closure, these were some of the

most populous and crowded places in Khulna city. According to BJMC and ministry sources, a decision has been taken up to lease the mills out for a period of five to 20 years through an open bidding system. They said five of them have already been leased to private entities. After the independence in 1972, 77 jute mills across the country were first brought under state ownership. Over the years, they were gradually privatised again as per suggestions by IMF and the World Bank. But leading up to the national polls in 2008, the to-be elected Awami League's manifesto featured the aim to take back the mills under state-ownership and make them profitable. In 2009, the new government reopened two closed mills and de-privatised another three. But then on July 1, 2020, the government closed all state-run jute mills citing heavy losses and excessive production costs. While most of the 25,000 permanent workers of the mills have received their wages and other benefits, the temporary and substitute workers have been left



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Those who worked in these mills for 15-20 years are now being turned away over spelling mistakes. It is painful to bear.

Ruhul Amin
Krishak-Sramik-Chhatra-Janata Oikya Parishad leader

Inclusive dev needed to ensure benefits for all

Speakers tell CPD-YPSA dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a dialogue in the port city yesterday said inclusive development is a requirement to ensure benefits for all citizens. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) jointly organised the dialogue, titled "Chattogram Dialogue: Commitment for National Development – Education, Value-added Employment Opportunity and Gender Equality" at a city hotel. Speaking at the dialogue, Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD, said inclusive development means people-centred development. While presenting the keynote, Avra Bhattacharjee, joint director, dialogue and outreach at CPD, said the term "commitment for development" talks about what political parties commit in their election manifestos. The present Awami League government announced a bunch of commitments in their election manifesto for the national polls in 2018, he said. While many of those have been implemented, many are under implementation while many more are yet to even get going, Bhattacharjee added. For Chattogram, the pace of releasing funds for major development projects is slow, he observed. This has delayed many projects which were supposed to be completed by 2021. Dr Jyoti Prokash Dutta, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, Chattogram chapter, putting emphasis on inclusive development said not a single government hospital has been established in Chattogram in the past 50 years but around 20 five-star private hospitals have been established here. "Can it be termed true development?" Arifur Rahman, executive director of YPSA, said more than 20 percent people in the country are left out of major development programmes, adding that they must be brought under mainstream development programmes. Among others, Awami League lawmaker and member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Finance Mostafizur Rahman Chowdhury was present as special guest.

Not a single government hospital has been established in Chattogram in the past 50 years but around 20 five-star private hospitals have been established here. Can it be termed true development?

Owners of land plots are invited to discuss their proposals

Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani, Old DOHS, Uttara, Banasree, Kalabagan, Pallabi, Mirpur DOHS, Shyamoli, Monipuripara, Green Road, Wari, Bashundhara, Shantinagar, Moghbazar, Eskaton, Segunbagicha, Paribagh, Indira Road, Mohammadpur, Lalmatia, Khilgaon, Malibagh, Bashabo & Siddheswari.



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At a time when price of essentials is getting out of hand again, the food directorate's subsidised rice programme is bringing some relief to life in the port city. But to access the department's pick-ups, from where the rice is sold, people of all ages are having to stand in long queues, withstanding the scorching heat. This photo was taken yesterday from Anderkilla area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Stand up for migrants in int'l arena

Speakers urge govt
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said Bangladesh needs to make sure the rights of its migrants abroad are being ensured and protected. They said the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) will be held in May this year, where Bangladesh needs to address migration-related gaps strongly.

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College Education Development Project (CEDP)
IDG Sub-Project
Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh
Email: anandamohan1908cedp@gmail.com

Memo No. AMC/CEDP-ID

Date: 05-03-2022

e-Tender Notice: CEDP/AMC/2021-22/G-15/03

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

| Sl. No. | Re-Tender ID No. | Name of supply | Last date and time of tender security submission | Tender closing date & time |
|---------|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| 1. | 669697 | Supply and Installation of Air Conditioner for ICT Lab & Teachers Conference Room (G-15) | 22 March/2022 01:15pm | 22 March/2022 02:15:00pm |

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 06 March/2022. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-435