

3 Ctg Jubo League units yet to get committees

Councils held one month ago

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The committees of three units of Chattogram Jubo League are yet to be declared, even a month after their councils, frustrating its leaders and activists.

Although the central leaders had all preparation to announce committees during the councils, they did not do so considering some "technical reasons", said insiders of the ruling Awami League's youth wing.

The council of south district unit was held on May 28, north district unit on May 29 and the city unit on May 30.

Jubo League's central leaders -- including chairman Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash and general secretary Mainul Hossain Khan Nikhil -- were present at the councils.

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Student stabbed dead in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

A 22-year-old college student has been stabbed to death in Khulna city.

The deceased is Syed Tahmidunnabi, a student of Rayernahal College and resident of the city's Shahpara area.

Around 2:00pm on Thursday, Palash, a carpenter, called Tahmid out of his home in Daulatpur area, said police.

As soon as he stepped out, Palash and four to five others started thrashing Tahmid, said Md Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station. "They later stabbed him multiple times."

As locals gathered hearing Tahmid's screams, the attackers fled.

He was later admitted to Khulna Medical College and Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries around midnight, said Robiul Gazi, Tahmid's brother-in-law.

Locals caught one person -- Palash's nephew Piyal -- and handed him over to police, said the OC.



Seven state-owned jute mills have been closed for two years. The closure has made life almost unliveable for the workers who lost their jobs due to the closure.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

400 families waterlogged in two weeks!

Waterlogging returns every monsoon due to canal grabbing

SIFAYET ULLAH

A canal has been occupied and filled, which led to about 400 families facing severe waterlogging in Mogpukur area of Kumira union in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila.

Locals have alleged that two industrial firms, KR Group and Portland International BD, are behind the illegal canal grabbing.

"Due to rain in the last few days, our homes, school, mosque and streets have gone underwater, thanks to the illegal canal grabbing," said Abul Bashar, a resident of this area.

"We requested the two firms to relinquish possession of the government canal but to no avail," he added.

During a visit to the area on Thursday, this correspondent found that more than a hundred houses have been inundated. Students are having to cross knee-deep water to go to school.

Besides, water of the 25-foot-wide canal next to Dhaka-Chattogram highway is now flowing through a pipe. Hence, it has become impossible to clear the water from the area in the last 13 days.

"Waterlogging has been occurring in our area every monsoon since 2019. But the administration has not been able to



PHOTO: STAR

solve this problem in the last three years," said Abul Kalam, another resident.

Morshed Hossain Chowdhury, chair of Kumira Union Parishad, said, "We have tried to solve this problem locally. But the occupiers do not want to listen to anyone. They have forcibly occupied the government canal."

Meanwhile, sufferers of the waterlogging have already lodged written complaints with the upazila nirbahi officer and Department of Environment (DoE), seeking appropriate action. According to Natural Water Reservoir Conservation Act 2000, all canals and natural waterbodies must be preserved by the state.

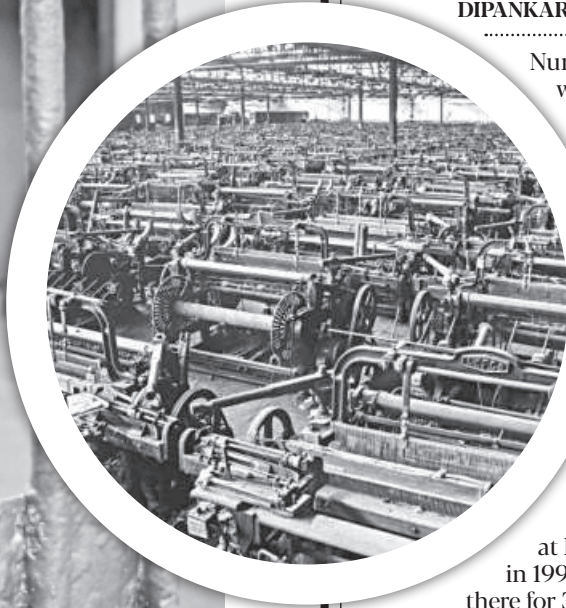
Ashraf Uddin, assistant director of DoE Chattogram, said filling the canal is a punishable offence under the law.

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The vulgar disparity of life

Thousands of jobless jute workers in destitute condition

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna



Nur Alom (47) was a substitute worker at a Khulna jute mill that shut down on July 1, 2020.

After losing his job, he tried working as a construction worker, pickle hawker, bus helper, and vegetable seller to meet at least the food expenses of his family of five.

The correspondent recently met Alom in front of the main gate of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill, his previous workplace, while he was selling vegetables on a van.

"I joined as a substitute worker at Platinum Jute Mill of Khalishpur in 1997. My father Abdul Sattar worked there for 36 years and retired in 1994. He only got Tk 1,20,000 after retiring," said Alom.

Asked how he has been passing his days, he replied that he lives a subpar life at a rented one-room flat in Khalishpur industrial area with his family.

"We were living a healthy life in the workers' colony, but the authority kicked us out following the mill's closure."

"I can't afford the basic educational expenses of my school-going daughters after paying the rent. I need over Tk 1,000 every month to look after my ailing mother," he added.

Alom worked as a substitute at Platinum Jute Mill for 23 years. The mill authorities gave him Tk 1,10,000, as per the wage commission formed in 2015. He has been offered no other benefits.

The jute minister, a day after the closure, announced at a press conference that all the arrears of the workers would be paid within two months, and the mills would be modernised and reopened within three months.

During a recent visit to at least four jute mills of Khalishpur, including Platinum and Crescent, this correspondent saw that the entire area has turned into an abandoned haunted zone as if struck by some big natural calamity.

According to Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation's (BJMC) Khulna zone, 14,351 workers out of the 14,996 of the seven state-owned jute mills had gotten a golden handshake of Tk 1,352 crore out of Tk 1,569 crore, while 13,339 substitute workers out of the 14,078 had been given Tk 105 crore out of Tk 109 crore.

Their collective dues currently stand at Tk 114.19 crore.

Md Murad Hossain, general manager of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill, said, "We paid Tk 400 crore out of the 428 crore to 3,776 permanent workers out of the 3,800. Of them, 24 are yet to get paid due to confusion regarding the spelling of their names."

"Around 800 substitute workers are yet to get Tk 3.42 crore, while over 3,000 permanent workers are yet to get Tk 111 crore for trivial issues like spelling confusions," said Ruhul Amin, coordinator of Sramik Krishak Chhatra Janata Oikya Parishad.

Md Golam Rabbani, BJMC liaison officer, said, "The mills would be modernised and reopened soon through a PPP or G2G agreement. Already four mills -- Platinum, JJI, Daulatpur and Crescent -- have been tendered."



After a two-year hiatus, Ratha Yatra, the celebration of Lord Jagannath's journey to his aunt's house, was commemorated by people of the Hindu faith, with colourful processions across the country yesterday. These photos were taken from Khulna city's Dakbangla intersection and Barishal's BM College Road, inset.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN AND TITU DAS

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