

CTG GOVT TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE

Year-long waterlogging, ENDLESS MISERY

ARUN BIKASH DEY

If one visits Government Teachers' Training College in Chawk Bazar area, they will notice a field inundated by water, entrances and ground floors of male and female hostels submerged, and hyacinths growing everywhere on the waterlogged premises.

According to the resident trainees, the campus remains waterlogged throughout the year. The problem has been persisting for over five years now, they added.

Mizanur Rahman, a madrasa teacher currently undergoing training at TTC, said, "Around six-seven years back, when I was doing BEd and MEd here, the situation was very good. We used to play football, basketball, and badminton on the college field every afternoon. Over the last five years, the situation worsened. Now the field remains waterlogged all year round."

"The drainage system is no longer working. Rainwater from last monsoon is still seeping out and inundating the campus, including ground floors of both male and female hostels," Mizanur added.

Thuichi Mong Marma, a senior teacher of



Manikchhari Collegiate High School in Khagrachhari, said there was no waterlogging on campus back in 2009-10.

"Last week, I returned to the campus to attend a training programme and was surprised to see the sorry state there. We had to enter the hostel treading through the waterlogged entrance. Mosquitoes are breeding around the premises," he added.

Mitali Devi Chakma, a teacher of

Uttar Mubachhari Nimno Madhyamik Bidyalay in Rangamati's Kaukhali upazila, said, "It's difficult to stay at the hostel amid waterlogging, bad odour and mosquito menace."

The TTC campus used to be one of the most beautiful campuses in the port city. It had a garden in front of the academic building, a large field, and a

walkway around it.

The college offers BEd and MEd degrees, different short courses, and training programmes to teachers of different institutions as well as those aspiring to take teaching as a career.

According to officials, at present there are around 850 students and trainees pursuing BEd, MEd and training at the college, with most of them residing in the hostels.

Contacted, Dilruba Akter Chowdhury, acting principal of the college, said, "Five years back, we had elevated the roads and walkways to ease the movement of teachers and students in monsoon. However, as the surrounding areas became higher than the college field and hostel compounds, rainwater accumulated there and cannot be drained out."

"Now waterlogging has become a round-the-year problem for the campus. We have informed the matter to our higher authorities but they have yet to respond," she added.

Contacted, Zalal Uddin Chowdhury, superintendent engineer of education engineering department in Chattogram division, said they are aware about the problem. "We did not have budget allocation earlier. In this current fiscal year, we have the budget and the problem will be addressed accordingly," he said.



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The Government Teachers' Training College at Chawk Bazar remains waterlogged throughout the year. According to students, this problem has been persisting for over five years now.

PHOTO: STAR

PINEAPPLE FARMERS IN RANGAMATI

Despite good yield, growers not all smiles

LALTANLIAN PANGKHUA

In hopes of higher profits, pineapple farmers in Rangamati had planted saplings of the summer fruit this winter.

While the yield has been satisfactory, the market demand for the fruit remains low, compelling the cultivators to sell their produce for lower prices.

During a recent visit to Naniarchar upazila, this correspondent saw pineapple plantations booming with freshly ripe fruits. However, the farmers' faces wore a gloomy look.

According to the Directorate of Agricultural Extension, pineapple was cultivated on 2,130 hectares of land this year, yielding a total of 55,913 tonnes of the fruit.

Bangladesh is listed as one of the top 10 pineapple producers around the world, with honey queen, a variety from the hills, playing a pivotal role in establishing this agricultural trademark.

Despite substantial pineapple production in Rangamati every year, farmers complain of being deprived of fair prices even after bumper harvests, attributing the cause of their losses to the absence of proper storage facilities.

Grown on hill slopes, the process of bringing the fruits to the markets from the orchards located in remote mountainous regions is a rather tedious task for the cultivators, mentioned farmer Dulal Gazi. "The price we are getting after overcoming such hardships is disheartening," he added.

Farmer Nabin Kumar Chakma of



PHOTO: STAR

Grown on hill slopes, the fruits are often brought to the market through boats.

Naniarchar said, "Rains are a frequent in the months of Baishakh and Jaishtha, leading to landslides along the slope. Thus, we resorted to off-season cultivation. However, the market demand doesn't always align with our expectations."

Farmer Arif Mia added, "I planted 25,000 saplings, investing Tk 70,000. I have to spend at least Tk 600 daily in labour costs. The produce has to be taken on a boat, and its rent further adds to the expenses."

He said he has to sell each fruit for Tk 10, much less than its production cost.

Wholesale trader Abul Mia attributed the increased cost of transportation and low market demand for this imbalance.

Contacted, Moniruzzaman, deputy director of DAE in Rangamati, "Due to cultivating pineapple before its preferred season, the fruits are not as sweet. With no available resource to store the produce, farmers are now exposed to greater risks."

Left unused, bridge becomes parking spot

No approach road constructed in 2 years

SIFAYET ULLAH

A two-lane bridge, constructed over Rajakhali canal in Kotwali area of Chattogram city as a connector on the Mariner's Road is being used for parking buses.

The bridge could not be opened to traffic due to the lack of approach roads, even two years after its construction.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) constructed the 70-metre-long bridge at a cost of Tk 8.67 crore under the "City Governance Project-2" of Japan International Cooperation Agency, and handed it over to the Chattogram City Corporation in January 2022.

However, CCC failed to open the bridge since no approach road has been constructed yet due to negligence of its officials, alleged locals.

As such, the bridge has been unusable for the last two years, leaving commuters suffering as they are being compelled to use an existing dilapidated bridge as an alternative route.

The CCC earlier constructed the four-lane, 1.3km-long Mariner's Road at a cost of Tk

12 crore to connect south Chattogram with Bandarban and Cox's Bazar. The road was opened to traffic in 2014.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw numerous buses parked on the bridge using a makeshift stretch of earthen road connected to it, while two floating shops were also set up there.

"As the bridge cannot be used, we are compelled to cross this spot using the old bridge as an alternative route even amidst risk," said Al Amin, a three-wheeler driver who transports passengers on the road regularly.

Several commuters echoed the same. Drivers of the parked buses said they kept their vehicles there as the bridge is closed to traffic at present.

"We set up our shops on the bridge by managing local influential people who benefit from us," said a shop owner wishing anonymity.

Acknowledging the situation, Farhadul Alam, a CCC superintendent engineer, said, "We have already sought funds for constructing an approach road to access the bridge."



Due to a lack of approach roads, the two-lane bridge over Rajakhali canal in port city's Kotwali area is now being used for parking buses.

PHOTO: STAR



The 20-bed lone centre in the north Chattogram was built to treat emergency road accident patients.

PHOTO: STAR

HATHAZARI UPAZILA

Trauma centre inoperative for three years

SIFAYET ULLAH

A trauma centre in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila has been lying inoperative since its inauguration in 2021 as the authorities still have not sanctioned adequate manpower and equipment.

The 20-bed lone centre in the north Chattogram was built to treat emergency road accident patients.

The centre, comprising a three-storey building for accommodation and other logistical purposes, was built at a cost of Tk 12 crore.

It was built at the point of two highways -- Chattogram-Rangamati and Chattogram-Khagrachhari -- to support victims injured in road accidents.

During a recent visit to the centre, this correspondent observed that some doors of the hospital were broken. The iron grilles were found rusty while windows were damaged.

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Rabi Kharmakar, a trader near the hospital, alleged that due to absence of security or caretaker, the place has turned into a den for gamblers.

Meanwhile, road accident victims are being referred to the Chattogram Medical College Hospital as the centre lies idle, said locals.

Shafiul Alam, secretary of Hathazari Bazar Businessmen Association, said, "No one is yet to receive any medical treatment from this centre due to negligence of local healthcare administration."

He urged the authorities to take immediate steps to make the centre operational.

Contacted, Rashmi Chakma, health and family planning officer of Hathazari upazila, said they could not initiate medical services at the centre due to a lack of manpower and equipment.

The trauma centre needs a skilled team of doctors and nurses.

"We have got approval to begin treatment there and are now trying to start with at least the outdoor unit with existing manpower," she added.