

Anti-quota demos continue

STAR REPORT

Hundreds of students from three universities yesterday rallied against the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs.

The universities are: Chattogram University, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University in Dinajpur, and Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University in Tangail.

In Chattogram, CU students blocked Sholosohor road for one and a half hours, starting at 4:00pm, causing significant traffic disruptions.

They gathered earlier at Shaheed Minar to voice demands for the abolition of the quota system.

In Dinajpur, HSTU students defied rain to protest in front of the university gate, demanding quota reforms and shouting slogans like "No place for discrimination in Golden Bengal" and "Merit, not quota!"

In Tangail, students from Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University formed a human chain at the university gate.

Meanwhile, students of other institutions including Dhaka University said they will bring out processions today and boycott classes and exams on Sunday if their demands are not addressed.

Man held over rape of 6-year-old girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested a man in Ghoraghat, Dinajpur, on Thursday night on charges of raping a six-year-old girl.

The arrestee is Sajju Mia, 25, from Loharband Uttarpara area.

Md Asaduzzaman Asad, officer-in-charge of Ghoraghat Police Station, said the incident occurred on Tuesday afternoon when the girl went to a nearby shop to buy some snacks.

On her way back home, Sajju Mia allegedly raped her while brandishing a sharp weapon, said the OC.



Traditionally, by the first week of Ashar (monsoon), farmers prepare Aman paddy seedbeds. However, due to a lack of rain, farmers are yet to prepare seedbeds this time around. The photos were taken at Tetultala beel and Batiaghata upazila recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Aman farmers worry over lack of rain

June saw 250mm less rainfall than normal; no seedbeds prepared yet

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Paddy farmers in Khulna division are worried as a lack of rainfall on the onset of Aman season threatens to adversely affect cultivation.

This staple crop is crucial for over 10 lakh farmers in Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira districts, who rely on monsoon rain for irrigation due to water salinity during the rest of the year.

Traditionally, by the first week of Ashar (monsoon), farmers prepare Aman paddy seedbeds.

However, this year, June recorded 250mm less rainfall than usual, leaving canal and river waters unsuitable for irrigation due to high salinity.

After visiting 15 villages in Batiaghata, Dumuria, Paikgachha, Dacope, and Rupsha upazilas, this correspondent saw no seedbeds were being prepared.

Agricultural lands lie fallow, covered with grass and used for pasture. In Batiaghata, two canals were found dried up.

"I haven't been able to prepare Aman seedbeds due to inadequate rain, which

hasn't lowered canal salinity, making the water unsuitable for irrigation," said Proshad Roy from Khalashibunia Kachhari Bari.

"Last year's delayed cultivation due to a lack of rain led to pest attacks and a poor harvest. This year looks worse," he added.

Approximately 930 farmers from Proshad's village share his predicament.



Abdur Rob of Pankhali village in Dacope upazila echoed similar concerns, adding that the Bhadra river's water remains too salty for irrigation and groundwater is also highly saline.

"Rainwater is our only hope," he said.

Environmental experts attribute the

situation to disrupted weather patterns and erratic monsoons due to climate change.

In recent years, Khulna division has seen a decline in precipitation during crucial Aman cultivation months, intensifying the hardships for the farming community.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension in Khulna, 84,810 hectares are designated for Aman cultivation with a target production of 291,563 tonnes of paddy, involving 317,274 families.

"It rained 305mm in May, much more than the usual 175mm, but it was too early to benefit the farmers. Till June 27, only 46mm of rain was recorded, 250mm less than the usual June rainfall," said Md Amirul Azad, senior meteorologist at Khulna Meteorological Office.

Md Mosaddek Hossain, senior monitoring officer of DAE's PARTNER programme, expressed concerns about the delayed seedbed preparation, which could lead to lower yields.

He added that the lack of rain is damaging Aus paddy cultivated in the region.

Farmers remain hopeful for timely rainfall to salvage the Aman cultivation season and mitigate the looming agricultural crisis.

UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEX Patients suffer for shortage of doctors

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The 50-bed Sarishabari Upazila Health Complex, serving over four lakh residents across Jamalpur and Sirajganj, is facing a severe shortage of medical staff.

Operating with only four medical officers and two consultants, well below the required 29, the facility struggles to meet the basic healthcare needs.

Dr Rabiul Islam, resident medical officer, said essential departments like surgery, gynaecology, cardiology, and others lack dedicated doctors and staffers.

The absence of a gynaecologist for six months has particularly hampered maternity care, while an equipped, but unused operation theatre due to surgeon shortage symbolises the facility's underutilisation.

With only one cleaner instead of the required seven, the hospital remains unhygienic.

Visiting the health complex recently, this correspondent found only one doctor busy working, while a huge rush of patients was seen in the emergency room.



Meanwhile, middlemen were seen taking advantage of the situation and taking patients to private clinics.

Saddam Hossain, a resident from Kumariabari of Kazipur, said he had been waiting in the hospital's corridor for an hour, but no doctor was available in the emergency room.

Instead, he saw a medical assistant attending patients.

Shahin Miah, a resident from Adra village of Sarishabari upazila, said he went to the hospital after an accident and waited for half an hour, but found no doctor till that point.

Dr Rabiul said, "Over a hundred patients are currently admitted to the health complex.

However, the hospital only has 50 beds, so half the patients are on the floors."

Sarishabari upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Md Shafiqul Islam said, "The issue of doctor shortage has already been informed to the authorities."

Local lawmaker Abdur Rashid, president of the hospital management committee, said he has been trying his best to solve the matter.



The park has been off limits to city dwellers for over a year now due to a renovation project.

PHOTO: STAR

Jatisangha Park remains off limits

First bureaucratic tangle, now renovation keeps visitors away

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Residents of port city are currently unable to use Jatisangha Park in Panchlaish due to delayed renovation work.

The port city lacks sufficient parks and open spaces for its residents. Jatisangha Park, established in 1964 and spanning 2.17 acres, is one of the few parks in Chattogram with free public access.

The park has been off limits to city dwellers for over a year now due to a renovation project.

Earlier, a tug of war over the park between the Chattogram City Corporation and Public Works Department led it to utter disarray, neglect and abandonment for six years, alongside a wastage of around Tk 5 crore of public money.

PARK HISTORY AND DECLINE

Originally established by the PWD and later handed over to the Chittagong Municipal Corporation in 1969, the park was named Jatisangha Park in 2002.

"It used to be a beautiful park with various trees and a walkway around an artificial lake," said local resident Shahedul Azam.

In 2012, the Chattogram City Corporation constructed two swimming pools and a boundary wall in the park at a cost of Tk 4.80 crore.

However, following a child's drowning in one of the pools, they were abandoned.

In 2016, CCC attempted to lease the park to a private organisation for 25 years, but this was opposed by the then minister for housing and public works, Mosharraf

Hossain.

Consequently, a dispute ensued, leaving the park abandoned for six years until it was handed back to the PWD in 2020.

RENOVATION PROJECT

The PWD began a Tk 12.62 crore renovation project for the park in January last year, scheduled for completion by June this year. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone for the project on December 4.

Babar Associates and Coronation Corporation, a joint venture, is responsible for the renovation.

The project aims to develop a green garden with attractive greenery, a boundary wall with iron grilles, a walkway,

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Invitation Reference No.	03/e-GP/PMP-Roads/BC/JRD/2023-2024
Tender ID	1001927
Name of Works	DBS Wearing Course work at Chainage:0+000 (Naikathi) to Chainage:9+140(Halder bari Bazar) km of Naikathi-Bhandaria (Z-8717) (Jhalokathi Part) Road under Jhalokati Road Division during the year 2023-2024.
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	21-Jul-2024 16:00
Tender Closing Date and Time	22-Jul-2024 12:00
Tender Opening Date and Time	22-Jul-2024 12:00

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d) 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-14