

Dhobaura–M'singh road in a sorry state



MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The 30-kilometre stretch from Mymensingh's Dhobaura to Tarakanda has become almost unusable, causing immense suffering for thousands of people who travel on the road.

The 45-kilometre Mymensingh-Dhobaura road, passing through Tarakanda and Phulpur, is the only road connecting the area, particularly for Dhobaura residents. But numerous potholes along the route have made journeys risky, costly, and time-consuming.

Md Abul Hossain, a local journalist, said with no alternate route to reach Mymensingh city, commuters are forced to risk their lives daily. A journey that previously took an hour now requires over two hours, he added.

The plight of patients referred to Mymensingh for better treatment from Dhobaura Upazila Health Complex is particularly severe. Patients and their attendants not only face life-threatening risks during the trip but also pay double fares due to the poor condition of the road, he said.

The broken road has also increased the cost of transporting agricultural products. "We produce different kinds of vegetables and crops, but the carrying cost has gone up sharply due to the state

of the road," said Md Liakat Ali, a farmer of Kalsinsur village.

Arif Hossain, a pick-up driver, echoed him.

Khokon Pahloan, proprietor of Pahloan Enterprise at Dhobaura Bazar, said, "We have to pay extra fare and spend additional hours transporting goods, and the problem has worsened this year."

Md Shafiqul Islam Mondal, LGED upazila engineer in Dhobaura, said the 30-kilometre road passes through three upazilas — Dhobaura, Phulpur, and Tarakanda. The nine-kilometre portion in Dhobaura is comparatively in good condition, he claimed.

Salman Rahman Rasel, LGED executive engineer in Mymensingh, said repair work has already been initiated.

Admitting the poor state of the road, he said the department does not receive the required funds every season, which has contributed to its current condition. A proposal for massive repair work has been submitted, and the work could start by November this year, he added.

Md Uzzal Hosen, Dhobaura UNO, said the issue has been raised in the district coordination meeting. LGED engineers have been contacted and assured that the road will be repaired soon to alleviate the ongoing sufferings of the people.

Delayed diagnosis putting children at greater risk

FROM PAGE 3
"He had a fever for 13 days and was receiving treatment at home. We admitted him to the hospital on Thursday when his health declined," said his mother, Rubi Begum, a resident of Sipahibagh.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least 4,026 children aged 0-10 have been hospitalised with dengue this year, while 10 children of the same age group have died out of 110 total deaths so far. In the past 24 hours, 173 dengue patients were hospitalised, raising the total cases to 27,955.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at

Shahid Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, said many parents are showing negligence this year by not testing their children soon after fever begins.

"Children are often brought to the hospital only when their condition turns critical," he said.

He explained that dengue symptoms appear differently in children.

"For adults, symptoms usually begin with sudden fever, body pain, and eye pain. But in children, it often starts with nausea and coughing. Infants may cry excessively, refuse breastfeeding, or appear unusually tired."

Dr Ahsan warned that

dengue reaches the critical stage faster in children.

"For adults, it may take 48 hours to become critical, but in children, it can take just 24 hours. That's why we strongly recommend hospitalisation as quickly as possible."

He also said children are more prone to developing dengue shock syndrome, which is highly dangerous.

Urging guardians to be more cautious, he added, "The risk of infection is high at schools and coaching centres. Most schools don't provide full-sleeve uniforms, but these are essential during dengue season. Children's legs should also be protected with long socks and shoes."

3,909 students awarded

FROM PAGE 4
"Welcoming" awards, 1,108 earned "Appreciation" awards, 615 were given "Congratulations" awards, and 86 students received the prestigious "Best Reader" award.

Actor Khairul Alam Sabuj delivered the welcome

speech at the programme. He congratulated the awardees, saying that truth and cultural values are the greatest sources of inspiration in life's journey.

Mountaineer MA Muhit; Shamim Al Mamun, former secretary and current member of the National Election Enquiry Commission; Khulna

Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate Mohammad Saiful Islam; Bishwo Shahitto Kendro trustee and management consultant Khalid Hasan; and Grameenphone's Regional Head for Khulna Bushra Mehreen also attended the event.

River land filled up

FROM PAGE 4
Ahidul Islam of Chanchra Dakshinpara. Another resident, Firoz Ahmed of Bhaturia Narayanpur village, said, "In many places there are complaints of encroaching to build structures or cultivate fish. But here the entire river is filled up. We do not understand how river land becomes private property."

Bangladesh Environment Movement (BAPA) Jashore convener Khandaker Azizul Haque said, "A part of the Mukteshwar River in Chanchra is being filled up and plots are being sold. Those involved in this encroachment and fraudulently grabbing the river's land must be given exemplary punishment immediately."

The phone number on the land sale signboard belongs to Nur Islam Nuru, a former peon of the Jashore registry office. He told reporters the land is privately owned by Jamal, Kamal and Munna of the area, and that he was

the country did their best to serve them. Doctors were brought in from seven countries for their treatment, and 78 of the injured were sent abroad for better care. Of the wounded, 7,363 were given health cards for free lifelong treatment at government hospitals.

The duo allegedly abused their positions and engaged in extortion, tender manipulation, and various corrupt practices to unlawfully amass wealth.

When asked, Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum said, "We haven't received any specific allegations against the two. We cannot carry out a probe based on vague allegations. That's why no action was taken against them."

They left the ministry after completing their tasks, she said, adding that the two were involved in the management of medical care for July victims.

"This has not tarnished my reputation," she told The Daily Star on August 17 at her Secretariat office.

Referring to criticism that she was seldom seen on the ground over the past year, the health adviser said, "I make field visits whenever necessary. I do that to get an idea of the real situation. But if I go somewhere with fanfare, I won't get the actual picture."

TREATMENT OF JULY VICTIMS

Providing proper treatment to those injured during the uprising was the health administration's foremost priority. However, it faced allegations of mismanagement and deficiencies in medical care for them.

Ministry officials said a list of 13,811 people injured during the uprising was prepared, and health service providers across

the two political parties.

Talking to this

correspondent, Nurjahan Begum said they had searched for non-partisan individuals to fill vacant posts at health agencies, institutions and hospitals, but got only a few suitable candidates.

"We then gave emphasis

on finding honest and skilled individuals... We did not make appointments considering political affiliations," she added.

SUSPENSION OF SECTORAL PROGRAMMES

The interim government scrapped the proposed Fifth Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP) and decided to absorb the sectoral programmes into regular ones to improve coordination and strengthen infrastructure.

Since 1998, the health ministry implemented four HPNSPs to provide various health services.

The ministry decided

to take two projects

forward to complete

the unfinished tasks of

the Fourth HPNSP and

continue the supply of

medicines and other

emergency items.

However, the projects

have not yet been

approved, disrupting

the supply of medicines,

officials said.

For example, five types of medicines for diabetes and hypertension are provided at 430 hospitals, mostly at the upazila level, but their supply has been

seen disruptions, they

added.

STEPS TAKEN SO FAR

The 12 member Health Sector Reform Commission, led by National Professor AK Azad Khan, submitted its report to Chief Adviser the Muhammad Yunus on May 5, recommending a sweeping overhaul

of the service.

However, the interim

administration halted

these

programmes

and failed to devise a

transitional plan to

continue the services

provided under the

schemes, severely

impacting preventive

healthcare, he said.

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Ensure justice for Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 3
Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing in November 2024 is still pending.

The groups urged the United Nations Security Council to refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC and called on UN member states to use universal jurisdiction to prosecute perpetrators of atrocities, as seen in Argentina.

They also raised concerns over the upcoming UN High-level Conference on the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar, scheduled for September 30 in New York.

"Rohingya representation is lacking. Survivors, women, youth, and Rohingya-led civil society must be at the forefront of discussions about their future," the statement said.

It pointed out that the ICC prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant against Myanmar

to the two political parties.

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The ministry has already initiated a process to appoint 3,000 doctors through a special BCS and appointed 3,512 senior nurses to mitigate the manpower crisis.

Meanwhile, the ministry lowered the prices of coronary stents from three US companies by Tk 3,000 to Tk 88,000 each, providing much-needed relief to heart patients.

The revised rates will come into effect on October 1.

Also, Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL), the state-owned pharmaceutical manufacturer, announced reducing prices of 33 essential medicines.

Steps have also been taken to reduce prices of cancer drugs.

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Be-nazir Ahmed, a health expert and former director of disease control at DGHS, said Bangladesh has performed reasonably well in preventive healthcare through various sectoral programmes over the last few decades.

However, the interim administration halted these programmes and failed to devise a transitional plan to begin. This is why the changes are not visible at the service level."

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"We stand united in our

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the statement concluded.

The 58 organisations

included Amnesty

International, Fortify

Rights, Human Rights

Watch, Burma Campaign

UK, European Rohingya

Council, Odhikar, Refugees

International, Robert F

Kennedy Human Rights,

and numerous Rohingya