

JnU 'A' unit entry exam today at 12 centres

Around 85 candidates to compete for each seat

JNU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test for the "A" Unit (Science and Life and Earth Science faculties) of Jagannath University (JnU) for first-year undergraduate (honours) and BBA programmes will be held today.

The examination will take place at 12 centres, including Jagannath University as well as Cumilla, Khulna, and Rajshahi universities.

For the A Unit, 72,474 applicants have applied for 860 seats, meaning around 85 candidates will compete for each seat. For the "C" unit, Faculty of Business Studies, 20,537 applicants have applied for 520 seats.

In Dhaka, the test will be held at nine centres: Jagannath University, University of Dhaka, Engineering University Girls' School and College, Mohammadpur Government High School, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Bangabazar Government Girls' High School, Dhaka Collegiate School, K L Jubilee High School and College, and BIAM Model High School and College.

The 100-mark test will consist of 72 marks for MCQs, while the remaining 28 marks will be allocated based on SSC and HSC results. For the A unit, questions will be set from physics, chemistry, and either mathematics or biology.

Dean of the Science Faculty Prof Dr Parimal Bala said, "Considering the convenience of examinees, centres have been set up outside Dhaka this year in Khulna, Rajshahi, and Cumilla."



## Contraceptive

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dropped to 58.2 percent from 62.7 percent in 2019. Access to modern contraception also declined, meeting the needs of 73.5 percent of women compared to 77.4 percent in 2019, shows the survey carried out by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with UNICEF.

DGFP officials said the unmet demand for contraceptives rose sharply during the Covid pandemic that hit the country in 2020. However, the then government deprioritised family planning rather than boosting contraceptive supply.

In 2023, the health ministry halted the purchase of contraceptives for about a year, resulting in a significant supply gap. It opted to channel funds meant for buying contraceptives towards the procurement of other items. Family planning took a back seat at that time, said a DGFP official, seeking anonymity.

When contacted, DGFP Director General Ashrafi Ahmad said the crisis deepened after the expiry of the Fourth Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP) in June last year. In the past, most contraceptives were bought under the scheme.

A lack of field-level workers worsened the situation, she said, adding that recruitment for some posts was halted due to legal complications.

### CONTRACEPTIVE SUPPLY DROPS

DGFP provides people with five types of contraceptives -- condoms, oral pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), injectables, and implants -- to people free of cost through its field-level workers across the country.

According to its national contraceptive summary report, condom supply dropped by 57 percent over the last six years.

Condom supply stood at 97.48 lakh in September 2019, months before the Covid outbreak -- a period when the unmet demand for contraceptives rose sharply.

The number continued to decline to 41.52 lakh in September this year, down from 87.31 lakh in September, 2022.

The other four contraceptive items have also seen a steady decline

since 2019: oral pills by 63 percent, IUDs by 64 percent, injectables by 41 percent, and implants by 37 percent.

As of December 11 this year, the agency had stocks of condoms for 39 days; implants for 33 days; IUDs for 45 days; oral pills for five months; and 18 days; and injectables for six months and 15 days.

Asked, Abdur Razzaque, director of the DGFP's logistics and supply unit, said they already initiated the purchase of implants.

"These contraceptive items could be restocked soon, provided that an ongoing legal issue over the purchase is resolved."

However, condoms are likely to run out of stock, depriving people of supplies for at least a month, he said.

Razzaque said the government approved a project last month to buy all five types of contraceptives, but the procurement process will take at least three months to complete.

For the time being, DGFP is using available funds to buy condoms in limited quantities, but their supply may still be disrupted for a month next year, he said.

Asked about the manpower shortage, Ershad Ahmed Nomani, deputy director (personnel) of DGFP, said that of the 50,648 field-level posts, at least 12,720 (25 percent) remain vacant.

Those include posts of family planning assistants and inspectors; family welfare volunteers; and sub-assistant community medical officers, he said.

These field-level workers not only distribute contraceptives but also provide advocacy and counselling to service seekers.

All these activities, which are crucial for birth control, have been seriously disrupted due to shortages of contraceptives and manpower, ultimately contributing to the rise in TFR, said Imran Siddiq, an SC lawyer.

A significant number of the commission's reform goals have been achieved. The establishment of the Secretariat, which was long overdue, marks a milestone in achieving the separation of the judiciary, noted Imran, also a member of the commission's legal team.

"Implementation of reforms has been particularly evident at administrative and institutional levels. But long-term structural reforms, especially those requiring constitutional amendments or extensive

## RAOZAN IN CHATTOGRAM

# New market unused as vendors clog highway

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

A newly constructed kitchen market in the Gohira area of Raozan municipality in Chattogram has remained unused for nearly a year despite shops being handed over to the vendors.

Meanwhile vendors continue to occupy the Chattogram-Rangamati regional highway daily, causing traffic congestion and hardship for commuters.

The market was built under a Livestock and Dairy Development Project between December 2023 and June 2024 to remove the roadside bazaar that regularly blocks the



regularly commutes along the route.

The multipurpose market building was constructed at a cost of Tk 1.20 crore and includes more than 16 separate sheds for poultry, meat and an open shed, said Jayita Basu, upazila livestock officer of Raozan.

The Raozan municipality has already leased out the market to private vendors.

"Vendors still sit along the highway's Rangamati-bound side every day, forcing vehicles to slow down or squeeze into a single lane, often leading to traffic congestion during peak hours," said Ali Ahsan Sumon, a college teacher who

new market does not have electricity connections and other basic facilities yet. That's why we are still sitting here."

Nurul Islam, another trader, said they were being told to move to the new market but had not received clear instructions about whom to want to or how the market would be managed.

Locals and vehicle drivers said the roadside market poses serious safety risks.

Nasir Uddin, an autorickshaw driver, said navigating the area requires constant caution as accidents occur almost daily.

Contacted, Aungching Marma, municipal administrator and assistant

commissioner (Land) in Raozan, said, "Most vendors sitting on the road are low-income people. Even if we want to, it is not easy to take strict action against them."

He said delayed installation of several utility facilities in the new building had rendered it non-functional. "Last week, we sent municipal engineers to ensure all utilities were installed, and the structure is now ready," he said.

The leaseholders have been repeatedly instructed to start operating from the new building, he added, warning that legal steps would be taken if vendors continue to occupy the highway in disregard of the instructions.

Photo: Sifayet Ullah

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