

Parts of Khulna submerged after heavy rain

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Online Desk : Large parts of Khulna city remained submerged after 184 millimetres of rainfall over the past 51 hours, causing severe waterlogging and widespread disruption to daily life, while residents questioned the effectiveness of a Tk 823-crore drainage improvement project. According to the Khulna Meteorological Office, the city received 184 millimetres of rainfall over the past 51 hours. The persistent rain inundated roads, lanes and low-lying areas, leaving many areas under knee-deep water and causing widespread suffering for commuters, students, transport workers and residents. The worst-affected areas include Mujgunni, Royal Mor, Tutpara, Jinnah Nagar, Daulatpur, Atra, Giltala, Dilkhola, Banargati and Sheikhpara. Water also entered many homes in these localities.

Residents and environmental activists said waterlogging has become a recurring problem during the monsoon due to inadequate drainage planning, despite years of infrastructure development under the city's drainage improvement project. They alleged that although seven canals have been excavated and more than 200 drains constructed or renovated over the past five and a half years, the measures have failed to provide a lasting solution.

Mustafa, a businessman in Mujgunni, said even light rainfall leaves the intersection under knee-deep water. "We urge the Khulna City Corporation (KCC) to take effective measures to resolve this problem permanently," he said. Hamim, a resident of Karigorpara in Pabla, said rainwater regularly floods the ground floor of his house because newly constructed roads and drains were raised without ensuring proper connections for water to flow from nearby homes.

Anup Kumar, resident of Pabla Sahapara, blamed the crisis on poor urban planning rather than only inadequate drains. He said many natural canals have been narrowed and converted into concrete drains in recent years, reducing their water-carrying capacity and disrupting the city's natural drainage system. "Simply building new drains will not solve the problem unless natural canals are restored, drains are cleaned regularly and proper links with rivers and canals are established," he added.

Easy-bike driver Hafiz said he had no choice but to continue working despite flooded roads. "Even after spending hundreds of crores of taka on roads and drains, our suffering has not decreased," he said. According to KCC, the city has around 1,165 kilometres of drainage channels. Under the "Khulna City Waterlogging Mitigation through Drainage System Improvement (Phase-1)" project worth Tk 823 crore, canal excavation, drain construction and other infrastructure works have been carried out over the past several years. Sheikh Mohammad Masud Karim, Project Director and KCC Executive Engineer said 169 covered drains with a combined length of 147 kilometres have been constructed under the project.

Md Anisur Rahman, KCC Chief Conservancy Officer said drain-cleaning activities are carried out regularly but have been temporarily suspended due to the ongoing rainfall, as mud removed from drains is being washed back by rainwater. He also noted that the city corporation lacks modern equipment to clean newly built covered drains efficiently, forcing workers to remove heavy concrete slabs manually. Equipment for mechanised drain cleaning has been included in the ongoing project and is expected to improve maintenance once procured.

Nazrul Islam Manju, KCC Administrator attributed the persistent waterlogging to multiple factors, including poor drainage planning in previous years, incomplete drainage works, an inoperative pump house on the Rupsha River and dysfunctional sluice gates. He said the city's drainage system has also been affected by raised drain beds, leaving many residential areas at lower elevations than surrounding roads. "We assumed responsibility only three months ago and are working day and night to remove obstacles to water drainage and clean the city's drains," he said. He also urged residents not to dispose of waste into drains, asking them

to use designated dustbins to help keep the drainage system functional.