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## Amphan inflicts massive damage

Death toll reaches 12; more than 2 lakh houses damaged; embankments washed away; a million people in 9 dists affected



PINAKI ROY, RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Cyclone Amphan has left behind a trail of destruction in the country's coastal areas, affecting more than a million people in nine districts in Khulna and Barisal divisions.

At least 12 people were killed and nearly 2.20 lakh houses damaged by the cyclone that swept through the south-western part on Wednesday with a wind speed of over 150 kilometre per hour.

It destroyed standing crops, vegetables and fruits on 1.76 lakh hectares of land, uprooted millions of trees and damaged fish farms, said officials.

More than 200 bridges and culverts were damaged in the coastal districts.

Also, around 100 villages were submerged as onrushing water severely damaged protection embankments.

Water Resources Minister Zahid Faruk said 7.5 km of protection embankments were destroyed at 84 points in 13 districts.

"We will repair these embankments soon," he said in a statement.

Apart from this nine coastal districts, many areas in at least 17 other adjacent districts were also affected.

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A youth, aided by three children, trying to salvage paddy from an inundated field in Kathurakathi village of Barishal Sadar upazila yesterday, hours after Amphan ravaged through the area. Bottom, a house destroyed by the cyclone in Dhalchar Charfashion of Bhola.

PHOTO: TITU DAS/COLLECTED

## A night with howling winds

WASIM BIN HABIB, from Khulna

The roaring, howling sound was what stayed with us all night.

Bunkered down with my ailing mother on the top floor of an eight-storey hospital in Khulna, all we could hear was the sheer pandemonium caused by the powerful storm, which started to pound the southwestern district since late afternoon on Wednesday.

By evening, Cyclone Amphan, which meteorologists a few days ago were calling one of the most dangerous storms in decades, was perilously close as it unleashed strong winds, bringing sheets of rain.

The cyclone hammered

KEY POINTS	
Houses damaged completely	55,667
House damaged partially	1.62 lakh
Crop loss	1.49 lakh hectares
Loss in fisheries sector	Tk 325cr
Loss in damaged roads	Tk 250cr
Loss in damaged embankments	Tk 300cr

SOURCE: DISASTER MANAGEMENT MINISTRY



## Mango growers hit hard by cyclone

2 lakh tonnes of mangoes drop

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

At least 2 lakh tonnes of mangoes, which is around 16 percent of the country's total annual production, have fallen off the trees because of cyclone Amphan, said the Department of Agricultural Extension.

According to the farmers, however, between 20 and 50 percent of the total annual production of mangoes

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BANGLADESH UPDATE

1,773 New cases in 24hrs

28,511 Total cases

408 Deaths

5,602 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

331,012 Deaths

5,129,112 Total cases



CYCLONE AMPHAN

## 72 people killed in West Bengal

CM Mamata Banerjee urges PM to visit state

THE HINDU ONLINE

The casualties due to Super Cyclone Amphan in West Bengal increased to 72, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said yesterday. Of them, 15 are from Kolkata, she added.

Mamata who addressed a meeting with senior government officials at State Secretariat to access the damage due to the cyclone said that she hasn't seen such a disaster in her life.

"I haven't seen a disaster in my entire life. I will ask the Prime Minister to visit the State and see for himself," she said.

The chief minister said that the Union Home Minister Amit Shah had called her and she told him about the enormity of the disaster.

Mamata said that the impact of the cyclone was so much

Take prompt measures to help Amphan-affected people

PM urges

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities concerned to take prompt measures to provide money and relief materials to Amphan-affected people, and reconstruct their houses.

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## In 2 weeks cases, deaths double

DGHS reports 22 deaths, 1,773 new cases yesterday

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The numbers of Covid-19 cases and deaths have more than doubled in less than two weeks.

Yesterday, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) daily briefing reported the highest number of deaths - 22 -- and positive cases -- 1,773.

With this, the death toll now stands at 408 and the number of positive cases at 28,511. The country detected its first Covid-19 case on March 8.

Eight weeks after that, the number of detected cases jumped to 12,425, and 199 people died by May 8.

Experts earlier warned that positive cases will rise in May.

In a report submitted to the DGHS in the

first week of this month, an eight-member committee appointed by the government said the outbreak might peak in the third or fourth week of this month and the situation would remain unchanged for almost two weeks, or until the first week of June.

The health ministry in late March formed the committee to supervise, monitor and support the coronavirus response.

Record shows that in the last 10 days, the number of positive cases persistently remained over 1,000 except on May 12 and May 16 when the number was 969 and 930 respectively as a result of fewer tests conducted.

The total number of tests was below 7,000 on those days.

Speaking to this correspondent on Wednesday, Prof Muzaherul Huq, former

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COMMENTARY

## Inhuman behaviour by some hospitals

MAHFUZ ANAM

Yesterday, we published a caption story of the 24-year-old Jhuma sitting on the footpath in the vicinity of Shahid Minar in a state of near collapse, supported by her husband, Shujan, standing next to her. Our photographer, Anisur Rahman, who has the habit of occasionally starting his work after taking his Sehri, met this young but distraught couple at five in the morning.

Here is what the couple narrated to Anis. Jhuma was expecting to give birth a month from now. She already knew she was going to

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## Beximco hands govt first batch of remdesivir

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Beximco Pharmaceuticals yesterday handed over the first batch of its antiviral drug remdesivir that has shown the most promise yet in treating Covid-19 patients by cutting the duration of symptoms from 15 days to 11.

The delivery took place on the day the drug administration gave emergency authorisation to the company to market the drug with the brand name Bemsivir IV.

A Beximco spokesperson said the drug would be provided free of cost to the government hospitals, and would not be sold at drug stores as per the requirement of Directorate General of Drug Administrations.

The price of a vial of Bemsivir would not be over Tk 5,500 including taxes, Rabbur Reza, chief operating officer of Beximco Pharma, told The Daily Star. Private hospitals treating Covid-19 patients will be able to buy it for Tk 4,800 because they are exempt from taxes.

A critically ill COVID-19 patient will need a minimum of six vials and a maximum of 11 vials.

Developed by American biopharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences, Remedeivir was previously developed to treat the Ebola virus but did not work. But it has turned out to be effective in helping COVID-19

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Police stop vehicles on Ashulia Highway near Ashulia Bazar on the outskirts of the capital around 11:00am yesterday, amid a nationwide shutdown enforced to contain the spread of novel coronavirus. The law enforcers sent back anyone who failed to come up with a valid reason for leaving the city. Many seeking to travel to their village home to spend Eid with their families had to go back. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## CRUSHED UNDER IRON RODS 13 die as truck crashes into ditch

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

Thirteen people, including two children, were crushed to death when a truck overturned and plunged into a ditch in Gaibandha's Palashbari yesterday morning.

The crash happened around 8:00am on Rangpur-Bogura highway in Dublagari area, Matiur Rahman Sarkar, in-charge of Gobindaganj Fire Service and Civil Defense, told The Daily Star.

"Around 10:00am, we got a call, reporting that a truck had fallen into a ditch. We reached the spot by 10:30am, and with the help of the locals, we removed the truck with a rescue vehicle and found iron-rods.

"Then one of the firefighters noticed that the water in the ditch was turning red. So we removed the rods, and the bodies there were," Matiur said.

"The children were aged between seven and 10, and nine men were between 18 and 45 and two other men were much older, he added.

"The victims must have been travelling on the iron-rods and covered under a sheet of tarpaulin, because it was raining and there were law enforcers checking if people were travelling defying the coronavirus restrictions."

It took the officials one and a half hours to find the bodies, he said.

Manjur Ali, a resident of the area, said there was no sign that there were people crushed under the vehicle.

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