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Amphan inflicts massive damage

Death toll reaches 12; more than 2 lakh houses damaged; embankments washed away; a million people affected; govt estimates Tk 1,100cr damage



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 Barishal 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 kilometres 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.

According to a primary estimate, the cyclone caused damage worth around Tk 1,100 crore, Shah Kamal, senior secretary at the disaster management and relief ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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

Water Resources Minister Zahid Faruk said 7.5 kms of protection embankments were washed away at 84 points in 13 districts.

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

Apart from the nine coastal districts, many areas in 17 adjacent districts

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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 in Charfasson upazila of Bhola.

PHOTO: TITU DAS/ COLLECTED



Coastal farmers take the brunt

SOHEL PARVEZ

Cyclone Amphan has caused 40,800 farmers of shrimp, finfish and crab losses worth Tk 217 crore in the south and southwest coastal divisions, according to preliminary estimate by the Department of Fisheries.

Officials linked the losses mainly to the flooding of farms due to the cyclone.

"It appears that the post-larvae shrimps that were stocked by farmers in enclosures were partially washed

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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

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KEY POINTS

- Houses damaged completely **55,667**
- House damaged partially **1.62 lakh**
- Crop damage **1.49 lakh** hectares
- Loss in fisheries sector **Tk 325cr**
- Bridges, culverts damaged **200**
- Embankments damaged **150km**

SOURCE: DISASTER MANAGEMENT MINISTRY

BANGLADESH UPDATE

1,773 New cases in 24hrs

28,511 Total cases

408 Deaths

5,602 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

332,104 Deaths

5,150,039 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

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Take prompt steps to help affected people

PM directs authorities

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.

She gave directives to

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Cases, deaths double in two weeks

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 over first batch of remdesivir to govt

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Beximco Pharmaceuticals yesterday handed over the first batch of its antiviral drug remdesivir that has shown the most promise 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

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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 falls into a 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, Matur 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," Matur 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.

A team of police from Palashbari reached the scene around half an hour after the crash and they also didn't realise that so many people had died, said Masudar Rahman Masud, officer-in-charge of Palashbari Police Station.

The truckers managed to flee the spot, said Abdul Quader Zilani, OC of Gobindaganj Highway Police Station.

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