



Desperate attempts are on to salvage fruits after a rickshaw carrying them flipped hitting a pothole hidden by stagnant water on a Shantinagar street in Dhaka yesterday. Mishaps like this are common when the city experiences even light showers. Cars and other vehicles, right, crawl through ankle-deep water on a Rajarbagh street in the capital yesterday, negotiating trenches dug for the construction of Moghbazar-Malibagh flyover. See online for more photos. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Dhaka drowned, gridlocked

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small launches following warning of bad weather by the Met department.
THE SUFFERING
"It took me three and a half hours to go to Farmgate from Bashundhara Residential Area through Gulshan and Tejgaon. It usually takes an hour," said Riazu Kamal, a private service holder.
"At one point, I felt like getting down from my car and start running," he added.
Shamsul Arefin, another sufferer, said it took him an hour to get to Gulshan Avenue from his house on road 137 in Gulshan and two and a half hours to reach his office at Karwan Bazar.

It should not take more than 45 minutes, but things got real awful yesterday due to the rainwater and the restrictions on vehicular movement for the PM's programme, he added.
Schoolchildren, many of whom had exams, and women were seen negotiating dilapidated roads and footpaths smeared with filth.
Many got down from public and private transports and walked home and workplace.
Traffic police stood helpless at many intersections while some were grappling with the overwhelming traffic mess all over.
Commuters on most of the city roads in Rajarbagh, Malibagh,

Shantibagh, Mirpur, Dhanmondi, entire Old Dhaka, Badda, Bashundhara Residential Area and Tejgaon and key thoroughfares, including Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Gulshan Avenue, Hatirjheel and Panthapath, were among the worst sufferers.
The rain also heavily inundated most roads in Kalshi, Shukrabad, Rampura, Paltan, Fakirapool, Kamalapur, Gulistan, Sayedabad and Jatrabari.
Dhaka-Aricha highway too went under rainwater.
COLLAPSE OF TRAFFIC SYSTEM
Prof Shamsul Hoque, who teaches

transportation civil engineering at Buet, said waterlogging on busy roads instantly led to tailbacks.
When rainwater inundates parts of the roads due to poor drainage system, motorists, fearing accidents, line up their vehicles on the visible portions of the street. This means, all the vehicles then ply through just one or two lanes, which causes congestion, he added.
Also, rain slows down traffic movement, while many run-down vehicles fail to pass through rainwater and break down because of engine failure, worsening the situation further.
Besides, desperate pedestrians, unable to move on foot because of rain splash and roadside dirt, take rick-

shaws on the roads already clogged up. This compounds the situation, as it increases the traffic volume and causes friction between motor and non-motor vehicles.
"All this results in an absolute complex situation of traffic standstill," said Prof Hoque.
THE ROOT CAUSE
Town planners have warned the government time and again that unplanned urbanisation would result in collapse of city traffic in the event of even a usual monsoon rain.
But regrettably, no one paid any heed to it, said urban planner Khondaker M Ansar Hossain, who worked on the Detailed Area Plan

(DAP) of Dhaka.
Instead, real estate developers have been allowed to indiscriminately earth-fill all the conservable water retention ponds, canals and floodplains in and around the capital, he told The Daily Star.
The rainwater was supposed to be carried away instantly to low-lying retention areas through a well-networked drainage infrastructure. But unfortunately, even the slopes of the existing drainage system are out of place.
So it takes hours for rainwater to pass, making city life miserable and damaging roads and vehicles in the meantime, said the town planner.

POLLS VIOLENCE PROBE No journo show up for hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
None of the 10 journalists, who were assaulted during the elections to Dhaka city corporations, attended yesterday's hearing of a probe committee formed by the Election Commission.

They said they do not have trust in the investigation.
Talking to The Daily Star, the news-men termed the initiative for the probe into the assault "pointless".
One of them, wishing not to be named, alleged that the EC did not take any action against the ruling party men for resorting to electoral irregularities on April 28. "So, what can the commission do about any assault on journalists?" the journalist asked.
Another one said, "The investigation is nothing but an eye wash. What will happen after the investigation? I don't think I will get justice."
The journalists had given statements before the same committee last month. "Why do I have to give my statement again? Did not it [the investigation committee] believe our previous statements?" the newsman asked.
At least 10 journalists were assaulted by ruling party men during the voting hours.
On May 5, the EC formed the three-member committee.

SAUDI CYLINDER BLAST 2 Bangladeshi workers killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Two Bangladeshi workers were killed in a gas cylinder blast in Saudi Arabia's Dammam on Wednesday morning.
The victims were Abdur Rahman of Laxmipur and Mohammad Bashir of Feni, said Noor Mohammad Masum, first secretary (labour wing) at Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh.
"We came to know from locals that the two died in an explosion that took place due to a faulty gas line," he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.
The embassy would look into the incident and send back the victims' bodies home, Masum added.

Six killed

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in a press release claimed that the trawler had developed cracks after being hit by a storm.
The coastguard claimed to have rescued, with help of locals, 11 passengers from the river.
UNB reported that 15 were being treated at Monpura Hospital.

Blame it on the girls

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"We asked him [Nur] to explain in seven days why he had set such questions," he told The Daily Star yesterday.
Maksud said it's the subject teachers who set the questions on respective papers and it was not possible for him to individually check each and every one of them.
However, it was not the first incident of setting such controversial questions in academic tests.
In May, Holy Cross Girls' High School, one of the country's most

reputed educational institutions, set a question in Islamic Studies paper of Class-X in the first-term exams, holding women's dress responsible for sexual harassments.
The school authorities later apologised for the question after it was published in the media.
Noted educationist Rasheda K Chowdhury thinks projection of women this way will not only create a negative impression on women but will also have a lasting effect on the minds of the students from a very early

age.
"The aim of our education is to make enlightened human beings by infusing the values of humanity, human rights and sense of mutual respects. We cannot teach students such things that amount to disregarding the rights of women," she told The Daily Star.
Rasheda, also the executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), said the school authorities must caution their teachers against using any misconception or sensitive

ideas in their academic activities.
"Since these incidents happened in the capital, it came to notice. I don't know what's going on in schools in rural areas," said Rasheda.
On May 5, a first-grader female student of Mohammadpur Preparatory Higher Secondary School in the capital allegedly was sexually assaulted by a school staff.
On April 14, the country was shaken by an incident of assaults on women at the TSC of Dhaka University during the Bengali New Year celebrations.

Woman found murdered in city flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A woman was found dead in her flat in the capital's Madhya Badda yesterday.
The victim is Shapla, 30, a mother of two.
Her hands and legs were tied up, and she was gagged. There were no major marks of torture on her body, said MA Jalil, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station.

Three people entered the flat on the first floor of a two-storey building around 9:45am in the name of repairing water supply lines of the house, said the police official, quoting the victim's five-year-old son Saad.
It was raining heavily in the morning, and Saad and his mother were at home, said Sub-Inspector Nurul Islam of the police station.
The criminals looted valuables from the house, he said.
The gang strangled Shapla when she screamed during the robbery, the SI suspected.
Shapla's husband Wahiduzzaman, a fast food shop owner, went out to take their third-grader daughter to school, Nurul said.
Returning home around 10:30am Wahiduzzaman found Shapla's body inside a bathroom and informed police of the matter.

Move Rampal plant elsewhere BNP to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
BNP yesterday called upon the government to implement the Rampal power plant project anywhere else for the sake of the Sundarbans, a world heritage site declared by the Unesco.
BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon made the call at a press briefing in the party's Nayapalton central office.
"Of course, we need electricity, and there are many options for power generation. But there is no alternative to the Sundarbans. The coal-based power plant will put a serious impact on the forest," said Ripon, also the party's international affairs secretary.
The government signed agreements with two companies for the construction of the Rampal power plant, he said.
The BNP leader claimed that as per the deals, Bangladesh would get only 13 percent of power to be produced from the plant, and "it in no way goes in favour of the country."
He also alleged that the government was not moving away from its decision to construct the plant in Rampal despite concern by different local and international environmental organisations.
Replying to a question, Ripon said the BNP also wanted such project be implemented but those plants should not be set up at places like Rampal.

Number grows 6 times in 2 years

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Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque in a recent briefing at the police headquarters told journalists that if police had evidence, it would take legal actions, regardless of the political influence a human trafficker might have.
Contacted, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told The Daily Star yesterday that he was yet to receive any such report. He would be able to comment once he goes through it.
Apart from the traffickers, several thousand brokers are involved in human trafficking across the country. They lure innocent and often illiterate jobseekers with false promises of highly paid jobs in Malaysia.
Some of them are thrown out of boats in the sea by traffickers while on voyage or are held captive in Thai jungles for ransom. Many had been killed and buried in mass graves there. Victims are sold in phases before they are herded on fishing and engine boats and taken to Thailand, the police report said.
Police high-ups went for the

probe to identify the human traffickers, causes of the crime and suggest remedies after the mass graves were discovered in Thailand and Malaysia recently.
According to the report, human trafficking via the sea was mainly done from Ukha and Teknaf coast of Cox's Bazar.
The report mentioned that human trafficking was being carried out from 80 coastal spots, like Shamlapur, Sheelkhal, Jahajpura, Teknaf Sadar, Shahporir Island, Gholapara, Paschim Para, Dakshin Para, Jettighat, Katabania, Mitha Panir Chhara, and Rajarchhara of Teknaf upazila; and JaliaPalang, Inani, himchhari, Rejukhal, Samitipara, Kutubdiapara, Nazirartek, Khurushkul, Choufaldondi, and Kopkhali of Ukha; and Banskhali, Sitakunda and Majhirghat of Chittagong.
RECOMMENDATIONS
The report recommended removal of administrative weaknesses in arresting and ensuring punishment of human traffickers, not considering their social and political influence.

It mentioned inefficiencies in the enforcement of the Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act, 2012, which has provisions for the death penalty for people convicted.
The reports further suggested that investigation and trial of cases filed for human trafficking be done quickly. It recommended holding the trials in speedy trial tribunals. More caution was advised so that the accused do not get bail from courts since they hardly ever show up in court once they have bail.
It also suggested coordinated efforts with Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, and if necessary, barbed wire fences on Bangladesh's border with Myanmar, patrols at the border by law enforcers, border force, the coast guard, and the Bangladesh Navy members.
The victims pay money through mobile banking and the law enforcers find it difficult to get evidence of payment. The report recommended monitoring of online banking since many use this method as well to pay.
The report suggested forming

effective counter-trafficking committees at district, upazila and union levels and legal action against jobseekers to discourage illegal migration.
Rubel
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attracted Indian attention after dismissing Virat Kohli cheaply in that much talked-about quarterfinal, also said that he was feeling fine after recovering from a side strain for which he missed the second Test against Pakistan last month.
"I am good at the moment. I have recovered. There's nothing to worry," he said.
"I won't say that I am not fully fit, but for a Test match one needs to have an extra amount of preparation," observed the right-arm fast bowler.
"All I am looking forward to is the ODI series. I want to be completely ready and match-fit by the time the ODIs begin. I really want to put in a good performance against India," said Rubel.

Viral but not true?

Indian govt denies issuing pics of army's Myanmar op
HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi

The government on Thursday denied releasing a photograph of the Indian Army's operation against northeast militants "along the India-Myanmar border", clearing the air after purported images of the offensive went viral on the internet.
Defence ministry spokesperson Sitanshu Kar tweeted this morning that the ministry had not released any photos of the operation "so far".
Kar's clarification came hours after at least three photos showing soldiers flashing victory signs and carrying guns did the rounds on social media platforms.
One photo showed around 20 soldiers sitting before an army helicopter and posing for the camera. Captions tweeted along with this photo said these soldiers had carried out the offensive against militants along the India-Myanmar border killing more than 20 militants.
The photos had surfaced on the internet after being tweeted by ANI news agency and soon was used by different media outlets.



ANI news agency posted this photo saying it was of the team which carried out the Myanmar operation. The agency also claimed the Additional Directorate General of Public Information of the Army authorised the image for use, with the specific request that the faces of the persons be morphed. SOURCE: HINDUSTAN TIMES