



A woman with two children wade through water as they look for shelter amidst heavy rains that caused widespread flooding in Sylhet yesterday. Water, *top left*, gushing into Bangladesh at Akhaura from India. Sylhet's MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, *bottom left*, inundated. Satellite images, right, taken in March and June show the water extent of Sylhet division.

IMAGES: MASHUK HRIDDOY/SHEIKH NASIR/REUTERS/COURTESY OF PALASH BASAK

## Declare flood-hit areas as disaster zones

### BNP demands, says govt busy with Padma Bridge inauguration instead

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday demanded the government immediately declares the flood-hit areas of the northeastern region as 'disaster zones' and provide all the affected people with adequate relief materials.

Speaking at a council of BNP's three wards at Bhatra under the Dhaka North City unit, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, the party secretary-general, also bemoaned that the government is occupied with the inauguration of the Padma bridge when thousands of flood victims are suffering.

"Floods are raging the country. The vast areas starting from Sylhet-Sunamganj to northern Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram were submerged by floodwaters," he said.

Referring to media reports, Fakhru said the water levels of major rivers, including the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna, are increasing flooding in many areas as the Indian authorities opened all the gates of the Farakka Barrage.

The BNP leader went on to lament that the government could not sign an agreement with India on the sharing of water of the common rivers for over a decade.

The government has long been talking about

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## No quick relief in sight for Sylhet

### Record rainfall in Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura dampens hope; 34 killed in two days

AGENCIES

The flood situation in the Sylhet region may not get better at least for the next couple of days as more water is heading toward the country from upstream due to record rainfall in India's Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura states.

According to a press release by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), heavy spells of rainfall are likely to continue over the northeast states and sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim for the next three days. They are expected to reduce after that. Thunderstorms and isolated heavy showers are likely to continue over north, central, and east India for the next two-three days, the press release added.

Thirty-four people have died in floods and landslides in Assam and Meghalaya in the last two days, officials said yesterday.

At least 16 people have been killed since Thursday in India's remote Meghalaya, the

state's Chief Minister Conrad Sangma wrote on Twitter, after landslides and surging rivers that submerged roads.

Next door in Assam, more than 2.6 million people have been affected by floods after five

**Cherrapunji had 972.0 mm rainfall on Friday. With this, the town broke the previous third-highest rainfall of 930.0mm recorded on June 15, 1995, according to met officials.**

days of incessant downpours, according to the state's disaster response agency.

Eighteen people had died in flood waters or landslides around the state since Thursday, the agency reported, with nearly 7,500 people rescued yesterday by mid-afternoon.

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters he

had instructed district officials to provide "all necessary help and relief" to those caught in the flooding.

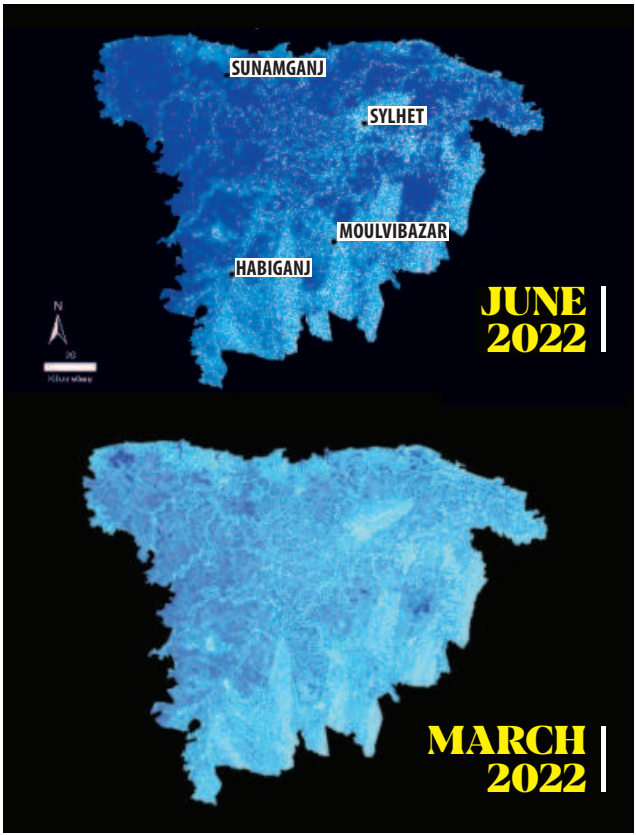
The water levels in the Brahmaputra and Gauranga rivers in the state were flowing above the danger level in many areas, officials said.

Tripura's capital Agartala also reported a massive flash flood. The city received 145 mm of rainfall in just six hours. Government sources said this was the third-highest rainfall in Agartala in the last 60 years. All educational institutions have been closed due to the flash flood.

Meghalaya's Mawsynram and Cherrapunji received record rainfall since 1940, officials said.

Cherrapunji had 972.0 mm rainfall on Friday. With this, the town broke the previous third-highest rainfall of 930.0mm recorded on June 15, 1995, according to met officials. It also missed the second-highest recorded rainfall for June by

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## Navy, air force, coast guard join rescue efforts

STAR REPORT

Navy, air force and coast guard personnel yesterday joined the rescue and relief efforts for the flood victims in Sylhet and its adjacent areas.

On Friday, Bangladesh Army started rescue operations in different upazilas of Sylhet, Md Mojibur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Sylhet, told the media.

Ten army platoons and six medical teams have been carrying out rescue operations in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

A team of 35 divers of Bangladesh Navy has joined the rescue operations. Besides, 60 more are on their way to the flood-hit areas of Sylhet, said Ahsanul Alam, assistant commissioner of Sylhet.

A navy team is working in Jalalabad and another in Companiganj.

At least two vessels of Bangladesh Coast Guard were expected to reach the flood-affected areas by yesterday.

One will conduct rescue operations in Sylhet and the other in Sunamganj, according to sources.

Two Air Force helicopters are also on their way to join the efforts.

Army personnel are currently conducting rescue operations in Sylhet Sadar, Companiganj and Gowainghat upazilas.

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh are also assisting the evacuation efforts in border areas.

Bangladesh Water Development Board's Sylhet office said the Surma was flowing above the danger level at Kanaighat and Sylhet points at 6:00am yesterday.

## Air, rail gone, road to may go soon

FROM PAGE 1  
inundated large swathes of Sylhet division in the last few days, leaving lakhs of people stranded.

The authorities on Friday suspended flight operations at Sylhet Osmani International Airport for three days after floodwater reached the runway.

### COMMUNICATIONS ALMOST COLLAPSED

Flash floods have hit hard the Sylhet division, badly affecting road communications in Sylhet and Sunamganj. People are forced to use boats and trawlers to travel from one place to another.

"Most of the roads have already gone under water with parts of many roads swept away by floodwaters,"

RHD official Fazle Rabbe told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said 10 major roads in Sylhet and six in Sunamganj have been submerged. In some areas, water was flowing four to five feet above the road surface.

"We are continuously monitoring the flood situation and taking measures to prevent sweeping away of roads."

RHD headquarters sources in Dhaka said they received information that around 143km roads in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Sherpur went under water.

"This is not the complete information. We hope to get more information tomorrow [today]," an official said wishing not to

be named.

The sources said part of a national highway from Sylhet to Bholaganj was submerged, disrupting road communications.

Regional highways and district roads, including Sylhet-Sunamganj, Jamalaganj-Sunamganj, Gobindaganj-Chatak-Goainghat, Sari-Goainghat, and Companyganj-Chatak road, are now under water, they added.

Ashrafur Islam Pramanik, executive engineer of RHD's Sunamganj division, said parts of Jamalaganj-Sunamganj road and a part of the road connecting a bridge on the Surma river in Chhatak upazila were swept away.

"We have some 350km

roads and around 80-90 percent of those have already been inundated," Ashrafur told this newspaper.

He said it is not possible for them to assess the damages right now.

**RAIL COMMUNICATION**  
Operations of trains to and from Sylhet Railway Station were suspended around noon yesterday as the main platform went under water, said a BR engineer.

He said two other platforms at the station were inundated earlier.

A total of 13 trains, including six intercity trains, travel to Sylhet daily from different destinations, including Dhaka and Chattogram.

In Netrakona, the soil

under the railway bridge 23 between Mohanganj and Atitpur railway stations was swept away sometime Friday night due to strong currents of floodwater.

This caused rail communications between Mohanganj station in Netrakona and the rest of the country being cut off, Mymensingh Railway Station Manager Jahangir Alam said.

Intercity train Haor Express was stranded at Mohanganj station yesterday morning as it could not depart for Dhaka. Another local train was also stuck there, he added.

*Our correspondents in Moulvibazar and Mymensingh contributed to this report.*

## Suspected jihadists kill 10 people in northeast Nigeria

AFP, Kano

Gunmen suspected to be linked to the Islamic State yesterday killed 10 people in the latest spate of violence in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, militia sources told AFP.

The 10 victims, nine men and a woman, were scavenging for metal scrap from vehicles burnt in military operations in Goni Kurmi village, near the town of Bama, when they were attacked, two militia sources told AFP.

"The 10 people were all shot," militia leader Babakura Kolo said. "The victims were in the village to scavenge for metal scraps when they ran into the terrorists who shot them dead," said Kolo.

The bodies of the victims were recovered by the civilian force and brought to Bama, according to Ibrahim Liman, another militiaman who gave the same toll.

The Nigerian army, deployed in the region, has not yet commented on the attack.

Jihadists have recently been attacking civilians collecting metal scrap, accusing them of spying on them for the military.

ISWAP, which split from mainstream Boko Haram jihadist group in 2016, has become the dominant threat in northeast Nigeria.

## Millions marooned

FROM PAGE 1  
Dudkumar and all other major rivers may continue rising in the next 48 hours."

Rivers were flowing above the danger level at 17 of its measuring points across the country until yesterday morning, the bulletin added.

Meanwhile, electricity supply to Sylhet district was cut off yesterday after sub-stations became submerged in flood water.

Sylhet's worst affected areas are Gowainghat, Companiganj, Kanaighat, Jaintiapur, Sylhet Sadar, Zakiganj, Bishwanath, Golapganj, Beanibazar and parts of Sylhet city area.

Chhatak, Dowerabazar, Sunamganj Sadar, Derai, Madhyannagar, Bishwambarpur, Dharmapasha, Tahirpur, Jamalaganj and all of Sunamganj town are the worst affected in Sunamganj district.

Amid the situation, the fare for boats, the only option for rescue so far, has shot through the roof. What used to be Tk 100 is now Tk 10,000, said locals.

Maroof Ahmed was willing to pay up to Tk 40,000 to a boatman to take his pregnant wife from their inundated village to Sylhet city. But the boatman declined.

And all the train movement in and out of Sylhet Railway Station was suspended yesterday due to flood. Around noon water entered the station's main platform.

In Moulvibazar, at least 40 villages of Kulaura and Barlekha upazila are inundated. Besides, many portions of the district headquarters have gone underwater.

Bangladesh Army, Navy, firefighters, civil administration, law enforcers and local council representatives are running rescue operations.

Nine million flood-hit people have so far been evacuated in Sumanganj and Sylhet, the state minister said while briefing reporters at the ministry's conference room yesterday.

The ministry has allocated 400 tonnes of rice, 41,000 packets of dry food and Tk 2.25 crore in cash as relief for the flood-hit people, said a press statement.

"Relief materials are being sent to flood centres. We will serve cooked food and where not possible, dry foods will be provided," Hossain said.

Bangladesh Army yesterday launched toll-free numbers to help the flood-affected people in Sunamganj and Sylhet. People can call those numbers without any cost, said the release.

The flood has also affected the adjoining districts of Sherpur and Brahmanbaria, report our correspondent quoting local administration.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education has asked the authorities of all schools and colleges in the flood-affected areas to get their establishments ready for affected people.