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## CLIMATE CHANGE

# Damage bill will be steep

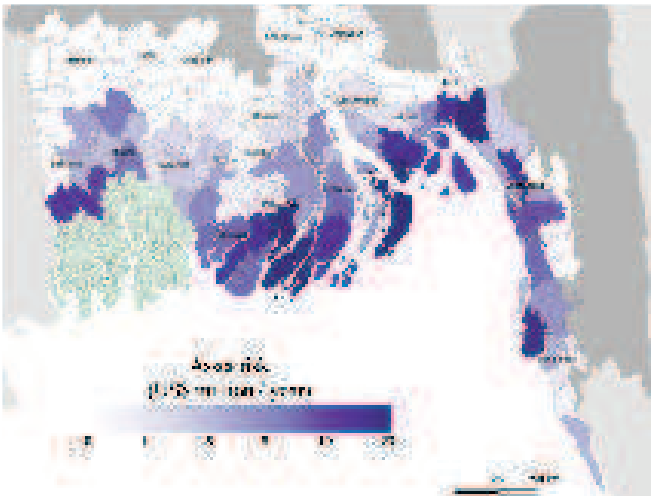
WB report says Bangladesh to lose \$570m every year in future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Because of climate change, cyclone-induced flooding could cause damages worth \$570 million across coastal areas every year in future, said a new World Bank report released yesterday.

The report, "Bangladesh: Enhancing Coastal Resilience in a Changing Climate", analysed the effects of a 0.5-metre rise in sea level, which is "equivalent to the conditions likely to occur in the second half of this century".

## DAMAGE TO ASSETS PER YEAR IF SEA LEVEL RISES HALF A METRE



In that event, Hatiya and Subarnachar upazilas in Noakhali; Mirsharai, Bakalia, Chandgaon, Hathazari and Sandwip upazilas in Chattogram; Galachipa in Patuakhali; Amtali in Barguna, Char Fasson in Bhola and eight other upazilas across Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, Khulna and Bagerhat will each experience yearly damages of at least \$25 million.

According to the report, these are the upazilas that will be hardest hit by a half-metre rise. Of them, the worst affected will be Galachipa, Amtali and Char Fasson.

In the report, there are three categories of floods brought on by cyclones, based on their magnitude. A 10-year cyclone flood event is one that is likely to occur once every 10 years; a 25-year flood once every 25 years; and a 100-year one occurs once every century.

A flood classified as a 25-year flood is harsher than a 10-year flood. "Three flood events were compared, reflecting the inundation associated with a 10-year, a 25-year, and a 100-year cyclone flood event," said the report. Some of the above-mentioned upazilas would go under as much as 8 metres (26 feet) of water in the case of a 100-year flood if there is a sea level rise of half a metre.

"Alongside an increase in coastal flooding, a sea-level rise will push saline water further into the tidal channels, threatening agricultural production, water supplies, and the diversity of coastal ecosystems," said the report.

In addition to calculating the annual damage, the report estimated the damages a flood event of these magnitudes would cause.

In the event of a half-metre sea-level rise, a 10-year flood would cause damages worth \$5.077 billion, a 25-year flood would cause damages

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In the pouring rain, little Tisha is all smiles being able to help her father Imadul stay dry while he collects fodder for their cattle. Their cattle could not graze due to the bad weather caused by a low over the Bay. The photo was taken at Chhata Park in Khulna city's Abu Naser intersection yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## AL MP Pankaj removed from party posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmaker Pankaj Nath has been stripped of all his posts in the ruling party for "breaching discipline".

The AL conveyed the decision to the MP from Barishal-4 (Hijla-Mehendiganj) through a letter issued by AL Office Secretary Biplab Barua on September 11.

Copies of the letter have been sent to AL lawmaker and Barisal AL President Abul Hasanat Abdullah and General Secretary Talukder Md Yunus.

Contacted yesterday, Pankaj said he received the letter, but he would not elaborate on the matter.

The letter reads, "The

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## INDO-BANGLA TRANSSHIPMENT

# 4-lane Cumilla-B'baria highway on cards

The Tk 7,188 crore project to be placed in today's Ecne meeting

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is taking up a fresh Tk 7,188 crore project to build a four-lane highway from Cumilla to Brahmanbaria that would improve connectivity between the port city and Sylhet and also make the transshipment arrangements with India more practicable.

The much-talked-about transshipment facility for Indian goods to its landlocked North Eastern Region (NER) using Bangladesh's two seaports and inland waterways, roads and rail network has failed to take off in a big way in the absence of proper infrastructure.

To address the bottleneck, the Indian government has agreed to fund a raft of connectivity projects in Bangladesh under its \$7.36 billion lines of credit.

But the projects are progressing at a snail's pace, leaving the landmark transit

arrangement between the two countries, which share the fifth longest border in the world spanning 4,096 kilometres, largely underutilised.

The four-lane in the eastern part of Bangladesh, which is adjacent to India's NER states, would help the cause and also enhance a portion of the 285 km journey by road from Chattogram, which houses the main seaport, and Sylhet, Bangladesh's fourth largest city.

Of the total project cost of Tk 7,188.66 crore, Tk 2,810.65 crore would come from the Indian LoCs.

The project, which entails constructing a 50-km four-lane and 11 km overpass from Cumilla's Mainamati to Brahmanbaria's Dharkhar, will be placed in today's meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council for approval.

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## Ensure free speech ahead of next polls

### Says acting UN human rights chief

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada Al-Nashif has urged the Bangladesh government to ensure freedom of expression and peaceful assembly ahead of the next general election.

"In the polarising environment ahead of the next elections, it will be vital for the government to ensure freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and for security forces to refrain from using excessive force against protesters," she said.

Human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and victims' families should not face reprisals or sanctions

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## Joj Miah files writ seeking Tk 10 crore in compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Jalal, who was framed and imprisoned as Joj Miah in the August 21 grenade attack case, filed a writ petition with the High Court yesterday seeking Tk 10 crore compensation from five convicts for violating his fundamental rights.

The convicts are Lutfozzaman Babar, former state minister for home affairs; Khodabox Chowdhury, then inspector general of police; Abdur Rashid, former assistant superintendent of police and investigation officer; former ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman and former special superintendent of police Md Ruhul Amin.

They were arrested in 2009 after fresh investigation in the case filed over the grenade attack on a rally of Awami League, then opposition party in parliament.

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Students block the capital's Bijoy Sarani intersection yesterday afternoon demanding justice for the death of fellow student Ali Hossain. The 10th grader of Government Science High School died in a road crash in Tejgaon industrial area on Sunday. The demonstration caused disruptions to traffic on the Bijoy Sarani and other roads. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## PABNA MENTAL HOSPITAL

# SOS from a troubled facility

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Pabna Mental Hospital has been struggling to provide services to patients for at least two months due to the lack of supply of necessary food, medicine and other materials.

The situation of the country's oldest mental health facility turned so grave that Dr Roton Kumar Roy, acting director of the hospital, issued an office order on Sunday to stop the admission of new patients.

The order, however, was withdrawn yesterday following the assurance from health directorate of providing necessary support.

Besides, the health ministry has appointed Dr Shafkat Wahid, associate professor of Rajshahi Medical College's psychiatry department, as the new director of the hospital.

Officials of the 500-bed state-run hospital, however, fear that the plight of the patients would not be alleviated anytime soon.

Visiting the facility yesterday, this correspondent found patients were going back after failing to get admitted while some others were found released from the hospital.

Billal Hossain, 40, from Sirajganj Sadar upazila, was released yesterday but, according to his family members, he was not fully cured.

"The hospital authorities called me on Sunday to release my husband. But he has not fully recovered yet. I am taking him back home," said China Begum, wife of Billal.

The doctors have prescribed four medicines for three months for her husband, she said. "The hospital authority provided only one medicine while I had to buy the rest."

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