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## Sitrang whips through south and beyond

**At least 9 die; cyclone disrupts communications, power; extensive damage feared**

STAR REPORT

At least nine people died in six districts with eight of them crushed under tree branches and another under collapsed wall amid stormy weather as Cyclone Sitrang hit Bangladesh coast last night.

Formed in the Bay, Sitrang weakened after landfall around 9:00pm though the Met office had forecast it would turn into a severe cyclonic storm.

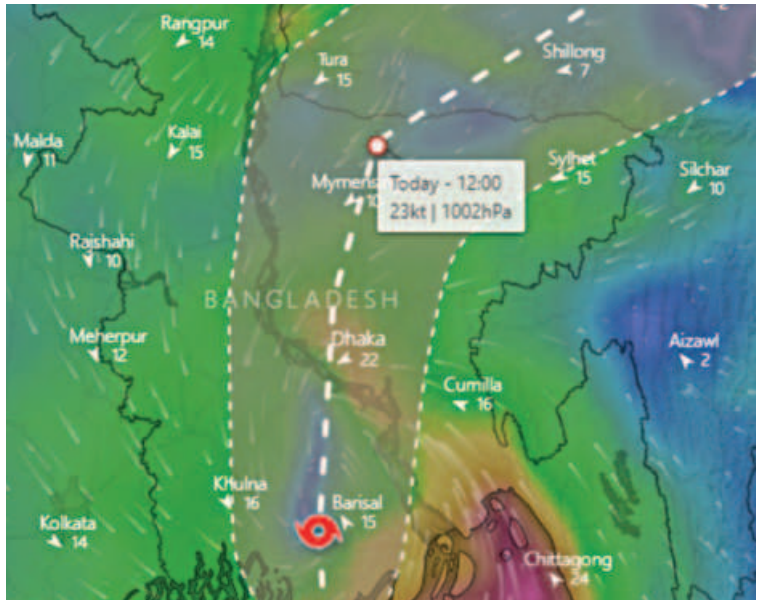


Image of 12:10am today.

SOURCE: WINDY.COM

However, as of filing this report around 1:45am today, coastal districts were experiencing disruptions to road and power links; heavy damage to houses and crops was also being feared.

Throughout yesterday, they witnessed heavy rainfall with fierce winds and a storm surge as high as 5 to 8 feet, according to the Met officials.

The Met office last night said the maximum wind speed was 88km per hour as against 110kmph projected earlier.

After making the landfall between Bhola and Sandwip, the storm would progressively weaken into a deep depression, depression and a low pressure late today, weather officials forecast earlier.

Throughout the day, the authorities raced to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people while Sitrang was approaching Bangladesh coast from the Bay.

All the people were being moved to safety from the cyclone's path, said Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, yesterday.

The nine who died included three members of a family -- the father, mother and daughter -- killed in Hesakhil Paschimpara of Cumilla's Nangalkot upazila as tree branches fell on them, confirmed UNO Raihan Mehbub.

A 37-year-old woman in Narail, another woman and a man in Bhola's Doulatkhan and Char Fashion, a 65-year-old woman in Shariatpur and another elderly woman in Barguna died the same way.

In the capital, a rickshaw puller was crushed to death in Dhaka's Hazaribagh yesterday evening after a wall collapsed due to speedy winds owing to Sitrang.

Two others, the passenger of the rickshaw and a motorcyclist, were injured in the incident, said Inspector Bachchu Miah, in charge of Dhaka Medical College Hospital police outpost.

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The Bay was rough all day yesterday as the country braced itself for Cyclone Sitrang, which started crossing the Bangladesh coast last night. The photo was taken in Chattergram city's Patenga area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

**DENGUE OUTBREAK**  
**Cyclone may prolong the sufferings**

HELEMUL ALAM

The surge in dengue cases in the country could continue longer than expected because of the rain.

Experts had earlier expected that the number of patients afflicted with the mosquito-borne disease would reduce in the first week of November, but they are now predicting that the spike in cases will continue due to the wet weather.

There has been torrential rain in the coastal districts, as well as the capital, due to the effects of cyclone Sitrang since early yesterday.

In the 24 hours preceding yesterday morning, at least five dengue patients died and 903 others were admitted to different hospitals across the country, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of dengue cases this year stood at 31,966, and deaths 118.

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**ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**  
**Cost may rise for multiple factors**

REJAUL KARIM BYRON, back from Rooppur

Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project may see a cost rise due to slow progress in power grid upgrade, possible changes in the loan repayment method amid the Russia-Ukraine war and the devaluation of the taka.

The Tk 113,092 crore plant has two units with a power generation capacity of 1,200 megawatts each. Of the amount, Tk 91,040 crore (\$11.38 billion) will be provided by Russia as loan, according to an agreement.

Project officials said the first unit will be ready for commercial operation in December 2023 and the second one in July 2024.

The plant, however, may face delay in going into commercial operation as the Infrastructure Development for Power Evacuation Facility, scheduled to be completed by December next year, has

seen only 27 percent financial progress and 45 percent physical progress in nearly five years till September this year.

Talking to reporters at the plant site recently, Shawkat Akbar, project director of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, said they would not be able run the plant until the power grid upgrade is done under the infrastructure development facility.

"Once we use nuclear fuel in the plant, we can't stop production," he pointed out.

Work of the infrastructure development facility under the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) began in April 2018 at a cost of Tk 10,981 crore with Tk 8,219 crore funding from the Indian Line of Credit.

The project's aim is to ensure power evacuation from the nuclear power

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**Rishi Sunak**  
**set to become new UK PM**

**Warns Tory party faces 'existential threat', rules out early general election**

AFP, London

Former finance minister Rishi Sunak yesterday won the battle for leadership of Britain's Conservative party and will become the country's first prime minister of colour.

Penny Mordaunt, the last rival left after Boris Johnson dramatically pulled out, failed to secure the necessary 100 nominations from her fellow MPs.

"Rishi Sunak is therefore elected as leader of the Conservative party," senior backbencher Graham Brady said, as Mordaunt pledged her "full support" for Sunak.

Triumph for 42-year-old Sunak came after Johnson's decision late Sunday to abandon his political comeback bid.

Just weeks after he lost out to Liz Truss to lead the ruling Tories, Sunak therefore pulled off a stunning reversal in fortunes.

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**'A big win for us'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pacer Taskin Ahmed's career-best T20I figures helped Bangladesh to their maiden win in the Super 12 of the T20 World Cup as the Tigers registered a nine-run victory against the Netherlands at the Bellerive Oval on Monday.

On a gloomy day in Hobart, Taskin took four for 25, helping Bangladesh restrict the Netherlands to 135 all out in 20 overs after posting a competitive 144 for eight.

The win comes as a huge relief for the Tigers, who have been enduring a lean patch in the shortest format for a while, losing 14 of the 19 played since they exited the last year's edition without a single win in the Super 12s in the UAE.

Bangladesh have played in all of the seven previous editions of the T20 World

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Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed pumps his fists as Najmul Hossain Shanto runs in to join him in celebration following the dismissal of a Netherlands batter during their Super 12 fixture of the T20 World Cup at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart yesterday. Taskin took four wickets for 25 runs as Bangladesh won the match by nine runs.

PHOTO: BCB

**ONLINE CARD GAME**  
**Indian firm facilitates illegal gambling**

**Transfers crores of taka out of Bangladesh**

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

An Indian company sold virtual poker chips in Bangladesh and took the lion's share of Tk 168 crore out of the country, a CTTC investigation found.

The company, Moonfrog Asia Pte Ltd, transferred the money, which they made over the last three years by selling the chips, into their account in Singapore, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit said.

The company had taken permission from the government to sell video games but is actually selling virtual poker chips, according to official documents.

Members of the CTTC said selling poker chips is illegal in the country as it is a form of gambling and a punishable offence in Bangladesh as per the Public Gambling Act-1967.

On October 20, the CTTC filed a case with Shahjahanpur Police Station against 10 named Bangladeshis and four to five unidentified people on charges of "operating online gambling".

According to the first information report, local and foreign fraudsters hosted online gambling and conduct financial transactions through Mobile Financing Services (MFS).

"We have already arrested a suspect, Md Benzir Hossain, who is hosting gambling with nine other absconding people through gaming sites, including Teen Patti Gold [owned by Moonfrog Asia], Teen Patti Ace Pro, KK Patti," Tohidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of CTTC unit, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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