



Centre, two women with children negotiate a flooded road in Darial village of Barishal's Bakerganj upazila. The rising water from the nearby Bighai river inundated vast areas of the village amid persistent rain all day yesterday under the impact of Cyclone Sitrang. Top left, volunteers asking people to move to safety in Dakshin Shoula village of Khulna's Paikgachha upazila. Bottom left, ships are moored in the Karnaphuli river in Chattogram city's Shah Amanat Bridge area. Top right, strong waves crashing into the shore in Patenga beach area. Bottom right, tidal water floods Akmal Ali Sharak in the port city's Jelepara area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS, HABIBUR RAHMAN, RAJIB RAIHAN, COLLECTED

Bangladesh won't face food crisis unless it's hit by natural disaster
Says food minister

UNB, Dhaka

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder yesterday said Bangladesh will not face any food crisis unless the country is hit by a natural disaster.

He made the remarks in a discussion on food security held in Barishal Circuit House, said a press release issued by the Press Information Department.

Despite warnings about the world being hit with a food crisis, Bangladesh, which produces about four crore tonnes of rice per annum, cultivates and harvests crops around the year, he added.

He also urged the people to stop the consumption of high-priced rice that appears shiny and silky on the outside but is low in nutrition as it is polished at least 4-5 times.

Alongside raising awareness on food and nutrition, he also requested people to stop wasting food.

The minister had earlier visited Barishal Rice Silo which is said to have a capacity of 48,000 tonnes. The under-construction storage with modern facilities is being built spending Tk 331 crore and is financed by the World Bank.

Russia could plan 'dirty bomb' pretext

Western countries warn of escalation in Ukraine conflict

REUTERS, Kyiv

Western countries yesterday accused Russia of plotting to use a threat of a bomb laced with nuclear material as a pretext for escalation in Ukraine, as Moscow evacuated civilians from a southern city in anticipation of a major battle.

With Ukrainian forces advancing into Russian-occupied Kherson province, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu phoned Western counterparts on Sunday to tell them Moscow suspected Kyiv of planning to use a so-called "dirty bomb".

In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of France, Britain and the United States said they had all rejected the allegations and reaffirmed their support for Ukraine against Russia.

"Our countries made clear that we all reject Russia's transparently false allegations that Ukraine is preparing to use a dirty bomb on its own territory," they said. "The world would see through any attempt to use this allegation as a pretext for escalation."

In an overnight address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the Russian accusation was a sign Moscow was planning such an attack itself and would blame Ukraine.

"If Russia calls and says that Ukraine is

allegedly preparing something, it means one thing: Russia has already prepared all this," Zelensky said.

"So when today the Russian Minister of Defense organises a phone carousel and calls foreign ministers with stories about the so-called 'dirty' nuclear bomb, everyone understands everything well. Understands who is the source of everything dirty that can be imagined in this war."

Asked about the fact that others did not seem to believe Russian's accusations, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a briefing yesterday: "Their disbelief doesn't mean there's no threat ... The threat is evident."

Russia has ordered civilians to evacuate territory it controls on the western bank of the Dnipro River, where Ukrainian forces have been advancing since the start of this month shortly after Moscow claimed to have annexed the area.

The Russian-installed authorities in Kherson announced yesterday that men who stay behind would have the option of joining a military self-defence unit. Kyiv accuses Russia of press-gang men in occupied areas into military formations, a war crime under the Geneva Conventions.

Kyrylo Budanov, Ukraine's military spy chief, said Russian forces were preparing

to defend Kherson city, not retreat from it, and reported evacuations were part of a Russian information campaign. While Russia is moving financial structures, equipment, vulnerable residents and wounded people from Kherson, he said, it is also reinforcing defences.

"They are creating the illusion that all is lost. Yet at the same time they are moving new military units in and preparing to defend the streets of Kherson," he told Interfax Ukraine news agency.

Since Russia's forces suffered major battlefield defeats in September, President Vladimir Putin has escalated the war, calling up hundreds of thousands of reservists, announcing the annexation of occupied territory and repeatedly threatening to use nuclear weapons to defend Russian land.

This month, Russia has started a new campaign using long-range cruise missiles and Iranian-made drones to attack Ukraine's electric power and heat ahead of winter.

Russian state television is filled with talk shows featuring pundits who are openly cheering attacks on Ukrainian civil infrastructure and call for ever tougher measures to eliminate what they describe as an illegitimate Ukrainian state.

Condemned convict arrested in Badda

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Rab arrested a convict of gang rape and murder in the capital's Badda area on Sunday after being tipped off about his location.

The arrestee had been absconding for 19 years. Nijamul Haque alias Suzan, 38, of Narayanganj, was convicted for gang-raping and murdering a 10-year-old on January 13, 2003 in Narayanganj Sadar upazila.

Nijamul, who returned from abroad a while ago, had taken up a new identity and went into hiding after a Narayanganj court sentenced him and four others to death on June 11, 2018.

10 sentenced to death for murdering 3 cattle traders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A Bandarban court yesterday sentenced 10 people to death for abducting and killing three cattle traders.

All the convicts are on the run. According to the case statement, one of the convicts made offers to sell cattle to traders Abu Bakkar, Nurul Afsar, and Shahab Uddin on April 14, 2016.

They were abducted and killed by the convicts the next day when the three went to a location near Thanchi-Alikadam road to see the cattle.

Law enforcers recovered the bodies after Abu Bakkar's brother filed a case with Thanchi Police Station, accusing 10.

Sitrang whips through south

FROM PAGE 1

Later at night, at least 13 trawlers capsized in the Bay. However, the casualties could not be known immediately.

Our correspondents from Patuakhali, Barishal, Khulna, Pirojpur, Bagerhat Cox's Bazar, Noakhali and Chattogram report that all the low-lying areas in the coastal region were inundated amid heavy rainfall and tidal surges.

"The situation worsened in the evening -- strong winds and very heavy rainfall here. We are rushing towards the cyclone shelter," Pankaj Shil from Hatiya, a southern island, told The Daily Star.

Aid workers have stockpiled emergency items such as food, tarpaulins and water purification tablets in refugee camps housing more than a million Rohingya in flimsy shelters in Cox's Bazar.

According to the central control room of the fire service in Dhaka,

around 600 roadside trees fell in different districts, blocking roads.

Briefing reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting yesterday afternoon, State Minister Enamur Rahman said, "We gave shelter to 24 lakh people during Cyclone Amphan. This time we aimed to shift 25 lakh people."

"Sitrang has turned into a cyclone and will hit the land in the evening," he said, citing weather experts from the Meteorological Department.

The centre of the cyclone will cross through Barguna and Patuakhali districts, he said, adding that 13 districts of Chattogram, Barishal and Khulna will be affected very badly.

The districts are Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barishal, Laxmipur, Chandpur, Noakhali and Feni. Barguna and Patuakhali could be worst-hit.

Assistance has been sought from the armed forces division to help

evacuate people from the remote areas, added the state minister.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina instructed the authorities to take all-out preparations to protect lives and properties from the impending severe cyclone.

The Meteorological Department asked maritime ports Mongla and Payra to raise their alert due to the inclement weather.

Three airlines -- Biman Bangladesh, US Bangla and Novoair -- cancelled 60 domestic flights to three destinations because of the cyclone.

The airports in Chattogram, Cox's Bazar and Barishal will remain closed till noon today.

The Civil Aviation Authority Bangladesh (CAAB) has decided to shut down all operations of these three airports from 3:00pm yesterday to noon today, according to a press release.

Bangladesh Inland Water

Transport Corporation (BIWTC) yesterday suspended operations of ferry services across the country.

Besides, operations of all types of water transports remained suspended since yesterday morning due to inclement weather, said an official of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education directed the authorities to use all secondary school and colleges as temporary shelters in areas to be hit by the cyclone.

In 2020, Cyclone Amphan, only the second "super cyclone" ever recorded over the Bay of Bengal, killed more than 100 people in Bangladesh and India, and affected millions.

Last year, more than a million people were evacuated along India's east coast before Cyclone Yaas battered the area with winds gusting up to 155 kilometres an hour -- equivalent to a Category 2 hurricane.

Rishi Sunak

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Addressing members of his party behind closed doors after the announcement, Sunak reportedly received a rapturous reception.

He warned MPs in that meeting that the Conservative party was facing an "existential threat". He also ruled out an early general election.

Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon, whose nationalist government in Edinburgh wants to hold an independence referendum next year, was among the first to congratulate Sunak.

"I wish him well... notwithstanding our political differences," she said.

"That he becomes the first British Asian -- indeed the first from any minority ethnic background -- to become PM is a genuinely significant moment," she said.

The contest, triggered by outgoing leader Truss's resignation on Thursday, had required candidates to secure the support of at least 100 Conservative MPs by 2:00 pm (1300 GMT) yesterday.

'A big win for us'

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Cup and their only notable victory was in the very first edition 15 years ago against the West Indies in 2007 in Johannesburg. But that victory was also in the group stages, making yesterday's win a significant one despite it being against an associate nation.

In fact, teams like Zimbabwe, Ireland, and the Netherlands all boast wins past the group stage of the T20 World Cup.

"We could never win a game in the Super 12 or Super 10 stages of the tournament. This is a big win for us. Nowadays, no one has the luxury to underestimate any side in T20is. World Champions like the West Indies were knocked out from the qualifiers [first round]. So, this was definitely a big win for us," player of the match Taskin said after the game.

It was Taskin who hit the ground running with two wickets off the

first two deliveries, pushing the men in orange on the backfoot at the beginning of their chase. The right-arm pacer had Dutch opener Vikramjit Singh edge one back to the first slip and then followed it up with Bas de Leede nicking one back to the wicketkeeper.

And with two run-outs in one over, courtesy of some excellent ground fielding by the Tigers, the Netherlands slumped to 15 for four in just 3.4 overs.

Colin Ackermann played a lone hand for his side, scoring a 48-ball 62, but that never gave chills to Shakib Al Hasan's troops in cold conditions at Hobart. Taskin ended the day just as he had started, with a double-wicket over as he removed Shariz Ahmad and Ackermann in the 17th over.

Meanwhile, the other game yesterday at the same venue between South Africa and Zimbabwe was washed out due to rain.

Indian firm facilitates illegal gambling

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He said they have come to know about the gambling activities through cyber patrolling.

CTTC filed the case under Sections 30 and 35 of the Digital Security Act, which states up to five years' imprisonment for e-transaction without legal authority, and for abetting offences.

According to investigators, Zamilur Rashid, the founder and CEO of Ulka Games Limited, a game studio in Bangladesh, came in touch with Moonfrog Asia, which developed the Teen Patti Gold game, in 2017.

Zamilur was appointed as the director of the Indian company in Bangladesh as a one percent shareholder.

On December 29, 2019, upon application of Ulka Games Limited, the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) approved a project named "Teen Patti Gold", and the type

of industry was "retail sale of video games".

In the BIDA approval, the promoter was Moonfrog representative Tanay Biraj Mohan Tayal and the company address was Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka. The total investment was Tk 1.25 crore.

CTTC officials say upon approval, Ulka Games appointed around 14 agents in different districts in Bangladesh to sell poker chips for the games.

To play the game, players have to pay the agents Tk 10 for one crore chips.

These 14 agents also appointed sub-agents, said a CTTC official.

Upon buying one crore chips for Tk 10, the sub-agents sell it to game users for Tk 11-12, said ADC Tohid, quoting primary investigation findings.

Tohid said arrestee Benazir was a sub-agent in Khulna and used to make transactions of Tk 15,000-

20,000 daily.

Players also have the ability to transfer chips to another user, said the official.

In the banking channel, there were transactions of around Tk 14 crore in the 2019-20 financial year, Tk 57 crore in FY 2020-21, and Tk 97 crore in FY 2021-22, according to CTTC investigators.

"We are now checking how many people are playing online games in Bangladesh and whether any transaction has taken place through an unauthorised channel, like hundi," said ADC Tohid.

Asked why they approved a gambling project, a senior BIDA official said they enquired about the company before registering it, and at the time no online gambling activity was noticed.

Shah Mohammad Mahboob, the then director, and now director general-3 (International Investment