



River erosion worsens in 8 districts

Many lose homes; farmland, edn institutions devoured in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat

STAR REPORT

Rivers are rapidly eroding houses, schools and farmlands in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and several other districts. Many people are losing their homes and belongings in a matter of hours. As flood waters are receding in the two districts, the Brahmaputra, the Teesta, the Dharla, the Dudhkumar and the Gangadhar are eroding the banks in at least 60 places. At least 280 homes, three schools and a college have been washed away in Kurigram while in Lalmonirhat, at least 20 homesteads have disappeared into the rivers over the past week, according to officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB). Besides, vast farmlands and over 500 homesteads are in immediate threat of being wiped out, they added. "My house and three bighas of arable land have been washed away by the Teesta. I am living on the road now, and I have to start over from scratch," said Hajera Bewa, 65, a resident of Bajra village of Ulipur upazila in Kurigram. In Lalmonirhat, 40-year-old Shukcharan Barman said, "Maybe 100 houses and my entire village are gone. But the Dharla is still eroding the banks."

At least 280 homes, three schools and a college have been washed away in Kurigram while in Lalmonirhat, at least 20 homesteads have disappeared into the rivers over the past week, according to officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

The BWDB said they were putting sandbags on the banks to curb erosion while relief and rehabilitation officers said they were preparing a list of the affected people. In Tangail, locals said the Jamuna washed away over 100 houses in Chituliapara and Patnipara areas of Bhupur. The villagers demonstrated blocking roads for effective measures to stop the erosion. "My house was washed away three days ago. I don't want handouts. I want an embankment that lasts," said Zilkod Hossain, a resident of Chituliapara. Local BWDB official Sazzad Hossain said, "We have already started putting sandbags to prevent erosion. We informed our higher authorities to construct a permanent dam there." In Sirajganj, the Jamuna washed away a major chunk of an embankment in Kazipur upazila early in the morning yesterday. Several government facilities may get eroded unless the sandbags and concrete blocks stop erosion in Kazipur, said locals and government officials. The Surma and the Kushiara are eroding properties in Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj and Habiganj. "We are working on a mega plan for ending river erosion in this region," said Khushi Mohon Sarker, additional chief engineer at BWDB in Sylhet. [Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Tangail, Pabna and Sylhet contributed to this report]



The Jamuna has eroded away a huge chunk of an embankment at Meghai Ghat in Sirajganj's Kazipur upazila. Bangladesh Water Development Board yesterday started dumping sandbags to curb further erosion. Locals are worried that a breach of the embankment will leave many key installations, including the Kazipur Police Station, at risk.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

One of the first Indians to fight 1971 war dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Major (Retd) Parimal Kumar Ghosh, one of the first Indians to fight in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, died at the age of 84.

He breathed his last in New Delhi on Thursday and was cremated yesterday, said Agomoni Ghosh, daughter of the deceased.

In 1971, Parimal Kumar Ghosh risked court martial by crossing the border to the then East Pakistan and reportedly helped set up the first group of Mukti Bahini.

He was first diagnosed with cancer in 1996 and battled the disease till the end, his daughter said.

Ghosh was born in January 1939.

On March 26, 1971, he was commanding four border outposts (BOP) of BSF at Sreenagar, Amlighat, Samarendraganj, and



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

At least 12 killed in two road crashes

Victims include five of a family

STAR REPORT

At least 12 people died in two road crashes in Jashore and Sylhet yesterday. In Jashore, seven people, including three children, were killed and two others injured when a bus rammed into a three-wheeler yesterday.

The accident took place in the Lebutala area on Jashore-Magura highway.

Police identified six of the deceased victims as Mahima Khatun, 48, her three-year-old twin grandsons Hasan and Hossain, sister Rahima Khatun, 30, and Rahima's daughter Zeba, 6, and auto-rickshaw driver Imran Hosen, 25.

They were from Bagharpara upazila of the district.

Mahima's daughter Sonia, 30, who is the mother of the twins, was brought to the capital in a critical condition. Sonia's daughter Khadija, 4, was also injured.

Police could not name one other deceased victim.

The family was going to Jashore General Hospital to visit an ailing relative on the battery-run three-wheeler when a bus of Royal Paribahan hit it, said Belal Hossain, additional superintendent of police.

"How can I bear the pain of losing them? I did not dare bring my wife to the hospital," Sadaruddin, the 70-year-old father of Mahima and Rahima, told this correspondent at Jashore General Hospital.

In Jhikargachha upazila of the district, local Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader Shakil Khan Saju, 26, died after he crashed his motorcycle into a roadside tree yesterday morning, police said.

He died around 7:00am while his family members were taking him to Dhaka for treatment of his injuries.

In Sylhet's Jaintapur upazila around 10:00pm yesterday, five people were killed and at least seven others seriously injured after a bus rammed into a battery-powered auto-rickshaw.

The incident took place in the Darbast area on Sylhet-Tamabil highway.

Omar Faruk, officer-in-charge of Jaintapur Police Station, said the victims died on the spot.

He added that both the vehicles were going towards Jallong from Sylhet.

[Our correspondents in Benapole and Sylhet contributed to this report.]

The family was going to Jashore General Hospital to visit an ailing relative on a three-wheeler when a bus hit it.

AI takes just 5 hours to design functional computer

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Researchers in China have developed an artificial intelligence tool capable of designing a working computer in under five hours.

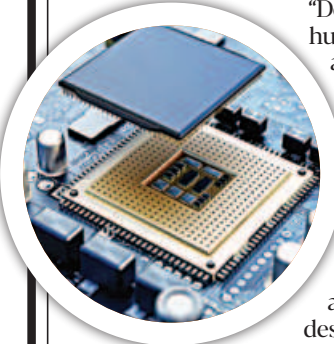
The team of 19 computer scientists from five different institutions made the AI breakthrough after setting out to prove that machines can create computer chips in a similar way to humans. The feat was performed 1,000 times faster than a human team could have achieved it, the researchers claimed, marking a major step towards building self-evolving machines.

"Design activity... distinguishes humanity from other animals and traditional machines, and endowing machines with design abilities at the human level or beyond has been a long-term pursuit," the scientists wrote in a paper detailing their research.

"We present a new AI approach to automatically design a central processing unit (CPU), the brain of a computer, and one of the world's most intricate devices humanity has ever designed."

The project involved the layout of an industrial-scale RISC-V CPU, capable of running the Linux operating system and achieving an accuracy of 99.99 percent in validation tests.

The AI bypassed the manual programming and verification process of the typical design cycle, which the researchers said "consumes more than 60-80 percent of the design time and resources" of human teams.



Tigers focus on levelling series

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

It was a rather exciting day for Liton Das when he woke up in the morning yesterday as the stand-in captain of the Bangladesh ODI team, a day after regular skipper Tamim Iqbal announced his retirement from international cricket.

As anticipated, Tamim's retirement issue hogged all the attention during the official pre-match press conference at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Liton entertained a few questions regarding Tamim's shock retirement, but tried to revert focus back on his team's immediate objective: keep the series alive by winning the crucial second and penultimate ODI against Afghanistan today.

At one point, however, Liton lost his composure as reporters remained adamant at bringing Tamim's issue back.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Palestinian youths throw stones at passing Israeli armoured vehicles in clashes during an Israeli military raid in the old city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank yesterday. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: AFP

US to send cluster munitions to Ukraine

REUTERS, Washington

The United States announced yesterday that it would send Ukraine widely-banned cluster munitions as part of a security assistance package, a move Ukraine said would have an "extraordinary psycho-emotional impact" on occupying Russian forces.

Jake Sullivan, US President Joe Biden's national security adviser, laid out the case yesterday for providing cluster munitions to Ukraine ahead of an expected Pentagon announcement.

"We recognise that cluster munitions create a risk of civilian harm from unexploded ordnance," Sullivan told reporters. "This is why we've deferred the decision for as long as we could."

"But there is also a massive risk of civilian harm if Russian troops and tanks roll over Ukrainian positions and take more Ukrainian territory and subjugate more Ukrainian civilians because Ukraine does not have enough artillery," he said.

Cluster munitions are prohibited by more than 100 countries. They typically release large numbers of smaller bomblets that can kill indiscriminately over a wide area and those that fail to explode pose a danger for decades after a conflict ends.

"Ukraine has provided written assurances that it is going to use these in a very careful way" to minimize risks to civilians Sullivan said.

Human rights groups oppose Washington's decision, but the munitions could provide a boost to a Ukrainian counteroffensive to reclaim territory seized by Russian forces since they invaded in February 2022.