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A silent witness to Dhaka's history



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Sweden set up Spain semifinal



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Hawaii fire death toll hits 55



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From 'girl next door' to multifaceted star

EROSION taking toll on millions

Rivers devour around 10,000 hectares of land annually

PINAKI ROY

Standing near the eroded edge of the mythical river in Matikata village of Tangail, 90-year-old Hashem Ali Munshi says the bank of the Jamuna is as shifting as ever. His vacant eyes belie the irrevocable damage the river has done to him.

Munshi, a farmer who once owned considerable land property, witnessed the river devour most of his arable land and his entire homestead.

"The river was around three kilometres away from our village 12 years ago. Now it has eaten up a big chunk of our village," he said. "Having lost their land, farmers have switched profession and have become day labourers or rickshaw pullers."

In the past 12 years, the Jamuna has shifted its bank numerous times, ravaging through many villages in

➤ The Padma and Jamuna eroded **50,955** hectares of land in 22 years

➤ **Five lakh** people have become homeless

➤ **50 lakh** people vulnerable to erosion

➤ **50** out of 64 district endure river erosion every year

Bhuiyapur upazila.

Rivers in Bangladesh devour thousands of hectares of land every year, leaving people living along untamed rivers homeless and landless, and forcing them to move to nearby embankments and chars, or migrate to urban slum areas.

In the past 22 years, the Padma and the Jamuna alone have eroded 50,955 hectares of land, six times as big as the St Martin's Island. The Jamuna eroded 25,290 hectares and the Padma 25,665 hectares, according to the Centre for Environment and Geographic Information Service (CEGIS).

CEGIS says over half a million people became homeless due to erosion of the two rivers in the past 22 years.

Bangladesh is an active delta. Nearly five million of its population live in the active floodplains of the major rivers which are vulnerable to erosion. Of them, two million live on char lands, an Asian Development Bank report mentions, citing different studies.

Another ADB document titled "The Jamuna-Meghna River Erosion Mitigation Project" states an estimated 1,200 km of riverbank along the major rivers are prone to erosion, with more than 500 km having severe erosion problems in Bangladesh. It also says an estimated 10,000 hectares of land are lost to erosion annually, which affects over 100,000 people.

People from different parts of the country have been spending their days in fear as this year river erosion along the Padma, the Jamuna, the Meghna, the Teesta and the Arial Khan is wreaking havoc in Kurigram, Bogura, Jamalpur, Lalmonirhat, Sirajganj, Pabna, Tangail, Shariatpur and Madaripur, among other districts.

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Hashem Ali Munshi, *on the left*, looks on as the Jamuna devours his village. The river has been aggressively eroding its bank in of Bhuiyapur of Tangail for the last few days. Residents fear that their neighbourhood may go into the river any time.

PHOTO: STAR

RECENT DOWNPOURS IN SOUTHEAST

51 lives lost to floods, landslides in 4 dists

STAR REPORT

The recent flood caused by torrential rain and tidal water in the country's southeastern region has claimed at least 51 lives in four districts.

Of the victims, 20 died in Cox's Bazar, 16 in Chattogram, 10 in Bandarban and five in Rangamati, according to local administrations.

They died either in landslides or from drowning in floodwaters in the last one week.

Over 10 lakh people in the four districts and Feni are flood victims, said a report of the disaster management and relief ministry on August 9.

In Cox's Bazar, the worst affected is Chakaria upazila where 11 people lost their lives. Six more died in Pekua upazila.

Bibhisani Kanti Das, additional deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, said around 4,80,000 people have been hit by flash floods in the district.

Seven out of 10 reported deaths in Bandarban were from landslides and the rest drowned.

Meanwhile, vehicular movement on Chimbuk-Ruma-Thanchi road remained suspended for around a week due to several landslides at different points on the road.

Many houses and a vast tract of jhum land have been damaged.

"As no vehicle can ply the road, we have to walk around 9km to reach a nearby bazar [market] for buying our daily essentials," said Ring Tulang Bawm, 25, of 16 Mail area in Bandarban Sadar upazila.

"I cultivated pumpkin on 10 acres of land. But pumpkins of around seven acres have been washed away by floodwaters," said Rurung Mro, 55, of Tongaboti area in Bandarban Sadar upazila.

"A woman in our para [neighbourhood] became sick

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S Alam serves legal notice on govt, four newspapers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A legal notice was served on the government, four editors of national newspapers, including The Daily Star, and seven journalists of the dailies on Thursday for reports the dailies published on Mohammad Saiful Alam and S Alam Group.

The legal notice apparently sought to restrict reporting on S Alam Group.

On behalf of the owner of the group Saiful Alam, law firm Ajmalul Hossain KC and Associates served the notices by registered post.

The notice demands that the home secretary and the information secretary collect the evidence, based on which five articles were written by the journalists, to justify the allegations made against Alam and his Group.

Until such information is provided, the notice

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DENGUE OUTBREAK

Saviour fails to survive

Young DMCH doctor who saved patients dies from the virus

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

As a doctor, she helped many patients to recover from dengue infection at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. But she herself could not beat the virus.

Sharifa Binte Aziz Akhi, 27, passed away at the DMCH early yesterday.

The 27-year-old physician, a resident of Jaypara in Dhaka's Dohar upazila, was admitted to a private hospital after being diagnosed with dengue.

She was moved to the intensive care unit of DMCH Thursday afternoon.

Sharifa, an FCPS part-II student, worked at the medicine department of the hospital, said DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Nazmul Haque.

On August 8, another physician Almina Dewan Mishu, 32, died of dengue at the same hospital.

Almina, an official from the 39th BCS batch, had been undergoing treatment at the DMCH ICU since August 1.

She was admitted to a private hospital with dengue fever on July 26. As her health deteriorated, she was moved to the public hospital.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) logged nine deaths in 24 hours preceding yesterday morning.

With this, the total number of deaths from dengue rose to 373 this year. Among the dead, 213 are females.

As many as 2,046 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in the same 24-hour period, bringing the total number of cases to 80,074 this year.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said dengue patients should be immediately hospitalised if they suffer from severe stomach aches, breathing difficulties, severe weakness, vomiting, or bleeding from gums and nose.

"If a patient showing such symptoms is not hospitalised within 24 hours, he or she may have dengue shock syndrome," he added.

Ilias Sikdar, father of minors Mim Akhtar and Jannatul Ferdous from Pubro Shewrapar, was finding it difficult to ensure the treatment of his children who were suffering from fever.

Mim, aged two and a half years, caught a fever a week ago while her sibling Jannatul, aged about one year, got the fever three days ago.

Ilias, an employee at a private company, took his two daughters to Dr MR Khan Shishu Hospital and Institute of Child Health in the capital's Mirpur yesterday.

He spent Tk 2,500 to get the necessary tests done for his two children. Doctors recommended admitting Mim to the hospital, but Ilias could not do so due to a lack of money.

"I came here with Tk 2,000. I managed to bring another Tk 2,000 with the help of my brother in two hours, but that was not enough to get my elder daughter admitted to the hospital," said Ilias.

He said he will have the test reports at 8:00pm today. After seeing those reports, doctors would decide on Jannatul's admission.

Nazira Begum, mother of two-year-old Mahin, said her daughter had been undergoing treatment at the hospital

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RECENT DOWNPOUR

HSC exams of 3 boards deferred to Aug 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent exams under the Chittagong Education Board, Madrasah Education Board, and Technical Education Board have been deferred by 10 days.

The decision has been taken considering the record flooding in the Chittagong division.

Now the examinations of those boards will start on August 27 instead of August 17.

Professor Tapan Kumar Sarker, the Chief Coordinator of the Inter-Education Board Coordinating Committee, confirmed this information.

Exams for other boards will be conducted according to the previous schedule.



A sudden surge in the number of dengue patients has left Nesarabad Upazila Health Complex in Pirojpur a little too overcrowded. There were 105 inpatients at the facility with only 50 beds yesterday. Sixty-eight of them were admitted with dengue.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

