

COX'S BAZAR DISTRICT

# Govt building 268km road network

BSS, Dhaka

The government is implementing a project to improve the rural connectivity in Cox's Bazar district.

Under the project titled "Emergency Multi Sector Rohingya Crisis Response Project (EMCRP)", the government is building a 268 kilometre road network in several upazilas, including Ukha and Teknaf.

The government is also building 50 new cyclone shelters, one relief administration and distribution centre, 34 multipurpose community service centres, six markets, two fire service offices, one LGED building, nine fire-fighting warehouses and drains, culverts and bridges inside the camps.

Under the project, the government is also setting up lightning arresters and solar street lights.

Talking to the news agency, Project Director of the EMCRP, being implemented by LGED, Javed Karim, said the project is helping build and rehabilitate basic infrastructure, improve community resilience and help prevent gender-based violence against the forcibly displaced Rohingya population.

Executive Engineer of LGED in Cox's Bazar Md Mamun Khan said work of around 200 kilometres has been completed.

"Four bridges and 45 school and

disaster shelters in Ukha upazila have been handed over. Also, a modern jetty is being constructed at the Cox's Bazar-Maheshkhali link gate. Two rubber dams have been constructed. Apart from these, several other works are going on," he added.

He also said multipurpose community service centres, satellite fire service centres, 268 lightning arresters, 2,500 solar street



lights and 35 nanogrids for energy supply have been installed inside the camp.

Development Project Proposal of the EMCRP got the Ecne approval on October 30, 2018. The revised DPP was approved on October 6, 2020.

The total estimated cost of the project is Tk 1,394.47 crore. Of the amount, the government is providing Tk 12.80 crore and the remaining Tk 1,381.67 crore is coming from the World Bank and German Development Bank.



Black smoke billows as workers mix stone and bitumen for roadwork beside the Rupsa Bridge bypass road in Khulna. The smoke not only affects the people passing by but also pollutes the environment. The photo was taken in Aranghata area yesterday. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Lightning kills four in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

Four people, including a child, died after being struck by lightning in three upazilas of Khulna, authorities said yesterday.

Of them, two people, including the child, died in Koyra upazila's Ghorilal village and one each in Botiaghata and Paikgachha upazilas on Thursday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Enayet Ali, 37, from Koyra, and Nazmul, 8, son of Al Amin from Matiadanga village. One Musa Gazi was seriously injured during the incident.

Moreover, deceased Srikanth Mondal, 25, was a resident of Deluti union under Paikgachha, and Al Mamun, 17, son of Moni Chowkidar of Kararia village in Botiaghata.

Ripun Kumar Mondal, chairman of Deluti UP, said Srikanth was an employee at a fish farm and was taking shelter in a hut during the afternoon rain when he was struck by lightning. He died on the spot.

Abul Kalam Akhonda, assistant superintendent of police (ASP south) of Khulna, said the bodies were handed over to the families.

## A 'CASTLE' IN RUINS

145-year-old historic Mymensingh building in dilapidated condition



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At the heart of Mymensingh city, surrounded by greenery, stands a two-storied tin-shed "castle" with a banyan tree in front of it.

Its European architectural design bears testimony to the sense of aesthetics and wealth of the then Mymensingh zamindars.

The structure comprises staircases made of iron, alongside various other metal accessories. Due to the sheer quantity of iron used in constructing and decorating the structure, this 145-year-old establishment was also known as "Lohar Kuthi" among locals.

The two-storied building was placed on a high plinth, which historians say was done to protect the castle from floods. The building also hosts two Greek sculptures in white on both sides of the front gate.

However, the dismembered hands of both the sculptures show how decades of negligence made it a forgotten "castle".

Maharaja Suryakanta Acharya Chowdhury, a prominent zamindar, constructed the castle

on 27.50 acres of land at a cost of Tk 45,000 in 1879 in Mymensingh town.

Some say it was named in memory of Mymensingh's first Zilla magistrate NS Alexander. However, another group of scholars claim that the building was named after Alexandra, the beloved wife of Emperor Edward.

Acharya used this building as a rest house for his guests. Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Mymensingh by train on February 15, 1926, and stayed at this place for four days as his guest.

Tagore was accorded several receptions during his stay there.

However, the rich history of the establishment remains mostly unexplored to this day. Not much has been done to create awareness either.

After the 1947 partition, the house was used as the library of Teachers Training College for men and teachers' dormitory.

The two-storied house has 14 rooms on the ground and first floors. Seven rooms

on the first floor of the house were used as dormitories for around 60 years.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found the floor abandoned, and in a precarious condition.

Although TTC still uses the second floor as a library for its students, this correspondent saw it to be only a shadow of its former self.

TTC Principal Prof Zainal Abedin Khan said officials of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs visited the castle recently to talk about renovation. "We are yet to get any confirmation in this regard," he said.

The castle was listed as an archaeological site in March 2019.

Contacted, Afroza Khan Mita, regional director of Department of Archaeology (Dhaka and Mymensingh), said a proposal for preservation, renovation and digging of all archaeological sites including Alexandra Castle has already been approved. The work could start in the next fiscal year.

"The renovation work of the castle will be given priority," she said.

## Saline creeps into cropland as sluice gates lie unrepaired

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

At least 50 farmers in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila are struggling to protect their crops as saline water from the Bay of Bengal constantly inundated their 150 acres of cropland due to four sluice gates being non-functional for eight years.

"We used to cultivate three crops on our land. Due to salinity, the land has turned barren," said Ahmed Hossain, a farmer from Muradpur union under the upazila.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board, these sluice gates, constructed on the mouths of Boalia, Shikder, Rajapur and Guliakhali canals between 1960 and 1968 became inoperative in 2016.

Visiting Boalia Khal (canal) area recently, this correspondent observed that sea water was constantly entering the locality during high tide through a damaged sluice gate.

Affected farmers in the area said they had urged the local administration several times for immediate steps to resolve the problem, but to no avail.

Nur Mohammed, who used to be a paddy farmer in the area, said salinity turned his land barren and compelled him to leave paddy cultivation.



A non-functional sluice gate in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila. PHOTO: STAR

"Only an operational sluice gate can turn my land cultivable again," he added.

Sitakunda is known for producing high-yielding varieties of beans, as well as tomatoes, gourds and sweet pumpkins every year.

Contacted, Habibullah, agriculture officer in

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**PRAYER TIMING**  
JUNE 22

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAA 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Woman crushed under train wheels

UNB, Pabna

A 60-year-old woman died after being crushed under the wheels of a train in Sadar upazila of Pabna district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sokhina Khatun of Khalishpur village in Sadullapur union.

Locals said the accident occurred in the morning when the Dhallachar Express hit her in Ghorerbhita area while she was crossing the road.

Locals alleged that no gateman was there.

Ishwardi Railway Station Police Officer-in-Charge Habibur Rahman said a police team was sent to the spot to look into the matter.



Flash floods hit northern districts like Rangpur and Kurigram due to the rise in water levels in the Teesta following torrential rain. Around 20,000 people in the low-lying areas of Rangpur's Kaunia upazila have been marooned due to the flood. The photos were taken yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## 20,000 stranded in Rangpur flash flood

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Around 20,000 people in the low-lying areas of Rangpur's Kaunia upazila have been marooned due to a flash flood caused by a surge in the Teesta river.

The flood occurred following excessive rain in the area alongside Indian upstream regions in 24 hours till yesterday morning, which caused the river's water level to rise above the danger mark.

The flood has already affected around 10 villages in the upazila. Also, 11 char areas have been affected by Teesta's rising water levels.

Rangpur Water Development Board (WDB) officials said the Teesta was close to

the danger level at Dalia Point a couple of days ago, causing floods in Gangachara in Rangpur and parts of Nilphamari district.

The Teesta is now flowing 52cm above the danger level at Kaunia point. However, WDB officials said the water level has remained unchanged since yesterday morning.

As floodwaters swept away many homes, residents of the flood-affected villages -- particularly in Balapara and Dhepamadhupur unions -- have sought refuge on higher grounds with their families and livestock.

"The flood situation has been worsening since Thursday. The flash flood has already claimed the livestock of many families, while a significant area of cropland has also been submerged," said Aminul Islam, chairman of Dhepamadhupur union.

He also expressed concern over the severe drinking water crisis and said relief efforts have yet to reach many flood-affected people.

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