



PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Farmers in Gaibandha cultivating Aman paddy on fields. Typically, Aman paddy is planted during July and August, before subsequently being harvested during November and December. The photo was taken in the Mohimaganj area of Gobindaganj upazila yesterday.

## SIX ORGANISERS IN CUSTODY

HC to resume hearing of petition tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will resume hearing and passing order on a writ petition tomorrow that challenged the legality of keeping the six organisers of quota reform movement detained in detective branch's (DB) custody for "their own security".

The petition has been included as item 10 for "order" on tomorrow's cause list of the HC bench comprising Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon.

The petition was filed by Supreme Court lawyers Aynunnahar Siddiqua and Manzur-Al-Matin on July 29 seeking HC orders for the immediate release of the six coordinators of the quota reform protests from law enforcers' custody and stopping the use of live rounds on protesters' demonstrations.

The HC bench held hearing on the petition on July 29 and 30 amid chaos and commotion in the packed courtroom and

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## SYLHET FLOOD

# 66,584 houses damaged in three districts

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

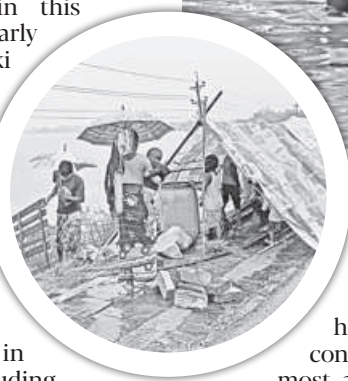
As their house was damaged in the ongoing flood, Aftab Uddin's family has been living in Bara Maidan High School shelter for 23 days at Talimpur union in Barlekha upazila, Moulvibazar.

The floodwaters have yet to recede fully from their Murshibadkura village in the union.

Many families in this union, particularly those in the Hakaluki Haor areas, are in a similar peril.

Since the onset of the flood in Sylhet region on June 16, triggered by heavy rains and upstream waters, a total of 66,584 houses have so far been damaged in three districts, including 16,987 in Moulvibazar, 27,597 in Sylhet, and 22,000 in Sunamganj. Unable to stay in their homes, many families sought refuge in shelters or at their relatives' houses, with the prolonged flood continuing to exacerbate their struggles.

Poor and marginalised people are particularly affected, facing severe challenges to manage their livelihoods, repairing their



damaged homes, and providing for their families.

Even though the floodwaters have receded considerably from most areas, many people are still unable to return to their homes due to the damages sustained to their houses.

"My mud hut was completely washed away in the flood. I have been compelled to borrow funds to repair the house as soon as possible, since my family would otherwise become homeless for prolonged time," said Satir Mia from Barlekha upazila.

Sumi Rani, district relief and

rehabilitation officer in Habiganj, said they have yet to collect detailed damage reports for houses in the district and will be requesting updates from upazila officials for better assessment.

Mohammad Chadu Mia, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Moulvibazar, said they have sent a list of damages sustained in the flood to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, requesting funds for repair and reconstruction of affected homes.

Md Abdul Kuddus Bulbul, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Sylhet, said they are compiling a list of damages and preparing for rehabilitation efforts for those affected.

## 23 TRIPURA FAMILIES

# Landslide threat looms large over them



MINTU DESHWARA, from Habiganj

The indigenous Tripura community has lived for generations in the Satchhari National Park of Chunarughat upazila, Habiganj.

However, the 23 families in the village now face constant fear due to landslides, a threat that has intensified over the past six years.

Relentless monsoon rains have eroded their homes and lands repeatedly, while sand and soil lifting from hill slopes in previous years worsened the situation.

Recently, five families abandoned their homes after landslides jeopardised their safety.

On July 13, the village's only bridge collapsed in another

landslide, trapping the remaining 23 families.

Currently, these families live in fear as monsoon downpours continue.

"We've lived with the risk of landslides for years, but the situation has worsened. This year, the bridge collapsed, leaving us stranded," said Sumon Debarma, a resident.

Shankar Tantubay recounted the recent landslide incident, "In the dead of night, a sudden landslide swept away a significant portion of the village and the bridge. We're now sheltered in the old forest department building."

Sand lifting, previously allowed, contributed to the rapid deterioration of the hill slopes.

"Our roads and trees have been destroyed, and life here has become unsafe," said a villager.

Village headman Chittaranjan Debarma expressed frustration over the authorities' inaction.

"We've sought assistance from different places, but to no avail. Villagers fear losing everything if urgent action isn't taken."

In 2020, the Bangladesh Water Development Board proposed a Tk 8.21 crore project to protect 480 metres of hill slope in the village.

However, the ministry deemed the cost too high for the benefit of 28 families.

"We were born here. This place is precious to us, and we've always strived to preserve these hills," said Chittaranjan.

Ashish Debarma, the assistant headman, echoed his sentiments.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of the Habiganj unit of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, suggested constructing a guide-wall to protect the village from landslides.

Chunarughat Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ayesha Siddika said plans are underway to relocate the 23 families to a safe area within the reserve forest.

"The hill slopes are causing erosion and landslides, affecting not only the Tripura village but also other areas within the Satchhari National Park. Efforts are on to protect the families and preserve their way of life amidst the challenges posed by erosion and landslides," she added.

## Mother and daughter die as trawler capsizes

3 others remain missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

A woman and her daughter died by drowning after a trawler capsized in the Meghna river in Magherchar area under Gosairhat upazila of Shariatpur yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Shahana Akhtar, 50, and her daughter Joli Akhtar, 26. The missing ones are Shahana's two sons Shanto and Shaon, and Shanto's friend Hridoy.

Meanwhile, at least five people were undergoing treatment at the local upazila health complex after being rescued.

Mohammad Akash, a rescued passenger, said, "Rough waves rocked the trawler sideways when a big wave suddenly hit it, causing it to sink."

The upazila administration launched a rescue operation after the incident yesterday, but had to call it off at 5:30pm due to inclement weather, said Pushpen Debnath, officer-in-charge of Gosairhat Police Station.

Quoting passengers of the trawler who survived the incident, the OC said that Shahana, a resident of Dhaka's Narinda area, was going to Magherchar with 10 others to see a prospective bride for her son and finalise the wedding date.

They boarded the trawler at Kodalpur Launch Ghat in Gosairhat around 10:00am yesterday.

Around 10:30am, the trawler capsized mid-river after losing control as strong waves due to rough weather started to rock the vessel.

Locals rescued eight persons and took them to Gosairhat upazila health complex.

## Apologise and resign: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Fakhrul yesterday condemned the "attacks by law enforcement and ruling party activists" on students during their prayers and mass procession programme.

He called on the government to apologise and resign immediately.

"Law enforcement and cadres of Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League carried out heinous armed attacks during today's prayer and mass procession program," he said in a statement.

Fakhrul criticised the government for shutting down various social media sites, including Facebook and Telegram, to disrupt yesterday's programme.



## Vested people playing govt-vs-students game

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said even after fulfilling the students' demand for quota reform, a vested quarter is continuing an ill effort to gain its interest by playing the government-versus-students game.

He made the remark at a press conference held at the AL president's Dhanmondi political office.

Quader said students are not the opponents of the government in any situation.

He also said the scope of the judicial probe commission has been extended for a proper investigation into each killing.



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