

## Two children killed, two hurt in Ctg landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Ctg

Two 11 year old boys were killed and two others critically injured in a landslide inside the Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) in Anwara upazila of Chattogram on Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Rohan, son of Abdur Rahim, and Mohammad Misbah, son of Mohammad Imran. They were residents of Ward-8 in Bairag union, said Tayebur Rahman, inspector at Anwara Police Station.

The incident occurred around 10:00am in the Eidgah area of Paschimpara when a group of boys sought shade from the heat near a hill.

A portion of the slope suddenly collapsed, burying four children under the debris.

The injured children, both aged 12, were first taken to Anwara Upazila Health Complex and later transferred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital for advanced treatment.

Quoting locals, police said the boys had been playing in a nearby field inside the KEPZ before moving toward the hill for shelter. As they rested in a crevice, part of the hillside gave way.

Eyewitness Mohammad Imran said, "They were sitting near the hill when it suddenly collapsed on them. Villagers rushed to the spot and rescued them."

Puja Mitra, doctor of Anwara Health Complex said the two children were already dead when they arrived. The others have been referred to CMCH, she added.



White herons try to catch fish in this waterbody in Rajshahi. Numerous canals and ponds in the district have dried up over the years, leaving very little fish for the birds to feed on. The photo was taken from the Chanduria area of Tanore upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## TELMACHHARA FOREST

# Water crisis drives wildlife to human settlements

MINTU DESHWARA

Facing an acute water shortage, wild animals in Telmachhara Forest, located in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj, are flocking to artificial water reservoirs near human settlements.

Due to the ongoing dry season, animals are gathering at an artificial reservoir in front of the Telmachhara Forest Office. Some are even venturing into nearby localities in search of water, making them vulnerable to poachers.

Locals say many animals, driven by thirst, are taking significant risks to survive.

Telmachhara forest, adjacent to Satchari National Park, is home to a diverse range of wildlife, but the scarcity of natural water sources during the summer months poses a severe threat to their survival.

Mehedi Hasan, beat officer at the



Telmachhara Forest Office, said the forest spans 1,626 acres, most of which is high and hilly terrain.

"As a result, water does not accumulate anywhere. In some areas, rainwater has mixed with soil and sand, filling natural depressions. This has worsened the crisis, as there is no water where it normally should be. Even

though there were a few days of rain recently, all the water has dried up," he added.

Md Anisur Rahman, in charge of the Sreemangal Meteorological Observatory, said the region usually receives 81mm of rain in April. While the tally for April this year has not been compiled, there has been less rain this year compared to previous years.

Sadiqur Rahman, a staff member at the Telmachhara office, said plans are underway to create a pond under the initiative of the divisional forest officer to solve the water crisis.

Contacted, Jamil Mohammad Khan, assistant conservator of forests for the Habiganj and Moulvibazar area, said they have received an application to build a pond for the animals. It has already been forwarded to higher authorities.

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## Return power to people, not the state

Says Farhad Mazhar

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Bogura



Columnist and poet Farhad Mazhar yesterday said a new Bangladesh under a new constitution must be founded on three fundamental principles.

The first principle, he said, is that the state cannot enact any law that undermines an individual's rights and dignity. Secondly, the state cannot adopt any law or policy that harms life, the environment, or nature. Thirdly, he said the state must not formulate any law or policy that endangers the lives and livelihoods of its citizens.

He made the remarks at a discussion with journalists at the Bogura Press Club.

"If we can establish these three principles, and if political parties launch movements based on them today, it wouldn't take more than six months to change Bangladesh...", said Mazhar.

"The power of the people must be returned to the people," he said. Mazhar explained that the message of the uprising is to return sovereign power to people and to establish a decentralised system where sovereignty and power of the people are paramount, not that of the state.

"The ultimate authority should not lie with the state; if so, then bureaucrats will govern us," he said. "The main point of democracy is local government, not the central one," he said, advocating for decentralising power through district administrations.

## 2 children drown in Narsingdi pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Two children drowned while bathing in a pond in Sonakura village under Shibpur upazila of Narsingdi on Thursday.

The deceased are Soha Akter, 10, daughter of Abul Kashem of Sonakura village, and her cousin Habiba Akter, 9, daughter of one Babul, said Shibpur Police Station OC Md Afzal Hossain.

According to family, Habiba had come to visit her uncle's house and went to bathe in a nearby pond with Soha. They drowned shortly afterward. Family members rushed them to Shibpur Upazila Health Complex, where the doctor declared them dead.

## Breathing life into bamboo

Flute craft of Sreemoddi echoes through generations



MASUK HRIDOV, Brahmanbaria

In the village of Sreemoddi under Cumilla's Homna upazila, the melodious craft of making bamboo flutes has quietly persisted for generations.

It is estimated that at least one-third of all flutes produced in Bangladesh originate from this small village. Around 40 families are engaged in this time-honoured tradition.

Made entirely from natural materials, these flutes have earned both national admiration and international acclaim.

The roots of this tradition trace back nearly a century, when two individuals -- Kokil Das Boiragi and Din Bandhu -- migrated from India and introduced flute-making to the village. Initially, they produced 50 to 100 flutes by hand, selling them door-to-door, often playing the instruments themselves to attract buyers, according to locals.

Today, the tradition thrives with contributions from the elderly, women, and even school-going children. Women typically take part in designing, drilling, washing, drying and colouring the flutes.

The preferred material is "muli bamboo" (*Melocanna baccifera*), a tropical species native to the region.

Based on the harmonium scale, flutes are made in varying lengths, up to four tones (roughly 20 inches), and include three to seven holes. The village produces eight varieties of flutes, including the Tota, Aar, Been, Balloon,

Classical, Aristocratic, Mohan, and Natural flutes.

Jatindra Chandra Biswas and his wife Rina Biswas are widely regarded as the most skilled flute makers in the village.

Explaining the 13 to 14-stage process, Jatindra said the bamboo is first cut into shape and dried in the sun. The outer skin is removed (except in the case of the Aar flute) and patterns are etched into the surface using clay and fire. Holes are made using pointed iron rods and coal.



For Tota flutes, the mouthpiece is crafted from the wood of the Mandar tree. The final steps include marking the holes, smoothing the surface with sandpaper, and cleaning and painting before packaging.

Flute maker Ratan Sarkar said the raw bamboo is typically sourced from Chattogram.

Sales peak in the Bangla month of Chaitra, with over one lakh flutes usually sold in Dhaka's Chawk Bazar alone. Wholesalers from districts such as Chattogram, Mymensingh, and Khulna place orders through mail, and the flutes are then

delivered by steamer or train, said Rui Das, an elderly craftsman.

Sabita Rani Majumder, a local flute artisan, said the Tota and Aar flutes are typically sold wholesale for Tk 10-20 and Tk 20-50 each, respectively, while specialised flutes designed for professional musicians, which can be two inches to as long as four feet in length, can fetch anywhere between Tk 1,000-5,000 each, depending on their design and quality.

Decorative and novelty flutes like Mohan, Been, and Balloon flutes are priced between Tk 100 and over Tk 1,000 each.

"After covering all expenses, we make around Tk 20,000-25,000 monthly," she added.

Nihar Sarkar, a buyer from Gazipur who has sourced flutes from Sreemoddi for four decades, said children and young adults are the main customers. However, he noted a decline in demand due to the popularity of plastic toys and mobile games.

Ratan said due to a lack of capital, artisans are struggling to scale up production. With proper support, he believes this traditional craft could flourish further on the global stage.

Homna Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ksemalika Chakma said the craft of Sreemoddi's flute makers is a part of Bangladesh's cultural heritage and deserves support.

"If the craftsmen express interest, we are willing to offer loans on easy terms to help expand the industry," she said.

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