

## 6 killed, 40 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and 40 others injured in four districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents and a news agency.

In Bandarban, a man was killed and at least 20 others were injured after a car plunged into a ravine in Alikadam upazila yesterday morning.

The accident occurred around 11:00am near Jobiram Para in the Kolarjhiri area of the upazila, said police.

The deceased was identified as Thoingya Mro, 25. All passengers onboard the vehicle were members of the Mro community and residents of the same village.

At least 20 others were injured in the accident, 10 of whom sustained critical injuries. They were sent to Cox's Bazar Christian Memorial Hospital for advanced treatment. The remaining injured are undergoing treatment at the Alikadam Upazila Health Complex, confirmed Mirza Zahid Uddin, officer-in-charge of Alikadam Police Station.

"The B-70 jeep [the car] lost control and fell about 50 feet down the hill... Police and fire service personnel reached the scene, and further details are being gathered," the OC added.

According to eyewitness, Menwai Mro, who was also attending the wedding, the car was en route to a wedding ceremony in Menpa Mro Para of Kolarjhiri from Tongpong Mro Para.

The vehicle was carrying 34 people, most of them women and children, which was far beyond its capacity.

In Dhaka, an unidentified woman was killed after being hit by a vehicle in the capital's Banani early yesterday, reports UNB.

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## BNP's politics now runs on AL money

### Says Hasnat Abdullah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Hasnat Abdullah, chief organiser (South) of the National Citizen Party (NCP), yesterday claimed that the politics of the BNP is now being funded by the Awami League.

"We have managed to ban the activities of the Awami League, but their financial network is still out of reach," he said as chief guest at an event held in Cumilla, in honour of injured and martyred of the anti-discrimination student movement.

Hasnat said, "Just as the politics of many upazilas in Cumilla is run by Awami League money, similarly, BNP's politics is also now financed by the Awami League. Those who are BNP leaders here, please don't consider us your enemies. I'm saying this for your own good. There are many upazilas in Cumilla where the politics of all parties has now been sold out to Awami League's money."

Pointing at Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, he said, "Those involved in the murders are out on bail, walking beside the families of martyrs. This is not only the government's failure but also the failure of Sir Asif Nazrul."

Hasnat said, "If the interim government thinks there are bigger reforms than the trials of the killers and the Awami League, they are mistaken. Justice for the killers is the first and foremost reform of this interim government." The event was organised by the District and Metropolitan Students Against Discrimination and was attended by leaders from various political parties, including NCP, BNP, Khelafat Majlis, Islami Andolon Bangladesh, and the AB Party.

### MAHESHKHALI CHANNEL

## LGED building jetty without BIWTA approval



MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Ignoring objections, the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Cox's Bazar is constructing a jetty in and on the foreshore of the Maheshkhali Channel, the most important waterway in South Chattogram that flows into the Bay of Bengal.

The unauthorised structure, built without a proper feasibility study, has raised serious concerns over siltation that may eventually fill up the channel.

For the project, LGED felled thousands of mangrove trees along the channel's bank.

Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain, adviser to the Ministry of Shipping and Labour, expressed dissatisfaction during a visit to Cox's Bazar on April 24, noting that the jetty was erected without approval from the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and involved illegal tree felling.

Nayan Shil, deputy director (Port) of BIWTA, said the Maheshkhali Channel plays a critical role in draining water from South

Chattogram to the Bay of Bengal and is now at risk of sedimentation due to LGED's unauthorised construction.

"We had sent them a letter to stop the work when it started. But the government body didn't pay heed to our objection," said Nayan, who was earlier posted in Cox's Bazar. He said a new letter is being prepared to halt the construction.

"If anyone wants to construct anything on a river, water channel or its foreshore, they must take approval from BIWTA. LGED didn't take our permission. They violated the rules," he said.

A recent visit to the site revealed ongoing piling work in the channel and foreshore, with thousands of mangrove trees already cut at Gorokhata area of Maheshkhali upazila.

Though LGED is building the jetty in the main channel, there is an older jetty about 300 metres inside the Gorokhata canal, connected to the channel and close to the new construction site.

Mohammad Boni Amin, upazila engineer of LGED in Maheshkhali, said the under-construction jetty is 700 metres long and 7.3 metres wide, with a 300-metre connecting road. The Tk 36.48 crore project began in April 2023.

"The foundation work has been completed. The old jetty is only 10 feet wide while ours is 24 feet. This project is for the public interest of the area," Boni Amin said.

The mangrove trees were planted during the 2003-04 fiscal year to form a natural coastal protection barrier. On July 31, 2023, the Coastal Afforestation Division, Chattogram, sent an objection letter to the LGED office in Cox's Bazar stating that prior approval from the environment ministry is mandatory for cutting such trees.

Mamun Khan, executive engineer of Cox's Bazar LGED, said they took permission from the Forest Department but not from BIWTA. He also claimed the jetty would not cause sedimentation in the channel.

The engineer could not confirm whether a feasibility study was conducted before starting the jetty's construction.



A local fisherman collects shrimp fry using a net in a river adjacent to the Sundarbans in Khulna. Each day during high tide, he sets up the net and lifts it just before low tide to gather the shrimp fry. He collects around 600 to 800 fry daily and sells each bundle of 1,000 fry for Tk 2,200-2,500. The photo was taken from the Sutarkhali River in Kalabagi, Dacope upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

### NETROKONA'S UPLANDS

## Rain, labour shortage delay paddy harvest

### JAYDUL ISLAM

While paddy harvesting in the haor regions of Netrokona has been completed, farmers in the district's non-haor areas are still facing severe difficulties due to equipment shortages, natural disasters, and lack of labour.

The non-haor regions, make up of roughly 144,385 hectares of cultivated land.

Many farmers from villages in Sadar, Barhatta, and Purbadhal upazilas expressed concern to this newspaper during a visit on Thursday.

Fazlul Haque, a farmer from Uradighi village in Barhatta upazila, said the persistent rain had disrupted his harvest.

"Because of the rain, I couldn't harvest all my paddy. It's all ripe now. But there's a shortage of harvester machines. We can't find labourers either, and the few that



are available are charging very high wages," he said.

Md Sekandar Ali, a farmer from Khatib Nagua village in Netrokona Sadar upazila, said two boys from their village were struck by lightning while fishing in the rain.

"Now the workers are afraid to

go into the fields. And the rain just won't stop. Most of the harvesters have also moved to other areas," he added.

Mohammad Nuruzzaman, deputy director of the Netrokona District Department of Agricultural

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### Man held with 2,820 yaba pills at Dhaka airport

UNB, Dhaka

A man was arrested with 2,820 pieces of yaba tablets hidden in his stomach at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, said Airport Armed Police Battalion yesterday.

A case has been filed under the Narcotics Control Act with the Airport police in this connection.

On information, the arrestee, Hossain Ahmed, 60, was detained near the northern side of the airport's Balaka building after arriving in Dhaka from Cox's Bazar on Biman Bangladesh domestic flight BS 152 on Wednesday.

Upon questioning, Hossain admitted to carrying yaba pills inside his stomach.

He was taken to the airport medical unit, where an X-ray revealed 30 capsule-shaped objects in his abdomen.

He was later transferred to Kurmitola General Hospital, where, under medical supervision, he expelled 30 tape-wrapped packets through natural means. Inside the packets, a total of 2,820 yaba tablets were found.

Police said Hossain had long been involved in drug trafficking.

Airport Armed Police said over 16,000 yaba pills were recovered in separate recent drives, which led to the arrest of five other drug traffickers.

## Take steps to stop cattle smuggling

### Livestock adviser directs law enforcers ahead of Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter yesterday warned against attempts by unscrupulous traders to smuggle in cattle from neighbouring countries ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, saying such activities must be stopped.

She said the Ministry of Home Affairs has already instructed the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the River Police to strengthen surveillance along land and river borders to prevent illegal cattle entry.

"Some dishonest traders may try to bring in foreign livestock centring Eid. This must not be allowed," she told a meeting of divisional fisheries and livestock officials at the Rajshahi Circuit House.

Farida noted that a high-level meeting has already been held at the ministry to address the issue of cross-border livestock movement.

During the same meeting, she also announced that mobile veterinary clinics will be set up at district level cattle markets by the Department of Livestock Services, where veterinary surgeons will be available to provide medical care for livestock in the lead-up to Eid.

She said basic healthcare services would also be

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## Fire guts over 100 shops in Munshiganj

UNB, Dhaka

More than 100 shops were gutted in a devastating fire at Sreenagar Bazar of Munshiganj district early yesterday.

Deputy Assistant Director of Munshiganj Fire Service and Civil Defence Shafiqul Islam said the fire started from a yogurt shop around 2:00am.

Initially, the night guards, accompanied by others, tried to douse the flame but had failed, and sought help from the Fire Service, he said.

Five firefighting units rushed to the spot and doused the flame after around six hours of effort at 8:00am, the fire service official said.

The cause of the fire could not be known yet, he said.

Manzurul Islam, owner of a wholesale shop in the bazar, said he had rushed from nearby Harpara village in an attempt to save his business but to no avail.