

## Woman dies of electrocution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

A woman died after being electrocuted in Netrokona's Barhatta upazila yesterday.

The incident occurred around 9:00am at her father's house in Charpara village under Raypur union.

Twenty-year-old Ritu Akter, daughter of Md Monzil Miah, had returned to her parental home for the first time with her husband, following their marriage, to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha.

According to her family, she noticed an electric wire in the kitchen and tried to fold and move it.

Just then, the electricity supply resumed, and she was electrocuted.

Hearing her screams, family members rushed to the spot and took her to Netrokona Modern Sadar Hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

Her cousin Sohrab Hossain said, "She had just come home for Eid. When she tried to move the wire, the power returned. She likely died instantly, though we took her to the hospital without delay."

Barhatta police confirmed the incident. They said as the family did not lodge any complaint, the body was handed over to them.



About 200 metres of the protective embankment near Naodoba Zero Point on the Padma Bridge in the Majhi Kandi area of Shariatpur collapsed into the river on Saturday morning due to erosion. Fearing further damage, three nearby shops were relocated. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## BGB fires blanks as crowd tries to snatch detainee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) fired blank shots in Teknaf on Monday to disperse a mob that allegedly tried to snatch a yaba smuggler from their custody, the force said in a press release.

The incident occurred around 4:30pm near Khurangkhali Border Outpost (BOP) under BGB-64 (Ukhiya Battalion), when a patrol team arrested Jahangir Alam -- an accused in a case filed by BGB on May 28 -- near the embankment adjacent to the BOP.

According to the press release signed by Lt Col Mohammad Jasim Uddin, commander of BGB-64, a group of 50-60 locals, including fishermen, gathered and began arguing with the BGB patrol team after the arrest. Although the team successfully brought the detainee back to the BOP, the group allegedly gathered again and attempted to surround the outpost in a bid to snatch Jahangir.

Following this, Jahangir's followers, including his relatives, alleged human traffickers, drug dealers, fishermen, and other locals, blocked the Teknaf-Cox's Bazar highway at Moulvibazar point using boats and burning tyres, the release added.

# Tidal surges damage 955 houses in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Monir Sardar, 45, a fisherman from Char Montaz union under Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila, and his four family members became homeless overnight as strong winds and tidal surges caused by a low-pressure system battered the coastline recently.

Since then, Monir has been living with his family in a makeshift shanty near the sluice gate area. "We live hand-to-mouth by fishing in the sea. All we had was the house, and now it is gone. I have no means to build a new house. We need the government's support badly," he told this correspondent.

Monir is not alone. Many people in the upazila are facing similar plight after at least 60 houses were damaged and over 10,000 people were waterlogged following heavy rains and flooding. Many still remain confined to their homes as water has yet to fully recede in the low-lying areas.

Across Patuakhali, at least 955 houses were damaged -- including 460 in Kalapara, 300 in Dumki, 270 in Patuakhali Sadar, 105 in Bauphal, 60 in Rangabali, 56 in Galachipa, 20 in Mirzaganj, and 15 in Dashmina upazilas -- leaving hundreds of people homeless.

"Only a skeletal frame of my house now remains that is unfit to live in. Wind blew off the tin walls and roof, and tidal surge



washed away the floor. I can't afford repairs without assistance," said Abbas Hawlader, 50, another fisherman from Char Montaz.

Omar Sani of Madhya Chalitabunia village said the nearby embankment collapsed due to the tidal surge, causing inundation across the village. "My home was partially damaged. For us, surviving here along the coast is a lifelong battle," he added.

Md Iqbal Hasan, upazila nirbahi officer of Rangabali, said relief efforts are underway. "We are preparing a list

of the affected residents. Rehabilitation will begin once damage assessments are complete."

Md Delwar Hossain, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Patuakhali, said it will take a few more days to complete damage assessments.

"So far, 109 tonnes of rice have been allocated for distribution among victims across the district. Each upazila has also received nine lakh takas for purchasing corrugated tin for rebuilding damaged homes," he added.

## Indurhat-Jilbari road renovation halted for months

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, *Pirojpur*

The renovation work of a two-kilometre stretch of road between the Indurhat and Jilbari areas under Pirojpur's Nesarabad upazila has remained halted for more than a year.

The 5km rural road serves as an important route connecting Nesarabad and Nazirpur upazilas. At present, a 3km stretch of the road, including the 2km under renovation, lies in a sorry state, with vehicular movement halted for a long time. As such, thousands of local residents have been facing immense suffering in their daily commutes.

The Local Government Engineering Department in Pirojpur initiated renovation of the 2km stretch of road through Jilbari and Binna villages under the Important Rural Infrastructure Development Project (IRIDP-3) in April 2023. The work order for the Tk 2.75 crore project was awarded to Efte ETCL (Pvt) Ltd, with a one-year deadline.

However, before the deadline expired in April last year, the contractor firm halted the work after completing only around 40 percent of the renovation.

"Nesarabad is a local commercial hub. Several thousand people come here from Nazirpur and other neighbouring areas daily for different purposes. They have to bear immense hassle during their commute," said Azharul Islam Tutul from Jilbari village.

Meanwhile, another 1km stretch of the road has also become dilapidated and unfit for vehicular movement. So, people are now being compelled to commute either on foot or using waterways via engine-boats, said Anwar Hossain, an elderly resident.

Mehedi Hasan, another local, urged the authorities concerned to renovate the 3km damaged portion of the road to mitigate people's suffering.

Contacted, Md Raisul Islam, upazila engineer in Nesarabad, said they have had no communication with the contractor firm.

"We have informed higher authorities in this regard. We have also sent a proposal for renovation of the other one-kilometre damaged part," he added.

Allegedly, Merazul Islam, managing director of the contractor firm, fled the country after withdrawing Tk 2,000 crore from the fund for eight projects in the district, including this one, according to LGED sources.

Following this incident, most of the development works of the LGED in Pirojpur have remained suspended.

The Anti-Corruption Commission has filed eight cases accusing Merazul of embezzling around Tk 1,073 crore from eight projects of LGED in Pirojpur, said Md Aminul Islam, deputy director of the ACC Integrated District Office in Pirojpur.

"We are also investigating nine other projects to find out if there was any corruption in them," he said.

Merazul is the former chairman of Pirojpur's Bhandaria Upazila Parishad and also general secretary of the upazila unit Awami League. His elder brother, Mohiuddin Maharaj, is a former Pirojpur 2 lawmaker.



## Cashew nut cultivation gaining Eid tourism expected Traders frustrated as rawhide

FROM PAGE 4

Five years from now, the production of cashew nut in the country's hilly areas is expected to be around 25,000 tonnes, and will continue to increase gradually over time, he added.

According to the official, around 160 saplings can be planted in 100 decimal of land. The plants begin bearing cashew nuts after two years, each producing around 15-20 kilogrammes initially. The production gradually increases as the plants get matured.

The raw fruit is sold at Tk 200-220 per kg, but after processing, the dry fruit fetches Tk 1,800-1,900 in local markets.

There are 22 cashew nut processing facilities in the country, he informed.

"So far, the pilot project has generated enthusiasm among the local farmers, and many more, including agro-entrepreneurs and unemployed youths, are showing interest in cashew nut cultivation," said Md Abdul Wadud, upazila agriculture officer in Nalitabari.

Golam Maula, a farmer from Nalitabari's Samoschura area, said he had cultivated cashew nut on one-acre land and earned a good profit from his harvest.

Uma Hajong, a farmer from Betoil village, said they are getting adequate

support from project officials.

Prof Dr Abdur Rahim, former dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Bangladesh Agricultural University, said boxing glove or kidney-shaped cashew nut is considered among the best dry fruits. It has around 50 percent fat, as well as rich with Vitamin-E and minerals including magnesium, zinc and copper.

Anti-oxidants present in cashew nut make skin look radiant and glowing. It also has anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anti-diabetic, anti-cancer, anti-microbial and cardio-protective properties, he added.

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Radiant Fish World, and the Dulahazra Safari Park.

Authorities, meanwhile, raised concerns over safety as the sea has been rough for several days, with parts of the beach forming dangerous pits and some areas experiencing reverse currents. Red flags have been raised to warn visitors, yet many continue to enter the water, ignoring the risks.

At least five bodies were recovered from the Cox's Bazar shoreline under Sadar upazila on Monday. Among the deceased, three were tourists, one local and one

unidentified person.

Security has been intensified, with Tourist Police, mobile units, and lifeguards working in coordination to manage the crowd. Mobile courts are also operating to ensure tourists are not harassed and that rules are followed.

Mohammad Sifatullah Sifat, a senior member of Sea Safe Lifeguard, said, "Our team is monitoring from towers, patrolling the beach, and using boats in the water. However, tourists themselves must stay alert for their own safety."

## Dhaka's air

FROM PAGE 3

Baghdad, and Kuwait's Kuwait City occupied the top three spots on the list with AQI scores of 174, 157, and 153 respectively.

The AQI, a daily reporting index, informs the public about how clean or polluted a city's air is and the possible health implications.

In Bangladesh, the AQI is calculated based on five pollutants: particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>).

Dhaka has long struggled with air pollution. Its air quality typically deteriorates in winter and improves during the monsoon.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution causes an estimated seven million deaths globally each year, mainly due to increased

mortality from stroke, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and acute respiratory infections.

## Team Group

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His second namaz-e-janaza will be held at BGMEA Bhaban on June 14. He will be buried at Banani Graveyard following the 3rd namaz-e-janaza at Banani Mosque on the same day.

Mosque expressed deep sorrow at the untimely death of Captain Saif. It said his professional skills, sense of responsibility, and commitment were a matter of pride for the airline.

As per the family's wishes, Biman's Toronto office is in close contact with the Bangladesh High Commission in Canada to bring back Captain Saif's body to Bangladesh.

FROM PAGE 3

He noted their target was to collect 100,000 hides this Eid, of which they had gathered around 80,000.

The government recently relaxed export restrictions on raw and wet blue leather for three months to boost local demand and prices. It also disbursed Tk 220 crore in incentives.

PRICES LOWER

OUTSIDE DHAKA In Chattogram, rawhide traders struggled to sell their stock, with many households forced to donate or dispose of unsold hides due to a lack of buyers.

Despite official price announcements, most transactions occurred at significantly lower rates.

Abdus Sabur from Halishahar said no one came to buy his cowhide, and he eventually donated it. A similar situation was reported in other areas.

Seasonal trader Atikur Rahman bought 170 cowhides at Tk 350 each but had to sell them for Tk 250 apiece.

Moslem Uddin, former vice president of the Chattogram Rawhide Traders' Cooperative Association, said government rates apply only to processed hides.

This year, cowhide was sold for Tk 600 to Tk 700 per piece, he added.

In the Rangpur division, rawhide traders are finding it difficult to

recover their capital.

Tariqul Islam from Gangachara upazila borrowed Tk 3 lakh and bought each cowhide for Tk 100-200, expecting to sell them for up to Tk 1,000.

"The current offers don't even cover processing costs," he said.

Similar frustrations were echoed by traders in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari, who now face high storage costs and declining leather quality due to inadequate preservation facilities.

In Moulvibazar, madrasas and orphanages, which traditionally rely on rawhide sales for funding, were shocked to find hide prices drop to Tk 250-300 on Eid day.

Md Shakawat Ullah, senior vice chairman of the Bangladesh Tanners Association, said the supply of cowhides is good this year, with a higher proportion of smaller hides.

He said prices have increased by Tk 100 to Tk 150 per hide compared to last year.

According to him, around 400,000 hides were collected over two days--Eid day and the following day.

On Monday, Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin said Bangladesh's leather industry has been struggling for 15 years and cannot recover quickly due to deep-rooted syndicates.

"I'm personally visiting various regions to break the grip of these syndicates," he said.

To stabilise rawhide prices, the government distributed 7.5 lakh tonnes of salt to help preserve hides, Bashir added.

He also blamed seasonal traders' lack of awareness for major losses during Eid.

The adviser also said efforts are ongoing to boost global demand for Bangladeshi leather goods.

WHY PRICES STAY LOW

In 2003, the government began moving the leather industry from Hazaribagh to a planned industrial park in Savar to reduce pollution.

But 21 years later, the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate is still not fully eco-friendly.

The central effluent treatment plant on the estate, built on 200 acres of land, is still not fully functional, polluting the nearby Dhaleshwari river.

Due to the persistent pollution problem in the estate, renowned international brands and buyers avoid buying leather from Bangladesh directly.

As a result, China has become the main buyer of Bangladeshi leather, but the Chinese offer lower prices.