



This is the only road connecting Rajshahi city with the Darusha area in Poba upazila. A new culvert, about 80 percent complete, is under construction here. However, downpours over the past few days have caused parts of the road to collapse, halting work and causing suffering to commuters. The photo was taken from Miapur Kulpara Mor yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHR UDDIN

Unsafe and unrepaired

Pothole-ridden Palbari-Manihar road in Jashore puts lives at risk

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Days of rainfall have left the Palbari-Manihar road in Jashore riddled with potholes, turning one of the busiest stretches into a hazardous route.

The Palbari-Manihar road is a key link for thousands of commuters travelling daily between Jashore town and other districts like Jhenaidah, Narail, and Khulna.

Maumun Rahman, a local, said, "The road in front of the BRTC office has not been repaired for a long time. With no drainage system in place, the rainwater has made the road almost impassable."



Others, including Muslimuddin and Mostadijur Rahman, said the situation is even worse in front of the Jashore Education Board office, where large potholes on the northern lane have made it impossible for buses, trucks, and rickshaws to move. Most vehicles now use the southern lane, further worsening the pressure on the already damaged road.

Contacted, Roads and Highways Department Executive Engineer Golam Kibria said a Tk 14 crore tender has been floated to repair the road. It has been sent to the ministry for approval.

One killed

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repairing the tank when the explosion took place. He was critically injured and was declared dead later at the hospital.

Witnesses and officials said a leak had been detected in the station's main storage tank about a week ago, prompting the closure of the facility pending repairs.

Yesterday, technicians began working on the tank, but around noon, the accumulated pressurised gas inside the chamber caused an explosion.

Mahir Uddin, an eyewitness who was nearby at the time, said, "The explosion was deafening. I was stunned for a while. The station and nearby buildings were heavily damaged. One person died on the spot while several others were seriously injured. It was horrifying."

Following the explosion, four units of Rangpur Fire Service rushed to the scene to conduct rescue operations.

Authorities halted traffic in the area and asked residents and bystanders to move to a safe distance.

The area was cordoned off by police and army personnel.

"There had been long-standing negligence in the station's gas storage system," the fire service official said. "Lack of proper maintenance likely led to this tragic incident."

Senior Warrant Officer of the Rangpur Army Camp, Sobahan Molla, said, "The army has launched an investigation to determine the exact cause. If there is evidence of negligence, the responsible authorities must be held accountable."

Funding cuts heighten risks

FROM PAGE 4

The funding decline is documented in a new UNHCR report that highlights the consequences of the global humanitarian funding crisis on displaced populations.

In Bangladesh, the report notes, the cuts are weakening an already strained aid response, leaving refugees, who rely entirely on external assistance, more vulnerable in terms of food, health care, education, and shelter.

Jahid Alam, a 45-year-old father of two, said he used to spend his earnings from maintenance work on extra food for his children.

"The amount of food we get every month is limited," he says quietly. "With the extra work, I could buy some variety for my children. Now, that is no

longer possible."

Jahid and his wife both have disabilities. Participating in maintenance work not only improved their nutrition but also kept them socially connected.

"[This] was never just a programme, it was a vital lifeline," said Afruza Sultana, who works in Site Management Support for BRAC, a key partner in the refugee response in Bangladesh. "It gave them more than just a wage -- it gave them purpose, dignity, and the means to feed their families and make alternative arrangements for basic needs."

The funding shortage is also impacting the maintenance of vital infrastructure, especially during monsoon season when upkeep of roads, bridges, paths, and latrines is essential.

In early 2024, roughly 5,500 refugees worked on over 500 infrastructure projects. This year, activity has declined by nearly two-thirds, leaving the camps increasingly exposed. Eroded roads, blocked drains, and broken bridges are now common.

Beyond infrastructure, the funding crisis is affecting other essential services.

With more Rohingyas arriving from Myanmar, resources are further stretched.

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