

# NEWS

## Two die in Sherpur flash flood

Breaches in embankments inundate homes and croplands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Flash floods triggered by onrush of water from upstream hills left two people dead in Sherpur's Jhenaigati and Nalitabari upazilas.

The deceased are Ismail Hossain, 17, son of street vendor Abdullah Mia of Tamagaon village in Jhenaigati, and Humayun Kabir, 10, son of Dulal Mia of Burunga village in Nalitabari and a second grader at Burunga Government Primary School.

Jhenaigati Police Station OC Al Amin said Ismail went missing around 4:00pm Thursday while trying to collect logs washed away by floodwaters in the Maharshi river near Tamagaon. Locals recovered his body around 1:00am after an 9-hour search.

Earlier around noon the same day, Humayun went missing in a similar incident while collecting logs in the Chellakhali river at Burunga. His body was recovered six hours later, around 8:30pm, said Nalitabari Police Station OC Sohel Rana.

Meanwhile, the flash flood damaged croplands and homesteads in both upazilas. According to the upazila administration, Water Development Board (WDB) and agriculture office sources, several points of the flood control embankment along the Maharshi river in Jhenaigati suffered breaches.

Around 100 metres of the embankment at Khoilkura and 50 metres at Dighirpar collapsed, flooding croplands and localities. A total of 1,565 hectares of farmland were submerged, of which 650 hectares of transplanted aman were completely damaged and 915 hectares partially affected.

Hafiz Mia, 38, a farmer from Gollar Char in Nalitabari, said, "The embankment breach has caused river water to inundate my land and house. My entire harvest is gone. I don't know how we will survive. We need government support."

Karim Sheikh, 55, of Tamagaon in Jhenaigati, echoed him.

Jhenaigati Upazila Agriculture Officer Md Forhad Hossain said, "Floodwaters from the Someshwari and Maharshi rivers have submerged croplands. Around 650 hectares of transplanted aman are fully damaged, 915 hectares partially damaged, and 86 hectares of vegetable fields remain under water. The damage may lessen if water recedes quickly."

Jhenaigati UNO Ashrafur Alam said, "We have visited the affected areas and moved disaster-hit families to shelters. Assistance will be provided after assessing the losses. WDB has also been instructed to repair the embankments without delay."



People wading through floodwaters in Jhenaigati of Sherpur yesterday. Flash floods from upstream hills left two people dead and damaged croplands and homes in the district's Jhenaigati and Nalitabari upazilas.

PHOTO: STAR

## Where have all the big hilsa gone?

Undersized catch floods markets amid poor jatka protection

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Large-sized hilsa have almost disappeared from markets across the southern region, with traders reporting that most of the catch now weighs between 200 and 400 grammes.

These smaller hilsa are being sold for Tk 400 to Tk 600 per kilogramme. According to the Barishal Divisional Fisheries Office, 60-65 percent of the hilsa currently being caught fall within this size range.

Fishermen said that unlike in previous years, when larger fish were available at this stage of the season, this year's catch is not only smaller in quantity but also dominated by undersized fish.

The Divisional Fisheries Department noted that hilsa below 225 grammes are considered jatka, whose capture and sale are prohibited. Yet jatka and slightly larger fish are being openly sold in markets.

On Wednesday alone, around 567 tonnes of hilsa were brought to 364 markets and landing stations in Barishal division, 65 percent of which were between 200 and 400 grammes.

At Barishal Port Road's

wholesale landing centre, Arif Enterprise's manager Md Shakil said most of the market supply consisted of small fish.

"A 300-gramme fish that cost Tk 1,000 per kg two days ago is now Tk 1,060. Fish weighing 700-800 grammes went up from Tk 1,960 to Tk 2,000 per

of 300-400 grammes of hilsa.

Traders blamed poor jatka protection drives last year for the scarcity of larger hilsa this season.

"Monsoon is supposed to bring good catches of large fish, but we haven't seen them so far," one trader said.



kg, while one-kilo fish rose from Tk 2,210 to Tk 2,260," he said, adding that 60-70 percent of the fish were small and overall supply was about half of last year's.

Fisherman Siddik Majhi from Kuakata said that from every five maunds of fish brought to shore, three maunds consisted

Shariful Islam, manager of the BFDC fish centre in Alipur, said adverse weather has kept many trawlers from going out to sea, cutting production.

"Of the 30 maunds of fish we received today [yesterday], about 25 maunds weighed between 300 and 400 grammes," he said, adding that hilsa prices

have jumped by Tk 5,000 to Tk 10,000 per maund over the past few days.

Fish weighing 500-700 grammes now sell for Tk 70,000 per maund, up from Tk 60,000-65,000, while one-kilo fish that fetched Tk 70,000-80,000 are now going for Tk 90,000 per maund.

Mohammad Anisuzzaman, senior assistant director of the Barishal fisheries department, said this year's hilsa production is likely to fall compared to last year. "We have indications of a decline. The main reason is that hilsa migration routes are shifting due to navigability loss, river pollution and climate change," he said.

"As a result, larger fish are scarce, and around 65 percent of the catch consists of hilsa weighing 200-450 grammes," he added.

While catching and selling jatka is illegal, he said monitoring the vast network of rivers is difficult.

"Whenever we get reports, we conduct drives with police, and law enforcers have already been instructed to crack down harder on jatka catching and sales."

## Bangladesh-US joint drill ends



PHOTO: COLLECTED

BSS, Dhaka

The six-day long joint exercise titled "Operation Pacific Angel 25-3" with participation of Bangladesh Air Force and US Pacific Air Force has concluded at BAF base Zahurul Haque in Chattogram.

The drill was held under the management of BAF, said a press release of ISPR yesterday.

Representatives of the US embassy in Dhaka, senior military and civil officials of the US Pacific Air Force, BAF officials and senior officials of the three services were present at the ceremony.

Assistant Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal (Ops) Javed Tanvir Khan delivered the closing speech.

"Operation Pacific Angel 25-3" was aimed at training the BAF to arrange exercise programme to ensure maximum use of the BAF helicopters and transport aircraft in emergencies and adverse situations.

A C-130J transport aircraft of the BAF, one Mi-17 helicopter and two C-130J aircraft of the Pacific Air Force, 150 members of the BAF and 92 members of the US Pacific Air Force participated in the drill.

## Hidden diabetes affecting 25m finally gets a name

STAR REPORT

An unusual and long-overlooked form of diabetes, linked to severe childhood malnutrition and affecting mostly lean patients, has finally been given a name, according to a Bloomberg report.

Researchers estimate that about 25 million people worldwide suffer from "type 5" diabetes, including in countries such as Bangladesh, Rwanda, and Indonesia, where healthcare systems are already strained and communities are vulnerable to climate change.

The findings, published September 18 in The Lancet Global Health, call for urgent development of diagnostic criteria and treatment guidelines. "The diabetes community must formally recognise this neglected entity, which likely affects the quality and length of life of millions of people worldwide," wrote lead authors Pradnyashree Wadivkar of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and Felix Jebasingh of Christian Medical College, Vellore, India.

Unlike type 2 diabetes, which is commonly linked to obesity and sedentary lifestyles, type 5 diabetes affects patients who are often in their early 30s, thin, and from impoverished communities. Many share a history of severe undernourishment as a fetus or in early childhood.

British researcher David Phillips, emeritus professor at the University of Southampton, first noticed this pattern nearly two decades ago while working in northern Ethiopia.

"There are people who die in a corner of their house because nobody ever thought about them having diabetes," Phillips told Bloomberg, highlighting how atypical patient profiles often delay diagnosis in resource-poor countries.

## Arrests made over violent disruption at NY consulate

Says press minister at Bangladesh embassy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several arrests have been made after activists from the Awami League's US chapter attempted to violently disrupt an event marking the first anniversary of the July uprising at the Bangladesh Consulate in New York on August 24.

Gulam Mortuza, press minister at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC, confirmed the development in a Facebook post yesterday.

"According to the US government, as of the second week of September, several individuals have been arrested, though no specific number was disclosed. The investigation is still ongoing," he shared.

He said both the embassy and the New York consulate are actively monitoring the situation. The New York Diplomatic Security Wing is coordinating with the New York Mayor's Office.

He informed that once the investigation is complete, US authorities will formally inform the New York consulate and the embassy. Based on the findings, a case may be filed.

This is the legal process in the US. The stage for filing a case has not yet arrived, he said in the Facebook post.

## WARI-BATESHWAR

# Gangariddhi museum project stalls for 6yrs

JAHIDUL ISLAM, Narsingdi

The construction of the Gangariddhi Museum at Wari-Bateshwar, one of Bangladesh's most significant archaeological sites in Narsingdi's Belabo upazila, has remained stalled for six years due to delays and administrative complications.

Initially planned for completion within two years, the project began in 2019 with an allocation of Tk 7.69 crore by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives.

Narsingdi Zila Parishad was tasked with implementing the project, while RCCL-RI received the contract. However, the work remains incomplete despite five deadline extensions.

According to the plan, a three-storey museum was to be built to showcase archaeological artefacts discovered at the site. But slow progress and management complications have left the structure unfinished.

At present, the incomplete building stands alone, while work remains halted.

Officials of Narsingdi Zila Parishad claimed that the construction work is now at the final stage. They said the delay stemmed from the fact that the museum is being built on privately-owned land using public funds, creating uncertainty over who will manage it once completed.

Visitors, who continue to visit Wari-Bateshwar, mostly leave disappointed due to the absence of a functioning



museum to display the recovered artefacts.

"I recently visited Wari-Bateshwar site, expecting to see something substantial.

However, it was a disappointment to see the museum's construction still ongoing. There was nothing much to experience," said Saiful Islam Akash, a student at Rajshahi University.

Wari-Bateshwar is considered a key archaeological site linked to the ancient Gangariddhi civilisation, dating back 2,500 years. Excavations led by Oitijhyo

Onneshan since 2000 have unearthed coins, weights, iron tools, terracotta figurines and manuscripts, indicating the presence of a prosperous urban centre in the past.

The Gangariddhi Museum was intended to preserve these artefacts and boost local tourism.

Khondkar Faisal Ahmed, founder of Bhai Girish Chandra Sen Central Library, said, "Our house is located right next to Wari-Bateshwar site. Due to administrative complications and negligence of those involved, the work was not completed on time. If the complications are resolved and the

work is completed quickly, the number of visitors to the site will increase significantly."

Contacted, Nur-E-Elham, assistant engineer of Narsingdi Zila Parishad, said, "We expect to finish the work within two to three months. Discussions with the ministry concerned are ongoing to resolve management issues."

Regarding the delay, he added, "The landowner repeatedly requested design changes. If the design was changed, the cost would have increased from Tk 7.69 crore to nearly Tk 19 crore. As there was no additional budget, the work had to be stopped."

Contractor Tapan Kumar Pal said, "There was repeated pressure to change the design and carry out the work as per the landowner's suggestions. Due to improper payment of bills and administrative complications, I could not complete the work within the stipulated time."

Professor Dr Sufi Mostafizur Rahman, founder of Oitijhyo Onneshan and professor of archaeology at Jahangirnagar University, said, "The government approved the design for a three-storey museum building. However, the Zila Parishad and the contractor wanted to complete the work as a two-storey building, to which I raised objections. As a result, they halted the work."

"Wari-Bateshwar is an asset of the entire country. Thousands of foreign tourists visit this site, and this has been made possible due to our writings. We have already received three awards for books written on Wari-Bateshwar. Therefore, if the museum is developed in accordance with the site's historical significance, it will enhance university research and attract more tourists," he added.

## He was fearless

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working people's liberation and stayed true to his principles. The younger generation must follow the path he showed," he said.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna called Umar a beacon in politics devoid of intellectual practice. "Politics without study and knowledge can achieve nothing substantial. Our politics needs more people like him," he said.

Jonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, said Umar influenced different generations through his writings and organisational work.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Umar's daughter Sara Akhtar Banu thanked the organisers and attendees, recalling her father as a tireless worker who never stopped writing, reflecting, or engaging with the country's issues, even in his final days.

Journalist Abu Sayeed Khan and Revolutionary Communist Party leader Saiful Haque also spoke, among others. Messages of condolence were also read out from writers and academics in West Bengal.

The programme, conducted by Faizul Hakim, convener of the memorial organising committee, began with a minute's silence. It also featured poetry recitation and the screening of a documentary titled "Chirantan Dipshikha" on Umar's life and work.