Jamuna devours 20 homes in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Jamuna river erosion has intensified over the past few days, devouring around 20 houses in Sadia Chandpur union under Chowhali upazila of Sirajganj.

Md Tanvir Hasan, chairman of the union parishad, said the erosion worsened since last Friday.

Dozens of people have been forced to relocate their homes, he said, adding that around 50 more houses and an educational institution in the union are also at risk.

"I lost my home to erosion last year and took shelter in Sadia Chandpur area. Now I have become homeless once again. I barely managed to save my belongings and relocate," said Saiful Islam, a local resident.

Atahar Ali Mondol, another erosion victim, shared a similar ordeal.

"Jamuna is eroding the riverbank areas rapidly over the last three days. At present, the river is 50 metres away from our school. If erosion continues at this rate, the school may be lost to the river," said Md Abdur Rashid, headteacher of Sadia Dewantola Sangkarhaati High School.

Md Solaiman Vuia, a sub-assistant engineer of Water Development Board in Sirajganj, said officials visited the spot on Monday for inspection.

"Jamuna's water level rose recently and then started to recede, causing erosion in the last few days. We are trying to begin riverbank protection work as soon as possible," he said.

A woman lays out earthenware plates to dry in the open. People from the Pal community in Maheshpur village of Bakerganj upazila in Barishal earn their livelihoods by making such products. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Banana boon for farmers in Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Banana farming in Sherpur, including in different hilly areas, has become a financial lifeline for many poor and marginal farmers.

This year, the target for banana cultivation was 660 hectares, but the figure has exceeded expectations, with 943 hectares brought under cultivation, said Mohammad Shakhauat Hossain, deputy director of the DAE in Sherpur.

He said cultivation is increasing every year.

The practice is gaining popularity as the soil and weather conditions in Sherpur are very suitable for banana farming. Farmers are showing more interest in cultivating the fruit as a cash crop, and many are becoming self-sufficient, he said.

The bananas produced in Sherpur are supplied to some 20 districts after meeting local demand.

Farmers are selling bananas worth Tk 80,000 to one lakh from 33 decimals of land, spending Tk 20,000 to Tk 30,000 on the same land, said the official.

DAE sources said banana is also being cultivated in various hilly areas of Jhenaigati, Nalitabari and Sribordi upazilas of the district.

Akkas Ali, another farmer of the same locality, said many in bordering villages

Growers said the demand for Sherpur bananas is high due to their good taste and quality. A large quantity is sold at Chowkidar Bari Bazar in Sribordi, where bananas worth around Tk 50 lakh are

sold every day during the season.

Taleb Ali, 50, a farmer of Sribordi Sadar union, said he planted 1,200 banana plants this season and expects sales of Tk six lakh.

are now focusing on banana cultivation.

Farmers said bananas can be harvested within eight months, making them a lucrative option as they are more profitable than many other traditional crops.

Dhak, dhol makers struggle to keep tradition alive

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

In the bustling lanes of Notunbazar in Sreemangal, while shoppers crowd clothing stores, a different scene unfolds at a small shop. Upside-down dhols of various sizes are neatly arranged as craftsmen quietly tie yarn around the drums in silence.

Seated in a corner is 79-year-old Soilendra Chandra Das, a master craftsman who has spent his life making dhaks, dhols, khol, tabla and harmoniums. His shop, filled with instruments crafted from cow and goat skin, stands as a fading reminder of a once-thriving profession.

"Earlier, I worked alongside my father and grandfather. There was so much demand that even five or six of us could not cope. Now, we only need to work for two to three months a year. It's no longer sustainable," he said.

Once, musicians and artisans were in demand across Sreemangal, and Soilendra recalls earning

up to Tk 1,500 a day. Today, finding a buyer for a single dhol is difficult. Prices range from Tk 2,000 to Tk 20,000.

"Interest in traditional instruments has faded. It's hard to even get Tk 100 for a drum now. I have been in this craft my whole life. It's in my blood," he said.

Another artisan, Ashutosh Rishi, 49, who runs a shop beside Soilendra's, echoed the same.

While demand rises during Hindu festivals such as Durga Puja, artisans often find little compensation. Once a regional attraction, the industry now struggles against modern instruments and shifting cultural tastes.

The instruments are made from neem and mango wood, with dhaks and dhols priced between Tk 5,000 and Tk 20,000 and tablas between Tk 3,000 and Tk 15,000. Despite their cultural and historical value, these instruments are being sidelined by cheaper modern alternatives.

AGS candidates pledge reforms, student welfare

strengthening the cyber cell to protect female students from online harassment.

"I want to start with fundamental issues -- ensuring security and access to essential services. I believe I can address reasonable demands by engaging everyone and working with the administration," she added.

LIKHON PUSHES FOR FULL AUTONOMY
Shah Poran Likhon, a student of Mass Communication and Journalism, aims to draft and implement a roadmap for a fully autonomous university.

He argued that real development is impossible without genuine autonomy, free from political parties and local influence.

"Autonomy exists only on paper. In practice, student organisations remain dependent on their parent political bodies and local politics," said Likhon, an independent candidate.

Despite the university entering its 73rd year, he said problems such as housing shortages, poor food quality, and lack of facilities still shape student politics.

"To end seat allocation based on affiliation or patronage, the university must become self-sufficient. My manifesto centres on 'self-service'," he added.

NASIM VOWS TO ENSURE TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY
Nasim Sarkar, from the Gonotantrik Shikkharthi Porshod panel -- a platform formed to fight for student rights, believes a democratic campus can only be restored by dismantling teacher dominance and empowering students.

A student of Bangla Language and Literature, Nasim has long been involved in student rights movements.

He blames "partisan control and fascist occupation" for problems such as partisan appointments in administration, politically driven hall seat allocation, and substandard food in dining facilities.

"We are not offering flashy promises, but focusing on fundamental issues," he said.

Sarkar pledged to dismantle the "feudal culture" in the university, where students are treated as subjects and teachers as rulers.

His manifesto includes an independent student-led faculty evaluation system, a permanent ban on partisan and fascist activities, ending corporate dependence in university funding, creating part-time jobs, and expanding

scholarships for underprivileged students.

MAHAYEER PRIORITISES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Mahayeer Islam, from the Sorbojonin Shikkharthi Parishad panel, vowed to shift the university's focus from political dominance to academic excellence.

"The university's glorious history has often been overshadowed by political movements, while academic achievements were neglected. I want to restore that balance," said Mahayeer, a student of Arabic and former coordinator of the anti-discrimination student movement.

He said after the July uprising, students had hoped for a change in political culture, but parties quickly returned to violence -- something his group stayed away from.

If elected, Mahayeer promises to implement an academic master plan,

ensure transparency in hall seat allocation, provide housing allowances for disadvantaged students, improve dining facilities, and fully develop TSC infrastructure.

He also pledged to introduce faculty evaluations by students and ensure transparent recruitment of internationally qualified teachers.

"The university must progress through research and knowledge, not politics. My goal is to return academic authority to students," he added.

PRAYER TIMING
SEPTEMBER 25

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-35	12-45	4-15	6-00	7-30
JAMAAT	5-10	1-15	4-30	6-05	8-00

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

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4 bodies recovered in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police recovered four bodies in separate incidents in Fatullah and Siddhirganj of Narayanganj yesterday.

The deceased include two children -- Abdullah, 4, who was killed after being hit by a battery-run three-wheeler in Fatullah, and Saifa Akter, 8, who drowned in a pond in Siddhirganj.

Sub-Inspector Yasin Arafat of Fatullah Model Police Station said the accident killing Abdullah took place around 8:00am. Driver Sagar, 30, later took the child to Narayanganj 300-bed Hospital in Khanpur, where doctors declared him dead.

Meanwhile, Saifa drowned in a pond near her house while she was bathing, said Jahangir Alam, senior officer of Kanchpur fire station.

Around noon, police also recovered the floating body of boatman Idris Ali Bepari, 45, from the Buriganga River near the Jamuna Oil Company ghat in Fatullah.

Idris went missing on September 22 after reportedly falling from his boat, said Jahangir Hossain, sub-inspector of Pagla River Police Outpost.

On the same day, police recovered the body of Ritu Akter, 22, from Hajiganj in Fatullah. Her father, Kashem Mia, alleged that his son-in-law called him around 9:00am, claiming that Ritu had taken her own life.

Kashem suspects he killed her daughter. Police said he has gone into hiding since the incident.