

## Crocodile attack sparks fear among fishers in the Sundarbans

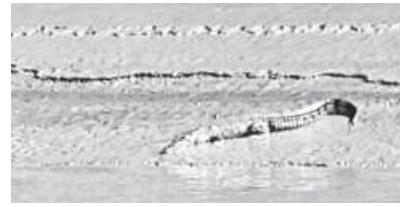
PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, *Bagerhat*

The recent death of a fisherman in a crocodile attack in the Sundarbans has triggered fear among locals, who are demanding stronger safety measures before venturing into the rivers and canals of the mangrove forest.

On September 30, Subrata Mondal, 32, of Khulna's Dacope upazila, was catching crabs when a crocodile dragged him into a canal. Fellow fishermen recovered his body nearly seven hours later.

While such incidents are not uncommon, awareness and safety practices remain inadequate, fishermen said.

"We are helpless. Fishing is our only livelihood. We know the risks, but there is no alternative," said Akkas Sheikh, a fisherman from Kachua.



Pasur river waterkeeper Md Noor Alam Sheikh said the crocodile population has increased, partly due to the Karamjal breeding programme.

Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, divisional forest officer of the East Sundarbans Division, said Subrata was attacked near Karamjal, close to a nesting site.

Due to increased restrictions this year, the area was undisturbed, allowing a crocodile to lay eggs there for the first time. The fisherman entered the water exactly where the crocodile was guarding its nest. He would have been safe if he had remained on land or in his boat."

Rezaul stressed the ecological importance of predators. "Crocodiles and tigers are the guardians of the forest's water and land respectively. Their presence is essential for protecting the Sundarbans' resources."

## Woman hacked to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A woman was hacked to death allegedly by a neighbour in Monirampur upazila of Jashore on Thursday evening.

The deceased was identified as Tripti Mondal, 38, wife of Abanish Mondal of Krishnabati village.

A neighbour, Shankar Mondal, 55, allegedly attacked Tripti with sharp weapons near her house and left her critically injured before fleeing the scene, said Md Babulor Rahman Khan, officer-in-charge of Monirampur Police Station quoting locals.

Tripti was initially taken to Monirampur Upazila Health Complex and then to Jashore General Hospital. As her condition worsened, she was being shifted to Dhaka, but died on the way. Her husband alleged that Shankar had long been making advance on his wife and attacked her as she rejected him.

A murder case was filed with Monirampur Police Station accusing Shankar yesterday evening.



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

**Sand extraction continues in the Padma river in Rajshahi, with dredging taking place day and night, even from protective embankments meant to safeguard this erosion-prone area. Such indiscriminate extraction is damaging the river and embankments, leading to severe erosion that threatens nearby homes. The photo was taken from the Bidhirpur area in Godagari upazila yesterday.**

## Renovated rail track left unused for 20 months

Officials trade blame while garbage covers unused line

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

A renovated railway track at Chattogram's Soloshohor Junction has remained unused for 20 months since its completion, raising serious questions over planning and accountability.

Track 4 at the junction was renovated under a project to enhance the station's capacity and ease train movement. Instead, it has become a dumping ground, with piles of waste and soil covering much of it and making it impossible for trains to use.

A floating kitchen market encroaches on its upper portion daily.

According to documents,

the railway's engineering department renovated two similar tracks at the junction, including this one, at a cost of Tk 99 lakh. The work was carried out by construction firm Namira Trading between June and December 2023.

Soloshohor Junction is a key connecting point under the Eastern Railway, serving at least 12 pairs of passenger and oil-laden trains daily on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar, Dhaka-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar, Chattogram-Chittagong University, and Nazirhat routes.

Of the five tracks at the junction, only three are currently in operation.

Abdul Hanif, former engineer of Chattogram Railway Division who oversaw the project, said, "Before train services



started on the Cox's Bazar route, the railway's traffic department requested us to renovate the line."

A staff of the junction said, "The entire money spent on renovating the line has gone to waste as no initiative has been taken to use it in the past 20 months."

Officials of the railway's traffic and engineering departments gave conflicting statements over the matter.

Zillur Rahman, sub assistant engineer of Soloshohor Junction section, said, "The line is fit for operating trains, but the traffic department is yet to start using it."

Arifur Rahman, master of Soloshohor Junction, claimed, "We have a shortage of

rail tracks for trains during shunting, but we are yet to receive any official message from the engineering department to use the renovated line."

Under railway rules, the engineering department is responsible for making train lines operational.

Asked why the line had turned into a dumping ground, Zillur Rahman said, "Even if the line is cleaned, it soon gets filled up with wastes again since no train runs on it."

Contacted, Chattogram Divisional Railway Manager ABM Kamruzzaman said, "I am not aware of this matter. If any department neglects its responsibility and causes the loss of public property even after renovation, action will be taken against them according to the rules."

## Two dead as truck rams auto-rickshaw in Gazipur

3 of a family injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

At least two persons died and three others were injured as a truck rammed into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw coming from opposite direction in Kaliganj upazila of Gazipur on Thursday night.

The identities of the deceased could not be known immediately, said Inspector Ashraful Islam of Kaliganj Police Station.

The injured are Hafizur, 40, his wife Saima Begum, 35, and their son Tamim, 4. All of them were passengers of the auto rickshaw.

The incident occurred around 9:00pm in Deopara Chatbar area on Tongi-Ghorashal bypass road when the truck hit the auto-rickshaw, leaving two passengers dead on the spot.



## Deep depression weakening

UNB, *Dhaka*

The deep depression over coastal Odisha and adjoining area moved northward, weakened into a land depression over Odisha and adjoining Chhattisgarh at 3:00pm yesterday, according to Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

It is likely to move in a north-northwestward direction further and weaken gradually.

Under its influence, steep pressure gradient persists over the North Bay. Gusty or squally weather may affect the maritime ports, the North Bay and adjoining coastal areas of Bangladesh, according the BMD update.

Maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal 3.

All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice, reads the update.



A farmer cuts and collects water hyacinths from his field. Heavy rainfall in the month of Ashwin has left large portions of farmland waterlogged. To protect Aman paddy seedlings, the farmer has to remove the water hyacinths from the plant beds. The photo was taken in Uzirpur upazila of Barishal yesterday.



ECO-TOURISM IN BARGUNA

## Neglect dims Harin Ghata's charm

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

The once pristine Harin Ghata eco-tourism site in Barguna's Patharghata upazila is steadily losing its appeal due to prolonged neglect and lack of maintenance.

Situated at the estuary where the Payra, Bishkhali, and Baleswar rivers meet the Bay of Bengal, Harin Ghata is known for its serene beaches, dense mangrove forests, and diverse wildlife – including over 500 spotted deer, after which the area is named.

Visitors are drawn to its tranquil environment, the melodic chirping of birds, and the rare opportunity to witness sunrise and sunset from the same location.

Developed in 2015 as an eco-tourism site under the initiative of the environment ministry, the forest area features walking trails, rest houses, watchtowers, and shaded huts.



The Forest Department collected Tk 1.2 lakh in revenue from ticket sales over the past year. However, visitor numbers have dropped sharply as much of the infrastructure has fallen into disrepair.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found parts of the foot trail broken, with slabs missing and wooden bridges in precarious condition. The suspension bridge inside the forest shook dangerously when walked upon. Plaster is peeling from structures including the watchtower and rest areas.

Local businesses are also suffering. "We now have better hotels and restaurants, but hardly any customers," said Jasim, a tea vendor near the forest entrance. "The access road is in poor condition, and the broken bridge inside deters repeat visits."

Tourists expressed disappointment as well. "The natural beauty here is unmatched, but the broken trails and lack of facilities are disappointing. Authorities should act immediately," said Shirin Sultana Rakhi, a visitor from Bakerganj.

Abdul Hai, the local forest beat officer, said, "Many structures were damaged during Cyclone Remal. We've been reporting the situation regularly to our higher-ups. We hope repairs will begin soon."

Assistant Conservator of Forests for the Coastal Forest Division in Patuakhali, Tarikul Islam, said a Tk 48 crore project titled Biodiversity Conservation and Eco-Tourism Development Project has been proposed under the ministry. Once funding is secured, major improvements will be made not only in Harin Ghata but also across other protected forest areas in Patuakhali and Barguna."

He said plans include mangrove afforestation on 2,500 hectares, enhancement of 1,000 hectares of existing forest, plantations of nipa palm and casuarina on hundreds of hectares, and the creation of flower gardens, ornamental tree plantations, and coconut and betel nut groves.

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## OBITUARY

Ziauddin Ahmed, Former General Manager, Bangladesh Telephone & Telegraph Board Died on 29 September 2025 in a Hospital. Please Pray for his Departed Soul.



Family Members