

## Mother, daughter killed in Sunamganj bus plunge

### STAR REPORT

A woman and her daughter were killed after a tourist bus, bound for Tanguar Haor, plunged into a roadside ditch near Inatnagar village, close to Pagla Bazar in Shantiganj upazila, Sunamganj, early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Monjura Akter, 37, wife of Abdullah Al Mamun, and their 10-year-old daughter Ayesha Siddika. At least ten others were also injured in the incident.

Suman Kumar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Joykolas Highway Police, said, "We found the bus overturned in a roadside ditch. Firefighters recovered the bodies of the mother and daughter trapped underneath and sent them to Sunamganj District Hospital for autopsy."

Quoting witnesses, the police official informed that the bus of Sejuti Travels carrying 11 senior officials of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) and their families left Dhaka for Tanguar Haor.

As the bus reached Inatnagar, it veered off the road and fell into a ditch. Monjura and her daughter, who were seated in the front portion, were crushed under the overturned vehicle and died on the spot, he added.

In a separate accident, two teenagers were killed after their motorcycle collided head-on with a sand-laden vehicle in Jahangirpur area of Chowgacha upazila, Jashore, yesterday afternoon.

The deceased, Imon Hossain, 15, and Ashraful Islam, 16, both from Bashapol Kaliakundu village in the upazila, were heading towards the upazila market on a motorcycle, police said.

OC Anwar Hossain of Chowgacha Police Station said the accident occurred when the motorcycle carrying the victims collided head-on with the sand-laden vehicle at the Bhadra intersection in Jahangirpur village, leaving both dead on the spot.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent them to the Jashore General Hospital for autopsy, the OC said, adding that legal proceedings are underway in connection with the incident.

## Three children drown in Rangunia pond

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three children drowned in a pond in Rangunia of Chattogram yesterday evening.

The victims are Sumaiya Akter, 5, daughter of Md Raju; Habiba Akter, 6, daughter of Md Kalu – both from Parua union; and Jannat Akter, 5, daughter of Md Naser, who had come to visit a relative's house in the area.

Rangunia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sifatul Majdar said the girls had gone to the pond while playing near their homes. When they did not return, their families began searching for them frantically and later found their bodies floating in the water.

The bodies were taken to a local doctor, who confirmed their deaths.

The bodies will be handed over to their families without an autopsy.



PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

As dusk descends, the riverside at Koilag in Bajitpur of Kishoreganj glows in shades of orange and red. While most people head home, a few fishers remain on the water, casting their nets in the calm of the setting sun. The photo was taken recently.

### CHUNARUGHAT IN HABIGANJ

# Sand lifting rampant despite crackdown

### MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Under the cover of darkness every night, valuable silica sand is being illegally extracted by a syndicate from streams within tea gardens in Chunarughat upazila of Habiganj.

Locals allege that politically influential groups have long been exploiting the natural resource, disrupting water flow, deepening stream beds, and causing erosion along the banks, putting nearby trees, homes, and settlements at risk.

During a recent visit to the Gilanichhara stream beside Deundi Tea Garden, this correspondent observed a group of workers loading sand onto a tractor with shovels. Upon noticing this correspondent's presence, the workers fled hastily, leaving the tractor behind.

What was once a narrow stream has now turned into a deep trench. The unchecked sand extraction has also caused hill slopes to crumble into the water, widening and disfiguring the natural terrain.

Balaram Ghatual, a local resident, said sand-laden trucks operate at night and that people are too afraid to speak up against the sand looters.

Similar illegal extraction is ongoing at 15-20 other sites across the upazila, including Badargazi and Amparachhara in Paikpara

union; Sutangchhara (Kalishiri and Ghanshyampur segments) in Ahmedabad union; Ichalia area in Gazipur union; Karangi river in Jankura, Mirashi union; and Jibdharchhara in Parkul Tea Garden, Ranigaon union.

"These streams once provided clean water for daily use. Now the water is either dried up or murky and unusable, forcing us to fetch

Chunarughat upazila administration sued 19 people for long-term illegal silica sand extraction from Gilanichhara. The complaint was lodged by Tahsildar Abdullah Al Mamun with Chunarughat Police Station.

The accused are Jasim Uddin, Arab Ali, Mintu Mia, Mozammel Mia, Mizan Mia, Mishuk Mia, Khoyer Mia, Saheb Ali, Rubel Mia, Farhad

leader and incumbent UP member," Abdullah Al Mamun said.

Contacted, most of the accused refuted the allegations.

Mohammad Jahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chunarughat Police Station, confirmed filing of the case and said efforts are on to arrest the accused.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit, said indiscriminate extraction of silica sand poses a grave threat to the local environment.

"Prised for its physical and chemical properties, silica sand is widely used in industries ranging from glass manufacturing to construction and artificial turf. Extracting silica sand without clearance from the Bangladesh Mineral Resources Development Bureau is illegal. If this continues, we'll be forced to pay a heavy price," he added.

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer of Chunarughat, said no leases have been issued for any of these streams for sand extraction.

"We regularly conduct mobile court operations, seize sand and vehicles, and fine or jail those involved. However, due to the remoteness of these areas, stringent vigilance remains a challenge," he added.



water from distant sources. The collapse of adjacent hill slopes has left many homes vulnerable," said Sunil Baraik, a worker at Deundi Tea Garden.

Recently, a mobile court drive in Badargazi area led to the arrest of 14 individuals who were caught red-handed while illegally extracting silica sand. They were later sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

On October 15, the

Mia, Sabbir Mia, Rahad Mia, Ramzan Ali, Tanvir Mia, Ali Haider, Elal Mia, Ekkas Mia, Sujan Mia, and Tahir Talukder.

"The accused have not only damaged the local environment but also deprived the government of significant revenue through their illegal operations. Most of them are known locally as BNP supporters. Ramzan Ali, however, is a local Jubo League

## Honouring two stellar women

bti, Star award 2 individuals in agriculture, environmental awareness categories



### STAR REPORT

The 6th winner announcement ceremony of bti-The Daily Star Stellar Women 2025 took place on October 16 at bti Celebration Point, honouring two extraordinary changemakers who have made remarkable contributions to society through their dedication and impact.

This edition of Stellar Women recognised Dr Nasrin Akter Ivy for her outstanding work in agriculture and Shah Israt Ajmery for her inspiring initiatives in environmental sustainability and awareness.

The event was attended by FR Khan, managing director of bti (Building Technology & Ideas Ltd); Aysha Siddiqua, executive director, communication and brand management, bti; and Abul Kalam Azad, digital growth editor at The Daily Star.

Ivy has been instrumental in transforming agricultural practices through sustainable methods that empower rural farmers and promote food security. Her work highlights how science and empathy can go hand in hand to strengthen Bangladesh's agrarian backbone.

Meanwhile, environmentalist Ajmery, chairman of Children Watch Foundation, has dedicated her career to addressing climate challenges through awareness, education, and grassroots action. Her initiatives have not only promoted environmental resilience but also encouraged youth and communities to take active roles in conservation.

Launched as a joint initiative by bti and The Daily Star, the Stellar Women platform shines a spotlight on rising Bangladeshi female professionals whose extraordinary work creates ripples of change across diverse sectors -- from healthcare and technology to social development, arts, and entrepreneurship.

Since its inception, the platform has highlighted stories of perseverance, leadership, and innovation, serving as an inspiration for generations to come.

## Youth held for raping schoolteacher

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Police detained a youth on the charge of raping a schoolteacher at gunpoint in the Tarang area of Matiranga upazila in Khagrachhari on Thursday night.

The accused was identified as Liton Tripura, 24.

Officer-in-Charge Tawfiqul Islam of Matiranga Police Station confirmed Liton's arrest and said a case has been filed under the Women and Child Repression Prevention Act.

According to the case statement, the victim had gone to Khagrachhari Sadar earlier in the evening and later visited Alutula with a friend on a motorbike. When they reached Tarang, a man followed them, intercepted them, threatened her with a firearm, and forcibly took her to a nearby forest where he raped her.

Afterwards, he demanded Tk 10,000 from her. The victim's friend managed to inform locals and the army, who conducted a raid and detained the accused.

Liton was later handed over to Matiranga police.

## Phulpur road in M'singh unrepaired for 50 years

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The two-kilometre road stretching from Kulirkanda to Ushumpur in Mymensingh's Phulpur upazila has remained earthen for around 50 years, causing immense suffering to hundreds of people.

On several occasions, the authorities were notified about the situation, but to no avail, said locals.

Khaleda Khatun, headteacher of Kulirkanda Government Primary School in Singheshwar union, said she has been travelling through the muddy road since she joined the institution six years ago. "The road becomes unusable even after a moderate rain," she said.

"Around four years ago, I wrote to the authorities concerned twice, seeking a solution, but no action has been taken yet," Khaleda added.

Swarna Akhter, a second grader, said many students find it difficult to get to school after rain.

Locals said hundreds of students from various educational institutions, including Merigai High School, Horinadi Dakhil Madrasa, and Hosenpur Isafia Mohila Dakhil Madrasa, use the road to reach their institutions.

Md Ayub Ali, a 60-year-old farmer from Dhanarbhita village, said, "We are unable to transport our produce through this road smoothly. Very often, we have to

depend on an alternative path, which is costly and time-consuming."

Morshida Begum, a member of Singheshwar Union Parishad, said they have informed the local authorities about the matter.



When asked, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sadia Islam Shema said she would look into the crisis.

Contacted, Md Jahangir Hossain, LGED upazila engineer in Phulpur, said 500 metres of the 2km road were concreted two years ago. "If funds are ensured, the remaining work will be done on a priority basis," he added.



Farmers in Rajshahi tend to their hybrid tomato plants as the flowers begin to bloom. While most winter vegetables are already available in markets, fresh tomatoes are yet to arrive. Growers say it will take over a month for the new crop to be ready. The photo was taken in Debipur village of Mohanpur upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN