

MEGHNA TRAGEDY

Over 100 people of Dashmina Upazila still missing

BSS, Barisal

Over 100 people from six unions under Dashmina Upazila of Patuakhali district are still missing following the tragic launch capsizing in Meghna on May 3.

It was gathered from relatives that at least 53 people have remained missing in Dashmina Union till now. They are, Khalil Akon, 32, Abdullah, 17, Anwar, 40, Sohrab Hossain, 28, Shanta, 2, A Rob Munshi, 45, Khalek Hawlader, 55, Somarta Banoo, 45, Azhar Chowkider, 30, Sattar, 20, Nasir, 25, Jyotsna, 16, Sonia, 8, Khalif Akon, 32, Alam Matabbar, 40, Abdullah Shamim, 20, Anwara, 40, Helal, 8, Sattar Bepary, 60, Soleman, 24, Abu Bakar Siddiki, 25, Ruhul Amin, 20, Anwar, 20, Minara, 18, Niras, 20, Bellal, 18, Liton, 15, Malek Matabbar, 35, Nahid, 9, Halumir, 55, Malek, 35, Faisal, 17, Mizan, 25, Abul Chowkider, 55, Forkan, 40, Dr Fakrul, 50, Jamal, 25, Faku Pallal, 50, Halima, 35, Rahat, 5, Suma, 3, Helal, 30, Malek Bhuiyan, 30, Rejmin, 17, Jafar, 20, Halima, 35, Shahidul Chowkider along with two children

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Alleged extortionist shot dead in Chittagong

BSS, Ctg

An alleged extortionist was shot dead by his rivals at village Islampur under Rangunia thana yesterday, police said.

They said the assailants, led by Ershad, shot Nanna, 27, son of late Meheruzzaman, point blank while he was taking tea at a stall in the morning.

Seriously injured Nanna died on the way to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

The body was sent to morgue for autopsy.

A case was lodged with Rangunia police in this connection.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 11		6-32pm
May 12	5-18 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

Edging towards ecocide... real estate builders fill the low-lying area of Ashuliya, a designated flood-flow zone. The filling-up of the area will result in a rush of millions of cubic metres of floodwater coming from the Bangshi River down to the Buriganga and the Tongi channel.

Inviting eco-disaster

Filling up of Ashuliya to cause flood in city, threaten Uttara dam, fear experts

MORSHED ALI KHAN

With the monsoon nearing, experts apprehend that developers are set to fill up most of Ashuliya, a designated 'flood-flow zone' and a tourist attraction, about 30 kilometres northwest of the capital.

If Ashuliya is filled up, millions of cubic metres of floodwater coming from the river Bangshi in the upstream will directly rush down the Buriganga and the Tongi Khal towards the capital, fear experts of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Rajuk and Water Development Board (WDB).

This 'sea of water', otherwise retained in Ashuliya, will inundate hundreds of peripheral villages and crush the flood protection embankment of Uttara and the city.

They also believe that the huge amount of additional floodwater would also cause serious erosion in the rivers down stream.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) has designated Ashuliya as a 'flood-flow zone'. Ashuliya also retains millions of cubic metres of water from inside the flood protection embankment at Goran Chandbari.

At least half a dozen small and large developers are filling up this vast low-lying land during the wet season when large barges are able to carry

huge amount of earth and unload it into the water. Similarly, acres of low-lying land in the area were filled up last year for a 'model town'.

The executive engineer of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), Selim Bhuiyan warns that filling up of Ashuliya would entail an environmental disaster, endangering the entire ecosystem of the area.

"This sea of floodwater accumulates in the vast low-lying areas of Ashuliya before slowly draining down the Buriganga under the Mirpur Bridge," said Selim Bhuiyan. "If this passage is filled up we have a disaster in hand."

Local people said that hundreds of acres of land one side of Ashuliya would be filled up in the oncoming flood season.

Developers have bought the entire stretch of land from local people over the last years.

Although the immediate-past government pledged to protect Ashuliya from reclamation, there has so far been no step in this direction, experts said.

According to sources, the government also instructed relevant authorities, particularly the Rajuk, not to allow any construction within five metres

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia meets UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at UN Secretariat in New York on Thursday.

High priority to protection of children: PM

UNB, New York

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday pledged to pursue people-oriented growth with special emphasis on the poor, vulnerable section and the children.

She also made a commitment to working for the advancement of the status of children, including their access to quality education.

The prime minister was speaking at a roundtable group discussion, organised on the occasion of the ongoing UNGA Special Summit on Children here yesterday.

Khaleda Zia said measures to protect children from all sorts of abuse would receive high priority with her government.

The group discussion was co-chaired by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and President of Guatemala Alfonso Portillo Cabrera. Heads of state and government from more than 60 countries are participating in the 3-day special session that began on May 8.

The Bangladesh prime minister also reiterated the pledge that children will not be left out of the purview of any socio-economic development programmes of her government.

Khaleda Zia asserted that Bangladesh would join hands with the UN and

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PM meets Annan, asks for better representation in UNDPKO

UNB, New York

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia Thursday attended a luncheon hosted by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan for the heads of government and state attending the UN Special Session in Children.

This was the first meeting between Khaleda Zia and Kofi Annan since he assumed office of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Annan thanked Khaleda Zia for participating in the UN session and the valuable contributions that Bangladesh has made to the preparation for holding the summit. "Bangladesh has played a very important role in the event," Annan told Khaleda Zia.

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Road accidents kill seven in Moulvibazar, Sirajganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven people were killed and 48 others injured in separate road accidents in Moulvibazar and Sirajganj districts yesterday.

Of them, five were killed in Moulvibazar and the rest two in Sirajganj.

In Moulvibazar, at least five people were killed and 40 others injured when a night coach overturned at Kamalpur, some 12-km off the district town, on Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday morning, according to UNB.

Police said the Sunamganj-bound night coach from Dhaka overturned at about 5 am when the driver lost control over the steering, leaving five people killed on the spot.

Four of the dead were identified as Mukul Das, a Union Parishad

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WC quiz draw-2: First prize goes to Sudhangshu

SPORTS REPORTER, from Khulna

Sudhangshu Sekhar Roy became the luckiest person in the Round Two draw of The Daily Star-Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz 2002 in Khulna yesterday.

A journalist from the Circuit House Road of Dhaka, Sudhangshu won the first prize, a 21" Toshiba Flat Television. His was the first name to be picked at a lively draw at the Zia Hall of the metropolis in the afternoon.

Winners' list and correct answers on page 13

Mayor of Khulna City Corporation Sheikh Tayebur Rahman drew the coupon of Shudhangshu in presence of a packed audience that included people from all walks of life.

Ripples of partisan delight

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City ward commissioner Newton gunned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A newly elected ruling BNP-backed Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward commissioner of Mirpur was gunned down and two of his aides were wounded at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Police said three unidentified gunmen shot and killed Saidur Rahman Newton, commissioner of ward No. 8, as he came out of Sheetal, a barber shop at Road No. 27, Dhanmondi at about 11:30 am yesterday. He was about to get in the microbus (Dhaka Metro-Cha-11-3668) to join the wedding reception of his younger brother scheduled to be held at the Rajanigandha Community Center at Dhanmondi.

A fatally injured Newton was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died, sources said.

Newton, also vice-president of the suspended central committee of BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), was elected ward commissioner in the DCC election held on April 25.

Kazi Ismail, a bodyguard of the



Saidur Rahman Newton

commissioner, was hit in the thigh and the commissioner's driver Naya Mizan in the throat, police and hospital sources said. They were receiving treatment for critical injuries.

Newton was accused in at least 36 criminal cases. However, some sources said all the cases were filed during the rule of the Awami League

government to harass him politically.

Family members of the slain ward commissioner said some members of Kala Jahangir group had come to his residence in his absence only five days ago and issued threats to him.

Sources said Kala Jahangir might have hands in the killing in an attempt to establish his supremacy in Mirpur area.

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuluzzaman Babar and State Minister for Land Ukil Abdul Sattar went to the DMCH to see the body.

After autopsy, the body was taken to the BNP central office at Naya Pallan and later, it was sent to his constituency. His Namaj-e-Janaja was held at the BNP central office at Naya Pallan after the Asr prayers. He was to be buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur.

Newton married Misty, sister of

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Naushin's death & home minister's philosophy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury has said that none can change destiny when it comes to death.

"Life or death is in the hands of Allah and none can do anything about it. Allah has taken back his creature," philosophised the home minister while visiting the central Badda residence of Marisha Islam Naushin who died in firing on Thursday.

Reacting to the death of the baby, the minister told newsmen, "The baby was not the target (of firing). Bullets were fired from the other side of the street. None thought the bullet would hit (the baby) in such a way."

The minister assured Naushin's family members of the arrest of the culprits.

Meanwhile, police yesterday arrested two persons for their suspected involvement in the killing of 20-month old Naushin, daughter of Nazrul Islam.

A stray bullet hit Naushin cradled in her father's arms, when a gang of extortionists fired at him fearing mob attacks. Naushin was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared her dead.

The incident occurred when Nazrul was returning to his central Badda residence along with his daughter after meeting his brother at north Badda.

Earlier, the gang illegally demanded tolls from Tarek Hossain Palash,

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School girl raped, killed in Laxmipur

UNB, Laxmipur

Miscreants raped a school girl and then killed her at North Chandrapur village in Sadar upazila Thursday night.

Police said the hoodlums abducted Shamsunnahar, 12, a student of class VI of Hajipara High School, while she was returning home in the evening after purchasing rice from Hajipara bazaar and took her to a garden. They raped Shamsunnahar and then strangled her.

Police recovered the body from the spot yesterday morning and sent it to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Most of world's disabled live in South & SE Asia

AP, Bangkok

Nearly two-thirds of the world's disabled people live in South and Southeast Asia, where they are locked in poverty and suffer discrimination, a U.N. agency said yesterday.

Some 400 million out of the world's 600 million disabled people live in the region, said a statement by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, or ESCAP.

Most are impoverished as a result of their disabilities or face handicaps resulting from poverty, including nutrition-related problems such as stunted mental and physical development, said the statement, citing a recent study.

Others are disabled as a result of road accidents, aging, alcohol dependence and schizophrenia.

"Poor people with disabilities are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and disability, each being both a cause and a consequence of the other," it said.

Disabled women and girls face the most severe discrimination, and while laws have been passed by

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Lawyer, petrol pump owner shot dead

Young man stabbed to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lawyer of the District Judge's Court, Dhaka and owner of a petrol pump were shot dead and two others bullet hit inside a private car at Narinda in the city yesterday.

The dead were identified as Advocate Anwarul Islam, 50, and Shah Newaz Babla, 50, owner of Karim and Sons petrol pump at Motijheel.

The injured -- Rezaul Karim Bachchu, 50 and Gabinda Chowdhury, 55-- were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses said the incident took place when Babla along with Anwarul Islam and manager of his petrol pump Bachchu were returning from the house of a lawyer at about 8 pm.

As soon as their car arrived near Narinda moth, another private car obstructed its way. Three armed

youths came out of it and opened fire, leaving the two dead on the spot, said Abul Kashem, driver of the attacked car.

The killers boarded their car again and fled the spot immediately, kashem told our DMCH correspondent at about 9 pm.

The motive behind the killings and other details could not be known. Meanwhile a young man was stabbed to death by a gang of miscreants in the city's Pallabi area yesterday morning.

Manjurul Haq Titu, 28, son of Alhaj Mahbulul Haq of 11B, 242, Pallabi, was called out of his house by one Shamsuddin along with his accomplices took Titu to a place in Block-B, Section-11 and stabbed him.

Titu was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH)

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Rice supply from Naogaon comes to a total halt

City traders back 'action programme'

REAZ AHMAD

Supply and marketing of rice are facing a major disruption with the staple food traders at Naogaon stopping its supply to different parts of the country including Dhaka for the last two days, protesting unabated highway robbery.

They suspended supply from the biggest rice supply centre in the entire northern region of the country on Thursday for an indefinite period in protest against alleged looting of several dozens of rice-loaded trucks and murder of some 15 truck drivers and helpers in the last six months.

They demanded an immediate end to 'growing insecurity' of rice carrying trucks and the drivers on northern highways, particularly on Naogaon-Dhaka route via Bangabandhu bridge on the Jamuna.

When contacted last night, Food Minister Abdullah Al-Noman said, "This has become a serious problem and I discussed the issue of security today with our party's Secretary General (Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan)."

He went on, "An organised gang is operating from Pabna-Sirajganj belt and they are involved in looting of rice carrying trucks and killing of drivers and helpers."

The Ministry of Home Affairs is monitoring the situation and would do the needful, Noman said.

Food ministry sources, however, brushed aside fears of any supply crisis of rice in the country because of the present action of rice traders.

Traders at one of the biggest rice wholesale markets in the capital at a meeting yesterday took stock of the situation and supported the action programme of the rice traders and truckers in Naogaon.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, traders at Mohamadpur Krishi Market in the city strongly resented 'government indifference' to incidents of highway robbery and 'failure to ensure security of rice carrying trucks and their drivers. They feared price hike of rice unless the supply line is restored soon.

Supply of rice was partly suspended on Thursday and fully from yesterday.

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