



PHOTO: STAR

A rickshawpuller struggles to make his way on a muddy and run-down road near Jatrabari fish wholesale market in the city yesterday. The road has remained in such bad shape for long, but the authorities have turned a blind eye.

50pc launches have no registration

Speakers tell press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 70 percent of 501 launches that met accidents in last 31 years, were built without proper design, said the speakers at a press conference yesterday.

They said about half of the 20000 launches, that are now plying regularly in different river routes, have no registration, and most registered launches are not built with proper design.

The press conference was organised jointly by Nirapod Noupath Bastabayan Jote (a coalition to implement safe waterway) and Shipping and Communication Reporters' Forum in observance of the Safe Waterway Day and to commemorate the fourth year of MV Nasrin launch disaster that left around 800 people dead.

The speakers said naval architects are supposed to prepare the design of the launches, but in prac-

tice inefficient draftsmen do the job resulting frequent launch accidents.

In a written statement, Aminur Rasul Babul, national coordinator of the alliance, said faulty design, launch drivers' inefficiency, reckless wheeling, excessive loading, defying security laws, absence of search lights, and unawareness about weather forecast are the main reasons for launch accidents.

There is no national guideline for the stability of the country's inland water transports, he said, adding though Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority follows the guidelines of International Maritime Organisation to ensure the stability of water transports, but these guidelines are not appropriate for inland water transports as it has been made for the sea-bound vessels.

Babul said about six crore people travel through 8433-kilometre-long waterways annually, but only

Tk 259 crore has been allocated for shipping ministry in the new national budget which is not adequate.

He said the government-sponsored project named 'Inland shipping safety administrative act' has become ineffective as the guidelines of the project were not implemented properly though it was launched to ensure inland water security.

He came up with some recommendations including one-stop service in the Directorate of Marine Transport, setting up four mobile water courts under the magistrates of Chandpur, Barisal, Patuakhali and Khulna districts, compensation for the dead and injured families after amending Inland Water Ordinance 1976, detecting risky routes and formation of taskforce with trained rescuers.

He also recommended setting up police camps with the provision

of lifejackets for passengers, and appointment of additional inspectors during Eid, Puja and other festivals.

"We want to wage a movement to ensure safe waterways in the country to resist untimely deaths," he asserted.

Moinuddin Zulfiquer, engineer and ship surveyor of shipping department, said it is regrettable that despite knowing the problems we cannot solve them.

"There are many problems which cannot be solved overnight," he said, adding, " But we are trying to solve them through short and long-term planning in this regard."

The press conference was also addressed by Jote Chairman Syed Alam, members Jayed Iqbal Khan and Shahdat Hossain, and Convener of Save the Environment MovementAbu Naser Khan.

Ctg port CBA office, illegal structures demolished

CPA land recovered

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court demolished illegal structures, including CBA office of the port workers, and recovered 14 kathas of CPA land near Chittagong Port Gate No. 4 during a drive yesterday.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) land at Middle Halishahar had been occupied for nearly three decades, sources said.

The demolished structures include offices of Chittagong Port CBA, Port Agents Stevedores and Contractors Employees' Union, Bandar Dock Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and Abdul Jabbar Canteen.

The drive led by CPA Magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury aimed at expediting the process of extension of Chittagong port area and implementing its different important projects, said the sources.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police and port security personnel assisted the mobile court in the drive.

200 shanties burn down, 12 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 200 shanties burned down and 12 people suffered injuries in a devastating fire that ripped through a slum at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

The fire originated from a kitchen at No 1 Gudaraghat slum at around 6:00pm and soon engulfed the entire slum, fire brigade sources said.

Twelve slum dwellers were injured while trying to extinguish the fire and taking out household goods and other valuables from

their homes.

Fifteen fire fighting units from four fire service stations rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after a struggle for about half-an-hour.

The fire fighters said that traffic jam caused delay reaching the area.

Sheikh Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, deputy director, operation and maintenance, Fire Service and Civil Defence, said, "The fire spread fast as the houses were tin-roofed and were located very close to one another."

Two new PSC members sworn in

UNB, Dhaka

Former ambassador Mirza Shamsuzzaman and ex-joint secretary AYM Mosharraf Hossain took oath as members of Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) yesterday.

Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin administered the oath to them at a simple ceremony at his office.

Earlier on June 21, former acting secretary of labour and employment ministry M Nurunnabi and former principal of Dhaka Home Economics College Suraiya Begum took oath as members of the PSC.