An Avoidable Death

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At 19, Fahim Shahriar Chowdhury (Rafi) had a bright future ahead of him. He was in his third semester at the American Independent University of Bangladesh (AIUB), where he was pursuing a BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE). During his free time he would go swimming at the Dhaka University pool. On Wednesday June 19th, he would do so for the last time.

That morning, soon after 11:00 am, Rafi took a dive from a board a few feet above the water, injured himself upon contact with the surface of the pool, and never re-emerged. It is not clear exactly what injury he sustained as a result of the dive that made him sink; he was an able swimmer by several accounts. According to newspaper reports, he was found unconscious around 11:45 am. By the time he arrived at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he was pronounced dead, say newspaper reports.

A more detailed account of the incident reveals disturbing cracks in Dhaka University's swimming pool safety standards.

When Rafi first sank to the bottom of the pool, several swimmers tried to rescue him. But he was at the deep end, 20 feet from the surface, and no one could hold their breath long enough to swim that low and pull him up. There was a swimming instructor who could swim down, but he wasn't strong enough to recover the body on his own.

Around that time, a Dhaka University student who is an adept swimmer, Mohammad Sadiq Rahman, attempted to rescue Rafi. He was also able to swim 20 feet down and, together with the swimming instructor, pulled Rafi out of the pool. Rafi had spent 10-15 minutes underwater at this point. He was unconscious and bleeding from the mouth and nose.

> Rafi was let down by the institutions meant to protect him. There is no word in the dictionary for a living parent who has lost a child perhaps because it is a fate so terrible. And yet Mr and Mrs Chowdhury are left without a beloved son who held so much promise.

Without any designated officials to take charge of the situation, chaos ensued. There were over a hundred swimmers at the pool, and people offered suggestions. At one point, Sadiq began administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), which consists of a combination of chest compressions and artificial respiration and is aimed at restoring partial blood flow to the brain and heart.

He stopped when another swimmer checked Rafi's pulse and declared that Rafi still had one. That swimmer urged someone to rush Rafi to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Once again, there