

A life lost due to negligence

Sylhet poet dies after falling in drain being constructed by SCC without safety measures

Our Correspondent, Sylhet

Poet Abdul Basit Mohammad succumbed to injuries yesterday morning at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, after he got hurt falling into an under-construction drain in Sylhet city's Amberkhana area on Monday evening.

The drain was being constructed by the Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) and like many other projects of SCC, no safety procedures were being followed at the site, said residents and cultural activists.

Criticising SCC for not maintaining safety protocols at under-construction sites, they said for years, almost all city roads and drains are being repaired. But while carrying out the construction works, the city authority never follows safety measures to avert possible accidents.

"We never saw the city corporation or the contractor of their development projects follow such protocols. This blatant negligence claimed the life of a renowned poet," said Abdul Karim Kim, coordinator of Sankhdbhoo Nagarik Andolon in Sylhet.

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Authorities have left pedestrians no other choice but to jaywalk at this section of the road in front of Cirdap auditorium for the foreseeable future, as they are building a police box by occupying the whole width of this footpath. Citizens know this is not right. Law enforcers know it is against the law. So, how did authorities think that this is a sound decision?

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ILO's VIOLENCE AND HARRASSEMENT CONVENTION

Ratify C190 for violence-free workplaces: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On June 21, 2019, International Labour Conference (ILC) of International Labour Organisation (ILO), in its 108th session adopted the first-ever standards on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace — Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190), and Recommendation (No. 206).

To eliminate gender-based violence including all incidents of violence and harassment in the sphere of work, it is important for Bangladesh to ratify ILO's new convention C190, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

It is also important to have a clear understanding and analysis on the existing legal and policy provisions of Bangladesh to eliminate gender-based violence in the workplaces, they stressed.

The event, titled "Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work: ILO Convention C190 and its relevance for Bangladesh", was jointly organised by The Daily Star and Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme (RMGP-II) of ILO, as part of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

Tuomo Poutiainen, country director of ILO Bangladesh said, "There is a very

clear commitment and understanding by the UN system in Bangladesh that without addressing issues related to gender-based violence, as well as violence and harassment in the world of work, it is impossible to achieve the SDGs."

"There is simply no enabling environment to promote gender equality and to promote the economic development of Bangladesh," he said.

Without women participating in the labour force, women's economic empowerment, along with a violence and harassment-free workplace, is not possible to achieve SDGs, Tuomo added.

Shammin Sultana, programme officer, Gender Mainstreaming, RMGPII, ILO Bangladesh cited a recent ILO/RMGPII study on 'Understanding the Gender Composition and Experience of Ready-Made Garment (RMG) Workers in Bangladesh', pointing out that women workers make up 60.5 percent of the RMG labour force; 97.1 percent of them are mostly employed in the low-paying jobs, and have very limited representation in managerial and leadership positions.

It also found that 61.7 percent of both women and men workers experience violence and harassment in the workplace, SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Work plan prepared to tap into potential of blue economy

Says foreign minister

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday said a work plan has been prepared that will act as a guideline to tap potentials of the blue economy.

"Bangladesh considers the blue economy as one of the cornerstones for its economic growth and socio-economic development," he said.

Dr Momen said the blue economy was an integral part of the government's election manifesto.

"We already have a lot of suggestions, recommendations, outcomes and discussions from meetings, workshops and seminars. Now, it is time to materialise all these, get into pragmatic actions and stop ecocide," the minister said.

Dr Momen said it is high time to decide which marine sectors to prioritise, based on domestic needs and demands of the global market, and chart a course towards a new horizon, in partnership with the regional countries.

He was addressing an international webinar titled "Blue Economy in Post-Covid-19 Era: Resilience Strategies for the Coastal States" as the chief guest. It was organised by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman Maritime University (BSMRMU).

Deputy Education Minister Barrister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, President of East-West Center, Hawaii Dr Richard R Vuylsteke and Vice Chancellor of BSMRMU Rear Admiral Khaled Iqbal also spoke.

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Teenager killed by 'muggers' in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenager was killed and another injured allegedly by muggers in Abdullapur area of Dhaka's Uttara on Wednesday night.

The deceased, Jisan Habib (18), and injured Ruhul Amin (17), both residents of Sonaimuri upazila of Noakhali, were returning to Nabinagar from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) around 10pm by a local bus when the incident took place, said Tapan Chandra Saha, sub-inspector of Uttara West Police Station.

They were visiting relatives in Dhaka and went to see off one of the relatives at the airport, the SI said.

Jisan, a college student and Ruhul, a school-goer, were playing games on their mobile phones when the bus stopped at Abdullapur. A mugger snatched Jisan's phone through the open window, prompting the duo to get after him.

They caught hold of the mugger after getting off the bus and started beating him, when another member of the mugger's gang attacked them with a knife from

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A mess 28yrs in the making

Savar Municipality cannot seem to find a landfill site; wastes being dumped beside roads, waterbodies

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Savar Municipality authorities have failed to arrange a landfill or garbage dumping station in its 28 years of establishment, hampering waste management to a great extent.

Due to a lack of designated spot, wastes from households, businesses, healthcare centres, vendors, restaurants and roadside shops are regularly being dumped beside roads and waterbodies, said locals.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found piles of garbage on the banks of the river Bongshi at Namabazar, Dhaleshwari at Ulail and Karnapara canal near Dhaka Aricha-highway.

Even educational institutions were not spared. Heaps of garbage were seen next to Savar Women's College, emitting a tough-to-tolerate stench.

Kabir Hossen from Talbag area near the college said they continue to suffer from the filthy obstruction and stench.

Shohidul Islam, a resident of Namabazar area, said municipality cleaners as well as locals have been dumping garbage beside the Bongshi river for years.

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Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh had said months ago that no battery-run autorickshaws will be allowed to ply the streets in the south side of the capital, yet not only are the vehicles running on the roads of Lalbagh, but they are also taking up the whole street by parking on the road at a busy intersection. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Girls' dropout rate may rise after school reopening: survey

Early marriage, economic crisis amid pandemic the reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One in 10 girls said they may not go back to school after reopening because of economic problems and marriage, found a study by the Population Council, circulated yesterday.

The research organisation followed a group of 479 girls aged between 12-15 years from April to September to track their lives through the pandemic. The average age of the girls was 14 years and they were from the districts of Chapainawabganj, Kushtia and Sherpur.

When the first round of interviews began in April, seven percent of the girls were already married in spite of being underage. By September, 35 more girls got married. Discussion of marriage and matchmaking also began for a significant number of girls, reported the study.

The report states that by mid-June, 52 girls reported child marriages happening in their community, and by September's end, a further 100 girls reported under-age marriages happening around them.

"Although most girls reported studying independently with help from family members, the percentage of girls not studying at all significantly increased from 1 percent (in April) to 5 percent (in June) to 10 percent (in September)," said the report.

These factors have also negatively affected the mental health of the girls, the study said.

"Four out of five girls reported depressive symptoms, which have

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KILLING OF SCHOOL STUDENT AYAZ

One sentenced to jail until death, 5 others get life term

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a student of Dhaka City College to jail until death and five others to life-term imprisonment for killing Ayaz Haq, a student of Dhanmondi Government Laboratory High School, in 2014.

Injamamul Islam alias Jisan was sentenced to jail until death while Tauhidul Islam, Mashirul Rahman Araf, Tauhidul

Islam Shuvo, Abu Saleh Md Nasim and Arif Hossain Regan got life term.

Judge Md Iqbal Hossain of the Special Judge's Court-5 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in presence of Jisan and Tauhidul at a packed courtroom. Rest of the convicts are absconding.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or

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MINI BYTES



Growing demand for bandwidth to result lesser interruption, higher speed at lower price: experts

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

To cater to the growing demand, the government has decided to go forward with the plan to join a third submarine cable. This submarine cable, third of its kind, will be fully functional by 2024 and will be added around 7200 Gbps of Bandwidth to the national information infrastructure.

Around the same time, the country's first submarine cable network is expected to be decommissioned. Built around 2005 and commissioned in 2006, SEA-ME-WE 4 is the first submarine fibre optic cable Bangladesh got connected to. Being the sole Backbone of the nation's internet connectivity, any interruption in service meant the entire nation had to suffer.

According to industry insiders, standard long route submarine fibre optic cable has a life expectancy of a 10 - 15 years. After that maintenance becomes costly and frequent. Bangladesh's first fibre submarine cable is already on its 15th year now. Human errors such as anchorage of seabound ships on the cable have resulted in some damage to the first submarine cables. When asked if the new cable will see similar downtime, Mirza Kamal Ahmed, General Manager of Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL), said, "In the last fifteen years, we had one severe accident which was in August 2019 when an excavator damaged the second cable. Besides, the seabed in our region has frequent tremors causing disruption. Rest of the slowdown happens in National Telecommunication Transmission Network (NTTN)."

Md Emdadul Hoque, the Secretary General of Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB), however, said that the speed slows

down are mostly due to unavailability of surplus connectivity. "We were sole dependent on the SEA-ME-WE 4 for a long time. Now that we have SEA-ME-WE 4, 5 and with the upcoming 6, the nationwide slowdown of the internet will reduce." He also pointed out that transition from SEA-ME-WE 4 to 6, routine maintenance might be more frequent resulting slowdowns.

The new submarine cable is also expected to dramatically reduce the price and increase the speed of Bandwidth in Bangladesh. Over the last decade, Bangladesh already saw a steep decline in the price of bandwidth while consumption and speed saw a sharp increase. The current demand for bandwidth is around, 1600 Gbps which has just 300 Gbps just four years back in 2016. But compared to the global market, Bangladesh lags far behind.

According to Ookla, the internet speed performance analysis giant, Bangladesh ranked 96th amongst 176 countries in fixed broadband.

But this is expected to change, according to Sumon Ahmed Sabir, Chief Technology Officer of Fiber@ Home and Executive Council member of Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC). "When serving higher demand, the maintenance cost of submarine cables goes down resulting higher speed broadband at a lower price. Compared to the world, our consumption is low which attributes to the higher price. But the new submarine cable has a much higher capacity. So, its maintenance cost will be lower cost per Gbps which will reduce the price of bandwidth.", he said. Emdad echoed the same. He added, "We are now importing some bandwidth through international terrestrial cable from India to ensure redundancy at a higher price. If we have ample redundant capacity, speed will go up will price will go down."