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TRANSPORT SECTOR AUTHORITIES

Each tragedy exposes their incompetence

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Whenever a tragic incident hits the transport sector claiming people's lives, a dismal picture of irregularities, mismanagement, and incompetence of the authorities gets exposed.

Be it a fire incident, a launch or ferry capsized, or a road or train accident, each of them becomes a topic of public discussion. The regulatory bodies seem to come to its senses, taking no time in forming probe committees.

The committees, indeed, unearth some irregularities and mismanagement and make recommendations, but those are left to be forgotten until a major incident occurs again.

Interestingly though, after most of the incidents, cases are filed against errant drivers or owners and, sometimes, lower-tier staffers of government agencies face music.

Top government officials, however, are

never held responsible for their failures in preventing the incidents, which, according to experts, demonstrate the poor state of governance in the sector.

"The setup of the regulatory bodies is not functioning effectively. Their presence remains only on paper," noted transport expert Prof Moazzem Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Every time after a major accident, we come to know that the procedures were continuing in an uncontrolled manner. It happens mainly due to a lack of accountability," he said, adding, "If you want to change the situation, the authorities must be made accountable."

FAILURE EXPOSED AGAIN

Violation of rules and the authorities' failure to check it came to the fore once again after fire ravaged a launch early Friday killing at least 41 people and injuring more than 100 others.

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LUXURIOUS VESSELS, LUDICROUS FIRE SAFETY PAGE 12

An excavator demolishes part of a building in Kamrangirchar on the Buriganga during yesterday's drive by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority to evict encroachers from the bank.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Three die as train rams bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Three people, including a child, were killed and at least nine others injured after a train rammed a bus that got stuck between the gates of a level crossing in Narayanganj yesterday evening.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

After the accident, a video of the crash went viral on social media that shows a level crossing gate was not down. The bus of Ananda Paribahan was stuck on the lines due to traffic. The train hit the bus and pushed it 10 to 15 yards.

Shopkeepers along the lines and pedestrians were injured. At the same time, the level crossing gate hit on an electric transformer.

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DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT

'My powers limited'

NAP leaders quote president as saying on EC formation law

RASHIDUL HASAN

President Abdul Hamid said although he wants an Election Commission that is acceptable to all, his power according to the constitution is limited in this regard, Bangladesh National Awami Party leaders claimed yesterday.

A seven-member delegation of NAP, a component of the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance, related details to this newspaper of their discussion with Hamid following an hour-long meeting at the Bangabhaban.

The meeting with Bangladesh NAP is part of the head of state's ongoing dialogues with registered political parties over the formation of the next EC.

"We have told the president that the past experience of the search committee was not good. The election commission formed through

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4TH PHASE UP POLLS

3 killed in violence

Reports of sporadic clashes, ballot stuffing in places

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed in polls violence during yesterday's fourth-phase Union Parishad election.

One person was killed and a youth was injured in police firing at Dakkhin Asannagar Government Primary School polling centre in Thakurgaon last night. A man was killed during a clash with law enforcers in Golapganj upazila of Sylhet while another was killed in Patuakhali when the election results were announced.

Police opened fire when a group of unruly people, supporters of a defeated member candidate, attacked police and election officials while they were leaving the polling centre after declaring the result, Upazila Nirbahi Officer concerned ATM Samsuzzaman told The Daily Star.

Hamidur Rahman, 65, and Shahinur, 26, were shot.

Locals took them to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital where Hamidur was declared dead. Shahinur was shot in the back and was

getting treatment at the hospital, said hospital resident Rokibul Alam.

Officer-in-Charge Chitta Ranjan Roy of Ruheha Police Station said police opened fire in self-defence and to protect electoral materials.

In Golapganj, Abdus Salam, 45, was killed during clashes between police, Rab and villages at Lakshmipasha Union last night.

The clash erupted when the ballots were being counted.

Local administration officials said Salam was found with gunshot wounds but it could not be ascertained who shot him.

In Char Montaj Union of Rangabali Upazila of Patuakhali, one was shot dead when results were announced for the member post of the union.

There were sporadic clashes among the supporters of the candidates and illegal ballot stuffing during yesterday's polls in 838 to union parishads. There were allegations of ballot snatching, beating the polling agents and vote boycotting in some UP areas.

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Anti-apartheid hero Desmond Tutu passes away

AFP, Johannesburg

South African anti-apartheid icon Archbishop Desmond Tutu, described as the country's moral compass, died yesterday aged 90, sparking an outpouring of tributes for the outspoken Nobel peace laureate.

Tutu, who had largely

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THIS EVENING

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