

TANKER INSPECTION  
Two Indian crew members die after falling sick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two Indian crew members of a foreign oil tanker anchored at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port died after falling sick while inspecting an empty cargo tank of the vessel. The victims -- Jishnu Raj (29) and Akhil Sekhar (26) from Kerala -- were technicians at the Danish-flagged vessel MT Nord Magic, police said. Patenga Police Station Officer-in-Charge Kabir Hossain said the two became unconscious after they started inspection around 4:00pm on Friday. The ship's local agent Mohammadi Trading Company with the help of Coast Guard took them to the city's Max Hospital where Jishnu was declared dead around 7:00pm. Sekhar died at the ICU around 4:00am yesterday, the OC said.

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Carrying a child, a man wades through knee-deep water in an alley in Chattogram's Bahaddarhat area yesterday. Inset, a mother returns from Chattogram Maa-o-Shishu Hospital in Agrabad, unable to seek services for her child as rainwater invaded its premises. Due to yesterday's rain, many low-lying areas were submerged in the port city, escalating public sufferings.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Downpour drowns port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

For residents of Chattogram city, the start of monsoon means the start of sufferings. This time is no different, as torrential rain submerged many parts of the city yesterday. Chattogram Met Office recorded 29 mm of rain in the last 24 hours, till noon yesterday, and 40.8 mm in 24 hours, till 3:00pm on Friday. Rainfall is expected to continue for the next 24 hours, said Meghnath Tangchangya, met officer of Chattogram Met Office. Low-lying areas including Halishahar, Shulakbahar, Chandgaon, DC Road, KB Aman Ali Road, Bakalia, Chawkbazar, Bahaddarhat, Muradpur, Sholoshahar Gate 2, Badurtala, Kapasgola, Agrabad, Port Connecting Road, and Prabartak intersection went under knee-to-waist-deep water. Motorised vehicles stopped plying, while only a few three-wheelers were seen on the roads. Many commuters failed to manage vehicles to reach their destination. Around 10:30am yesterday, Rasu Dhar, a resident of Rahattarpool, was waiting for a vehicle to go to Chattogram Medical College Hospital to attend to her sick mother. "I've been waiting here for around half an hour but still haven't found a vehicle," she told The Daily Star. After a little while, she was seen wading through the murky water overflowing from the roadside drain. Besides that, Chattogram Maa-O-Shishu Hospital was also submerged in knee-deep flood waters, causing much peril to residents needing their service. Rickshaw-puller Md Rafique was seen hauling his three-wheeler through knee-deep water on foot at Muradpur. "The screws of one of my wheels have broken after the rickshaw hit a hard object in the water... Now, I'll get no income for the rest of the day."

**MAYOR'S RESIDENCE SUFFERS SAME FATE** The residence of Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury and the adjacent road at Bahaddarhat have also fallen victim to waterlogging. "We suffered due to waterlogging last year and expected that the issue would be addressed after Rezaul was elected mayor," said a local, preferring anonymity. "But the situation remains the same." Asked about the matter, Rezaul said, "What will I do? CDA [Chattogram Development Authority] has been implementing a mega project to address waterlogging. For this purpose, they were digging canals and making retaining walls." "And to do this, they made temporary dams in the canals and filled up a major part of the waterbodies too," he said. "I asked them to remove the dams before the rainy season and open up the canals, so water can recede," he explained. "They removed some dams but did not get rid of the earth they filled the canals with." CDA chief engineer Hasan Bin Shams could not be reached for comments.

Fire guts 30 houses in Gazipur

UNB, Gazipur

Thirty houses of two colonies were gutted in a fire in Chandra area of Kaliakoir upazila of Gazipur district yesterday. Saiful Islam, in-charge of Kaliakoir Fire Service, said the fire originated from an electric short circuit and gutted the houses in the morning. On information, two firefighting units rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after around an hour. No casualties were reported, he said. The official also said the extent of damage could not be assessed immediately.

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT  
Sued by AL leader, ex-BCL man sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A former Chhatra League (BCL) leader of Joypurhat was sent to jail on Friday, after a case was filed under Digital Security Act (DSA), accusing him of making defamatory comments on social media against several leaders of AL. Khaza Al-Amin Sohag (35) -- son of Khaza Samsul Alam, vice president of Joypurhat district AL -- was a deputy social-welfare affairs secretary of district BCL. Dewan Iqbal Hossain, panel mayor of Joypurhat municipality and president of poura AL, sued him under DSA on Thursday. Iqbal told local journalists that Sohag had been writing insulting and defamatory comments against top leaders of local AL, including Abu Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapan, local lawmaker of Joypurhat and whip of Jatiya Sangsad. The image of the AL leaders have been tainted due to his comments, he said. Recently, he also wrote against the panel mayor, which harmed his personal and political image. Later, Iqbal filed a DSA case with Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in Joypurhat. The court took the issue into cognizance and ordered police to take necessary action. Police arrested Sohag from the municipality's Purbha Bazar area around 8:30pm on Friday. Later, Sohag was sent to jail after police produced him before a court that night, said ASM Alamgir Zahan, officer-in-charge of Joypurhat Sadar Police Station. While browsing Sohag's Facebook page, this correspondent saw a write-up about Swapan. Sohag's family members could not be reached for comments.

Youth found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pubna

A youth was found dead near the Boral bridge station area in Bhangura municipality early yesterday. Identity of the victim could not be confirmed yet. Harun Mazumder, officer-in-charge of Sirajganj GRP Station, said locals informed police after finding the body near the station. Police sent the body to Sirajganj general hospital morgue for autopsy. The victim might have been crushed under the train wheel, the OC said.

Kalandi canal on deathbed



PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The century-old Kalandi canal in Brahmanbaria's Akhaura upazila is now on the verge of extinction due to encroachment and pollution over the last three decades. The five-kilometre-long canal originated from a hill in India's Tripura and joined the Titas River in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila through Akhaura municipal town. The canal used to be around 35 feet wide three or four decades ago. But it has narrowed down to 10 feet. Visiting the area recently, this correspondent found several hundred houses and shops, set up encroaching the canal's bank. The canal had shrunk down so much due to concrete structures that it seemed like it never even existed there. Local environmentalists

alleged that a group of influential people, with the help of some corrupt government officials, prepared some land documents and claimed ownership of the canal lands in the '90s. Since then they've been indiscriminately encroaching the canal banks claiming to be owners. The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, however, prohibits any kind of filling or changing the landscape of any waterbody, said green activists. "Around three or four decades ago, we saw large boats plying this canal. But now, it's all dried up," said Rubel Ahmed, convener of Akhaura Prakriti O Poribesh Club. Locals said grabbers erected a bamboo fence around some parts of the bank and gradually started building structures. Akhaura's immediate past

UNO Romana Akhter said the upazila administration made a list of 33 grabbers and issued notice to them around four months ago. "Within three days of serving the notice, the grabbers filed a petition challenging the charge, as they said they were owners of the land. In response, the court issued a stay order." "That is why we could not step forward to evict the land grabber," said Romana on May 18. She claimed that some former UNOs took initiatives to recover the canal's land but they also faced a similar situation. Romana has recently been transferred to Rangamati's Baghaichhari upazila. Contacted, Aonggyajai Marma, the current UNO, said, "I just joined my post last week. I will look into the issue and take necessary steps."

Noted physicist a victim of land grabbing  
RDA took 5 years to take action against illegal construction

ANWAR ALL, Rajshahi

Due to the negligence of local authorities, a man got the opportunity to occupy a strip of land of his neighbour -- renowned physicist Prof Arun Kumar Basak. Yahia Ferdous, the mutawalli of a waqf estate right beside Arun's land, has done this in Rajshahi city's Sagarpara area. As Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) took no significant action, Ferdous continued to harass the 82-year-old educationist for years. In May, Ferdous lost a legal battle and was compelled to remove a structure he built on the occupied land. But he still did not let go of the land, as he cordoned it off with metal grilles, Arun said. "I couldn't look after my properties, as I was busy with work and studies. My neighbour [Ferdous] exploited this situation. Now, I feel unsafe in my own house," Arun, professor emeritus of



I've gone to many people to find a solution, but nothing is helping.

ARUN KUMAR BASAK

physics at Rajshahi University, told The Daily Star. The land underneath Arun's house belonged to his wife Debika Basak. After her death last year, he inherited it. In 2003, while constructing a two-storey building on his own land, Ferdous occupied a 2-foot-wide strip of Debika's land by breaking its boundary wall. Debika then filed a complaint with

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IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR... Setting off from home in the early hours, this family visits the local canal to catch different small fish using traditional methods. In 2-3 hours of work, they collect around half a kilo of tengra and bailsa fish, which they cook for lunch. This photo was taken from Khulna's Terokhada upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Teen drowns in M'singh

UNB, Mymensingh

A Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinee drowned while swimming in Khiru river in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila yesterday noon. The victim is Abu Nayeem (16), son of Faruq Mia of Jahangirpur in Gazipur. He was supposed to sit for SSC exams this year from Jhalpaja Govt High School in Bhaluka, said OC Kamal Hossain of Bhaluka Police Station. Quoting locals, OC Kamal said Nayeem along with his friends started swimming in the river in Jhalpaja area around 11:30am. His friends could not find him when they came out of the water after an hour. Locals conducted searches in the river and recovered the body around 1:30pm.