

30 days, 467 accidents, 524 deaths

Road Safety Foundation paints grim picture of last month's road situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 524 people died and 821 got injured in 467 road accidents across the country in June, Road Safety Foundation, a non-government organisation, said in a press release yesterday.

Among the deceased, 68 were women and 73 children, the organisation added.

Road Safety Foundation collected the data based on reports published in nine national dailies, seven online news portals and electronic media.

A total of 204 people died in 197 motorcycle accidents, which accounted for 38.93 percent of the total deaths, the press release added.

Some 107 pedestrians

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IT'S A BIKE, IT'S A CYCLE, NO IT'S MICHAEL! This photojournalist spotted a man riding a never-seen-before vehicle on Postogola bridge, going towards Keraniganj recently. The owner of the vehicle calls it a "Michael" -- a two-wheeler that has the front of a bicycle and the back of a motorbike, with a pair of looking glasses. Although the vehicle seems functional, there's a lot of doubt about its safety.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Lowest 'Ka' unit pass rate in 5 years!

DU CORRESPONDENT

Only 10.39 percent students passed in Dhaka University's "Ka" unit admission test for the 2021-22 academic session -- the lowest in the last five years.

A total of 11,466 student aspirants passed the "Ka" unit admission test against 1,781 seats.

A minimum of 24 marks have to be obtained in the multiple choice questions and 16 marks for written part to pass, which means 40 marks is compulsory to pass the admission test.

This year, the "Ka" unit admission test was held on June 10, where 1,10,374 aspirants participated.

In the 2016-17 academic session, the pass rate was 13.55 percent, in 2017-18 it was 23.37, 13.04 in 2018-19, 15.93 in 2019-20 and 10.76 in 2020-21.

The pass rates have decreased as admission seekers were too much dependent on coaching centre-based learning instead of text books, said Dr Sitesh Chandra Bachar, chief coordinator of this year's "Ka" unit admission test.

PRAYER TIMING		JULY 5	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55 8-17
JAMAAT 4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Fake visas, real miseries

Syndicate pocketing lakhs by promising to send people abroad with forged documents, says DB

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Using fake visas, a transnational syndicate has reportedly been trafficking people to Italy and Canada. A section of airport officials allegedly supported the syndicate in exchange for Tk 4 to 5 lakh, by allowing fake-visa holders to go abroad.

And for entry into Italy, the syndicate pays around 3,500 euros to their associates there. An Indian national in Italy and syndicate member, reportedly takes care of this, claimed investigators.

Police's detective branch (DB) got the findings after arresting six Bangladeshi members of a "fake visa-making" syndicate.

A DB (Gulshan division) high official, who is involved in the investigation, shared the info with The Daily Star yesterday.

Detectives, however, did not disclose how many victims were sent abroad this way in the last five years.

The six arrestees are Jewel Proshan (38), Moksedur Rahman alias Raj (40), Liton Mahmud (40), Ful Miah (52), Arif Hossain (50) and Abdul Kader Sohag (43). They were held from the capital's Shah Ali area on June 29.

The six later admitted to their crime and gave confessional statements before a Dhaka court on Saturday.

SM Rezaul Hoque, additional deputy commissioner of DB, said the syndicate has been involved in trafficking and issuing fake visas since 2016.

The syndicate first targets different people on social media and online communication apps like Facebook, WhatsApp or imo, and then promises to send them to Italy or Canada, he said. Then it makes fake visas for the victims, said Rezaul.

Liton, who is an expert in forging visas, only charges Tk 2,000 to 4,000 for it. But the victims have to pay Tk 20,000, as the two associates of Liton -- Arif and Ful Miah -- get Tk 16,000 for bringing and managing victims, said investigators.

"The three arrestees -- Liton, Ful Miah and Arif -- in their confession said they have issued around 400 fake visas in the last five years," ADC Rezaul told this newspaper.

"We are now analysing and trying to find out more details in this regard," he said.

Detectives took all these steps after a woman filed a complaint. According to the complaint, arrestee Jewel talked to the woman on social media.

During conversation, Jewel claimed that he is involved in the manpower business and sends people abroad. He offered to send the woman to Italy or Canada.

After she fell into the trap, Jewel demanded Tk 7 lakh, and she paid by a bank cheque on May 10.

Then Jewel gave her an Italian visa on June 18 and a plane ticket on June 20.

On June 22, with the visa and ticket, she went to Dhaka airport. Eventually, after the airline official checked the passport and ticket details, they informed her that the visa was fake.

The syndicate has been involved in trafficking since 2016. It first targets different people on social media and online communication apps like Facebook, WhatsApp or imo, and then promises to send them to Italy or Canada. Then it makes fake visas for the victims.

Detectives said Jewel and his two associates -- Raj and Sohag -- are mainly responsible for dealing with airport officials.

Additionally, Jewel primarily maintains contact with the syndicate's members in Italy, said ADC Rezaul Hoque.

The arrestees are now in jail. Jewel was accused in a previously filed human trafficking case.

Detectives said they have got names of some syndicate members from the arrestees' statement, and a drive is underway to arrest them.

But they did not disclose them, as it may alert the suspects, said Mashhur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Gulshan division) of DB.

"We may disclose more details following their arrest," he said.

Save Neelam Ghar: USG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urban Study Group (USG) yesterday protested the demolition of Neelam Ghar, a century old heritage building on Court House Street in old Dhaka.

Leaders and volunteers of the conservation organisation formed a human chain in front of the National Museum.

Taimur Islam, chief executive of USG, said the demolition work is ongoing violating a 2018 High Court directive that ordered the authorities to stop changing, modifying and demolishing 2,200 British-era buildings named in the group's list of heritage sites in Old Dhaka, including Neelam Ghar.

He demanded that the authorities concerned take necessary steps to protect all the listed buildings.

The Deputy Commissioner's Office of Dhaka, which is the custodian of the 15 decimals of land, leased the building out to the Dhaka Bar Association on February 15 for a year.

According to the lease documents, the lessee shall neither build anything new nor change, modify and repair the existing structure. Selling, handing over, and mortgaging the property is also prohibited.

However, the association started renovation works on the building against the clauses.

DBA general secretary Firojur Rahman Montu claimed that the building

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It's time to rebuild

Planning minister tells roundtable on floods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said the government will immediately enhance its infrastructure rebuild programmes in the country's flood-affected areas, including the Sylhet region.

"In my ministry, some scrutinies take place while placing proposals before Ecneec [Executive Committee of National Economic Council]. We will do these works swiftly," said the minister.

There has been a tremendous economic loss. Not a single road remained out of the flood's clutches.

There was a lack of government preparation to tackle the flood situation as nobody could realise its magnitude beforehand.

MA MANNAN

IMRAN AHMAD

He was addressing a roundtable on "Reasons behind frequent flood in Sylhet region, rehabilitation and permanent solution" in the capital's Jatiya Press Club organised by Sylhet Division Journalists Association, Dhaka.

Addressing the event as chief guest, the planning minister, also an AL lawmaker from Sunamganj-3, said the recent flood was the worst ever in his constituency in decades.

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A 50-hour ordeal

Family narrates Amin Md Hilaly's experience after being picked up by 'unidentified' men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Unidentified men" picked up Amin Md Hilaly, a real estate businessman and an accused in the North South University scam case, and recorded his statement about the case after taking his signature and fingerprints, claimed family members.

Amin Md Hilaly, managing director of Ashaly Housing and Developers, was found hours after his family organised a press conference in Dhaka on Sunday demanding to know his whereabouts. They claimed that he has been missing since the evening of July 1 after he started for his office from his brother's house in Uttara.

Rafiqul Islam Hilaly, brother of the businessman, said he talked to Amin after he was found on Sunday night. Rafiqul said Amin was traumatised following the incident.

Rafiqul said unidentified individuals in three minibuses stopped Amin when he was going to his office.

Taking Amin inside the vehicle, they blindfolded him and took him to a lock-up, he added, quoting his brother.

"Inside the lock-up, Amin was asked to keep his face towards the wall when someone entered the room. The room was under CCTV surveillance. At least three to four persons -- fully masked and wearing caps -- interrogated him six to seven times and recorded the statement on camera. They asked him to look normal while on the record."

"On Sunday night, they blindfolded him again, took him to a microbus and left him near a brick kiln in Hemayetpur's Joy Mandap area. They asked him to walk forward and not to look back. After a while, Amin removed the blindfold himself and found none," Rafiqul said.

"My brother contacted me from the auto-rickshaw driver's cell phone around 10:30pm and I informed the police," he added.

On July 1, 2022, family members of Amin alleged that he went missing mysteriously.

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Work with us

Atiqul tells REHAB on eliminating Aedes breeding ground

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday urged Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) to work with the city corporations to control spread of Aedes mosquitoes.

The DNCC mayor made the comment while addressing a views-exchange meeting with leaders of realtors at Nagar Bhaban in Gulshan 2.

Atiqul said not only city corporations but everyone will have to work together during this monsoon season to control the spread of Aedes mosquitoes.

"We have seen Aedes mosquito larvae mainly in under construction buildings. REHAB will have to take responsibility in this regard," he said.

Atiqul said they are working to control Aedes mosquitoes, giving highest importance, and are already using drones to locate breeding sources on rooftops of different buildings.

Urging REHAB to hang banners along with pictures to alert people against Aedes mosquitoes, the mayor said REHAB will have to take necessary steps so that an under-construction building does not become a breeding ground.

Meanwhile, at least 36 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours yesterday.

All hajj pilgrims to reach Saudi Arabia today

RASHIDUL HASAN

All Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims are set to reach Saudi Arabia today. Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Flynas have already carried all their passengers to the country.

Saudia, the flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, will operate its final pre-hajj flights today from Dhaka, AKM Mahfuzul Alam, senior manager of sales at Saudia, told The Daily Star.

On Sunday, Biman met its quota of carrying 29,992 pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, said Tahera Khondoker,

Biman's general manager (public relations).

Flynas has also met its quota of carrying 6,086 pilgrims, sources said.

Saudia will meet its quota of carrying 23,922 pilgrims today, Mahfuzul said.

A total of 60,000 people will perform hajj this year from Bangladesh. Of them, Biman was set to carry almost half of them, and Saudia and Flynas the rest. According to a bulletin of the religious affairs ministry's hajj management portal, 56,952 pilgrims have

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CLASSIFICATION OF HAJJ PILGRIMS (2022)

