

519 died in 458 accidents last month

Says Road Safety Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 519 people died and 961 suffered injuries in 458 accidents across the country in August, said Road Safety Foundation in a press release yesterday.

Of the deceased, 64 were women and 69 children.

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

A total of 172 people died in 183 motorcycle accidents, which accounted for 33.14 percent of the total deaths, the press release added.

Some 109 pedestrians and 94 drivers and helpers died in accidents during this period.

At least eight people died and six remained missing in 11 waterway accidents, while 24 people died and nine were injured in 23 train accidents.



Amid students' protests, local authorities set up a zebra-crossing and speed-breakers in the area where a Chittagong University teacher was killed after a microbus collided with his scooter yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

CU teacher killed in road accident

Couple among 3 die as pickup, auto-rickshaw collide in Sylhet

STAR REPORT

A Chittagong University (CU) teacher died as a microbus collided with his motorbike in the university's gate-1 area early yesterday.

The deceased is Aftab Hossain, associate professor of the university's Zoology department, said police.

According to police sources, Aftab was going towards the city on his scooter from the university. Around 12:30am, a Hathazari bound microbus, coming from the opposite direction, hit Aftab's scooter.

Eye witness Moktar babu said, "I was waiting for a CNG and the scooter rider was trying to cross the road, suddenly the microbus came and hit the scooter."

Aftab was seriously injured and rushed to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Kamrul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Raozan Highway Police Station, said locals detained the microbus driver Masud Parvez and handed him over to the police.

Police also seized the microbus. "After filing a case against the driver, we've already sent him to court," he added.

After the incident, students of the university blocked the Chattogram-Rangamati highway at 3:00am for around 30 minutes, demanding the construction of a foot-overbridge and speed breaker in the accident site.

Aftab Hossain's namaz-e-janaza was held at 2:00pm at

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Incomplete bridge, immeasurable suffering

Narail residents struggle as Kalia bridge's construction remains unfinished

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Thousands have been suffering for years as the construction of Kalia bridge over the Nabaganga river in Narail is yet to be completed.

The bridge was supposed to be completed in 2019. However, only 65 to 70 percent of the work has been done so far.

The duration of the Tk 72,37,00,000 project -- which started on March 18, 2018 -- has been extended till December 23 in the 4th term. However, the authorities have not yet confirmed if it can meet the fourth deadline as well.

Over five lakh people of Narail and Khulna have been facing manifold problems for years as work of 651.83-metre-long and 10.25-metre-wide bridge could not be completed in five years.

After the expiry of the deadline in 2019,



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



RHD extended the deadline by one more year till June 30, 2020. The deadline was extended further till June 30, 2021, due to the pandemic.

During a recent visit to the construction site, this correspondent saw the work almost abandoned, with very few people around. One pillar is yet to be re-installed as the previous one broke and sank into the river after being

hit by a cargo. The link roads are yet to be built.

Barkat Ullah, chairman of Kalia's Khasial union of Kalia upazila, told this correspondent that around 400 villages out of the 635 in Narail district will be directly benefitted from the bridge.

"People of 39 unions of Loharagara and Narail Sadar and 14 unions in Kalia are suffering immensely. Every day thousands of people have to cross Nabaganga river to go to offices, schools colleges and hospitals in Narail town," he said.

"I have to spend Tk 20 every day to cross the river. It is quite burdensome. If the bridge is fully constructed, I would be benefitted," said eighth-grader Taiba Khatun.

Hassan Al Mamun, chairman of Loharagara's Kotakol union, said, "The construction work is moving at a snail's pace due to the negligence

of the contracted firm who are appointing fewer workers on the site."

RHD executive engineer in Narail Md Ashrafuzzaman said, "A pillar broke down due to being hit by a vessel. We need a revised design."

"Around Tk 36 crore will be additionally needed for this purpose. Besides, the other pillars will be constructed with modern safety rings. Hence, it may take longer than December 2023 to complete the work," he added.

"I am disappointed at the delay in the bridge's construction. I have repeatedly talked with the contracted company, related offices and the higher authorities to finish the work," said local lawmaker Kabirul Haq Mukti.

"If the bridge is opened, the connectivity of Gopalganj, Barishal and Bagerhat districts with Narail-Jashore will increase," he added.

Attack on baul singer protested in Narail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

Cultural activists yesterday protested attack on baul singer Harez Fakir in Narail.

The 70-year-old was attacked allegedly by the local UP chairman's men at Purulia village in Kalia upazila on August 27.

Protesting the incident, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote formed a human chain at Narail Press Club.

Jote president in Narail Malay Kundu, vice president Aslam Khan Lulu and general secretary Shariful Alam Litu among others spoke on the occasion.

Municipality mayor Anjuman Ara also joined the programme.

The speakers said such an attack cannot be accepted in any way. They demanded justice for the victim.



Whale carcass washes ashore in Kuakata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

A 30-foot-long dead whale washed up on the Kuakata beach in Patuakhali yesterday morning.

The half-decomposed body of the mammal was found at Jhaubagan point of the beach around 9:00am, said Dolphin Protection Committee Member Abul Hossain Raju.

"In the morning, a motorcyclist spotted the dead whale on the beach and informed us. Later, we reached the spot and informed the forest department. The whale is 30 feet long and 6 feet wide. It is believed that it died 10-15 days ago," said Abul Hossain.

Sagarika Smriti, a Kuakata biodiversity researcher at World Fish, said it was a Baleen species of whale. There are also 16 types of the Baleen whale. These mammals like to live in the cold water of the deep sea. It is yet to be

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EVERYONE'S DOING IT

Illegal sand extraction goes unabated in Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

Bagerhat has become a safe haven for illegal sand miners, as they have been wreaking havoc in different areas of the district, polluting the environment and creating public nuisance.

Locally made dredger machines are used day and night to lift sand.

On Saturday afternoon, two dredgers were seen extracting underground sand from the canal adjacent to the road at Barabasbaria area in Dema union of Bagerhat Sadar upazila.

The first one, mining sand from a canal at Abdul Rasulpur village, belonged to Ripon Kumar Mosid, a member of Dema Union Parishad's ward-8.

The second dredger, belonging to



PHOTO: STAR

have alleged that part of the money received from sales has to be paid to the local public representatives.

Contacted, Ripon Kumar said, "Everyone does it. Why is it only my fault? I immediately stopped lifting sand when the upazila nirbahi officer sir gave a warning."

"There is little profit in this business anyway," he lamented.

Dema Union AL President Sheikh said he is mining sand to fill a field of a local school to facilitate students' activities.

"I'll stop the machine when the field is full," he added.

Dilip Kumar Dutta, professor of environmental science at Khulna University, said the biggest damage caused by underground sand lifting is the loss

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