

JHALAKATHI BUS ACCIDENT

A tale of survival and loss

STAR REPORT

“The bus was about five to ten minutes away from my destination... I was telling my wife over the phone to wait near the Gabkhan bridge where I will get off.”

“I was about to hang up the phone, suddenly I heard a loud noise as if something exploded... Perhaps it was a tyre as the bus tilted and before I could realise what was happening the vehicle plunged into a roadside waterbody.”

Md Momen, a passenger of the ill-fated bus that fell into a roadside waterbody in Jhalakathi Sadar upazila yesterday morning, told this newspaper.

Momen was sitting by the road staring at the waterbody surrounded by people and rescue personnel.

He was still shivering from the near-death experience.

However, not everyone was as lucky as him.

At least 17 people, including children, were killed and 33 injured when the bus fell into a roadside waterbody in the Chotrokanda area of Dhansiri union around 9:45am.

There were around 60 passengers in the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Family member of a deceased breaks down in tears while sharing the loss of a loved one with others. At least 17 people, including children, were killed and 23 injured when the bus fell into a roadside waterbody in the Chotrokanda area of Dhansiri union around 9:45am yesterday. This photo was taken in Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

‘They’ll never return home’

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, from Jhalakathi

Irene, a 20-year-old mother, was happy, as she was returning home after the first nanubari (grandmother's home) visit of her one-month-old daughter, Ripa.

They were accompanied by Irene's younger brother, Nayan, and the journey was meant to end at their home in Barishal's Hizla area.

However, fate had other plans, as tragedy struck mid-road.

A bus accident claimed the lives of the three yesterday morning.

The once jubilant atmosphere turned into one of grief and sorrow, leaving their loved ones heartbroken.

“I cuddled my niece before they left this morning,” said Irene's elder brother Rubel.

“Her smiling face is still fresh right in front of my eyes,” he added.

Rubel burst into tears while talking to this correspondent at the Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital yesterday afternoon.

“Now their cold, lifeless bodies are lying at a hospital,” Rubel said.

At least 17 people including Irene, Ripa, and Nayan were killed in the accident and 33 others injured as the bus fell in a roadside waterbody in Chhatrakanda area of Jhalakathi Sadar upazila around 9:45am.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Newly-registered Supreme Party to rally in districts from Jul 28

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP) yesterday declared to hold rallies in several districts from July 28, demanding free, fair, and impartial elections as per the constitution.

The decision came from a rally held around 11:00am, from Paltan to Dainik Bangla intersection area. Over 1,000 leaders and activists joined the programme.

Speaking at the rally, BSP chairman Sheikh Shajada Syed Saifuddin Ahmed Maizbhandari said, “The caretaker government system conflicts with Bangladesh's constitution and is insulting to politicians.”

“So, there is no alternative to free, fair, and impartial elections with active participation for the sake of the country's development, progress, and stability,” he added.

He emphasised making the Election Commission independent to establish the people's voting rights.

BSP declared to hold rallies on July 28 in Chittagong, August 1 in Munshiganj, August 7 in Gazipur, and August 8 in Cumilla.

Yesterday, the party leaders and activists at the rally protested against alleged “anti-national conspiracy”, “propaganda against the armed forces”, and demanded punishment for “Mossad agents”.

Studying under open sky as school bldg risky

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

A bunch of students in uniforms attending lectures under a tree -- this is what this correspondent saw when he first stepped inside Uttar Tiakhali Government Primary School in Barguna's Amtali upazila.

Established in 1973, the school was a cluster of tin-shed rooms back then.

In 2003, the Local Government Engineering Department constructed a single-storey building for the students. However, the building started to crumble within just a decade.

In 2021, the Upazila Primary Education Office declared the building, with a cracked roof and walls, abandoned after several students were injured due to ceiling plasters falling off on their heads, according to teachers.

For the last two years, classes have been held under a tree on the school compound on the balconies of the abandoned building during drizzles.

“We have to sit for hours under the scorching sun. The heat is unbearable, and it is very difficult to focus in such unpleasant circumstances,” shared Marium, a fifth grader at the school.

Attending classes in the balcony is more dangerous as the ceiling can collapse on their heads anytime, added Marium.



PHOTO: STAR

“We need a new school building immediately,” she pleaded.

Marium's classmates Maria Islam, Abu Hanif, Sakil, Hasibur Rahman, Mahfuz and Nazma Akhter echoed her.

This correspondent, during his visit, saw fifth graders being taught under the tree while third graders were sitting on the balconies. A class was also underway in one of the old tin-shed rooms.

“We don't have any classrooms. The children are suffering,” said Abdul Mannan, an assistant teacher.

The school authorities had applied for a new building after the old one was declared abandoned. However, no

4 killed, 17 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed 17 others injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Bogura, at least two women were killed and 15 passengers injured as a bus and another unknown vehicle collided on Bogura-Natore regional highway in Jamadarpukur area in the early hours.

The accident happened around 3:30pm as the Lalmonirhat bound bus collided with the other vehicle while trying to overtake it, said Abbas Ali, officer-in-charge of Kundarhat highway police outpost in Nandigram upazila.

The bus later plunged into a roadside ditch, said the OC.

Jelma Begum, 50, from Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila died on the spot while Rokashan Begum Boishakhi, 20, from Mirzapur upazila in Patuakhali succumbed to her injuries at Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, said Sub-inspector Dulal Hossain of the hospital police outpost under Sadar Police Station.

The locals and police rescued the injured and sent them to the hospital, said police.

The victims are from Natore, Bogura, Lalmonirhat and Barishal districts, said the SI.

In Chapainawabganj, at least two persons were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between a pickup van and a CNG-run three-wheeler at Folimari in Bholahat upazila.

Fatema Begum, 42, daughter of Idris Ali from Gohalbari village died on the way to Bholahat Upazila Health Complex and Helaluddin, 35, son of Shamsar Ali from Dhorompur village in Bholahat succumbed to his injuries while he was being

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

BARIND REGION  
Food security at stake for overuse of groundwater

Speakers tell national drought convention at RU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers at a discussion in Rajshahi yesterday urged the authorities concerned to stop producing rice by overusing groundwater in the High Barind region.

Instead, they proposed promoting cultivation of high value crops like mango, guava, and dragon fruit that require less water and can generate more income for farmers than rice in the region.

They were speaking at the inaugural discussion of the national drought convention held at MA Wazed Miah Academic Building of Rajshahi University.

The convention, divided in four different sessions, was organised by 16 NGOs. The country's food security is at stake in the Barind for overuse of the groundwater over the last three decades, said Prof ANK Noman, chairman of the Department of Economics at RU.

In addition, conflicts between fish and crop farmers are on the rise over the surface water, he said while presenting the keynote paper.

RU Vice-Chancellor and geologist Prof Golam Sabbir Sattar said the authorities are allowing overuse of groundwater, which resulted in the depletion of both surface and ground water.

“Producing rice with ground water is creating discriminations among farmers. The solvent ones are depriving the small

Protecting the water resources in Barind should be the top priority.

OMOR FARUK CHOWDHURY  
Lawmaker

ActionAid Bangladesh's country director Farah Kabir said if the drought issue is not solved, it will take more time to deal with climate migration.

The session's chief guest Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change, called upon researchers and development activists to come up with strategies and actions for the government in this regard. Chowdhury said the government is spending Tk 37,000 crore for climate change issues.

BIRTH REG SERVER HACK  
Police press charges against four

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have pressed three charge sheets against four persons for issuing 18 birth certificates by breaching its main server in 2021.

Sub-inspector Shapan Kumar Sarkar of Counter Terrorism Division of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheets last week to a Chattogram court.

The accused are Khalid Bin Yousuf, 33, Khairul Islam, 43, Nazmul Haque Arif, 38, and Asharaful Alam, 39. Among them, Khalid, programmer of Birth Registrar General Office, among others, developed the previous server, said CT officials.

Khalid and Khairul are on the run while the remaining two are behind bars.

The cases were filed with Patenga and Chawkbazar police stations after 18 dubious birth registration certificates were issued by hacking the user IDs and passwords of three ward councillor offices under Chattogram City Corporation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়

চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম

Website: <http://forestsouth.chittagongdiv.gov.bd>

দরপত্র/নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/(রাজস্ব) অব ২০২৩-২০২৪

তারিখঃ ২০/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ

জদকৃত বনজন্ডব্য দরপত্র/প্রকাশ্য নিলামে বিক্রয়ের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্যে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, চলতি ২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সালে চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগের অধীন বিভিন্ন রেঞ্জ/স্টেশন/বিটে জদকৃত/ঝড়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত/বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে আহরিত এবং জিম্মায় রক্ষিত বিক্রয়যোগ্য বনজন্ডব্যের লটসমূহ নির্ধারিত তারিখে ক্রয়ে আগ্রহী প্রকৃত কাঠ ব্যবসায়ীগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত বদ্ধ খামে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলীতে নির্ধারিত সিডিউলে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবরে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রকাশ্য নিলাম বা দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে ক্রয়ে আগ্রহী অংশগ্রহণকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিনিধিকে দরপত্র দাখিল/প্রকাশ্য নিলামের পূর্বে স্ব-স্ব রেঞ্জ/স্টেশন/বিটে রক্ষিত লটসমূহ সরেজমিনে দেখার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল। দরপত্র দাখিল/প্রকাশ্য নিলামের পর বনজন্ডব্য না দেখার অজুহাতে কোন প্রকার ওজর আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। পারিপার্শ্বিক অবস্থার প্রেক্ষিতে যে কোন সময় বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা নিলাম স্থান, সময় ও তারিখ পরিবর্তন করতে পারবেন। দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী ও লট সম্পর্কীয় যাবতীয় জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয়াবলী বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার দপ্তর ও স্ব-স্ব রেঞ্জ অফিস হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে দেখতে ও জানতে পারা যাবে।

ক্রঃ নং	প্রকাশ্য নিলামের তারিখ	নিলামের সময়	প্রকাশ্য নিলাম যে স্থানে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে	বনজন্ডব্যের অবস্থান	মন্তব্য
(১)	১১/১০/২০২৩খ্রিঃ	সকাল ১০.০ ঘটিকা হতে নিলাম কার্য শেষ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত।	বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ, বনপাহাড়, মন্দনকানন, চট্টগ্রাম।	কালুরঘাট ডিপো, সংশ্লিষ্ট রেঞ্জ ও রেঞ্জের অধীন বিট/ক্যাম্প এবং স্টেশন কার্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ।	জদকৃত/ঝড়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত/বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে
(২)	১৫/০২/২০২৪খ্রিঃ	ঐ	ঐ	ঐ	আহরিত/জিম্মারাখা
(৩)	১৫/০৫/২০২৪খ্রিঃ	ঐ	ঐ	ঐ	সকল প্রকার কাঠ

সীল টেভারের জন্য ধার্যকৃত তারিখ

ক্রঃ নং	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ	দাখিলের সময়	দরপত্র যে সকল স্থানে গ্রহণ করা হবে	বনজন্ডব্যের অবস্থান	মন্তব্য
১)	২৩/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ	সকাল ১০.০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ২.০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	১) বন সংরক্ষক, চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের কার্যালয়। ২) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম। ৩) বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ।	কালুরঘাট ডিপো/সংশ্লিষ্ট রেঞ্জ ও রেঞ্জের অধীন বিট/ক্যাম্প এবং স্টেশন কার্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ।	জদকৃত/ঝড়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত/বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে আহরিত/জিম্মা রাখা সকল প্রকার কাঠ
২)	১৩/১২/২০২৩খ্রিঃ	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-
৩)	১৭/০৪/২০২৪খ্রিঃ	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-

আব্দুল্লাহ আল-মামুন  
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা  
চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম  
ফোন নং-০২৩৩৩৩৫৭৩২৮  
E-mail: [dfocgts@gmail.com](mailto:dfocgts@gmail.com)

জিডি-১১৩৯