

Three more die in Netrakona speedboat capsiz

Death toll now four

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The bodies of three people, including two children, who went missing following a speedboat capsiz in the Dhanu river in Khalajuri upazila of Netrakona on Friday, have been recovered.

The deceased are -- Laila Akter, 7, Saiya, 11, and Shirin Akter, 18. Their bodies were recovered yesterday afternoon about one kilometre away from the site of the incident in Charpara area of the river, said Hafizur Rahman, assistant deputy director of Netrakona Fire Service and Civil Defence.

With this, the bodies of all four missing victims have now been recovered. The Fire Service concluded the rescue operation yesterday following the recovery of the bodies.

On Saturday, the body of Ushamoni, 5, was found approximately 500 yards away from the accident site.

"Strong river currents made the operation extremely difficult. Divers worked continuously for nearly 48 hours. The delay in recovery was due to the bodies drifting downstream," added Hafizur.

The accident occurred on Friday noon when a speedboat carrying 15 wedding guests from Itna upazila in Kishoreganj sank in the river.

Khalajuri Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mokbul Hossain said the accident happened while the speedboat tried to avoid a collision with a bulkhead. In doing so, the speedboat struck a fishing boat and overturned. Four people went missing in the incident, and three others sustained injuries, while the rest managed to swim ashore.

2 children drown in N'ganj pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Two children drowned in a pond near their home in Sajai village under Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila yesterday.

The victims were Anisur Rahman Anis, 7, son of Abul Hossain, and Zahidur Rahman Zahid, 5, son of Jahangir Hossain -- both first-grade students.

Locals said the boys were playing near the pond when they went missing. Around 12:00pm, villagers found their bodies floating and took them to Araihazar Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared them dead.

Dr Ashraful Amin, residential medical officer at the health complex, said they had died before arrival, adding that excess water in their stomachs caused the deaths.

New govt pay scale

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calculations of allowances such as house rent, medical and transport, methods to adjust salaries in line with inflation, and retirement benefits including timely pensions.

He said the commission plans to recommend salary structures based on employee evaluations and rationalise financial benefits both in cash and in kind.

"We have already begun work in full swing," said Khan.

"Although six months have been allotted to determine the salary structure, we hope to submit the final report

earlier than scheduled."

Yunus directed the commission to devise a rational salary structure for government and autonomous officials and employees that aligns with present-day realities.

Emphasising the importance of health insurance for officials, the chief adviser said even if salaries increase, many people lose their assets due to illness.

The National Pay Commission has been formed after a decade to review and recommend a new salary structure for government and autonomous officials and employees.



22 LGED projects stall for a year in Patuakhali

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

At least 22 development projects under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Patuakhali have been stalled for over a year, causing immense suffering for residents.

The projects include roads, bridges, and drainage structures, all left abandoned midway across different upazilas of the district.

From the Koromjatala road and drainage system in Sadar upazila to Shonkhola in Galachipa, Balitali in Kalapara, and Charkhali in Mirzaganj, the situation is the same.

In some places, locals are forced to cross broken bridges by boat, while in others, unfinished brick soiling has deteriorated to the point of making roads impassable.

Locals said the projects were awarded to former Pirojpur-2 lawmaker and district Awami League joint secretary Mohiuddin Maharaj, who reportedly went

into hiding after the political changeover on August 5 last year, leaving behind project works worth around Tk 100 crore.

Contractors alleged that LGED projects in the southern region had long been dominated by the "Mirajul-Maharaj syndicate".

Under the name of Mirajul Islam's company Ifti ETCL, the syndicate reportedly secured 22 projects in Patuakhali between 2012 and 2023.

These included 12 in Sadar upazila, three each in Galachipa and Mirzaganj, two in Kalapara, and one each in Dumki and Rangabali.

Of the projects, seven were under the "Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Iron Bridges in the Southern Region" scheme for 22 iron bridges, involving Tk 76.57 crore. So far, overall progress has been less than 40 percent, with only two projects completed while the rest remain stuck.

The delays have left locals

frustrated.

"We suffer immensely using the unfinished road. The brick soiling has worn off, rendering it unusable. The bridge has been lying incomplete for a year. The contractor is nowhere to be found," said Rahim Biswas of Poshurhunia village in Kalikapur union under Sadar upazila.

Mizanur Rahman, a rickshaw-puller, said, "If new contractors are appointed and the projects are completed promptly, our sufferings will end."

Contacted, Md Hossain Ali Mir, executive engineer of Patuakhali LGED, said, "Around 50 percent work of the 22 projects awarded to Ifti ETCL has been completed."

"However, since the contractor is unavailable at present, complications have arisen regarding the projects' progress. Local contractors are reluctant to continue. We have informed higher authorities in this regard, and a decision will be taken accordingly," he said.

CU gears up for student union

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Roman Rahman, the organisation's member secretary and a candidate for vice president (VP), said, "We are considering an independent panel, although we remain open to alliances if necessary. Our main goal is to protect students' rights..."

Islami Chhatra Andolan is expected to contest under "Shocheton Shikkhatri Parishad", while Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsads (BGCS) has confirmed its intention to run by itself.

Several cultural and social groups are said to be in talks for joining forces to form an independent slate.

Among the names under discussion are Mahfuzur Rahman for VP and Rashid Dinar for GS.

Chhatra Shibir is reportedly working on a coalition panel that may include female candidates, July uprising activists, religious minorities, and members of indigenous communities. However, their VP candidate has not yet been finalised.

Jatiyatabdhi Chhatra Dal is also exploring the

possibility of running together with five organisations from the Democratic Students' Alliance and Chhatra Majlis.

Sajid Hossain Hridoy, organising secretary of JCD CU Unit, said the organisation favours a joint panel due to Shibir's dominance on campus.

"Talks are ongoing with left-leaning groups and BGCS. That is why we have yet to finalise our VP candidate," he added.

This year, candidates must pass dope tests or face disqualification.

Campaigning will start after the final candidate list is announced and continue until a day before polling. It is allowed from 10:00am to 9:00pm. Rules ban class disruptions, interference with exams, and participation of outsiders.

Chief Election Commissioner Prof Moniruddin said no candidate or supporter will be allowed to distribute voter slips within 100 metres of polling centres on election day.

Violations may result in fines of up to Tk

20,000, cancellation of candidature, expulsion, or legal action, he added.

As per the schedule, nomination forms have to be submitted between September 15 and 17. These forms will be further scrutinised on September 18, followed by a publication of a preliminary candidate list on September 21.

The deadline for withdrawal is September 23 at 3:30pm and the final list will be announced on September 25. Polling will be held on October 12 from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

The government has decided to launch the first-ever typhoid vaccination programme, he said.

The vaccine -- Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) -- is prequalified by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is more effective than the vaccines currently available in the market, Prof Jafar said, adding that it will protect for five years.

He said the target is to bring 4.9 crore children under the campaign, while the authorities have a stock of around 5.5 crore doses. So far, 89.27 lakh children have been registered.

Responding to another question, SM Abdullah Al Murad, line director (MNCH) of DGHS, said children without a birth registration certificate can be registered directly at vaccination centres to receive the shot.

In Feni, a man was killed by a mob for allegedly trying to steal a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

Locals caught the suspected thief and beat him to death.

Feni Model Police OC Md Shamsuzzaman said, "On information, police visited the crime scene, recovered the body, and sent it to Feni Sadar General Hospital morgue for autopsy."

Legal action will be taken in this regard, the OC added.

90 lakh

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at both temporary and permanent vaccination centres. Officials of the Directorate General of Health Services yesterday shared the information at a press conference at its headquarters in Dhaka.

DGHS Director General Prof Md Abu Jafar said the rate of typhoid infection in Bangladesh is higher than in many other countries.

Citing the Global Burden of Disease survey 2021, he said around 4.78 lakh people are infected with typhoid annually in Bangladesh, and about 8,000 of them die. Of the deaths, 68 percent are children, he added.

Amid this situation, the government has decided to

launch the first-ever typhoid vaccination programme, he said.

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Neither Islami Chhatra Shibir nor Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsads officially fielded panels for hall union polls.

A total of 443 candidates contested, with voter turnout recorded at 67.93 percent among 11,919 registered voters.

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