

Mother, daughter killed in Sunamganj bus plunge

STAR REPORT

A woman and her daughter were killed after a tourist bus, bound for Tangbar Haor, plunged into a roadside ditch near Inatnagar village, close to Pagla Bazar in Shantiganj upazila, Sunamganj, early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Monjura Akter, 37, wife of Abdullah Al Mamun, and their 10-year-old daughter Ayesha Siddika. At least ten others were also injured in the incident.

Suman Kumar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Joykolos Highway Police, said, "We found the bus overturned in a roadside ditch. Firefighters recovered the bodies of the mother and daughter trapped underneath and sent them to Sunamganj District Hospital for autopsy."

Quoting witnesses, the police official informed that the bus of Sejuti Travels carrying 11 senior officials of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) and their families left Dhaka for Tangbar Haor.

As the bus reached Inatnagar, it veered off the road and fell into a ditch. Monjura and her daughter, who were seated in the front portion, were crushed under the overturned vehicle and died on the spot, he added.

In a separate accident, two teenagers were killed after their motorcycle collided head-on with a sand-laden vehicle in Jahangirpur area of Chowgacha upazila, Jashore, yesterday afternoon.

The deceased, Imon Hossain, 15, and Ashraf Islam, 16, both from Bashpol Kaliakundu village in the upazila, were heading towards the upazila market on a motorcycle, police said.

OC Anwar Hossain of Chowgacha Police Station said the accident occurred when the motorcycle carrying the victims collided head-on with the sand-laden vehicle at the Bhadra intersection in Jahangirpur village, leaving both dead on the spot.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent them to the Jashore General Hospital for autopsy, the OC said, adding that legal proceedings are underway in connection with the incident.

Three children drown in Rangunia pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three children drowned in a pond in Rangunia of Chattogram yesterday evening.

The victims are Sumaiya Akter, 5, daughter of Md Raju; Habiba Akter, 6, daughter of Md Kalu -- both from Parua union; and Jannat Akter, 5, daughter of Md Naser, who had come to visit a relative's house in the area.

Rangunia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sifatul Majdar said the girls had gone to the pond while playing near their homes. When they did not return, their families began searching for them frantically and later found their bodies floating in the water.

The bodies were taken to a local doctor, who confirmed their deaths.

The bodies will be handed over to their families without an autopsy.

Phulpur road in M'singh unrepaved for 50 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The two-kilometre road stretching from Kulirkanda to Ushumpur in Mymensingh's Phulpur upazila has remained earthen for around 50 years, causing immense suffering to hundreds of people.

On several occasions, the authorities were notified about the situation, but to no avail, said locals.

Khaleda Khatun, headteacher of Kulirkanda Government Primary School in Singheshwar union, said she has been travelling through the muddy road since she joined the institution six years ago. "The road becomes unusable even after a moderate rain," she said.

"Around four years ago, I wrote to the authorities concerned twice, seeking a solution, but no action has been taken yet," Khaleda added.

Swarna Akhter, a second grader, said many students find it difficult to get to school after rain.

Locals said hundreds of students from various educational institutions, including Merigai High School, Horinadi Dakhil Madrasa, and Hosenpur Isafia Mohila Dakhil Madrasa, use the road to reach their institutions.

Md Ayub Ali, a 60-year-old farmer from Dhanarbhitia village, said, "We are unable to transport our produce through this road smoothly. Very often, we have to



As dusk descends, the riverside at Koilag in Bajitpur of Kishoreganj glows in shades of orange and red. While most people head home, a few fishers remain on the water, casting their nets in the calm of the setting sun. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

CHUNARUGHAT IN HABIGANJ

Sand lifting rampant despite crackdown

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Under the cover of darkness every night, valuable silica sand is being illegally extracted by a syndicate from streams within tea gardens in Chunarughat union.

Locals allege that politically influential groups have long been exploiting the natural resource, disrupting water flow, deepening stream beds, and causing erosion along the banks, putting nearby trees, homes, and settlements at risk.

During a recent visit to the Gilanichhara stream beside Deundi Tea Garden, this correspondent observed a group of workers loading sand onto a tractor with shovels. Upon noticing this correspondent's presence, the workers fled hastily, leaving the tractor behind.

What was once a narrow stream has now turned into a deep trench. The unchecked sand extraction has also caused hill slopes to crumble into the water, widening and disfiguring the natural terrain.

Balaram Ghatal, a local resident, said sand-laden trucks operate at night and that people are too afraid to speak up against the sand looters.

Similar illegal extraction is ongoing at 15-20 other sites across the upazila, including Badargazi and Amparachhara in Paikpara.

On October 15, the

union; Sutangchhara (Kalishiri and Ghanshampur segments) in Ahmedabad union; Ichala area in Gazipur union; Karangi river in Jankura, Mirashi union; and Jibdarchhara in Parkul Tea Garden, Raniganj upazila.

Chunarughat upazila administration sued 19 people for long-term illegal silica sand extraction from Gilanichhara. The complaint was lodged by Tahsildar Abdullah Al Mamun with Chunarughat Police Station.

The accused are Jasim Uddin, Arab Ali, Mintu Mia, Mozammel Mia, Mizan Mia, Mishuk Mia, Khozer Mia, Saheb Ali, Rubel Mia, Farhad

leader and incumbent UP member," Abdullah Al Mamun said.

Contacted, most of the accused refuted the allegations.

Mohammad Jahidul Islam, officer in-charge of Chunarughat Police Station, confirmed filing of the case and said efforts are on to arrest the accused.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit, said indiscriminate extraction of silica sand poses a grave threat to the local environment.

"Prised for its physical and chemical properties, silica sand is widely used in industries ranging from glass manufacturing to construction and artificial turf. Extracting silica sand without clearance from the Bangladesh Mineral Resources Development Bureau is illegal. If this continues, we'll be forced to pay a heavy price," he added.

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer of Chunarughat, said no leases have been issued for any of these streams for sand extraction.

"We regularly conduct mobile court operations, seize sand and vehicles, and fine or jail those involved. However, due to the remoteness of these areas, stringent vigilance remains a challenge," he added.

water from distant sources. The collapse of adjacent hill slopes has left many homes vulnerable," said Sunil Baraiak, a worker at Deundi Tea Garden.

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