



SOUTH ASIA DISASTER NEWS

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WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

SUMMARY

Afghanistan



Takhar rockslide kills 3 of a family

Source: Pajhwok Afghan News (PAN), Taluqan

Date: 06 August 2014



Three people of a family were killed and as many wounded as part of a mountain slipped in the Chah Aab district of northern Takhar province, an official said on yesterday. Sunnatullah Taimur, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the overnight incident destroyed one house, threatening 20 others. Incidents of the nature have been predicted in the area.

Saifuddin Mushtaq, the district's administrative chief, said police had evacuated 20 families to safer places. The injured were shifted to hospital and are said to be in stable condition.

Tankers with 70,000 litres of fuel gutted

Source: Pajhwok Afghan News (PAN), Maimana

Date: 07 August 2014



About 70,000 litres of fuel were torched on yesterday as a result of a blaze at the Aqina port in northwestern Faryab province, bordering Turkmenistan, an official said. The fire broke out due to a short circuit of a generator transferring fuel from one tanker to another at 8:30am. The blaze was extinguished by firefighters after an hour and a half. Sultan Sanjar, the administrative chief of Andkhai district, told Pajhwok Afghan News two fuel tankers, containing 70,000 litres of fuel, were completely torched. The tankers

belonging to the Daulatzada Company imported fuel from Turkmenistan. Abdul Momin Ziyae, the Ziyae private firm head, said importers would have suffered losses worth millions of dollars if the fire had spread to other fuel storages at the site. "Over the past 13 years, the government has been unable to execute even a small project for traders in Aqina. They still face a shortage of firefighting tools, potable water, electricity and roads." Aqina port is located in Andkhoy district on the border with Turkmenistan. Commercial goods are imported and domestic products exported through the port.

69 Taliban militants killed in joint Afghan-NATO raids in Nangarhar

Source: Pajhwok Afghan News (PAN), Nangarhar

Date: 08 August 2014

At least 69 Taliban militants were killed in separate operations carried out by NATO-led coalition forces and Afghan forces in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. Defense Ministry spokesman, Gen. Zahir Azimi, said the militants were killed in three separate ground and air operations.

Gen. Azimi further added that two senior Taliban commanders were also among those killed during the airstrikes. In the meantime, local officials in Nangarhar province said Afghan and NATO forces have launched joint operations in Khogyani and Shirzad districts. The officials further added that the operations were launched on Wednesday morning and the joint forces are still conducting the operations.

Provincial police spokesman, Hazrat Hussain Mashriqwal, said a number of Pakistani militants were also among those killed during the operations. Mashriqwal said a number of Taliban militants were also injured during the operations. The Taliban militants group has not commented regarding the report so far.

Demines among 23 dead in new wave of violence

Source: Pajhwok Afghan News (PAN), Kabul

Date: 09 August 2014

Security officials on Thursday announced the killing of at least 18 armed rebels, three policemen and three deminers in Paktia, Ghor and Zabul provinces. Brig. General Zalmay Oryakhel, the police chief for southeastern Paktia province, said a joint operation was launched by Afghan and NATO forces in Zazai Aryub district last night. The operation that continued until Thursday afternoon killed 15 rebels, including a shadow district chief. Six civilians, including women, were wounded, he added.

Three policemen lost their lives as their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in western Ghor province. Brig. General Ahmad Fahim Qaim, the provincial police chief, said the incident took place in the afternoon on the road connecting Dolana district with Ferozkoh. Governor Syed Anwar Rahmati, in the meantime, informed a clash was underway between two armed groups in Shahrak district. He linked the fight to an internal feud. In the restive south, the governor of Helmand announced the arrest of six top-level Taliban commanders. Maj. Gen. Muhammad Naeem told journalists in Lashkargah the commanders had been arrested in the past week. In neighboring Zabul province, two deminers were reportedly killed by militants. Sources in the Shah Joi district said the deminers were working for a foreign company in the area. District chief Ali Ahmad said the slain men were abducted a few days back and their bodies found today near the Sro Shelo area of the district.

4 killed, 35 injured in Kabul attack on ISAF convoy: Karzai condemns car bombing, condoles with bereaved families

Source: The Afghanistan Times (AT NEWS), Kabul

Date: 11 August 2014



At least four civilians were killed and 35 others injured on Sunday in a suicide attack on the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) convoy in the capital city of Afghanistan, official sources said. Kabul police spokesman, Hashmat Stanikzai, said the death toll included two children and a woman. The injured including a woman and a child. He said those wounded in the blast were taken to hospital. According to official sources the car bombing took place at 11:30 a.m. in

Darul Aman area, western part of Kabul City.

Ministry of Interior spokesman, Siddiq Siddiqi, said the ISAF convoy was the apparent target of the suicide attack. Heavily armored vehicles of the coalition troops have been damaged in the car bombing, but no NATO casualty was reported. A media statement issued by the Presidential Palace said that President Hamid Karzai strongly denounced the terrorist attack. President Karzai said that those involved in the terrorist attack and recent unrests throughout the country were enemies of peace in Afghanistan, who on the behest of others are hell-bent on killing innocent civilians. The president offered his condolences to the bereaved families prayed for quick recovery of the wounded. ISAF in a separate statement confirmed the attack, but did not provide details. In the media statement ISAF said, "Right now, the incident is under investigation. There are no reports of ISAF fatalities at this time." While condemning the suicide car blast ISAF said, "We sincerely regret the loss of the lives and injury to innocent Afghan civilians in this tragic incident. More information will be released as it becomes available."

Meanwhile, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on ISAF convoy, in which the suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle on a main road. A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, claimed responsibility for the attack in an email sent to different local and foreign media outlets. He claimed that two armored vehicles of ISAF were damaged and all on board foreign troops were killed. Terror attacks had increased manifold as coalition troops are preparing to leave Afghanistan by the end of this year after 12 years of war against the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Though, the US-led NATO troops had stayed for over one decade in Afghanistan to end terrorism and militant organizations from the country as well as the region but the war has been labeled as total failure by local and foreign political affairs analysts, because everyday Afghan civilians and security forces are targeted by the militant groups and foreign terror outfits sponsored by regional spy agencies.

Dozens of rebels dead in Uruzgan clashes

Source: The Afghanistan Times (AT NEWS), Tirinkot

Date: 11 August 2014

Ten days of armed clashes in the Khas Uruzgan district of central Uruzgan province have ended with the killing of dozens of insurgents, an official claimed on yesterday. The battles broke out when dozens of rebels mounted attacks on police check posts soon after Eid-ul-Fitr, deputy police chief, Col. Mohammad Aslam, told Pajhwok Afghan News. He said the clashes in Shala



Nava, Siasang and Pachghar areas of Khas Uruzgan ended a day earlier, leaving 44 rebels dead and 16 others wounded. Bodies of a number of fighters are still lying at the site. One militant commander Mullah Marhoom was among the dead. An Afghan soldier also died and another was injured. The Taliban are yet to comment on the clashes.

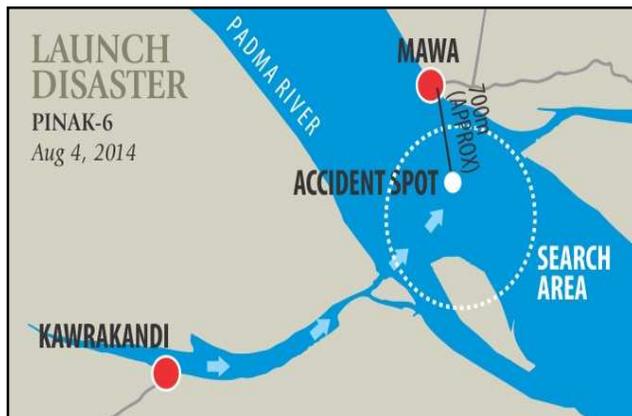
Bangladesh



Launch of dead not traced yet

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 06 August 2014



The rescuers could not locate the ill-fated Pinak-6 even over 30 hours after the double-decker launch sank in the Padma with more than 200 passengers on board near Mawa Ghat in Munshiganj. At least 129 passengers were still missing as of 9:00pm yesterday, according to the information centre set up by the district administration.

The rescuers said there was no hope of finding any survivor. Nurul Haque, director (development) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said all teams are working

round the clock but have yet to trace the sunken launch as well as any missing bodies till 1:00am today. Saidul Hasan, deputy commissioner of Munshiganj, claimed that around 100 passengers were rescued so far.

Family members and relatives of the missing people were unhappy with what they said was slow progress in the salvage operation by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), the navy, police, coast guard, fire service and district administration. Accusing the rescuers of neglect, they even blocked a road in front of Padma Rest House near Mawa Ghat for an hour in the morning. The rescuers, however, said they found it difficult to carry out rescue operation due to strong currents and high winds in the choppy waters where the depth of the river is at least 90 feet. No body was recovered from the scene yesterday.

However, police said the body of a woman was found floating in the Meghna river near Haimchar upazila of Chandpur in the morning. She could be one of the passengers of the ill-fated vessel. The woman was aged about 25, said Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of



Haimchar Police Station in Chandpur. Meanwhile, police confirmed the identity of one of the two female passengers whose name couldn't be known on Monday. The body of Hasi Begum, 50, a resident of Shibchar of Madaripur, was handed over to her brother Hannan around 12:00noon. The two female passengers, who were rescued around 11:30am on Monday, died about 20 minutes later. Pinak-6 that was on its way to Mawa from Kewrakandi was carrying more than 200 passengers against a capacity of 85. It sank in the face of strong waves and high winds in the mighty river near Louhajang around 11:00am on Monday. Briefing reporters on the salvage operation in the evening, BIWTA Chairman Shamsuddoha Khandakar said they would launch a joint intensive search in a few hours. "Three ships equipped with side-scan SONAR system will conduct the search simultaneously," he said. The ships from the navy, BIWTA and BIWTC will cover at least 600 metres on the Kewrakandi-Mawa route, he said.

The vessels will also search up to one kilometre in the upstream and three kilometres in the downstream, the chairman said. He also said restrictions would soon be imposed on small vessels plying big rivers like the Padma. In reply to a query, he said Pinak-6 that left Kewrakandi with around 150 passengers took on board an additional 100 passengers at a terminal halfway to Mawa. The launch took aboard the extra passengers at Kathalbarhi launch terminal where it was not supposed to stop. "The number of passengers in the vessel finally stood around 250," he said. Capt Nazrul Islam of Bangladesh Navy told this newspaper that they conducted a pattern search on the route with SONAR machines till 12:00noon, and then started a random search in the afternoon. "The sunken launch might have been washed away or covered in silt. We are trying to locate it with the machines," he said.

Meanwhile, a murder case was filed against the launch owner, its master and four others. BIWTA Inspector Jahangir Bhuiyan filed the case with Louhajang Police Station. Rescue vessel Rustom reached the spot around 9:30pm on Monday. But it sat idle as the sunken vessel couldn't yet be found. Survey vessel Kandari left Chittagong for the spot around 12:00noon and is expected to reach Mawa Ghat by this morning. The vessel can locate a sunken launch even if it is covered in silt, said officials. The failure to locate the launch irked family members and relatives of the missing people, as they kept waiting on the riverbank for news of their loved ones. "We cannot understand what they [the rescuers] are doing. More than 30 hours have elapsed, but they could not even locate the launch, let alone giving any news of the survivors," said Mizan, relative of a missing person.

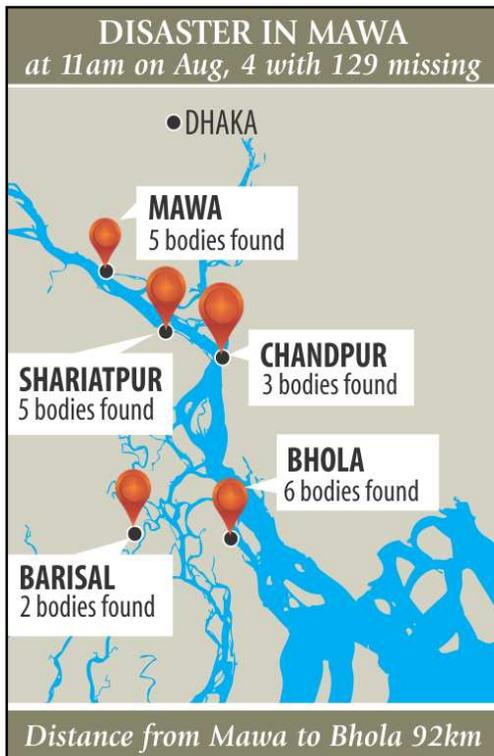
Some of them were upset with journalists for what they said was broadcasting wrong information. "We want news of our missing family members. Please don't mislead us with wrong information," said a family member of a missing person. Even after the launch disaster, many launches were seen overloaded with passengers at Mawa Ghat. In the evening, vessel ML Prince was seen carrying at least 250 passengers against a capacity of 140.

Waiting for the dead- 22 bodies found afloat near Mawa, in 4 downstream districts

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 07 August 2014

Their tears have gone dry. They have lost the strength to wail or search further. But they have kept waiting on the banks of the Padma river at Mawa Ghat to get news of their loved ones who drowned with the ill-fated Pinak-6. But the rescuers were yet to locate the sunken vessel even three days after the disaster. Since Tuesday night, the BIWTA, BIWTC, the navy, police, coast guard, fire service and district administration have been conducting an intensive search covering an area of six kilometres, but all to no avail. Family members and relatives of the missing people were frustrated and angry at what they said was the government's inept handling of the situation.



They had given up hope of seeing their loved ones alive, but they wished to get at least the bodies.

Many of them gave the names of their missing family members to the information centre set up by the district administration at Mawa Ghat yesterday. Some of them provided the centre with photographs of the missing. Some of them were busy checking the luggage that was fished out of the river, trying to figure out whether any of those belonged to their loved ones. Briefing reporters around 7:00pm, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said a total of 19 bodies had been recovered so far. Of those, eight bodies were handed over to their relatives.

The minister, however, didn't give the identities of the victims or say where the bodies had been found. But the information centre said 22 bodies had been recovered so far. Of those, two were found on Monday, one on Tuesday and the rest yesterday. Identities of eight victims could be ascertained so far, said officials at the centre. The body of Fahad, 24, of

Jhalakathi was recovered in Bhola on Tuesday. The bodies of Jannatul Lucky, 20, of Shariatpur, Jamal, 27, of Faridpur, and Mizanur, 35, and Ima Akter, 18, of Madaripur were recovered from Sureshwar of Shariatpur yesterday, while the body of Rita Akter, 25, of Faridpur was found in Chandpur. Of the 13 unidentified bodies, three were recovered at Mawa, five in Bhola, two each in Barisal and Chandpur, and one each in Shariatpur and Laxmipur, said the centre. Police confirmed the deaths of two female passengers -- Hasi Begum and Nusrat Jahan Hira -- within an hour of the launch disaster. At least 137 passengers were still missing, according to officials at the centre. The double-decker vessel, which was on its way to Mawa from Kewrakandi, was carrying more than 200 passengers against a capacity of 85. It sank in the face of strong waves and high winds in the mighty river near Louhajang around 11:00am on Monday.

Meanwhile, all government agencies concerned held a review meeting at Mawa Ghat in the afternoon. The shipping minister briefed the reporters in the middle of the meeting. He said a joint intensive search was carried out with side-scan SONAR machines yesterday, and it would continue until the launch was located. Apart from this, the fire service would continue its efforts to locate the launch, said Shajahan. The minister said survey vessel Kandari-2, which can locate a sunken launch even if it is covered in silt, would join the operation. The vessel reached Mawa Ghat from Chittagong at about 12:10am today. Shajahan said survey vessel Jarip-10 would be used in the operation if Kandari-2 fails to locate the ill-fated launch. Jarip-10 has side-scan SONAR and GPS systems that are used in ocean surveys. "We are hundred percent sure that the launch will be located and pulled out of the river bed," Shajahan said. Talking to The Daily Star, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority Chairman Shamsuddoha Khandakar said eight vessels from the BIWTA, coast guard, the navy and fire service are engaged in the intensive search with the involvement of around 200 people. Asked about the delay in launching the



operation, he said, "Initially, we thought we would be able to locate the launch with our existing equipment and manpower. But, as time wore on, we realised that we needed more support." Government high-ups were informed about it, and the operation started on Monday night, said the BIWTA chairman. "We are trying our best," he said.

However, relatives and family members of the missing were extremely unhappy with the rescue efforts. "How will we be able to identify the bodies? The authorities could not locate the launch even three days after the disaster. We believe the bodies are stuck in the hull," said Shahidul Islam, whose wife, daughter and niece remained missing. Shahidul, who was also on board the ill-fated launch, jumped into the river and survived. Recalling the horrifying moments, Shahidul said they were inside the hull when the double-decker started going down. His wife Ayesha Akter held his hand when the launch was tilting to the left side. But her hand slipped from his clutch as the passengers jostled to escape. He was then pushed towards a window, and he got out of the hull. Ali Abbas of Narayanganj whose wife and two daughters were missing said, "I want the bodies of my wife and daughters. That will be my consolation. I want to bury them." Some aggrieved relatives of the victims assaulted several journalists for what they said was misleading people with wrong information. They also hurled brick chips at a makeshift control room of Munshiganj police and a camp of the Red Crescent Society.

Bus crash kills 10- 4 of them burnt to death as vehicles collide, catch fire

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 07 August 2014

At least 10 people were killed and 40 were injured as two buses collided head on and caught fire at Shibpur upazila of Narsingdi on Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday afternoon. The fire fuelled by leaking compressed natural gas from one of the buses engulfed the vehicles minutes after the impact near Kararchar around 5:10pm, reports our Narsingdi correspondent. Four people were burnt to death inside the buses. Another person died on the spot and the other five died at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital and Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Sources said a coach heading towards Dhaka from Brahmanbaria collided with a minibus going towards Monohardi upazila and one of the buses first caught fire and burnt both the vehicles as locals were trying to rescue the victims. Several rescuers suffered burn injuries.



Injured rescuer and eyewitness to the accident Wahid Miah, 38, told The Daily Star at DMCH that he heard a crash and ran to rescue the victims. He said he and other rescuers got many passengers out of the minibus through the windows. He said there was a passenger stuck behind the driver's seat of the minibus and when they tried to get him out, the bus caught fire. The fire then engulfed the coach. Wahid lives very close to the spot.

Another eyewitness, Jahidul Islam, said when they were rescuing the passengers, they heard a hissing sound. Three fire engines reaching the spot brought the fire under control in half an hour. Vehicular movement on the highway was halted for about two hours. The identities of five of the dead could be confirmed: Sohana Ahmed, 24, of Kendua in Kishoreganj; Majnu Mia, 50, of Hairmara in Raipura of Narsingdi; Hannan, 50, Ramiz Uddin, 65, and Rizia Begum, 45. Hannan, Ramiz and Rizia died at DMCH. They were taken to DMCH along with 12 other people

injured in the accident, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Haider Ali of DMCH police camp. Two of the injured were admitted to the burn unit, he said.

Deputy Assistant Director Mizanur Rahman of Fire Service and Civil Defence said they had recovered the charred remains of a person from the driver's seat of the coach. At least 56 people were killed in road accidents during the three-day Eid holidays last month. Bangladesh has one of the highest road accident fatality rates, according to World Bank statistics. Police have seized the vehicles involved and filed a case with Shibpur Police Station.



Anger grows over rescue failure- Death toll in Padma launch disaster reaches 36

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 08 August 2014



Grief has given way to anger at Mawa on the Padma river. Four agonising days into the Pinak-6 launch disaster, family members of those missing are now accusing the government of putting in poor rescue efforts. As of 12:30am on yesterday, 36 people are confirmed dead. Scores more missing are presumed dead. The sunken double-decker is yet to be traced. Locals of Madaripur blocked Dhaka-Khulna highway for nearly three hours yesterday, demanding removal of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) chairman and other officials for what they said was

negligence in duties. Ferry and launch services were also disrupted, putting passengers in trouble. Family members of the victims have been waiting on the banks of the Padma since Monday for what they could only hope are bodies of their loved ones. "Can't I expect the body of my sister? The government did not do what it should have done from the beginning," said Sabuj in anger. Hailing from Narayanganj, he rented a trawler and scoured the river himself for his sister's and nephew's bodies. Another relative of a victim said, "What the government is doing is just an



has prohibited fishing at Mawa since the accident. Some relatives of the victims said that if the fishermen had been allowed to work, it could have brought some results.



Meanwhile, Tugboat Kandari-2 joined the rescue operations early yesterday. But it could not locate the sunken vessel. The official death toll, meanwhile, stands at 36 as 14 more dead bodies were recovered from different districts yesterday, according to the information centre set up by the district administration at Mawa. Of the 36, the bodies of 17 were handed over to family members after identification. The information centre could not provide the names of the 14 recovered yesterday. The

corpses were kept at Pachchor Primary School in Shibchar in Madaripur. Meanwhile, survey vessel Jarip-10 was on its way to Mawa, said the authorities. Another vessel, Kandari-7, which will assist Jarip-10 in the search for Pinak-6, was also on its way, they said. The rescuers said they had been using sonar side scanner in a 50-kilometre radius to look for Pinak-6.

They said a device called sub-bottom propeller was being used since yesterday morning. The propeller is submerged behind a tugboat and it could identify metal objects in the riverbed. Captain Nazrul Islam of Bangladesh Navy said the propeller could detect metal even if it was covered under silt. "A cable connects the propeller with a laptop," he told The Daily Star. On detection, the GPS system will be used to pinpoint the location of the vessel, he said. He also said Jarip-10 was likely to arrive before midnight yesterday. The survey vessel has multi-beam sound scanner that can locate objects as deep as 250 feet underwater, he added. BIWTA Chairman Shamsuddoha Khandakar said, "We are carrying out salvage operation using the latest technology. We are searching metre-by-metre to find the vessel. We are trying our best." Pinak-6, on its way to Mawa from Kawrakandi, was carrying more than 200 passengers against a capacity of 85. It sank in the choppy waters amid strong winds at Mawa around 11:00am on Monday.

Gangachara Upazila in Rangpur- Teesta devours farmland, homesteads

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 08 August 2014

Erosion by the River Teesta took an alarming turn in the last six days, creating panic among the villagers at Saudpara in Kolkond union under Gangachara upazila in Rangpur district as it devoured a vast tract of cropland and a large number of homesteads and orchards. The erosion-hit people, who took shelter on roads and high land, have been facing acute crisis of drinking water and food, said locals.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found many villagers leaving their homesteads for safer places in fear of further erosion. Shamsul Islam, a resident of the village, said he lost everything due to the onslaught by the river. "My one acre of cultivable land and homestead had gone into the river during the period," said Abul Kalam, a farmer of the area. Despite



repeated pleas, the authorities are yet to take any remarkable step to check the erosion, said the villagers. Mominur Islam, chairman of Kolkond union parishad, said erosion by the river eroded about 25 acres of croplands and left at least 50 families homeless in the last six days. We already informed the higher authorities, seeking their assistance, said the chairman.

Salvage ship detects metal object: Death toll hits 42

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 10 August 2014

Salvage ship Kandari-2 detected a metal object, presumably a wreckage of the sunken launch Pinak-6 on Monday, six days after the launch capsized with 250 passengers on board. Search workers are saying the length of the metallic object detected underwater in the Padma near Mawa matches the length of Pinak-6. The equipment on board Kandari-2 detected the object underwater on Saturday afternoon. The object had shown up scanners for the last two days, but the Kandari-2 equipment has captured a sharper image.



Chittagong port's Chief Hydrographer Manjurul Karim Chowdhury, who is in command of Kandari-2, said the metallic object was found one kilometre downstream from where the vessel had sank. "A metal object was found near the accident spot but it's still uncertain whether it's of Pinak-6," in-charge of Kandari-2 Navy captain Manjurul Karim Chowdhury said. Divers are trying to identify the object, he said. Meanwhile, the death toll from Monday's launch capsizing in the Padma river rose to 42 with the recovery of another body from the Meghna in Hatiya upazila, Noakhali on Saturday morning.

Being informed by locals, the divers recovered the body of a man from Islampur Chapla ghat area, said sub-inspector of Chairman Ghat police camp in Hatiya upazila Md Yusuf.

The deceased was identified as Ahamed Khan, 42, hailing from Bhanga upazila of Faridpur district. Munshiganj Deputy Commissioner Md Saiful Hasan Badal said 123 passengers of the ill-fated launch remained missing until Saturday. Among the deceased, the identities of two people were confirmed on Saturday. They are Moyeen, 3, of Goalkanda village of Shibchar upazila of Madaripur district and his mother Rokhsana Begum, 30. The bodies were handed over to their families.

3 Killed, 10 Hurt- Train rams 3-wheeler

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 10 August 2014

Three women of a family were killed and 10 others injured as a train rammed a locally made three-wheeler on a level crossing at Yasinpur in the Natore Sadar upazila yesterday. The deceased are Sajeda Begum, 18, her grandmother Sundari Bewa, 55 and another grandmother Julekha Begum, 45 -- all residents of the upazila's Paikordal area. They died on the spot. It was the second such accident in a little



over a week. Eleven people were killed and at least 60 more injured in a bus-train collision on an unguarded level crossing in Jhenidah on August 1. Yesterday's accident took place around 12:30pm when Barendra Express hit the Bhatbhati, which was passing through a level crossing near Yasinpur Railway Station, said Basudev Banik, superintendent of Natore police. The injured were rushed to Natore Sadar Hospital. No gateman was posted at the level crossing at the time of the accident, said the SP. Locals demanded a rail gate and a full-time gateman at the level crossing immediately.

Flicker of hope in hunt for Pinak-6- Signals picked up from metal object of similar length; 6 more bodies recovered; death toll now 46

Source: The Daily Star, Staff Correspondent

Date: 11 August 2014

A ray of hope flickered on the sixth day of hunt for sunken launch Pinak-6 yesterday as rescuers claimed to have detected signals from a “metallic object” in the Padma. “The metallic object has similarity with Pinak-6 in length,” said Manjurul Karim Chowdhury, a navy official involved in the operation. The ill-fated double-decker was 16/17 metres long. The rescue vessel Kandari-2's side-scan sonar detected the object around a kilometre off Mawa launch terminal. Rescue officials had been working on several possible locations within 20 kilometres downstream from the capsized site.

The side-scan sonar sends a beam of sound waves down to the ocean bed measures how loud the return echo is and creates an image. “It was moving fast with strong currents,” the navy official told journalists. Several attempts to hook it to the rescue boat's anchor also have failed. “We cannot say anything for sure.” The operation was “paused” around 9:00pm due to bad weather, he told The Daily Star, adding that they will resume the work once the weather improves.

Meanwhile, the death toll from the disaster reached 46 with six more bodies found yesterday. After identification, 28 bodies were handed over to family members after identification. Of those unidentified, three were buried yesterday and 11 on Friday. The double-decker vessel, which was on its way to Mawa from Kaorakandi, was carrying more than 200 passengers against a capacity of 85. It sank in the face of strong waves and high winds in the mighty river near Lauhajang around 11:00am on Monday. Meanwhile, family members of those missing are now accusing the government of putting up poor rescue efforts. Many were seen searching bodies of their beloved ones on their own. Shamsuddoha Khandaker, chairman of BIWTA, told The Daily Star, “We are trying our best.” Contacted around 3:30pm, the police control at Mawa said 116 passengers are still missing. But around 7:00pm, Inspector Mujibur Rahman announced over loudspeaker that the number is 67. He said they have come to the decision after talking to “every family” over the phone. Of the 116, police claimed, 49 passengers survived the incident. The Daily Star could so far reach families of 12 survivors.



No disaster news found this week.



Death toll in Pune landslide rises to 152

Source: newsonair

Date: 06 August 2014

The death toll in the landslide at Malin village in Pune district has risen to 152. Official sources said, these include 59 men, 72 female, and 21 children. The NDRF continued rescue operations despite inclement weather in the site.

Assam Govt asks district authorities to take steps to face drought

Source: newsonair

Date: 06 August 2014

The Assam government has instructed Deputy Commissioners to take proper steps to face the drought-like situation. State Agriculture Minister Nilmoni Sen Deka said in the Assam Assembly that 14 districts are facing rain deficiency. The minister informed the house that Deputy Commissioners and Agriculture departments in 14 districts have been directed to take necessary measures. Mr. Deka underscored the role of the Irrigation Department to tackle the situation.

20 feared drowned as overloaded boat capsizes in Ganga in Varanasi

Source: The Times of India

Date: 06 August 2014

VARANASI: More than 20 people were feared drowned while another 22 were rescued when an overloaded motor-operated boat capsized in a swollen Ganga in Varanasi on Tuesday afternoon. National Disaster Response Force and PAC flood unit were pressed into rescue operations. One person has been arrested and a magisterial probe ordered into the incident. The boat owner is absconding. One body had been fished out till the filing of the report. As the news spread of the tragedy spread, thousands of people gathered at the Gaangpur Ghat in Mirzapur where the boat was headed. Mirzapur DM Anil Dhingra, SP R P S Yadav and SDM (Chunar) Ashok Kanojia, who reached the ghat had to face locals' ire over alleged delay in launching rescue operations.

Police had to use force to disperse the villagers. Varanasi commissioner RM Srivastava along with DM and SSP of Varanasi was camping at Betawar Ghat in Varanasi to monitor the rescue operations. Reports said on Tuesday the Ganga was flowing five metres above normal level in Mirzapur and four metres above the level in Varanasi as the boat headed towards Gaangpur in Mirzapur from Betawar Ghat in Varanasi. A few survivors who managed to swim to safety at Gaangpur side said that apart from 54 men and women that included students of different schools and colleges, the boatman had also allowed two bulls on board before the boat left Betawar Ghat at Bachhawa Chatti under Rohania police station in Varanasi. Survivors further claimed that as the boat reached midstream amidst high current, the two bulls went berserk causing the boat to overturn and capsize. However, commissioner and district magistrate of Varanasi Pranjal Yadav claimed that only 40 persons hailing from Dharmalpur, Shivpur, Badhahi, Govindpur and Bela villages of Mirzapur were on board. The commissioner said that search operations were underway at three places -- Gaangpur in Mirzapur, Samneghat and Malviya bridge in Varanasi -- as bodies could be swept away due to strong current. He said that the actual reason behind the tragedy would be ascertained in the magisterial probe and added that the first priority of the administration was to rescue the victims and retrieve the bodies. "All efforts are being made to fish out the bodies," he added. Apart from private divers, teams of National Disaster Response Force and flood companies of PAC launched search drives from Chunar (Mirzapur) to Malviya

bridge in Varanasi while big nets were arranged at Samnaghat and Malviya bridge, he said. IG (Varanasi zone) Prakash D said that process to identify the rescued and missing persons was continuing. Regarding confusion over the number of passengers on board the ill-fated boat, he said that the actual picture would be clear after the end of the search operation. A youth Jitendra was first to swim to Gaangpur ghat but his mother Hirawati, who had gone to Varanasi for treatment, was missing. Similarly, Gauri was saved while her daughter Kiran (30) and three-year-old granddaughter were missing.

More than a million people affected by floods in Odisha

Source: newsonair

Date: 07 August 2014



In Odisha, floods triggered by heavy rain have hit more than a million people. About 1.12 lakh people have been shifted to safer places while 240 free kitchens have been opened for flood victims at different places. Special Relief Commissioner of Odisha, PK Mohapatra, however told media persons at Bhubaneswar today that the possibility of a major flood in the Mahanadi system has been averted and water level in all major rivers in the state is receding. The death toll due to heavy rains and floods in the state has gone up to 34 including 19 in the

current phase of natural calamities. Our correspondent reports that the situation remains grim in the lower catchment areas of Mahanadi, the largest reiver of Odisha, following Hirakud Dam's release of excess water through 50 gates. A total of 26 breaches including both small and big have occurred at various places in the embankments of different rivers in the state. Many villages have been marooned by flood water, while road communication in the flood-affected areas has been cut-off. 11 National Disaster Response Force and 30 Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force teams have been deployed to assist the administration in rescue and relief operations. The Odisha government has requested the Defence Ministry to keep two choppers on stand-by for airdropping and rescue operation if required.

Flood threat to Bihar averted: Govt

Source: DD news

Date: 07 August 2014



The flood threat to Bihar has been averted after Nepal drained out water from the artificial dam created on Kosi river after a landslide, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said in Rajya Sabha today. She said this to a query whether the issue was raised during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Nepal. "The flood threat in Bihar has been averted as Nepalese authorities have drained out water from the artificial lake created on the Kosi river through a controlled explosion". The

Prime Minister's presence helped in carrying out this action. "Bihar is now free from floods," she

said in response to a query by Sharad Yadav (JD-U). Swaraj said since the artificial lake on the Kosi river was created at the time the Prime Minister was in Nepal, the authorities there carried out a controlled explosion and drained out water in it. "For the first time in many years, there will be no floods this time in Bihar," she said. Swaraj's assurance came after she made a suo motu statement on Prime Minister Modi's Nepal visit that has helped give a new direction and impetus to Indo-Nepal ties. Raising the issue after the statement, Yadav asked her if the issue of flooding of Kosi river was raised by the Prime Minister during his Nepal visit. Yadav said there have been floods in Bihar due to the Kosi river and creation of an artificial lake on it following a landslide that is likely to affect 5 crore people in India and Nepal. There have been concerns in Bihar over the creation of an artificial dam on the Kosi river in Nepal that posed flood threats downstream on the Indian side. The Indian government has carried out evacuation of many living along the banks of Kosi river to avoid any loss of life due to possible floods.

3 die of encephalitis in Arunachal, 17 others affected

Source: DD News

Date: 08 August 2014

Arunachal Pradesh Health and Family Welfare Minister Kalikho Pul said three persons have died of encephalitis in the state and 17 persons tested positive. Preventive measures, like fogging operation and supply of mosquito nets, were initiated and symptomatic treatment was being administered to the patients. "Myself and the director of health service have written to the DCs and district medical officers to remain alert while I am constantly monitoring the situation," he said. Meanwhile, the district vector borne disease control society organised fogging operation and indoor residual spray in the JE affected areas of Kakoi, Tarajuli, Gumto, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh and Amba. Keeping in view the likelihood of the spread of the disease, the capital administration has ordered ban on import and transportation of pigs and birds including poultry from outside the state till August 31 next. DC Mige Kamki said that as per the order violators would be prosecuted for endangering public safety. On being told about nine malaria deaths at Longding, Pul said on being alerted by the local MLA, a medical team was dispatched from Pasighat general hospital to take preventive steps and contain the situation.

24 kids injured as bus turns turtle

Source: PTI

Date: 09 August 2014

Kapurthala: Twenty four school students aged between 6 and 14, and a teacher were injured when the bus they were travelling in turned turtle near Baghwanpur village here today. All the injured of Bholath-based Ajanta Model Senior Secondary School have been admitted to the civil hospital at Bholath while six seriously injured have been shifted to a private hospital at Jalandhar.

40 passengers, bus crew injured

Source: The Hindu

Date: 09 August 2014

CUDDALORE: As many as 40 passengers of the private bus plying on the Kallakurichi - Cuddalore route, and the crew suffered injuries when the vehicle hit a tipper lorry and overturned at Vellai Gate near Panruti on Friday. Police sources said that the crew included driver Selvam (45) of Thiagdurgam and conductor Anbu (55) of Thirunavalur. All the injured have been admitted to the Mundiyanbakkam government medical college hospital.

Flood like situation in Jaipur's sub-urban towns

Source: PTI

Date: 10 August 2014

Jaipur: Torrential rains created havoc and flood like situation in Jaipur's sub-urban towns of Bassi, Lalsot, and Chaksu whereas Kot-Khabda recorded the maximum rainfall of 30 cms till 0830 hours today, an official report said here. The state rescue teams have reached Bassi, Lalsot, Chaksu and Kot-Khabda to provide relief to people who have either remained in the houses or stranded here and there, the spokesman said, quoting Jaipur Collector K Kunal.

Odisha flood toll mounts to 45, water level goes down

Source: newsonair

Date: 11 August 2014

Death toll due to floods in Odisha climbed to 45 and number of people affected by the deluge to over 32.9 lakh on Sunday as the situation improved gradually with receding water level in many areas. Water level in almost all rivers including Mahanadi dropped considerably amid signs of improvement in the flood situation in different areas, Deputy Relief Commissioner Prabhat Ranjan Mohapatra said on Sunday. However, more than 4.8 lakh people in over 460 villages were still left marooned in the delta region of Mahanadi river system, while many areas were still submerged by flood water of Baitarani river, he said. Different parts of the state, mainly northern region, were lashed by rain under the influence of a low pressure but the intensity was low and the weather is unlikely to aggravate the flood scenario, said a senior official in the office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC). Rain and thundershower would occur at many places over Odisha during next 24 hours and heavy rainfall was expected at one or two places in interior parts, the meteorological centre said. The number of people affected by the flood mounted to over 32.9 lakh from around 28.58 lakh estimated on Saturday, the SRC office said, adding, the number of flood-hit villages also climbed up to 5,313 located in 134 blocks in 1,381 gram panchayats spread over 23 districts. The death toll in floods and heavy rains in different parts of the state climbed to 45, eight more from Saturday's 37, SRC office said. The highest number of casualties occurred in Bargarh district, followed by Mayurbhanj district. Flood deaths were also reported in Bhadrak and Sambalpur, it said, adding, deaths were mainly caused by drowning in swirling waters and wall collapse. Over 1.19 lakh people were still sheltered on river embankments and other high places for whom 168 free kitchens are operating to provide cooked food, it said, adding, number of such people was high in Cuttack and Puri districts. While 39 breaches have occurred at different places, as many as 165 wards in 27 urban local bodies areas have also been affected in flood and heavy rains, it said, adding, around 30,000 houses were damaged in the floods. With water level gradually dropping in Hirakud reservoir on Mahanadi river, 22 sluice gates were now kept open for discharge of excess water as against 50 gates opened for the purpose two days ago, it said. Flow of water in Mahanadi river through Mundali barrage has come down to about 7 lakh cusec from around 11.4 lakh cusec two days ago, SRC office sources said. Despite recession of water, many areas remained inundated in the delta zone of Mahanadi river system as the state government stepped up relief operation, it said, adding, the situation in several areas of Kendrapara and Puri district remained grim.

Rajasthan Floods: Over dozen villages inundated in Jaipur, Dausa

Source: newsonair

Date: 11 August 2014

In Rajasthan, more than a dozen villages have been inundated in Jaipur and Dausa districts following heavy rain fall during the last three days., Chaksu, Kotkhwada and Lalsot are worst hit by heavy down pour. The Jaipur district administration has requisitioned army column for rescue

operation in Kotkhawda. More than hundred personnel have moved with equipment and boats for relief operations. A few other army columns are on stand by for flood relief. In Jaipur, schools remained close today following warning of heavy rain fall by the met office.



Dangerous roadside accident in Kulhudhu'fushi

Source: Haveeru News

Date: 06 August 2014

A dangerous roadside accident has taken place in Haa Dhaalu atoll Kulhudhufushi on yesterday morning, seriously injuring a man. The police revealed that the accident took place around 8:30am near the harbour area. The 45 year old man who suffered serious injuries in the accident is being treated in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Kulhudhufushi Regional Hospital.



The man injured in the accident was driving a motorcycle which collided with a pick-up, resulting in the accident. The accident occurred when the pick-up suddenly changed gears from reverse to forward as the motorcycle was trying to overtake the pick-up. It resulted in the motorcycle colliding into the front buffer of the pick-up. The motorcycle immediately fell down and went under the pick-up, said the police. The 42 year old man in the back seat of the motorcycle, and the 19 year old man driving the pick-up, were both uninjured, said the police. Police reports that they are now investigating the accident.

Health alert on Ebola outbreak

Source: Haveeru News

Date: 07 August 2014



Health Ministry has issued an alert advising people to take preventive measures against the dangerous Ebola virus which is spreading throughout the West-African countries. The health alert issued by the ministry stated that they were working in collaboration with the Immigration Department to monitor passengers travelling from countries infected with Ebola virus. Health Protection Agency is working on providing health facilities with guidelines as to how follow-ups, treatments, and

infection control should be carried out.

A cure has not yet been found for the Ebola virus. This virus can be transmitted with ease from person-to-person by the means of blood, fluids produced by the body, or by sharing sharp objects such as syringe needles with a person infected with the virus. World Health Organization (WHO) says that it is likely that there are more ways through which this virus may be spreading. WHO surveys show that more than 1,200 people have been infected and more than 600 killed by the virus. Symptoms of the disease become visible within 2-21 days of infection. Early symptoms include fever, body ache, weakness, nausea and a neck pain.

WHO noted the fact that a high number of deaths are resulting from organ failure that is occurring as a result of infection from the virus. It's been years since the Ebola virus was first found in Africa. The fast rate at which the virus is now spreading is however causing concern. WHO has issued a health alert advising people not to travel countries where the virus is spreading. In addition to the health alert issued for the Ebola outbreak, a health alert was also issued Health Protection Agency for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) which is spreading in the Arabian Peninsula. This includes Saudi Arabia, from where a large number of Maldivians continue to come back after performing the Umrah.

Nepal

Sindhupalchok missing declared dead
Source: Kantipur News, Sindhupalchok
Date: 6 August 2014

KATHMANDU, AUG 06 - Around 123 people who went missing since the deadly landslide at Mankha VDC in Sindhupalchok district have been officially declared dead. The District Administration Office Sindhupalchowk on Wednesday declared those missing as dead as there was no possibility of recovering the bodies alive from the debris. Rescue workers have found only 33 bodies from the debris of landslide-hit settlements.



Sindhupalchok Chief District Officer Gopal Prasad Parajuli informed that the administration had declared them dead as per the recommendation made by the village development committee and demands of the families whose relatives had gone missing in the landslide. "The missing persons were declared dead after the nature of the site showed that there were no possibilities to find the bodies," said CDO Parajuli. Parajuli also informed that the administration has provided Rs. 40,000 each to the relatives for the final

rites of those missing.

Family members of those missing in the landslide also performed the last rites by making effigies out of Kush, a grass considered sacred according to Hindu mythology. Likewise, Rs. 5,000 each were distributed to those whose houses were damaged in the landslide. Around 129 houses were damaged in the landslide. Meanwhile, authorities have continued their efforts to funnel out the dammed water.

Koshi flood terror among Saptari locals abates

Source: Republica News, Rajbiraj

Date: 6 August 2014

RAJBIRAJ: Following massive landslide and flooding that claimed dozens of lives at Jure, Sindhupalchowk district on Saturday, the swollen Koshi River had terrified people living along its banks in the Nepal-India border area of Saptari district. However, the panicked locals are currently breathing a sigh of relief as the water level in the river has come down over the last four days.

According to Anandmohan Sharma, a local of Bhardah VDC in Saptari, the lives of the locals, who were terrified, has limped back to normal. All 56 sluice gates on the Koshi barrage had been opened since Saturday to ease the water level and 18 of them have been left open since Tuesday. As per information given by the Koshi barrage control room, 38 sluice gates have been closed after the risk of overflowing by the Sunkoshi subsided. However, technical experts at the control room said the closed sluice gates will also be opened immediately if there is any problem. The Koshi river flow as measured on Tuesday was 151,000 cusecs. Scores of panicked families from Badgama, Bairaga, Jagatpur and other villages in Saptari district who had moved to safer ground four days ago have started returning to their homes from Tuesday after the threat posed by the river overflow subsided.

Displaced locals of Gobargadha, an island-like VDC situated in the middle of the Koshi in Saptari and reached by boat, have also started returning to their homes. However, the local administration has warned them not to go back to their houses for the moment. But Kusheshwar Yadav, a local, said that hundreds of them moved back to the village on Tuesday alone.

Likewise, on the Indian side, hundreds of residents of Birpur, Bhimnagar, Kataiya and dozens of other villages in Supaul district of Bihar state, who were sheltering along the east and west canal areas of the barrage, have also returned to their homes. Over the last four days, the number of Indians and Nepalis coming to see the flooding has been increasing. Thousands are arriving in the Koshi barrage area on a daily basis, Bindeshwor Mandal, a local of nearby Bhardah VDC, said, adding that local entrepreneurs are turning a good profit selling them various items, sometimes at higher prices.

Landslide hits Jajarkot

Source: Nepal News, Jajarkot

Date: 6 August 2014

Landslide hit Naya Nayakbada-2, Jiri of Jajarkot, after incessant rainfall on Sunday. Four houses were swept and more than a dozen displaced. Houses of Kali Bahadur Shahi, Gopal Kami, Padam Shahi and Balu Singh were brushed by the landslide, Dilip Singh, a resident of Jiri, said through telephone. No human casualty was reported in the incident but millions worth of property is estimated to be damaged.

Locals are facing difficulties after the flood on Daha rivulet of the same village swept away the wooden bridge linking Jiri to Maina. The displaced families were taken to safer places said a local, Khamma Shahi. More than 60 families now have drinking water issue after the landslide damaged the source of drinking water at Nayakbada-5.

According to the District Police Office, the landslide at Khalanga-5 on Monday morning has displaced more than half-dozen houses. The loss caused by landslide is yet to be ascertained said DSP Chakra Bahadur Singh.

10 districts affected by flood, landslide: DPM Gautam

Source: Nepal News, Kathmandu

Date: 7 August 2014

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, Bamdev Gautam has said that flood and landslide incidents across the country have affected 10 districts so far. Fielding queries of lawmakers in a meeting of Legislature-Parliament Wednesday, DPM Gautam said the affected districts are Sindhupalchok, Sankhuasabha, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Bajura, Gulmi, Pyuthan and Lalitpur.

In those tragic incidents, 73 individuals have died, while 42 were injured and 123 are missing, said DPM Gautam. He said the government has been making maximum efforts to provide prompt relief and speed up the rescue operations. The Deputy PM's remarks have come at a time when the government is alleged of sluggish progress in this regard.

123 missing presumed dead

Source: Kantipur News, Kathmandu

Date: 7 August 2014

Focus will now be on draining the artificial lake formed by the landslide dam, says Home Ministry

KATHMANDU, AUG 07 - The 123 people missing in Saturday's massive landslide in Sindhupalchok are now considered dead and the search operation has been stopped after Wednesday. The missing, however, cannot be officially declared dead yet, said the Home Ministry. The law allows the disappeared to be certified dead only after 12 years from the time of the disappearance.

"The search and rescue team will now focus solely on draining the artificial lake formed by the landslide dam," said Yadav Prasad Koirala, joint-secretary at the ministry. The team had recovered 33 bodies from the debris before the search was halted. Koirala said that it has become impossible and even dangerous for the team to look for bodies. "The families of those presumed dead have begun receiving Rs 40,000 per dead," said Chief District Officer of Sindhupalchok Gopal Parajuli.

A Nepal Army team has been trying to drain the lake for the last five days. But its plan to explode a section of the dam to widen the channel created on Saturday failed for the second consecutive day. According to the Army, the water has been flowing into the lake at the rate of 190 cubic feet per second and is flowing out at 210 cusec. A reading on Wednesday showed that the water level of the dammed lake has been reduced by 51 cm, said Jagdish Chandra Pokharel, NA spokesperson.

The Army and disaster experts, however, are unsure what the reduction means in terms of a possible outburst. No one has information on the exact depth and volume of the lake and the strength of the dam. "To the naked eye, the volume of water on the lake seems constant," said Dhruva Devkota, a humanitarian programme coordinator at Save the Children, an international organisation, involved in providing immediate relief to the victims. Devkota was on the site of the disaster on Wednesday.

"The dam looks strong," he said. "But there is a new danger to upstream localities from back flooding because we can see the landmass on the hill splitting again. Another landslide could occur at the same site." According to the ministry, the last three months alone have seen landslides and flood affect ten districts, including Sindhupalchok. The combined death toll from these tragedies is 73, with 42 injured and 123 presumed dead. Excluding the incidents at

Sindhupalchok and Sankhuwasabha, where a landslide killed seven people on Monday, the disasters have damaged properties worth Rs 104.6 million.

Pakistan



17 killed in AJK road accident

Source: Dawn News, Muzaffarabad

Date: 6 August 2014

MUZAFFARABAD: At least 17 persons, including seven women, were killed and 10 others were wounded on Tuesday, in yet another tragic road accident in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in about two weeks caused by negligent driving. The accident occurred near a place known as Chathyal, some six kilometres on the outskirts of Abbaspur town in Poonch district, after an overloaded public transport vehicle fell into a ravine, police said.

The rundown wagon, with maximum seating capacity for 18 persons, had started its journey from Forward Kahuta, headquarters of district Haveli, for Hajira in the neighbouring Poonch district, with around 28 persons on board. “The overloaded and speeding vehicle fell some 250 yards down the narrow road on a mountain slope, due to negligence of driver,” police official Basharat Shah told Dawn from Abbaspur. He said 16 persons, including the driver and a couple and their two daughters, died on the spot and 11 others were wounded. Of them one succumbed to his wounds on way to hospital.

The deceased were identified as Khawaja Manzoor, his wife Saleem Akhtar and daughters Sadia Manzoor and Sadaf Manzoor, Shahid Akbar, Mohammad Raees Khan, Mohammad Farooq, Shakil Ahmed, Nazir Ahmed, Shabana, Shaheen Akhtar, Akram, Beenish Kabir, Salma Sarwar, Mohammad Safeer (driver), Abdul Shukoor Bukhari and Mohammad Siddique. Fourteen of them belonged to district Haveli, two to district Sudhnoti and one to district Poonch, the official said. Three of the 10 injured persons were said to have received critical wounds.

Sri Lanka



Water supply the main concern in drought hit dry zone

Source: Daily News, Colombo

Date: 6 August 2014

The people of the drought -hit districts of Polonnaruwa, Monaragala, Anuradhapura, Hambathota, Ampara, Puttalam, Trincomalee, Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi, immediately need wide-mouthed 50- liter water barrels to collect and store water. Local bodies in the district need several hundred 1,000- liter hybrid water tanks for the distribution of drinking water, District Secretaries of the affected areas told the Daily News yesterday. At this juncture water supply is a major concern, they said adding that community organizations, aid agencies, religious organizations and social service providers that wish to be of assistance to the affected families may provide them with hybrid water tanks and 50- liter water barrels to be given among the people. “A family needs at least a couple of 50-liter barrels. With two barrels they can always have one ready to collect water from the browsers that have been deployed in their areas to supply drinking water,” Polonnaruwa District Secretary Nimal Abeysiri said. “With the use of

1000- liter water tanks, we can place them at various points so that people can come and collect water from them,” he said. “We have already put to use some 300 water tanks. We need yet another 1,200, 1,000-liter hybrid water tanks to improve the conditions,” he said. “We can avoid water wastage which is caused by those small-mouthed bottles and containers which people bring to collect water from our supply browsers, by using 50-liter water barrels,” he explained. “There are about 120,000 affected families in Polonnaruwa. Therefore, there is a requirement of 240,000, 50 liter water barrels,” he pointed out. “We purchase water from the National Water Supplies and Drainage Board. The government has provided necessary funds to help the drought victims,” he added. Disaster Management Minister Mahinda Amaraweera said the government has allocated Rs. 1.9 billion to assist drought victims in the dry zone. District Secretaries said, the government has implemented a number of forward cash programs to help the affected families. Asked if they had issues relating to food, Secretary Abeyisiri said, “The people of Polonnaruwa can manage to survive with rice and polsambol. I must say their main problem is water. “The sad part is that we cannot expect the rains till October,” he said. Meanwhile, Disaster Management Center officials said they and other ministries too, have sent money to the District Secretaries in the affected districts to carry out drought relief programs.

Ebola virus: BIA on alert

Source: Daily News, Colombo

Date: 6 August 2014

Arrangements have been made to look out for Ebola infected passengers arriving at the Bandaranaike International airport (BIA), a Health Ministry spokesman said. The spokesman said arrangements have been made under the direction of Health Minister Maithripala Sirisena to commence a quarantine system at the BIA and also to operate an Emergency Operation Centre 24 hours a day.

Officials at the BIA's special health unit will be vigilant. Doctors will be provided all required vaccines, he said. Special attention will be paid on passengers arriving from affected countries. Persons with Ebola symptoms will be subjected to a special inspection and they will be admitted to the IDH for treatment, the spokesman said. Nurses are on round the clock duty at the BIA from yesterday. All passengers arriving from African countries will be monitored for three weeks during their stay in Sri Lanka, he said. The spokesman said Health Ministry officials have made arrangements to educate state hospital officials on Ebola.