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### Press Release

## **Speakers demanded to give compensation to the families of the victims - consultation held commemorating 14 anniversary of M V NASRIN-1 Launch Capsize**

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised a consultation meeting titled "Awarding compensation to families of the deceased and victims and legal obligation regarding the judgment pronounced by learned Court on launch capsized case" at Bhola District Lawyers Associations on the occasion of 14th anniversary of M V Nasrin launch capsized while travelling from Dhaka to Lalmohan in Barisal District. Bar Association Secretary Obaidur Rahman Sajahan chaired the meeting and Mr. Justice Nizamul Haque, Retired Judge, Appellate Division; Bangladesh Supreme Court was graced as chief guest.

The meeting was moderated by S M Rezaul Karim, Legal Advisor and Director, BLAST and Mamataz Begum MP Bangladesh Parliament; Ferdous Ahmed, District and Sessions Judge, Bhola; Abdul Momin Tulu, Chairman, Bhola District Council; Md. Akteruzzam, Chief Judicial Magistrate delivered their speech in the meeting as Special Guest. Md. Mashiur Rahman, Advocate, Supreme Court presented the latest status of the case of MV Nasreen launch capsized filed by BLAST. Subsequently, Advocate Jibonando Jayonto and Journalist Nazrul Islam contributed as panel discussant.

"Through this judgment and decree, the lower Court set a landmark precedent. It became explicit that not only by filing writ petition before High Court Division but also by pleading at lower Court, people may obtain redress." said the Chief Guest. He noted that legal aid organisations may concentrate to work in an appropriate way so that victims can get compensation immediately. Moreover, he added that, the way victims of the launch capsized of the MV Nasreen-1 connected themselves to these long legal battles for a conclusive closure; it must set an exemplary footstep.

In the consultation, family members of deceased and injured victims of the MV Nasreen-1 launch capsized recollected the pathetic incident which was held in 14 years back and urged for prompt disbursement of compensation.

It is noted that, the High Court Division rejected the Provisional petition made by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and others including the owner of the launch in a landmark decision on 5 June 2017 and uphold the Judgment of the lower Court to compensate Taka 17 crores and 11 lakhs Taka to the victims of the MV Nasreen launch capsized.



# বাংলাদেশ লিগ্যাল এইড এন্ড সার্ভিসেস ট্রাস্ট (ব্লাস্ট) Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)

Mamataz Begum, Member of Parliament, Bhola, assured that she will give her best effort to execute this decree in time and she emphasised on raising awareness among mass people about launch capsizes.

Advocate Khalilur Rahman, Coordinator, Barisal Unit delivered his welcome speech and local lawyers, human rights activists, representatives of NGOs and journalists were present among others in the consultation.

**Background:** On 5 June, 2017 Honorable High Court Division upheld the Judgment of the Dhaka District Court on launch capsizes compensation case filed by BLAST. It is a landmark decision of the High Court Division to award compensation amounting to Taka 17 cores and 11 lakhs to victims of the MV Nasreen. This judgment made the family member of deceased and victims of launch capsizes entitled to obtain compensation.

A High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Syed Mohammad Ziaul Karim and Justice Sheikh Md. Zakir Hossain delivered this verdict. Senior Advocate Dr. Kamal Hossain, Advocate Subrato Chowdhury, Advocate Z I Khan Panna represented BLAST in the High Court hearing while Advocate Md. Barkat Ali and Advocate Sharmin Akter assisted them in this legal battle. BIWTA and representatives of Launch Association Committee were also present in the hearing.

The MV Nasrin capsized at the confluence of the Meghna and Dakatia rivers on 8 July 2003 while travelling from Dhaka to Lalmohon of Bhola district. In that accident 110 people died and 199 people remained missing. That year, the DC of Chandpur published a list of 400 affected families to whom the Naval Disaster Trustee Board awarded certain amounts to the victims. In 2004 BLAST filed a petition in the Dhaka District Court on behalf of victims' families claiming that the compensation provided was wholly inadequate. On 2 February 2016, 13 years after the capsizes, the Dhaka District Court pronounced judgment in favour of the victims and ordered the government and others to pay Taka 17 cores and 11 lakh compensation to them. BIWTA and other defendants filed a civil revision to the High Court against that judgment on 24 October 2016 and the High Court initially issued a rule asking why the judgment and the compensation award should not be set aside. However, on 5 June 2017, the High Court dismissed the rule and upheld the decision of the lower Court.

## **For further information, please contact:**

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