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PRESS RELEASE

BLAST demands prompt and effective investigation of casualties in Barguna-bound MV Abhijaan-10 passenger launch fire, punishment of those responsible and adequate compensation to the victims

On 24 December 2021, a massive fire broke out in the MV Abhijaan-10 passenger launch in Jhalakathi. According to media sources,¹ about 50 bodies have been recovered so far, more than a hundred have been burnt in the incident and many are missing. The launch MV Abhijaan-10 was going to Barguna from Dhaka, reportedly carrying more than a thousand passengers. The launch caught fire while it was on the Sugandha river in Jhalakathi. It was later diverted to Diakul village on the riverbank. The fire is believed to have originated from the engine room of the launch.

A review of the number of casualties in the country so far due to assorted reasons including launch capsizes and fire shows that the Inland Shipping Ordinance, 1976, is being violated by ship owners, operators and regulatory authorities.

Section 56 of the Inland Shipping Ordinance, 1976, which deals with protection against explosions, fires etc. appears to have been clearly breached in the case of the fire on the MV Abhijaan-10.

BLAST is demanding prompt and effective investigation into the casualties, public release of the investigation report, punishment of those responsible and adequate compensation to the victims. In the case of MV Nasreen launch capsizes (Case No – 344/2008) filed by BLAST for the victims, the Court had ordered compensation to the affected persons.

It is demanded that the regulatory authorities take appropriate action to ban all vessels without a certificate of survey under Section 33 of the Ordinance, and to ban any vessels that ply without insurance or marine casualty trust fund as per Section 58(a) of the Ordinance.

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¹ [বালকাঠির সুগন্ধা নদীর পাড়ে মৃতদের স্বজনদের ভিড \(prothomalo.com\)](http://prothomalo.com)