**Press release, April 15, 2024**

**Civil Society Demands Judicial Inquiry on Sadarghat Launch Accident on Eid-Day with Adequate Compensation**

Dhaka, April 15, 2024: Nirapad Naupath Bastobayan Jote (Safer Waterway Implementation Alliance) demanded a judicial investigation and punishment of those responsible for the death of five people in the launch accident at Sadarghat on Eid-ul-Fitr, April 11. The leaders of the alliance think the death of five persons is due to negligence and reckless behavior of some people. The case filed in this incident condemned the negligence and reckless driving of the launches for the death.

On the afternoon of Eid, two launches were moored at pontoon number 11 of Dhaka Sadarghat. Although there was not enough space between the moored launches, another launch recklessly tried to enter the pontoon through them. At this time, one of the ropes mooring the launch shattered and thrashed the five passengers waiting on the pontoon, who died on the spot. During Eid and other festive days, there is always extra pressure on the jetties, so extra surveillance and security measures were expected. The alliance leaders call for an end to such undesirable instances in the waterways of Bangladesh. They raised the following demands for a secure Bangladesh's waterways.

(1) A high court judge should lead the investigation committee. (2) The committee should also have experts and representatives of affected family members. (3) Reports of all past investigation committees to be published immediately. (4) Adequate police force must be deployed under the Marine Magistrate Court. (5) Launch owners must ensure insurance for all passengers and ensure a passenger list before departure of every trip. (6) All those responsible for the accident should be brought under exemplary punishment. (7) Additional inspectors and police force should be deployed at the jetty during Eid, Puja, other festivals, and storms. (8) Immediate maximum compensation must be given to the families of those who died in the launch accident on April 11, 2024.

Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief coordinator of the alliance, said that waterways in Bangladesh are the most cost-effective and safe. We want the government to give utmost importance to securing this cost-effective waterway for transporting people and goods.

Since 2003, this alliance has been agitating to make Bangladesh's waterways safe, and they have regularly made these demands. On July 8, 2003, MV Nasreen sank, resulting in the loss of many lives. Almost 15 years after this incident, the alliance has presented various recommendations to implement safer waterways every year. In 2006, the alliance published research outlining the root causes of maritime accidents and recommendations for remedial measures. In a press conference on February 25, 2015, the coalition demanded the appointment of additional magistrates and police at the jetties during the Eid and Puja holidays and storm seasons.

Reported by,

Mustafa Kamal Akand, Coordinator, Safer Waterways Implementation Coalition, 01711455591, kamal@coastbd.net