



12 lives lost on highway

Reckless helper drives coach as driver sleeps; causes collision in Rangpur; 49 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The reckless driving of a coach helper filling in for a sleepy driver caused a head-on collision with another bus that left at least 12 dead and 49 injured in Taraganj of Rangpur yesterday.

The crash around 10:40am happened when the coach heading for Thakurgaon from Comilla collided with the bus heading for Rangpur from Dinajpur at Teromile area on Rangpur-Dinajpur highway.

A survivor of the coach said the passengers sensed the danger right after the helper took the steering wheel in Bogra around 5:00am and the driver went to the back to sleep.

"As the helper took the steering, many passengers protested," said Sadikul Islam, the survivor. The coach was at speed with 40 to 50 passengers inside and around 30 more on its roof, he told The Daily Star over the phone.

Some of the passengers, however, got down in Bogra and Rangpur.

The passengers started to panic seeing the reckless driving and warned the helper repeatedly, he said.

"But the warnings fell on deaf ears and rather he sped up and started overtaking many vehicles," said Sadikul, who was returning from Comilla.

He said at one stage some passengers even asked him to stop the vehicle so that they could get off and asked to see his licence.

The helper had then said he would show them the licence once they got to Taraganj.

"Just before the crash, it felt like the bus was moving without any balance and suddenly went on the wrong side of the road. We heard the bus coming from opposite direction honking," said Sadikul.

"I was like thrown out of the bus from the window," he said. He, however, suffered minor injuries.

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Awami League Publicity Affairs Secretary Hasan Mahmud, 3rd from right, at a recent Olama League programme in the capital. He along with several AL leaders claims that the organisation has no links with their party. However, Olama League claims to be an affiliated body of the AL. PHOTO: COLLECTED

AFFILIATION OF OLAMA LEAGUE

If not AL, who's with it then?

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The Olama League has all along been claiming to be an affiliated body of the Awami League, and issuing media statements and holding programmes using that identity.

Its men have joined AL leaders and activists during different movements and senior AL leaders quite often have participated in its programmes.

Leaders of the Olama League have got invitations from the Gono Hhaban. They even have a designated office space at the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue.

So, it is really hard to buy AL leaders' claim that the Olama League has no link with the party.

At present, the organisation is split into two feuding factions -- one led by Ismail Hossain bin

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"Some people introduce themselves as Olama League leaders. Actually, they don't belong to Awami League. This is not even a like-minded organisation."

HASAN MAHMUD
AL'S PUBLICITY
AFFAIRS SECRETARY



"Awami League is being called a party of Hindus and we are trying to erase this image and this is our prime target."

ABDUL HASAN
SHEIKH SHARIATPURI
LEADER OF A FAC-
TION OF OLAMA
LEAGUE

Broadcasters risk jail, fine if they violate rules

Says draft Broadcast Act

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A draft of the Broadcast Act-2016 has been prepared with a provision of jail term and fine for violating the rules or regulations of the act and orders or directives of the proposed broadcast commission.

According to the draft, criminal procedures would be followed in case of probe, trial and appeal concerning any offence that falls under the act.

One may face a maximum penalty of three months' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5 lakh or both for violating the rules or regulations and orders or directives of the commission, it says.

If any broadcaster keeps committing the same offence, it would be fined Tk 1 lakh a day, says the draft act.

However, the offences under the law would be considered "non-cognisable" and "bailable", and the court wouldn't be able to take any case into cognisance without the commission's approval.

Besides, if anyone runs broadcast without prior approval under the law or other related laws, the guilty person may face a maximum penalty of seven years in jail or a fine of Tk 10 crore or both, the draft reads.

It mentions 27 types of activities that a broadcaster cannot carry out without prior approval from the authorities concerned.

A 43-member committee formed by the government prepared the draft after the National Broadcasting Policy-2014 recommended that a law be formulated.

The information ministry yesterday published the draft on its website (www.moi.gov.bd) to elicit public opinion.

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Unusual surrender of a duty-dodged car

RAFIUL ISLAM

The owner of an unregistered luxury car left his vehicle in front of the Customs Intelligence office in Sylhet, apparently being unable to pay the taxes and get the vehicle registered.

Customs Intelligence officials of Sylhet found the 2007 Lexus RX 350 abandoned outside their office around 2:00am yesterday and there was an unsigned letter from the owner inside the car.

The unusual incident happened at a time when customs intelligence officials were

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The 2007 Lexus RX 350 abandoned outside the Customs Intelligence office in Sylhet early yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

US provided assistance to Bangladesh

Says US official about probe into the alleged plot to abduct, kill Joy AP, Washington

AP, Washington

The United States provided assistance to Bangladesh in its investigation that unearthed the plot to abduct and kill Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's son in the US, a senior American official has said, a day after the police claimed to have uncovered the conspiracy.

"The United States Department of Justice responded to the Government of Bangladesh's request for legal assistance related to this case," the official told PIT.

The comment was made in response to a query

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Govt claim 'false and fictitious'

Alleges Taleya, demands Shafik Rehman's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers, including detained journalist Shafik Rehman's wife Taleya Rehman, yesterday outright rejected the government's claim that Shafik was involved in a conspiracy "to abduct and kill" Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

At a programme at the Jatiya Press Club, they also dismissed the PM and the detectives' claim that such a plot was proven in a US court and that the Bangladesh government had evidence in this regard.

Newly floated "Platform to free Shafik Rehman" organised the programme, demanding cancellation of Shafik's remand and his release.

Participants, including human rights and development activists, lawyers, doctors, teachers and singers, quoted a report published yesterday in "The Wire," an Indian publication.

The report said the US court records

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