

# DISLODGED SCULPTURES AT RU Students did it to 'protest'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Some students of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Rajshahi University have dislodged around 500 sculptures and left those scattered on the faculty premises, "protesting the lack of protection of their works".

They claimed that they did this to realise their demand for proper protection of their works. They fear religious bigots would damage their sculptures.

This happened within a week of the Chittagong University incident in which some unidentified men on motorcycles smeared engine oil on the wall art made by fine arts students ahead of Pahela Baishakh.

The authorities of the Rajshahi University faculty identified seven students who are behind dislodging of the sculptures.

The Daily Star talked to three of the students who said they along with some 30-40 students dislodged the sculptures at night.

Although most teachers and students demanded an investigation into the incident and punishment of those involved, the faculty authorities termed the incident "the work of

immature students".

In a meeting yesterday, the faculty's academic committee condemned the incident and requested the university authorities to look into the matter.

Two RU assistant proctors -- Shamim Ahmed and Zihad Ahmed -- talked to the students involved in the incident and rebuked them.

Assistant Proctor Shamim said they could not take any step, as the university has no vice-chancellor and pro-vice chancellor for the last one month. "We hope a body will be formed to investigate the incident."

Jamil Erphan, a security guard of the faculty, noticed the matter around 8:30am yesterday.

"I saw the beautiful sculptures of concrete and wood lying on the ground. Art works built for Pahela Baishakh celebrations were broken and scattered on the road. Some small sculptures were left leaning against the doors of teachers' rooms," said Jamil.

Hundreds of art works of students were kept on display on the faculty premises.

When students and teachers were

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Sculptures dislodged by some students of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Rajshahi University lay scattered on the faculty premises yesterday. Students were protesting lack of protection for their works.

PHOTO: STAR

## 1971 WAR CRIMES

# Verdict on two Kishoreganj men today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 is set to deliver judgement today in a case filed against two Kishoreganj men for allegedly committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

The special court yesterday fixed the date, 40 days after the prosecution and the defence completed the closing arguments and the tribunal kept the case waiting for delivering verdict.

The accused -- Syed Mohammad Hussain alias Hossain, 64, younger brother of convicted war criminal Syed Hasan Ali, and Muhammad Moslem Pradhan, 66, -- are facing six charges.

Of them, Moslem is in jail and pleaded not guilty, while Hussain is on the run.

Wrapping up their arguments and rebuttal of defence arguments on March 7, the prosecution prayed for capital punishment of the accused saying they had proved all six charges.

The defence, however, said the testimonies of the prosecution witnesses were "not credible" and the prosecution had utterly failed to

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## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

# Bangladeshis among 9,000 rescued

REUTERS, Geneva

Nearly 9,000 mainly African migrants were rescued in the Mediterranean this past long weekend after being put by smugglers in Libya onto unseaworthy boats heading toward Italy, UN aid agencies said yesterday.

The migrants, many from Nigeria and Senegal with some from Bangladesh, are among an estimated 20,000 held by criminal gangs in irregular detention centres in Libya, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said.

On release, they pay to board the overcrowded boats, often just inflated rubber vessels that could not cross the Mediterranean, in the hope of starting a new life in Europe.

"It is obvious that better spring weather has encouraged smugglers to take people from their detention centres," IOM spokesman Leonard Doyle told a news briefing in Geneva.

"The smugglers have clearly taken them to sea and pushed them out in the hope and belief that they would be rescued."

More than 35 vessels, including private charity boats, the European Union border agency Frontex, the Italian and Libyan coast guards and 12

merchant ships were involved in rescuing dozens of vessels, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said.

"This was an overwhelming search and rescue activity by all sides involved," UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch said.

"We repeat our calls on Europe, on the governments, to be out there saving lives. NGOs have been a great help in terms of filling up that vacuum," he added.

At least 900 migrants have died or have gone missing while attempting to reach Europe by sea so far this year, including 97 missing in the latest incidents between Thursday and Sunday, during which time 18 bodies were also found, Doyle said.

Some 36,000 migrants have been rescued, against 24,000 at this time last year, he said.

IOM reported earlier this month that growing numbers of African migrants passing through Libya are traded in what they call "slave markets" before being held for ransom, forced labour or sexual exploitation.

"So there's a full-on economy of trafficking or trading in migrants who think they are going to a better life in Europe and end up effectively in a gulag of exploitation," Doyle said.

# EC to open talks with parties in July

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"The commission will decide about other stakeholders to be invited to the dialogues," he said.

Having digital voting machines (DVM) ready by February next year and launching a campaign to popularise those machines, and holding mock polls 10 days ahead of the actual polls top the agenda.

Transparent ballot boxes were proposed as an alternative to the DVMs.

The EC will sit with political parties 25 days and with NGOs, newsmen and civil society representatives 35 days ahead of the announcement

of election schedule. Their suggestions on polling dates and other major issues would be taken into account.

The draft stresses the need for multiple meetings with political parties, law enforcers, election observers and foreign diplomats to ensure a participatory national election, the EC secretary added.

The roadmap also says that the EC will take political parties' suggestions on the appointments of election officers, where polling stations should be, and preparing the voter lists.

"The election should be held on time, as there is a constitutional

obligation for holding polls within 90 days prior to the current parliament's dissolution," Abdullah said.

The five-year tenure of the Awami League-led government will expire on January 11, 2019.

Before holding the 2008 national polls, which according to local and international observers was free, fair and impartial, the EC led by then CEC ATM Shamsul Huda also prepared a roadmap.

BNP and many other political parties that are not part of the AL-led grand alliance have been demanding a "non-partisan administration" during the election.

# Troubles within

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Mozammel claimed that around 40 percent buses and minibuses were not on the city streets in the last two days, even though the owners were not allowed to do that as per the Motor Vehicle Ordinance-1983 and the conditions stipulate for getting route permits for buses.

"It means they are violating the law," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Just two months ago, people were made to suffer as transport workers went on a nationwide "work abstention" for two days, February 28 and March 1, protesting verdicts of courts.

The decision of the "work abstention" was made on the night of February 27 at a meeting reportedly held in Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan's home and was attended, among others, by State Minister for Rural Development and Co-operatives Mashiur Rahman Ranga.

Shajahan is the executive president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation while Ranga is the president of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association.

On April 6 and 7, the federation held extended meeting where they discussed the draft law and decided that they would submit a recommendation to the authorities concerned about bringing several changes to it.

Abdur Rahim Box Duda, senior vice-president of the workers' federation, told this newspaper that the meeting, attended by Shajahan Khan, decided that they would form human chains across the country on April 23 demanding the cancellation of some "black clauses" in the proposed law.

According to the draft law, a person has to pass at least class-VIII or class-V to be eligible for professional driver's licence or helper's licence respectively. It also has provisions for harsher punishments for traffic rules violations.

Asked about the tendency to disobey laws, Rahim said the civil society and the media always blame the drivers but they never talk about how the drivers drive buses amid various difficulties.

"No driver wilfully kills an ant, let alone a human being," he said.

Yet, his federation had gone for a nationwide "work abstention" on February 28 and March 1 after a truck driver was convicted of wilfully killing a woman in Savar.

Trucker Mir Hossen Miru killed Khodeza Begum by running his truck over her on June 20, 2003, at Jhauchar in Savar.

Khodeza's fault was that she and her husband Nuru Gazi tried to prevent Miru from using their private road to transport soil from the Dhaleshwari river bank.

According to the case documents, Miru and his helper Intiaj Ali ignored the objections of Nuru for five to six days.

Around 11:30am on June 20, 2003, when the duo reached near their house, Nuru and Khodeza stopped them and again asked Miru not to use their private road.

At one point of the exchange, Miru drove his truck over Khodeza leaving her spot dead and Nuru survived narrowly by jumping away. Locals handed Miru over to police.

Firoz Talukder, the investigation officer of the case on February 9, 2004, pressed murder charges against Miru and Intiaj under section 302 of the Penal Code.

In his testimony before the court, Firoz said he brought murder charge against the accused as he found evidence that accused killed the victim intentionally.

On February 27, a Dhaka court found Miru guilty of "pre-planned killing" and sentenced him to death.

The court in its verdict said, "Accused [Miru] killed Khodeza Begum intentionally by running truck over her as he was asked not to drive over the said road. Undoubtedly, it's a pathetic murder and Khodeza Begum was killed for a trifle matter."

Yet, a group of road transport workers' leaders dubbed the murder an accident.

They led their workers, some of whom were already enforcing a strike in 10 districts of Khulna division over another verdict in a road crash case, to go for an "indefinite work abstention" nationwide with no prior notice.

The workers took to the streets, brought road transport to a grinding halt, clashed with police, hurt businesses and held people hostage for two days.

The transport workers in the 10 districts of Khulna division had been on work abstention to protest the sentencing of another driver involved in the road crash that killed filmmaker Tareque Masud, media personality Ashfaq Munier Mishuk and three others on August 13, 2011.

In the verdict of the case, Manikganj Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court on February 22 held bus driver Jamir Hossain, 50, guilty of "reckless driving and negligence" that led to the deaths of the five.

The court gave life imprisonment to Jamir under section 304 of the Penal Code (charge of culpable homicide).

The court said Jamir committed several offences, driving without a valid licence, driving a bus unfit for the road, driving a bus with a tampered speed governor, and colliding with the microbus carrying the victims on the oncoming lane of the highway.

Citing the investigation, the court said Jamir's driving licence expired three years before the accident and fitness certificate of the bus had also expired.

He had been driving the bus illegally using a fake fitness certificate renewal slip, the court said.

Citing testimony of a BRTA official, the court said speed governor seal, which caps the buses top speed, was tampered with and for this reason Jamir was able to drive at higher speeds.

The court said Jamir had been driving since the night before the accident and failed to take rest.

Jyotirmoy Barua, a Supreme Court lawyer, said the verdict was delivered under section 304 of the Penal Code which deals with the crime of killing a human being without malice aforethought.

In this particular case, the driver might have had no intention to kill the people but he was aware of the fact that his licence and fitness certificate of the bus had expired, the speed governor was tampered with and he knew his actions could cause death, said Jyotirmoy.

He said if the convict was aggrieved with the verdict then he could have appealed to the Supreme Court. "But, going on a strike to protest the verdict cannot be a solution," he said.

Rahim, senior vice-president of the worker's federation, on February 26 said they had been deprived of justice "because the driver was not tried under proper legal provisions" and vowed to continue the strike until they get assurance from the government of a "just trial".

Asked why they went for a strike instead of going to the court with their arguments, he said, "We will go to the High Court and will place our arguments... a driver has the right to go on strike."

Asked about being all powerful in the transport sector and holding people hostage, Khandakar Enayetullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, refuted the allegations and said, "We are always misunderstood. Wholesale allegations have always been raised against us without any justification."

Mashiur Rahman Ranga, state minister for Rural Development and Co-operatives Division, said, "Fines are imposed [on owners] in case of any irregularities. Being the minister, I have never influenced this matter. No question of abuse of my power can be raised here."

Minister Shajahan could be reached last night.

# Led by the heart

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from besieged Syrian villages, killing 126 people.

Photographer and activist Abd Alkader Habak was there working and was briefly knocked out by the blast. When he came to senses, he began trying to help the wounded.

"The scene was horrible -- especially seeing children wailing and dying in front of you," Habak told CNN. "So I decided along with my colleagues that we'd put our cameras aside and start rescuing injured people."

The first child he checked on was dead.

He ran towards another. Someone shouted at him to stay away -- the child was already dead, they said.

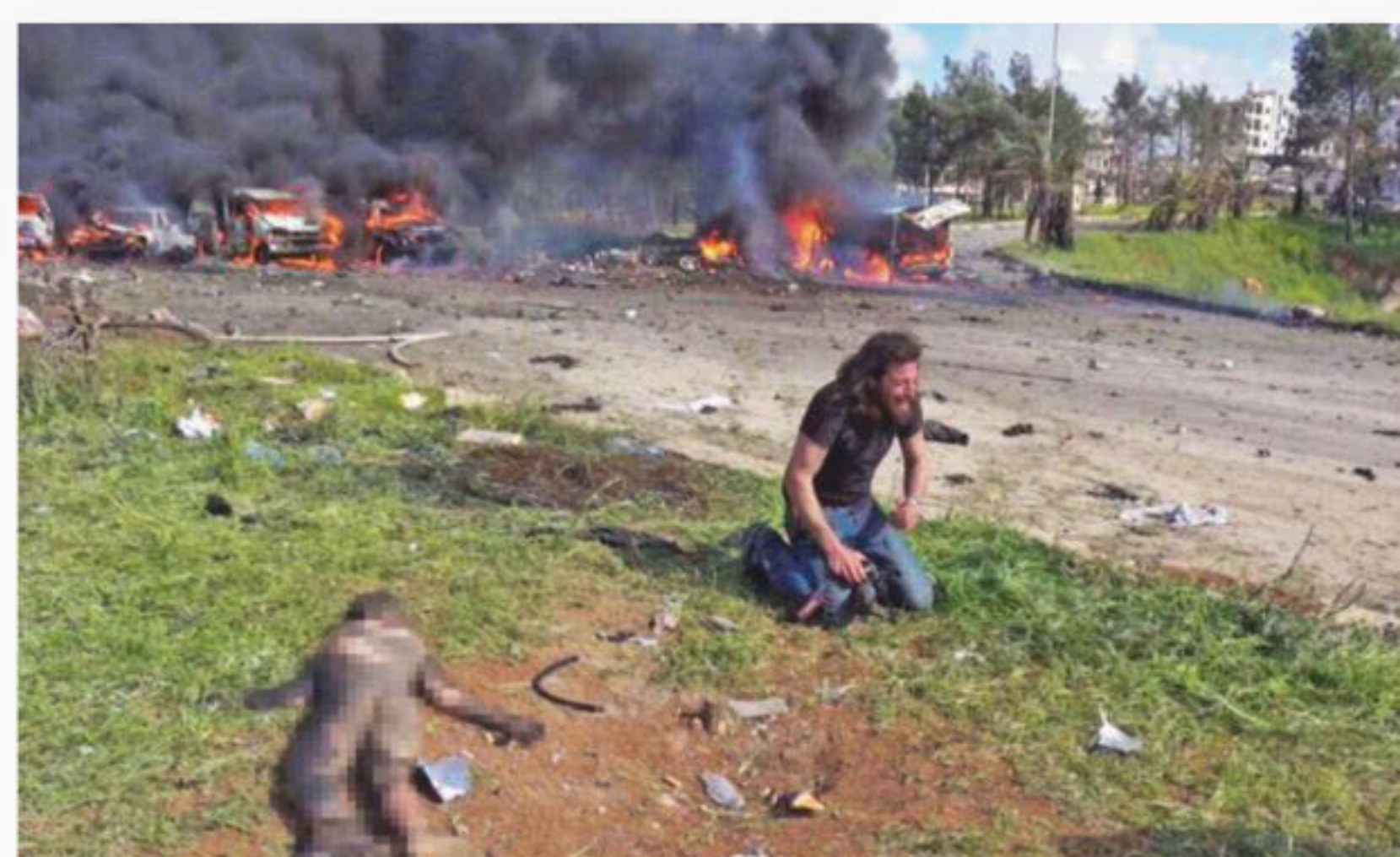
But he wasn't. Habak could see the boy was barely breathing.

He picked him up and began to run towards safety. His camera was still on, recording the chaos.

"This child was firmly holding my hand and looking at me," he said.

An image taken by another photographer, Muhammad Alrageb, shows Habak dashing towards an ambulance, the child and his camera in his arms.

Alrageb said he also helped some of the injured but then began taking



After rescuing one boy, Habak is overcome with grief beside the body of another victim.

PHOTO: CNN

photos.

"I wanted to film everything to make sure there was accountability," he said. Also, he added, "I feel proud that there was a young journalist there helping save lives."

Habak said he left the injured boy, who must have been only 6 or 7, at the ambulance. He doesn't know if the boy survived.

Then he ran back to scene of the

bombing to help others. He came across another child on the ground. This one, too, was dead -- one of 68 children killed in the attack.

Overwhelmed, Habak collapsed. An image, shot by another photographer, shows him on his knees sobbing near the boy's body.

"I was overcome with emotion," he told CNN. "What I and my colleagues witnessed is indescribable."

# Canadian river vanishes in 4 days

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days from 26 to 29 May last year based on river gauge data, said Dan Shugar, a University of Washington Tacoma professor. A 100-foot (30-meter) tall canyon formed at the end of the glacier, rerouting the melting water, Shugar and his colleagues wrote in a study published in Monday's journal Nature Geoscience.

The scientists had been to the edge of the Kaskawulsh glacier in 2013. Then the Slims River was "swift, cold

and deep" and flowing fast enough that it could be dangerous to wade through, Shugar said. They returned last year to find the river shallow and as still as a lake, while the Alsek, was deeper and flowing faster.

"We were really surprised when we got there and there was basically no water in the river," Shugar said of the Slims. "We could walk across it and we wouldn't get our shirts wet. It was like a snake-shaped lake rather than a river."

The lack of water in the Slims wasn't because of changes in rainfall, Shugar said. They know that because it's a river fed mostly by glacial melt, not rain, and the Alsek increased in amounts similar to what disappeared from the Slims.

The Kaskawulsh glacier covers about 9,650 square miles (25,000 square kilometers), about the size of Vermont. The front of the glacier has retreated nearly 1.2 miles (1.9 kilometers) since 1899, Shugar said.