

2 brothers die in autorickshaw, lorry collision

Another brother hospitalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two brothers were killed in a road crash and another injured when a truck rammmed a CNG-run autorickshaw in Hetimganj area of Golapganj upazila in Sylhet yesterday morning.

Locals torched the truck. Quoting locals, Golapganj Police Station's Officer-in-Charge AKM Shibly said the autorickshaw heading for Sylhet was being driven by Suruj Ali, 40, and his two brothers were in the back.

He said the sand carrying truck hit the autorickshaw in front of Mollagram Government Primary School around 11:30am.

Tormuj Ali, 45, and Suruj died on the spot. Their other brother was undergoing treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The OC said the truck driver fled the spot.



Locals torch a tipper lorry at Hetimganj on Sylhet-Zakiganj Road yesterday after the vehicle collided with an autorickshaw, inset, killing two people on the spot.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Remove

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benches to be removed and replaced with alternatives that give rough sleepers a sheltered place to sleep.

Cara Leavey, an LSE masters student who is studying inequalities and social science said homeless people would no longer be able to take shelter at night.

Speaking to The Independent, Leavey said rough sleepers used to rest on the old flat benches near the library at night, and were "not doing anything troublesome".

"During the winter, there were a lot more homeless people who were sleeping on those benches. A lot of people were really upset to see how many rough sleepers there were in the area," she said.

A group of students gave food, clothes, sleeping bags and blankets to homeless people in the winter, when temperatures plummeted and snow hit London. "Both professors and students felt really passionate about this," Leavey added.

The petition - signed by hundreds of people - says the LSE "claims to work towards the 'betterment of society', but the implementation of anti-homeless benches outside the library is anything but."

It adds: "As a university which claims to care about alleviating inequality and addressing social and economic challenges, it is outrageous that LSE would install these benches designed to exclude vulnerable populations."

An LSE spokesperson told The Independent: "The safety of our staff and students is paramount."

"We received a number of reports from LSE staff and students who were threatened and abused by members of the public gathering on the benches outside the library. This is in addition to extreme anti-social behaviour in the area."

"The risk posed to the LSE community had become unacceptable and changes were made to attempt to reduce the incidence of further threats and anti-social behaviour."

The spokesperson added: "We will review these measures to determine whether they are appropriate."

Bus owners offer

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company uses contracts, we will recommend cancellation of its registration and we will cancel the membership of the company," he said.

From now on, drivers and other employees of buses would be salaried, he said, adding that they would monitor the matter and enforce the decision strictly.

"Information from different media outlets and our assessment show that contract system is responsible for road accidents," he said.

The investigation of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), into the crash that killed the two college students, identified two buses competing and reckless driving as reasons for the accident.

OTHER DECISIONS

Enayet said representatives of the owners and workers would check documents of buses at Mohakhali and Saidabad bus terminals from today and no vehicles would be allowed on streets without valid documents.

All rundown buses in the city would be refurbished before September 30, he said, adding that they were reinforcing their support to the initiative taken by late Dhaka North City Corporation mayor Annisul Huq.

Annisul wanted to get all city buses under a handful of companies to bring discipline in the city transport sector.

Enayet said after Annisul's death,

the initiative lost momentum.

BODY ACCEPTS DRAFT ACT

Enayet said bus owners and workers in Dhaka supported the draft of the Road Transport Act-2018, which got cabinet approval on Monday.

"This is a time befitting law. It has been enacted in line with ground reality," he said, adding, "The law has many positive sides. However, in many cases, the amount of fine for owners has been increased. We will send our proposal for changes if necessary."

Two leaders of transport workers -- Shahidullah Sadhu and Karam Ali -- supported the act at the press briefing.

Asked about allegations that the proposed act was soft on vehicle owners, as it holds only drivers responsible for casualties, Enayet said the draft was in no way soft on owners; rather the punishment for them has been increased in many cases.

The association's President Abul Kalam, Senior Vice-President Hasan Imam, Organising Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, and Office Secretary Samdani Khandaker were also present at the briefing.

Driver confesses

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Bus owner Shahadat Hossain, the driver of another bus and two helpers were taken in police remand for questioning.

More arrests over 'rumour'

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Akhtaruzzaman Tony, 22, Asadullah Al Galib, 22, and Munim Sarkar, 23, in the capital's Dhanmondi on Tuesday night, said Rabiul Islam, operations officer of Rab-2.

During their primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted that they are Chhatra Shibir activists and that they uploaded provocative posts on Facebook through mobile phones to instigate and divert student protesters as well as deteriorate law and order, claimed a Rab statement.

The force also claimed to have seized a laptop, SIMs and a form for joining Shibir from their possession.

The arrestees were handed over to Dhanmondi police in connection with a case filed under the ICT act, said the Rab official.

The cyber crime unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) arrested three others -- Tauhidul Islam Tushar, 24, Mohammad Waliullah, 28, and Ehsan Uddin Ejaz, 18, -- from different areas of the capital on Tuesday on charge of spreading rumours on social media.

They were shown arrested in a case filed with Ramna Police Station, Additional Deputy Commissioner Najmul Islam of the unit told The Daily Star.

Their laptops, mobile phones and memory cards were seized and information on their Facebook IDs was also collected, the official said.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed Waliullah on a five-day remand while Ejaz and Tushar were placed on four days each. The court passed the order after inspector Rafiqul Islam, investigation officer of the case, produced them before it and sought a 10-day remand for each of them.

Arrested by the unit on Monday, Mahbubur Rahman, Alamgir Hossain, and Saidul Islam are currently on a five-day remand.

"Quizzing the trio we got sensational information and links of many others who spread rumours on social media," said ADC Nazmul, adding that they were conducting drives to arrest them.

In Sirajganj, arrestee Shakhawat Hossain Shakil Mahamud, a lawyer at the district court, was sent to jail on Tuesday after being arrested on charge of spreading rumour on Facebook to instigate student protesters.

Shakil allegedly shared a fake post regarding the army, said Mojaharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sirajganj DB police.

A Chittagong court yesterday placed each of the four youths, arrested on Monday, on one-day remand in connection with an ICT case.

They are Maruf Hossain, Aziur Rahman, Imdadul Haque Anik and Abdullah Al Shahed. Two of them are Chhatra Federation leaders.

On August 4, Rab arrested actress

Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed in Dhaka's Uttara while police arrested Shahed Akter in Rupnagar and DB arrested noted photojournalist Shahidul Alam on Monday over similar charge.

Meanwhile, a random post has been doing the rounds on Facebook since Monday, requesting people to share information on 30 people with law enforcers. The post claimed that the 30 spread rumours to make the student movement violent.

The post also shared a telephone number and email address belonging to the cyber crime investigating centre of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

However on Tuesday, the Centre issued a statement on Facebook, saying the post was not uploaded by it.

"But citizens are always welcome to share with us any information on any sort of cybercrime," the Centre said in the statement.

Asked about taking action against those who shared the post on Monday, Molla Nazrul Islam, special superintendent of CID's organised crime unit told The Daily Star yesterday that anyone could provide law enforcers with information on violence.

"We have primarily checked the post and photos of some of those 30 people and found their involvement in instigating violence through social media," said Nazrul, adding that they were working further on the matter.

Shahidul Alam

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Communications Technology Act on charges of spreading propaganda and false information against the government.

During a hearing of the case, Shahidul told the court that he was tortured in custody, but police denied the allegation.

In response to a writ petition filed by his wife Rahnuma Ahmed on Tuesday, the High Court directed authorities concerned to immediately send him to the BSMMU.

It also ordered the BSMMU to examine Shahidul's physical condition and submit a report by 10:30am today. The court also fixed today for further hearing on the petition.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday filed a petition with the Supreme Court seeking stay on the High Court order that directed the authorities concerned to send Shahidul Alam to the BSMMU.

After a brief hearing, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division of the SC Justice Hasan Foez Siddique sent the petition to the full bench of the apex court for the hearing today.

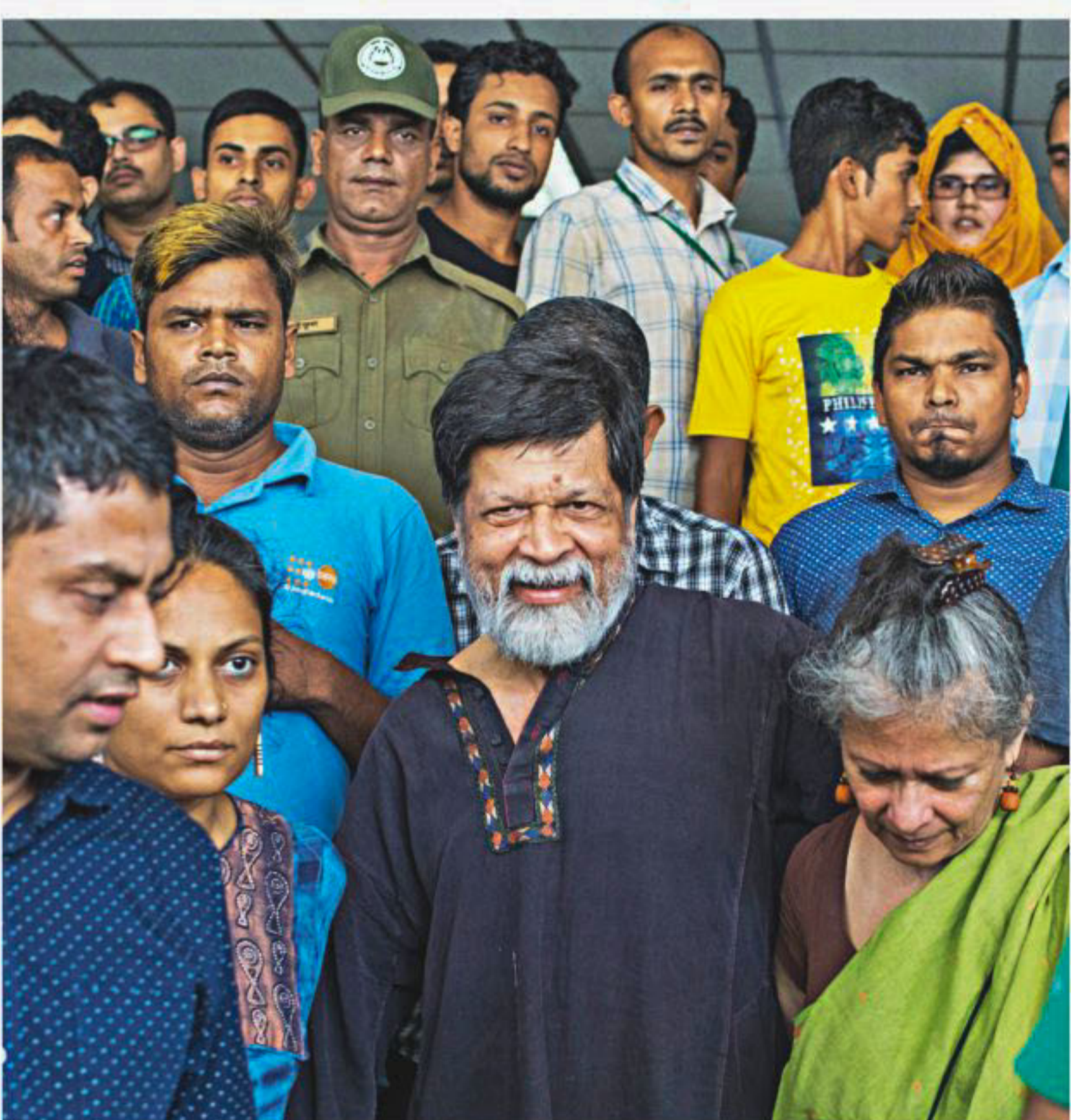
Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the government while Idrisur Rahman and Sara Hossain appeared for the writ petitioner.

Shahidul was picked up by plainclothes men on Sunday night and was placed on a seven-day remand by a Dhaka court the next day.

CONDEMNATIONS POUR IN
Over 500 academics, writers, artists, activists and journalists from around the world -- including Noam Chomsky, Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Patrick Farrell and celebrated writer Bapsi Sidhwa -- condemned the detention and alleged torture of photojournalist Shahidul Alam, and demanded his immediate release.

"Shahidul Alam's detention underlines the growing crackdown on dissenting voices in Bangladesh, in a pattern that is visible elsewhere too," said their statement published on the website of well-known Pakistani journalist and blogger Beena Sarwar.

The signatories demanded that the government drop all charges against Shahidul, ensure his medical treatment and that he be released immediately.



Shahidul Alam at the BSMMU yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

ately.

The statement said that laws like the ICT act which "make such whimsical attacks on freedom of expression" should be changed and demanded that the government use restraint in dealing with young protesters, many of whom are children, and ensure that police play their role responsibly.

Meanwhile, sixty-nine noted rights activists, academics and civil society members of Bangladesh also strongly condemned repression of students, journalists and especially of Shahidul by the government, including arbitrary police remand under the ICT Act.

If anything he has done is considered against the law, charges could be brought in the due process, but nothing justifies unlawful abduction, arbitrary remand and unconstitutional torture in custody, said the statement.

Signatories also demanded that the

government stop suppressing students, academics, journalists and human rights activists immediately, release all who have been arbitrarily detained and take necessary steps to ensure road safety, freedom of speech, freedom of movement and freedom of association for all, without discrimination.

The signatories include Dr Hameeda Hossain, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Shaheen Anam, Barrister Raja Devashish Roy, Dr Iftekhar Zaman, and Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar.

Elsewhere, four hundred and thirty-eight artists, photojournalists, filmmakers, writers and journalists from India also demanded "immediate, unconditional and honourable" release of Shahidul.

Furthermore, The Editors Guild of India, in a statement, said that it was "pained and agitated" to learn of the detention of Shahidul Alam in Dhaka under the provision of the ICT Act.

Freed in one case

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which she was convicted. We have to move to the higher court with every case which takes time. From the way we are now moving, we expect she will be freed soon," Khaleda's lawyer Zainul Abedin told The Daily Star.

Concerns over Khaleda's health became a major issue in the country's political scenario after she went to prison.

After visiting her in prison in June, her physicians said she had suffered a mild stroke and needed immediate treatment at the United Hospital.

Several ministers, however, said her blood pressure had dropped and suggested she take treatment at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University. Khaleda rejected the suggestion.

"She fell ill after going to jail. Her personal physicians recommended better treatment, but the government didn't care. It is inhuman," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhruul Islam

Alamgir said.

BNP leaders have said their party would not participate in the coming parliamentary election if Khaleda is not released.

Khaleda had gone to jail on multiple occasions in the past. But this is the first time she has been behind bars for such a long time. She had been under house arrest pending trials in buildings used as makeshift jails called sub-jails in 2008.

The 72-year-old former prime minister is the second former head of government to end up in prison on corruption charges. Former dictator HM Ershad also went to jail for corruption.

Before going to jail, she repeatedly asked her party men to stay united ignoring the rifts. There were apprehensions in the party of splits.

In her absence, BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman became the acting chairman and coordinated the party's activities from London.

The senior leaders frequently hold meetings at Khaleda's Gulshan office and then the decisions are conveyed to Tarique Rahman for endorsement, said party insiders.

"Party leaders are now more organized and the tie [among them] is stronger than ever," Fakhruul said.

Rather than enforcing any strike or hartal, the BNP has observed token hunger strike, rally, and submission of memorandums to the deputy commissioners across the country.

Party insiders said they will hold tougher programmes demanding Khaleda's release after the Eid-ul-Adha.

Party leaders and her relatives said the former premier has been spending her days in jail reading books, newspapers and offering prayers.

Her residence "Firoza" is guarded only by her personal security personnel and her relatives sometimes come to the house.

No bar to free Hasnat Karim

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of police for interrogation. The police claimed that Hasnat was released after questioning, but his family insisted he never returned home and could not be contacted by any means.

The police on August 3 that year said they had arrested Hasnat under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that allows arrest without a warrant.

He was shown arrested in the terror attack case on August 13 the same year and was interrogated for several days on remand.

Court sources say the order of his release was sent to the jail authorities yesterday afternoon. His release from Kashimpur jail is just a matter of time since he is not accused in any other case.

Sharmina Parvin, Hasnat's wife, said they are expecting his release in the morning today. Asked for her reaction, she refused to make any comment.

Earlier on July 23, Inspector Humayun Kabir of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit

who is also the investigation officer of the case pressed charges against eight alleged militants in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, showing 211 people as prosecution witnesses.

Judge Mujibur Rahman of the Special Tribunal accepted the charge sheet after hearing. The tribunal also issued arrest warrants against two fugitives -- Shariful Islam Khaled and Mamunur Rashid Ripon -- as the investigation officer appealed to the court to that end.

The tribunal directed the officers-in-charge of Bagmara police in Rajshahi and Nandigram police in Bogra to submit reports by August 16 on execution of the warrants issued against them.

The other six accused are behind bars. They are Jahangir Alam alias Rajib Gandhi, Rakibul Hasan Regan, Rashedul Islam alias Rash, Sohel Mahfuz, Mizanur Rahman alias Baro Mizan and Hadisur Rahman Sagar.

Names of 13 other "militants" were

not included in the charge sheet despite their involvement as they were killed in encounters with law enforcers at different places on different dates.

On July 1, 2016, armed militants stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan and killed 20 hostages, mostly foreign nationals. Two police officials were also killed during the 12-hour standoff. Global terror outfit Islamic State-inspired home-grown militant group "neo-JMB" as police called it is held responsible for the Bangladesh's worst ever terrorist attack.

Meantime, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal has no courtroom to run the trial proceedings of the cases filed against militants independently. It has to begin its trial after adjournment of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 of Dhaka.

Due to shortage of courtrooms for the Anti-Terrorism Tribunal, trial of the cases pending with it is not running smoothly. As a result, litigants are being deprived of justice.