

11 more lives lost

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Dhaka city and reached the Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

"At least eight to 10 passengers requested him to drive carefully, but he didn't pay any heed and overtook other vehicles at almost every crossing point," said Saiful, whose mother and three brothers were also injured and were being treated at the hospital.

The driver lost control when trying to ply on the wrong side of the highway, he said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sarail Police Station's Sub-inspector AB Siddik, quoting passengers, said, "The driver's reckless driving led to the tragic accident even though there were no vehicles ahead of or beside the bus."

The dead were identified as the seven-month-old son of Omar Faruk, Yasin, from Gopalpur village in Moulvibazar; Rubina Noor, 55; and her daughter Samina Noor, 28, from Yousufpur village in Sreemangal.

Yasin's mother Rehana Akter was admitted to hospital in critical condition.

Police seized the bus and filed an unnatural death case, while the driver and helper of the bus managed to flee.

In Cox's Bazar, two Chhatra League leaders were killed in an accident at Chakoria on the Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway when an Awami League leader's Pajero jeep hit the motorcycle they were on yesterday.

One of the victims, Pavel Hossain Sabuj, 18, son of Jan-e-Alam of Digarpan Khali area and general secretary of Ward-9 Chhatra League died on the spot, while the other, Nabiul Arafat, 17, vice president of Ward-9 Chhatra League, was taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital with critical injuries. He was declared dead at 9:45pm.

The accident occurred at Sagir Shah Kata at Dulahazara of Chakoria municipality at around 12:30pm, police said.

Inspector Md Alamgir Hossain of Malumghata Highway Police Outpost at Dulahazara said the Pajero, belonging to Cox's Bazar District Council Chairman and Chakoria municipal unit Awami League President Zahedul Islam Litu, collided head-on with the motorcycle which was coming from the opposite direction.

Police seized both vehicles and took them to the highway police outpost.

In Mymensingh, at least two, including a child, were killed and four others injured in a road accident at Rupchandrapur area in Tarakanda upazila.

The victims were identified as Abid Hossain, 5, and Azizur Rahman, 22, from Haluaghat upazila of the district.

The accident occurred when a Mymensingh-bound CNG-run auto-rickshaw from Haluaghat collided head-on with a truck at around 12:15pm, killing the child on the spot, said Mahbulul Haque, OC of Tarakanda Police Station.

The injured were rushed to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where Azizur died.

Police have seized the truck but its driver managed to flee.

In Faridpur, a college student was killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Barisal highway at Moshaujan Bus stand area under Nagarkanda upazila.

The dead -- Monira Akter, 18 -- was a grade 12 student of Monohorpur MA Sukur Women's College.

Quoting locals, Sheikh Mafujur Rahman, OC of Bhanga Highway Police Station, said a Sheba Green Line Paribahan bus ran over Monira and she died on the spot.

Locals blocked the highway for an hour after the accident.

In Sirajganj, a man was killed and three others injured as a speeding bus, on its way to Bogra, collided head-on with a truck at the Koddar Mor point

near the Bangabandhu Bridge early yesterday, police said.

The dead -- Shahadat Hossain, 45 -- of Sirajganj Sadar upazila, was a passenger of the bus.

Sayed Shahid Alam, OC of Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station, said Shahadat died on the spot while the injured were taken to Sirajganj General Hospital.

The accident triggered traffic congestion that lasted for hours, he said.

In Dinajpur, at least 20 were injured as a passenger bus suddenly turned over on the Dinajpur-Rangpur highway in Chirirbandar upazila.

The injured were sent to different hospitals in Rangpur and Dinajpur.

Abdul Maleque, OC of Doshmile Highway Police Station, said the bus was heading to Rangpur from Dinajpur and suddenly turned over on the highway and fell into a waterbody at Champatoli village in the upazila at around 4:30pm.

In Narsinghdi, two people were killed as a bus hit a motorcycle on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Baraitala area of Shibpur upazila in the district, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Mehedi, 22, son of Alauddin; and Noman, 24, son of Kafil Uddin, both from Khalipur village in Kapsia upazila of Gazipur.

OC of Shibpur Highway Police Hafizur Rahman said the Sylhet-bound Ena Paribahan bus of hit the motorcycle at around 10:00am, killing Mehedi on the spot. Noman died when he was taken to Narsinghdi Hospital.

Police seized the bus from Bhairab but its driver managed to flee.

In Gazipur, at least 20 were injured as a Mymensingh-bound passenger bus turned over after its driver lost control of the wheels at Jainabazar area in Sreepur Upazila on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, police said.

Shahidul

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hearing list of the HC bench of Justice Md Ruhul Quddus and Khandaker Diliruzzaman.

Justice Ruhul told the lawyers that they (court judges) would examine the decisions of the HC and Appellate Division in such cases, and asked them to move Shahidul's bail petition next week.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the government in the courtroom.

The photographer was sent behind bars on charges of "spreading propaganda and false information against the government".

Shahidul, 63, was picked up by law enforcers on the night of August 5 from his home in the capital's Dhanmondi area.

The following day, he was placed on a seven-day remand after police had produced him before a court seeking a 10-day remand. He told the court that he was tortured in custody, but police denied the allegation.

Upon completion of his remand, he was sent to jail on August 13.

Meanwhile, Dr Pabitra Sarkar, former vice chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata, and poet Subodh Sarkar, chairman Paschimabanga Kabita Academy, criticised the Bangladesh government over the arrest of Shahidul Alam.

While speaking to The Daily Star on Tuesday, they said they hoped for Shahidul's quick release.

ARREST APPROPRIATE: JOY

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ICT affairs adviser and son Sajeeb Wazed Joy today called "appropriate" photographer Shahidul Alam's arrest and claimed that Shahidul had spread rumours instigating violence during last month's student protests for road safety, reports BSS.

In a signed article in the US-based RealClearPolitics (RCP) media outlet, Joy wrote that Shahidul was one of those responsible for turning a peaceful protest into a violent one.

He added Alam was arrested for "inciting violence, which, because of his celebrity [status] and despite the facts, led to an international outcry on his behalf.

"Police arrested Mr. Alam not because he held a contrary view but because his latest pronouncements caused real harm. Mr. Alam's words helped transformed a peaceful protest into lawless violence," Joy wrote.

He added that hijacking a protest by young students and endangering their lives, along with those of many other Bangladeshis, was not politics but rather a form of terrorism.

China using

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sensors and a front-facing camera.

"Education today is no longer a one-way street, where the teacher teaches and students just learn," said Candy Xiong, a teacher trained in early childhood education who now works with Keeko Robot Xiamen Technology as a trainer.

"When children see Keeko with its round head and body, it looks adorable and children love it. So when they see Keeko, they almost instantly take to it," she added.

At the Yiswind Institute of Multicultural Education on the outskirts of Beijing one of the task Keeko assists with is part storytelling and part problem-solving.

A "prince" has to find his way through a desert and the children must put together square mats that represent the path taken by the robot.

Each time they get an answer to the right the device reacts positively, displaying heart-shaped eyes on the small screen.

But Xie Yi, principal of a kindergarten where Keeko has been put on trial, believes that it will be a long while before robots can completely replace humans in the classroom.

"To teach you must be able to interact, have a human touch, eye contact and facial expressions. These are the things that make an education," Xie said.

Maximum age

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Currently, the highest ceiling for joining government services is 30 years. Different media reported that the government would increase the age bar to 32 years.

Asked, Muhith said, "I had a plan to raise the age bar. I also made a proposal to that end, but it did not materialise.

"I have no objection to raising the age limit. But I think government jobs should be contractual -- it may be for 10 to 15 years."

Replying to another query, he said the polls-time government might be formed by mid-October, adding, he was likely to be in the interim government.

The government has meanwhile decided to give citations to the family members of the Indian army personnel who made sacrifices during the Liberation War in 1971.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday approved a proposal to collect crests through direct purchase method to honour them.

Photo albums

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But the anguish as well as the hope of the families never ends. They continue to pass sleepless nights.

"For me, every single day is painful. Allah knows better about the fate of my husband [Tariqul] and I hope he is alive and will return one day," said Baby, 27.

Talking to The Daily Star on Tuesday, noted human rights activist Sultana Kamal said, "No matter who are the perpetrators, it's the duty of the law enforcement agencies to find out what has happened to those who disappeared."

According to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), as many as 544 people have allegedly fallen victims to enforced disappearances between 2010 and July 2018 in Bangladesh and over 300 of them are still missing.

Many of the 544 victims returned to their families while bodies of some were found later. Others were shown arrested in several cases filed by the law enforcers. ASK reckons the number of such people is over 200 in the last eight and a half years.

Like Baby and Tasin, family members of the other missing victims teeter between hope and loss of all hope. The victims include homeopath Moklesur Rahaman Johnny of Satkhira, Bangladesh Chhatra Union leader Shamim Hossain, BNP leader Ilias Ali, and six youths, including BNP Dhaka city ward-38 General Secretary Sajedul Islam Suman.

On numerous occasions, family members held programmes and appealed to the authorities to bring back the victims. The calls, however, have fallen on deaf ears.

Amid such a situation, the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances is being observed today. August 30 has globally been observed as the Day since 2011 to condemn what the United Nations considers "a strategy to spread terror in society".

To mark the day, a group of UN Human Rights Experts in a statement on Tuesday said countries around the world must act urgently to search for people who have been subject to enforced disappearances, and ensure that this heinous crime is properly investigated.

Although the agony of the victims' families lingers, the government denies that enforced disappearance exists in Bangladesh.

At a programme last month, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan claimed that the country was not witnessing any incident of enforced disappearance.

"We don't do any extra-judicial killings ... we are bringing back those who according to you had disappeared ... How can we rescue those who disappear following unsuccessful romantic relationships? ... How can we rescue those who disappear after failing in business?" he asked.

Who's Hafizur?

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Hafizur's SIM card. A picture of man in Rab uniform is seen in the filled out form.

The Daily Star could not verify the call history and registration details.

According to the call history, of a total of 100 calls made from Hafizur's number between June 13 and June 24, 94 were from Mirpur-Paikpara area, where the Rab-4 Headquarters is situated. Of the rest six calls, one was from Rajarbag Police Lines. There were also frequent calls to three official numbers of Rab-4.

The Daily Star called several numbers on the list. When called, a woman said she was Hafizur's cousin. She added that Hafizur worked for Rab-4.

She also added that the family could not reach him over the phone.

"I called his wife. She said that Hafizur had a problem at his office and his phone was taken away," the woman said wishing anonymity.

The woman gave the phone number of another cousin of Hafizur. When called, a man said Hafizur was with the Rab.

Asked about the call history, the Rab-4 CO said, "Anyone can call Rab numbers. That does not mean he is also a Rab member."

At the press conference, Jamsher also said they collected footage of CCTVs installed near the place from where Mohan was picked up on June 10. He distributed the footage among journalists.

"A white microbus and a motorcycle were seen there. Seven to eight plainclothes men picked Hafizur up in the motorcycle. Two of them made him sit in the middle and left," Jamsher claimed.

Jamsher said he was present at the scene and he talked to the plainclothes men. He said he asked them why they were picking up his son.

"They said there was a complaint

ASK statistics, however, show, 47 people were made to disappear in 2010, 59 in 2011, 56 in 2012, 72 in 2013, 88 in 2014, 55 in 2015, 97 in 2016 and 60 in 2017 while 10 people were abducted allegedly by law enforcers in the first seven months of this year.

The recent victims of enforced disappearance include former Bangladesh ambassador to Vietnam M Maroof Zaman and Ishtak Ahmed Fahim, a student of a university in Canada. They have remained traceless for nine and 12 months respectively.

Maroof's daughter Samiha Zaman on Tuesday said, "It has been almost nine months since my father went missing. Yet in all these months, I have not received any help from any body. I don't know why he has been forgotten by everybody!"

"Why is that nobody has shown any concern or care? Please just give me my father back," she said while talking to The Daily Star.

Sultana Kamal said it was regrettable that the families of the forcibly disappeared people had to live through the culture of impunity.

"The experience of disappearance of a family member is much more painful than that of death. It keeps the family members in endless waiting," Sultana Kamal opined.

She also condemned the failure of the state apparatus to bring an end to this cruelty to the families.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque said incidents of enforced disappearance were in no way acceptable and were gross violation of human rights.

"It is the state's duty to find out the missing people no matter how they go traceless and identify the persons responsible and bring them to book in shortest possible time," he said.

He demanded incorporation of the provision "enforced disappearance" in the relevant law. As no such term exists in the law, victims' families face trouble in getting justice, he added.

He also said the victims who return avoid talking to the commission officials.

Talking about the issue, Sheepa Hafiza, executive director of ASK said although the situation has improved a little this year, it is still violation of human rights if even a single person disappears.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the ASK demanded the government form a judicial commission to prevent incidents of enforced disappearance and ensure justice.

It also urged the government to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Confiscate all properties

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Earlier, the ACC deputy director had filed the case with Gulshan Police Station, accusing six people, including the four. The other two are Mahabubul's wife Ruzi Chisty and ex-manager of the bank's Gulshan Corporate Branch Delwar Hossain.

After their arrest, a Dhaka court placed Mahabubul on five-day remand and the others on four day remand each. After being quizzed, the four were sent to jail.

The ACC probe found that Tk 138.82 crore was deposited with the current accounts of Bakshiganj Jute Spinners Ltd, owned by Mahabubul's son, wife and daughter, at Farmers Bank's Bakshiganj and Gulshan branches in between November 18, 2013 and January 30 this year.

Later, the entire amount was withdrawn in cash.

Though the transactions were suspicious, Zia and Delwar who were managers of Bakshiganj and Gulshan branches respectively at that time, didn't inform Bangladesh Bank about it, and thus abetted the laundering of the money, reads the case statement.

Besides, at least seven suspicious transactions of more than Tk 13 crore were made involving bank accounts of Mahabubul and his son, according to the ACC.

On January 8, 2014, Tk 2 crore was suspiciously transferred to Mahabubul's savings account at Farmers Bank's Gulshan Corporate Branch from a current account of Saif Powertek Ltd.

Besides, eight pay orders worth Tk 1.34 crore were issued against Mahabubul and his family members from different branches of Farmers Bank under suspicious circumstances.

Examining the bank documents, the ACC also found that 16 more pay orders worth Tk 1.80 crore were issued against Rashed Enterprise, owned by Mahabubul, in a similar way.

Former Farmers Bank chairman Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir and Mahabubul was at the centre of controversies surrounding the Farmers Bank, according to two probe reports prepared by Bangladesh Bank in 2014 and 2016.

They violated rules and were involved in irregularities in approving loans, bypassing the executive committee and branch recommendations, according to the reports.

Later, the central bank asked them to resign from the bank board last year and they did so on November 27. In the following month, Farmers Bank's board of directors was restructured and four state banks and state-owned Investment Corporation of Bangladesh injected Tk 715 crore to save the bank from severe financial crisis.

BB FINDINGS ON MAHABUBUL
The BB investigation found that Mahabubul, in violation of banking rules, granted an overdraft loan facility of Tk 5 crore to Prime Islami Securities, a client at the bank's Motijheel branch, without placing the loan proposal at any meeting of the executive committee.

He also unilaterally approved a loan of Tk 2.50 crore to Saif Powertek without any recommendations from the bank's Gulshan branch where the company applied for a loan of Tk 3 crore on July 3, 2014.

The executive body headed by Mahabubul granted a Tk 8 crore loan to United Bricks and Fultola Filling Station on March 5, 2014, without taking any credit proposal from the branch.

On the same day, it also approved a credit limit of Tk 15 crore to Urban Design and Development against an under-construction flat valued at Tk 5.91 crore.

According to the BB, the committee gave its approval to a term-loan of Tk 16 crore and a working capital of Tk 2 crore in favour of Chittagong Fisheries, a client at the bank's Gulshan branch, for purchase of a fishing trawler.

The loan was granted before the bank's branch prepared the credit proposal, said the BB.

Mahabubul approved a loan of Tk 20 crore to MS International though the bank's Gulshan branch recommended approval of a Tk 16 crore loan.

He also granted a Tk 12 crore loan to Emerald Foods, ignoring the observations of the bank's managing director and deputy managing director that the firm's collateral for the loan was insufficient.

The BB probe also unearthed that

the private bank approved a Tk 17 crore loan to Index Housing, flouting banking rules.

Mahabubul sanctioned the loan without even placing the loan proposal before the board. The bank's head office initially rejected the proposal, but Mahabubul approved the loan anyway.

SONALI BANK SCAM CASE
The Anti-Corruption Commission has approved the charge sheet against two businessmen and former deputy managing director of Sonali Bank Kazi Fakhruul Islam in connection with a case filed over misappropriating about Tk 3.46 crore from the bank in 2009.

The two businessmen are Jagoron Textile Mills Limited Chairman Jahangir Alam Miyaji and Managing Director Mahbubur Rahman.

However, the anti-graft watchdog didn't include in the charge sheet names of some others who were accused in the case, said ACC sources.

According to the charge sheet, Fakhruul used his subordinate officers in embezzling Tk 3.46 crore from the state-owned bank.

The ACC had filed the case with Siddirganj Police Station on November 8, 2016, accusing around 8-10 people, including the trio and other bank officials.

ACC Deputy Director Shamsul Alam, also the investigation officer of the case, found that Jagoron Textile Mills already went bankrupt and was closed.

Even after that, the bank officials increased the factory's LC limit to Tk 300 lakh from Tk 125 lakh and opened 10 back-to-back letters of credit to export Polo shirts and T-shirts illegally.

Later, all the products were sold at local market flouting the condition of the LCs. Though the bank authorities were aware of it, they did not take any action against the firm. Rather they paid Tk 2.94 lakh to the textile mills.

The bank also paid the Mills Tk 52 lakh in pre shipment credit.

Fakhruul, who later became the MD of state-run BASIC Bank in 2010, was also accused in separate cases filed in connection with misappropriation of around Tk 4,500 crore from the bank between 2010 and 2013.

Father of ex-husband held

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Ananda TV, to death when she was entering her home in Pabna town around 10:00pm on Tuesday. She died at Pabna Medical College Hospital around 10:30pm.

Victim's elder sister Chompa Khatun said, "My sister got married with Rajib Hossain, son of Abul Hossain, on June 6, 2016, but Rajib's family did not accept the marriage.

"Rajib's family tortured her and demanded Tk 5 lakh in dowry. As she couldn't give the money, she was divorced. My sister then filed a dowry case against Rajib, his father and mother on May 31 in 2017."

After the case was lodged with Sadar Police Station, Rajib's family often threatened her sister over the phone with consequences if she did not withdraw the case, Chompa alleged.

Gautam Kumar Biswas, additional superintendent of Pabna police, said Nodi's mother Morzina Begum filed a murder case against Abul, his son Rajib

and four to five unknown others.

Nodi may have been killed by hired criminals over the dowry case, but the killers are yet to be identified. Police are investigating the incident to find the real culprits, he said.

Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said police arrested Abul from his house in Pabna town yesterday morning and were trying to detain the other accused.

Nodi started working at a local daily five years ago. Recently, she joined Ananda TV as its Pabna correspondent, her family said.

She was first married with one Jibon Chowdhury, but they separated five years ago. Nodi has a seven-year-old daughter.

Nodi had a dream of building her career in journalism and wanted to live with dignity, but she was killed, said her mother Morzina.

Journalists in Pabna formed a human chain, organised by Pabna Sangbadpatra Parishad, in front of Pabna Press Club yesterday morning,

demanding punishment of the culprits.

"If the criminals are not arrested within 48 hours, journalists will go for tougher agitation," Abdul Matin Khan, president of the parishad, said at the human chain.

Journalists in Noakhali also formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office, demanding immediate arrest of her killers.

Meanwhile, the information ministry, National Human Rights Commission, Ain o Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Sammitosamajik Andolon and a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists denounced the killing of Nodi and demanded that the culprits be brought to book.

The two journalist platforms will hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club today, protesting the killings and attacks on journalists and demanding arrest of culprits.