

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/bangladesh-two-newspaper-photographers-beaten-14-12-2012,43797.html>

Asia - Bangladesh

Police violence

## Two newspaper photographers beaten and arrested by police

14 December 2012

Reporters Without Borders condemns an assault by police officers on two news photographers in Siddhirganj, on the outskirts of the capital, while they were covering a nationwide opposition protest on 11 December.

Following the arrest of the photographers, who work for English-language dailies, fellow-journalists obtained their release by staging a sit-in outside the police station where they were being held.

"While this case is a positive example of the way journalists can mobilize to defend their colleagues, it also testifies to a disturbing increase in attacks on journalists in Bangladesh," Reporters Without Borders said.

"Instead of continuing to turn a blind eye to violence against the media, the government must react quickly and reaffirm its determination to combat the impunity enjoyed by those responsible. The constant decline in the media's ability to work freely in 2012 has encouraged more violence and self-censorship, and this is dangerous for democracy."



Witnesses said *Daily Star* photographer **Amran Hossain** and *New Age* photographer **Sourav Laskar** were taking photos of a used car tyre burning in middle of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at around 11:30 a.m., when they were assaulted by policemen led by Mamun Sirajul Haque, who accused them of setting fire to the tyre.

After being punched and slapped by Haque, despite showing their press cards, they were dragged to a police van and driven to the Shimrail police post, about half a kilometre away, where they were again beaten. Haque seized their mobile phones and cameras, and damaged

Laskar's camera by throwing it to the floor.

They were subsequently taken to Siddhirganj's main police station and were handed over to officers there, but dozens of fellow press photographers and reporters quickly staged a sit-down protest outside.

Following mediation by police superintendent Nazmul Alam from the nearby municipality of Narayanganj, the two photographers were released unconditionally at 2:45 pm and it was announced that Haque had been suspended, prompting the journalists to end the protest.

Amran and Sourav nonetheless lodged a formal complaint against Haque at the police station.

The National Press Club and Bangladesh Photo-Journalists' Association (BPJA) issued statements the next day condemning the incident and demanding that Haque be punished for assaulting, harassing and illegally detaining two press photographers.

Violence against the media, especially police violence, has increased this year in Bangladesh. The day before this assault, several journalists with privately-owned *Diganta Television* were insulted and threatened by 20 officers led by a Dhaka Metropolitan Police deputy inspector.

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