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Russian Truck Tax Protests End in Tragedy

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The police said the driver of the truck responsible for Thursday's accident, who has not been named, may have dozed off behind the wheel.

A Russian truck driver was killed and three others injured when a truck careered onto the curb and into a group of protesters in the Tver region west of Moscow on Thursday, traffic police said.

Around 60 people were rallying against a new per-kilometer charge for trucks to use Russian highways, when at 10:30 a.m. a truck carrying flour along the St. Petersburg-Moscow highway switched lanes, lumbered onto the pavement, collided with a parked vehicle and rolled toward the crowd.

One man was killed on the spot, and another four men were taken to hospital, the traffic police said in an online statement.

The new truck charge has has been widely criticized by drivers. The system, which went into

operation on Nov. 15, uses satellites to track vehicles weighing more than 12 tons and deducts 1.53 rubles ($0.02) per kilometer. The proceeds are to be spent on upkeep for Russia's often dilapidated highway network.

A second wave of large-scale protests by truck drivers affected traffic in several Russian regions on Thursday, the RBC news agency reported. Some drivers lined up along roadsides, while others formed columns moving at 5 kilometers an hour down highways, blocking other vehicles.

The police said the driver of the truck responsible for Thursday's accident, who has not been named, may have dozed off behind the wheel.

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