The tale of cowards in uniform

CHINTITO

In commemorating on March 8 the International Women's Day the supreme sacrifice of our women for our liberation, here are some illustrations of the shameless 'bravado' committed by Pakistani soldiers. (*Source: FB Community 'Bangla Success Stories', 3 March 2013, original in Bangla*)

25 March 1971 night. Sweeper Rabeya Khatun at Rajarbagh Police Line Canteen was raped after police resistance failed. She survived death, as the Pak Army needed a sweeper to clean the blood and the bloodied corpses. She narrated: 26 March. When girls were brought the soldiers burst into joy. They entered the barracks and tore off the clothes of the women, kicked them to the ground and raped them. Parts of their cheek, stomach, neck, breast, and back were bitten off... blood. Those who protested their breasts were cut off, the nozzle of the gun inserted in their intimate parts, and then killed by a sharp knife. Many minor girls died of repeated rape. Their bodies were cut to pieces and thrown into gunny bags. The girls were tortured on different floors of the headquarters tied to thick rods by their hair. Bound girls were hit with baton, bitten, humiliated and pained by insertions... the soldiers kept on laughing. They bit off the naked girls' body parts with their teeth, and then burst into jubilation. If anyone resisted, they were killed instantly. Some of the girls had no front teeth, the sides of the lips were bitten off, their fingers smashed. Some died while tied to a rod.

Subedar Khalilur Rahman of Rajarbagh Police Line. His experience: As soon as the girls were herded in by trucks, they were raped, all their clothes torn off. After day-long rape they used to be tied to a rod at the headquarter building. Raped again at night, they were killed as soon as anyone protested. Rod, stick, rifle nozzle were inserted into their private organs. Breasts were cut off. If someone fainted due to continual rape, the raping did not stop.

Narration of an undertaker Pardeshi: 27 March 1971. While picking up dead bodies from the morgue to a truck, I saw the body of a teenager wrapped in a sheet. Completely naked, her breasts and private organ were mutilated. Pieces of flesh were cut off from her backside. 29 March. While picking up bodies at Shakhari Bazaar, Pardeshi saw corpse of men and women, young and old, they were mutilated, decomposed. Most of the women were naked, some had their breasts torn off, and some had insertions. At Mill Barrack he saw the dead bodies of six women. Their eyes, hands, feet were bound tight. Their internal organ bloodied. Their bodies riddled with bullets.

Dhaka Municipality Sweeper Shaheb Ali's version: 29 March 1971. From only Mitford Hospital picked up several trucks of dead bodies. At a house in Armanitola he saw the body of an 11-year old girl, her entire body mutilated, blood lumps all over, pieces of flesh cut off. After being raped, her two legs had been spread apart till her navel. 30 March. Rokeya Hall roof. Shaheb Ali saw the body of a 19-year old girl, shorn off clothes. He learnt from a Pak soldier that to kill the girl there was nothing required other than rape. She died of successive rapes. The eyes of the girl were bloated. Her private organs, bloodied, swelled up to her stomach. Human bite evident on her two cheeks and breasts.

Rajshahi University. Medical Student Manjila and her sisters Meher Banu and Dilruba, and thirty other girls were fed to the Pak officers in groups of five-six each night. They were fed with rice and salt.

Journalist Ranesh Mitra's account: Rangpur Arts Council was used as a women's torture cell. About one hundred captive girls were raped each night. Those who fell sick were killed. Three to four hundred girls were sent to Dhaka. They were never seen again.

Rajshahi University Social Welfare Department research findings: Pak soldiers raped and tortured 15 women at village Jugissho in May 1971. Fifty-five young women of the area were taken away. In Banshbari village, Pak soldiers drove out about 150 women of different ages from their home and raped them openly; ten died on the spot. Deljan Bibi of Bagmara village was fasting in the month of Ramadhan. Suddenly Pak soldiers entered her house and began to rape her. Sonavan Khatun of the same village was raped on the open street.

Jessore, Kushtia, Kumarkhali, Mirpur, Khulna... the same story. Innocent women raped and tortured, mutilated and killed by Pakistan forces that came with a mission to revert the freedom of a Bangali nation that were 85% Muslim.

The UN theme for 2013 International Women's Day is "A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women". Let us begin by bringing to book the criminals who partook in the inhuman violence against women in 1971, and those who backed them then and are backing them now.

If unknown soldiers can be honoured, "unknown solders" can also be dishonoured by depicting their sins, and them in uniformed statues.