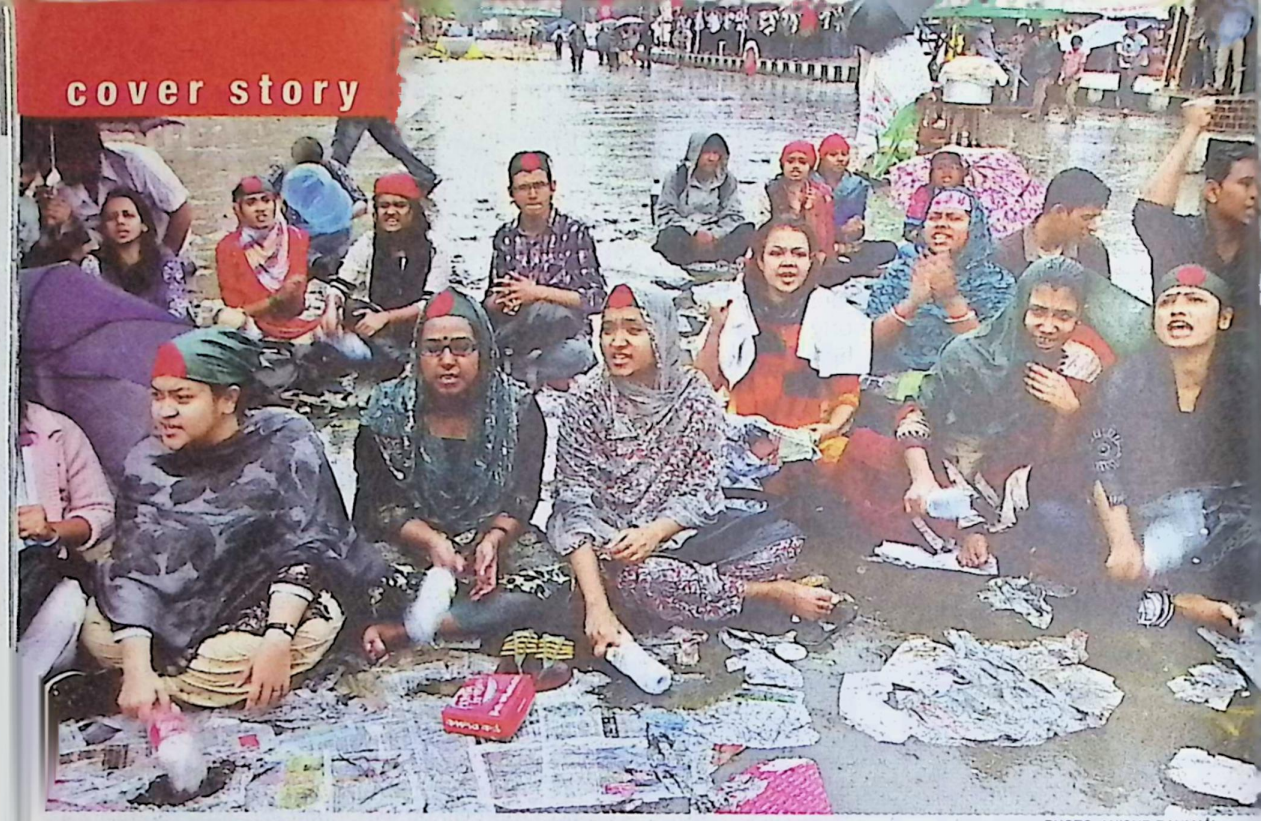


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**Braving the cold and rain, they stayed, resolute in their demand.**




PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

*Left*

**Demanding justice for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.**

In another moving film 'Tahader Juddho' (Their War) by Afsan Chowdhury, the experiences of poor, uneducated women in 1971 have been documented. Through a series of interviews women describe how they risked their lives and those of their families to secretly deliver food, clothes, blankets etc to the Muktijoddhas, hiding them in their homes from *razakars* and the Pak army, smuggling arms from one place to the other. But as the film points out, such heroic acts and unconditional patriotism have not been recognised or mentioned in history books. In the film Chowdhury asks the question: "Weren't these women as much *Muktijoddhas* as the men who fought the Pakistani army with guns?"

After the war ended, women – many of whom who had lost their men – husbands, sons, fathers – had to keep on fighting for the survival of their families and households. "And it's standing on these households that society itself survived in 1971," says Chowdhury.

Forty-two years later women have risen again to protest injustice. A sweeping look at Shahbag's *Projonmo Chottor* shows the scores of young women – most of them university or school students, chanting slogans with their men, demanding justice for the martyrs of the Liberation War. It is their way of showing that the powerful love that their predecessors shared – for their country, national identity and for their own right to be equal citizens – will be carried forward and women will continue to be at the forefront of movements for justice, rising to the occasion, with determination and fearlessness, against all odds.

*Sources:*
*'Karuna Begum: An Extraordinary Freedom Fighter' by Lt Col Sajjad; The Daily Star Independence Special 2012; the Star magazine; Wikipedia.*