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Mahfuz Anam

Editor (Star Weekend)

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PHOTO: SADI MAHADI

“Freedom is the atmosphere in which humanity thrives. Breathe it in.”
– Richelle E. Goodrich, Author

SNAPSHOT

PROTEST

Every time Tonu's face surfaces on your Facebook newsfeed, a torrent of mixed feelings hit you at the same time -- outrage, sorrow, helplessness and so much more. Nothing to do but scroll on and eventually run away from the atrocity that we allowed and continue to allow on the streets of Bangladesh.

Sohagi Jahan Tonu, a young teenager who was obviously a dreamer like many a young man or woman in Bangladesh; most likely in love with the motherland, someone who enjoyed cricket, had high hopes for the national team, loved art and theatre and had many friends planning outings, movie nights and what to wear this year on Pahela Baishakh. Tonu was just another girl next door, who earned pocket money giving out private tuitions to children, maybe just a handful of years younger than herself. One fine day, as she goes about life, Tonu is raped, murdered and thrown by a culvert -- like kitchen or

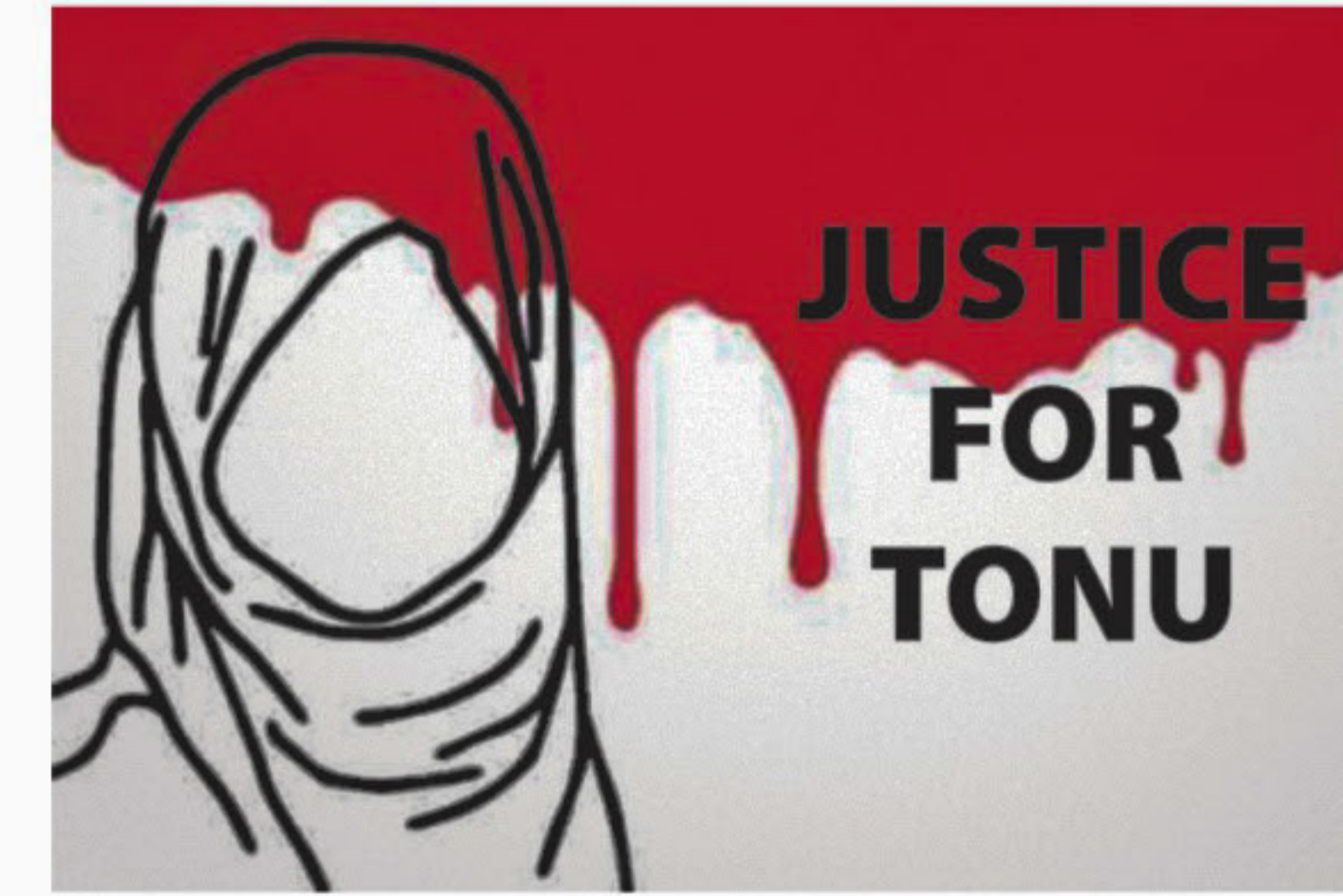


PHOTO: COURTESY

THE FIGHT FOR TONU

ELITA KARIM



PHOTOS: STAR FILE

a damaged tooth. Her unconscious body was found in the bordering area of Comilla cantonment by her father late at night, at around 11:00 pm.

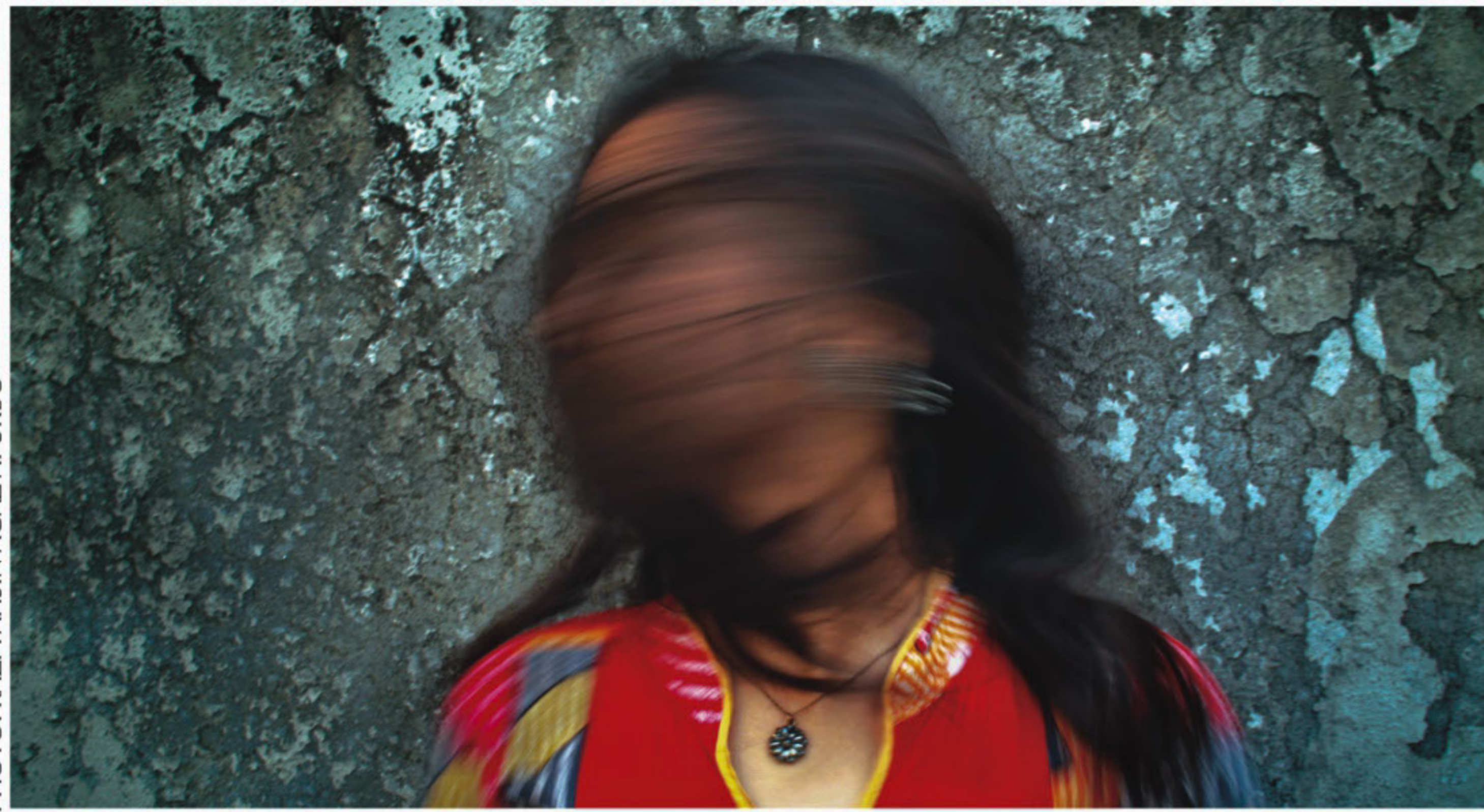
Despite the fact that such rape-murder and run cases happen almost every day to people of all ages, victimising mostly women, Tonu's case managed to hit a nerve, maybe because the media, general public, students and parents -- Bangladeshis from all walks of life -- somehow fear that this case will remain unsolved. Just like many other tragedies that have taken place amidst us, namely the Sagar-Runi case, Tonu's case will drag on as well, till protestors find other

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PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



Congratulations!

This congratulatory letter is a kind gift from the friends of one of Bangladesh's most valiant freedom fighters Squadron Leader (Red) Badrul Alam, Bir Uttam who has recently been honoured with the Independence Day Award. This distinguished freedom fighter of the Bangladesh Air Force got the award for his bravery in one of the most crucial operations during the liberation war of 1971. With a slow moving helicopter, he risked his life to bomb and attack the oil refinery and oil tankers in Narayanganj and Demra cutting Pakistan army's strategic oil supply. During the operation, his chopper got shot few times by anti-aircraft guns of the Pakistan Army. Despite all of that, he completed his mission with valour and spirit of independence and thus, contributed greatly to liberate the country. He is also a holder of medallion- "Bir Uttam".
Mashudul Huq
Central Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Out in the Open

Thanks to Elita Karim for her precious article titled 'Out in the Open' published on March 18, 2016. I think there are many people in total darkness about the subject of mental health. It is a reality that we hardly talk about mental health and very few people in our society actually take care of it. When they encounter any mental health problem in their family members, they often associate it with ghosts and evil spirits. Therefore, without going to the psychiatrists, they prefer to go to exorcists and quack doctors, which causes further complications and even fatalities. I would like to thank the spotlight writer because through her article we learned some of the main causes of mental disorders and the much required guidelines to help those who suffer from it.
Enamul Hassan
Madaninagar, Narayanganj



reasons to block roads and headlines on papers shift from Tonu to yet another case of rape, murder or maybe a bank scam.

But of course, we have to be optimistic. The army authorities have said that they will provide full support to the police in investigating Tonu's murder. That does not hurt the heart to rest, because the army will definitely investigate with precision, and support the law in sentencing them to death. After all, it's a wonder how the army manages to find out so much information thanks to their high level intelligence platforms and rigorous training. Ever tried to lie your way into cantonment? Most of the times, these liars are caught at the other side of the area and eventually the vehicles are turned around and made to take the longer route.

We hope that the fight for Tonu will not die down. Young protestors all over the country have taken up the spot, chanting the right words demanding justice, not only for Tonu, but all the other young women she represents in the country; for all the wrong doings that slowly evaporate. ■

In the Spirit of Independence

The 26th of March is a historic and glorious day for all Bangladeshis. In 1971, on this day, a new era began by declaring the independence of this country, consisting of seventy million Bengalis. After this historic declaration, the fight between justice and injustice started. Bengalis from all walks of life took up arms to fight against the occupation of Pakistanis. We are among those peoples of the world who had to sacrifice a lot for liberation, and achieved it through a long, bloody battle. On this glorious day, all of us should swear to shun self-destructive politics and work together to build a "Bengal of Gold", as expected since the time of our liberation war.

Sayek Ahmed Sajib
University of Rajshahi

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.

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