



The younger brother of Nusrat Jahan Rafi in tears yesterday as he waits at the Dhaka Medical College morgue to receive the body of Nusrat, who lost her battle for life five days after set on fire at a madrasa in Feni. Inset, thousands of locals attended her namaz-e-janaza on a local school playground near her home in Feni's North Charchandia village.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN/STAR

# Outrage

FROM PAGE 1  
On April 6, with minutes to go before her exam was to start, she was taken to the roof of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa and set on fire for refusing to withdraw a sexual harassment case against the madrasa principal. People of all walks of life joined in protest programmes across the country yesterday demanding justice. Dhaka University students, under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, the platform of quota reformists, held a rally demanding actions against the perpetrators. With placards like "We want justice", "Why my sister was killed?" they brought out a procession from Raju Memorial that ended at the Central Shaheed Minar. They said a culture of impunity was causing recurrence of such incidents. In the afternoon and evening, different groups formed human chains at Shahbagh, protesting the killing of the 18-year-old. Students in Jahangirnagar

University, Rajshahi University, and Chittagong University also protested the killing of Nusrat. In Chattogram, a group of students, under the banner of "Prothom Alo Bondhushova" held a protest rally at the university's Central Shaheed Minar around 12:30pm. They demanded capital punishment for the criminals involved. "Every day, we get news of rapes from different corners of the country. But how many of the culprits are being tried or punished?" asked Aklima Jannat, a student of communication and journalism department at CU. They urged the government to enact strict laws for dealing with such perpetrators. National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque thinks "the prevailing culture of impunity" was promoting brutality on women and children. "People are now living in anxiety. We never know who will become a victim [of sexual harassment]."

Criminals are encouraged to be repeat offenders as there is no proper enforcement of law and people are not getting justice, he told reporters at the DMCH. Lengthy investigation and trial process destroy evidence, he said demanding swift trial of the Nusrat murder case. Praising the bravery and resilience of Nusrat, the NHRC chief said she did not yield to injustice and she was a paragon. "I didn't see any guilt or regret in the accused principal's face," he observed. Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said if necessary, the case filed over Nusrat's murder would be sent to a Speedy Trial Tribunal for quick disposal. "I will instruct the prosecution to move the case fast so that it is settled quickly," he said, replying to a reporter at the home ministry. The minister said investigation into the case was going on and once the probe was complete, a charge sheet would be placed before the court.

The government would then take necessary steps for its quick disposal, he said. In similar tone, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said no one involved in the murder would be spared. "We will bring all of them [perpetrators] to book as the government has taken it very seriously," he said. PROTEST ALL AROUND Since the news of her death broke in Sonagazi Wednesday night, many organisations and people staged demonstration in Feni town demanding punishment of the accused principal and other perpetrators. Condemning the incident, CU Teachers Association (CUTA) in a statement yesterday evening demanded exemplary punishment of the criminals involved. A group of students under the banner "Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad" formed a human chain at Gate-2 in the port city demanding the same. In Rajshahi, around 100 people

formed a human chain in the city's Shaheb Bazar Zero Point and held a rally demanding the government take stern action and ensure justice. A human chain was also formed at Rajshahi University demanding the same. In Kurigram, around 100 people formed a human chain in Gabarmor area. Condemning the heinous act, Manusher Jonno Foundation urged the government to set an example so that such an incident never recurs. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Sommitilo Sangskritik Jote, and Samajtantrik Mohila Forum, in separate programmes demanded punishment of the culprits. In its statement, Samajtantrik Mohila Forum said Nusrat's statements must be taken into account while punishments are meted out and there should not be any delays. It criticised the government for their failure in providing safety to women.

## NUSRAT MURDER CASE HC to interfere if negligence found in probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court would interfere if it finds negligence into the probe of Feni madrasa student Nusrat Jahan Rafi murder case. The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil yesterday made the statement responding to a suo moto move of barrister Syed Sayedul Haque Suman, a lawyer of the Supreme Court. In the suo moto move, barrister Suman prayed to the authorities concerned for a judicial inquiry into Nusrat's death. He placed newspaper reports before the HC bench, saying the incident has sparked protest across the country and a judicial inquiry should be conducted to identify and punish the culprits. Talking to The Daily Star, barrister Suman said he would move a petition before the HC seeking necessary orders if the investigation into Nusrat murder case was not conducted properly. The authorities should ensure that Nusrat is not forgotten like Tonu, Mitu or journalist couple Sagar and Runi, the lawyer added. Nusrat lost her battle for life at 9:30pm on Wednesday, five days after she was set ablaze at a madrasa in

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

## Madrasa teacher sent to jail over 'raping' a boy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police yesterday arrested a madrasa teacher at Tafsirul Quran International Madrasa in Panchabati of Fatullah over allegations of raping a boy. Officer-in-Charge Aslam Uddin of Fatullah Police Station said Tafsirul Islam, 28, had allegedly been raping the eight-year-old boy for several days. The boy's parents took him to a doctor around yesterday noon when he became sick. The doctor, after examining him, reported the incident to the police, the OC said. The boy's father filed a case yesterday afternoon and police arrested the teacher. A court sent him to jail, the OC said. He said they admitted the boy to Narayanganj General Hospital. Locals yesterday brought out a procession in front of the madrasa, demanding exemplary punishment of the teacher.

# How did they manage to flee?

FROM PAGE 1  
can be identified if the principal's aides -- Nuruddin and Shahadat alias Shamim -- are arrested. Witnesses said they saw the two at the main entrance to the madrasa on the night of April 5. The following day, Nuruddin was again seen at the gate. The duo, accused in a case filed by the victim's brother, went on the run following public outrage over the incident. Locals alleged that the two suspects, both Fazil (graduation) students of the madrasa, were able to evade arrest as Sonagazi police did not take prompt action to catch them. The 18-year-old madrasa girl, who suffered serious burns, lost her battle for life at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Wednesday night. According to some local journalists, Sonagazi police earlier told them that it was a case of attempted suicide. After taking over the investigation from Sonagazi police on Wednesday, the Police Bureau of Investigation launched a combing operation to arrest all the eight accused. Some PBI officials from Dhaka, Chattogram and Cumilla have been tasked with the job, said sources.

PBI chief Deputy Inspector General Banaj Kumar Muzumder said they were working to arrest all the accused, including Nuruddin and Shamim. Talking to locals in Sonagazi yesterday, The Daily Star learnt that a committee was formed demanding release of Siraj following his arrest on March 27. Nuruddin and Shamim were made the convener and the joint convener of the 20-member body. Under their leadership, human chains were formed and protests staged in the upazila town on March 28 and 30 demanding release of the principal. Madrasa teachers and locals alleged that the two had threatened Nusrat's relatives and other people who demanded justice for her sexual harassment. Only a few minutes before the Alim exams on April 6, four unidentified people allegedly took Nusrat to the roof of the three-storey administrative building of the madrasa saying one of her friends was being assaulted there, victim's brother Mahmudul Hasan Noman had told this newspaper earlier. They asked her to withdraw the case filed by her mother against Siraj on

March 27 over sexual harassment in the principal's office, but she didn't comply. At one stage, the four doused Nusrat with kerosene and set her on fire, Noman said. Nurul Amin, a peon of the madrasa, said Nuruddin and Shamim might have links with the four attackers. "The duo had close relations with the principal. They could enter his office anytime." He said although section 144 was enforced in and around the madrasa campus during any public examination, the principal's aides could enter the madrasa premises freely. Mostafa, a night guard at the madrasa, said everybody knew about the close relations between the principal and the duo, but none dared say anything against them. MORE STUDENTS HARASSED? Talking to The Daily Star after yester-



Nuruddin Shamim They could enter his office anytime."

day's Alim exam, a classmate of Nusrat alleged that she was also sexually harassed by Siraj about four months ago, but she didn't get justice. She said she had informed her family about it, but the incident was not probred. "The same person's crime has caused the death of my classmate. I want capital punishment for the principal," she said. Night guard Mostafa, who had worked as the principal's peon a couple of years ago, said he witnessed at least three incidents in which Siraj forcibly hugged three female students in his office. "I could neither protest nor tell others about the incidents fearing reprisal," he told The Daily Star. BURIED AT VILLAGE A pall of gloom descended on Uttar Char Chandia village of Sonagazi yesterday afternoon after Nusrat's body reached her village home from Dhaka. Family members, relatives and villagers broke down in tears as an ambulance carrying the body reached her home around 4:30pm. Her two brothers Noman and Rashidul Hasan Raihan fainted.

After around an hour, her namaz-e-janaza was held at the ground of Sonagazi Mohammad Saber Government Pilot High School. Several thousand people took part in the janaza, led by Nusrat's father AKM Musa. The madrasa girl was laid to rest at her family graveyard around 6:30pm. "Nusrat was my close friend. I received support from her regarding my studies," an Alim examinee told journalists at the madrasa after yesterday's exam. Students demanded highest punishment for the principal and the killers. Earlier in the day, Nusrat's body was handed over to her family members after an autopsy at the Dhaka Medical College morgue. Brig Gen Nasir Uddin, director of the DMCH, told this newspaper that the girl died of her burn injuries. He said they kept samples from the body for microbiological and DNA tests. Nusrat's father Musa said they received all necessary support from the prime minister and the hospital authorities. "I request all to pray for the salvation of my daughter's departed soul. I demand exemplary punishment

for the culprits." AL LEADER EXPELLED A Feni Awami League leader has been expelled from the party for defending the madrasa principal, the prime accused in the case, in a local court on Wednesday. Kazirbagh union AL General Secretary Bulbul Ahmed Sohag, also the chairman of the union, was expelled from the party yesterday, said Noor Hossain, general secretary of Feni Sadar upazila AL. On Wednesday, the court placed Siraj on seven-day remand. Police have so far arrested nine people, including three accused, in connection with the murder case. A Feni court yesterday placed two of the arrestees on five-day remand each. They are Zubayer Ahmed, an Alim student, and Umme Sultana Poppy, an Alim examinee and also the niece of the principal. The two were picked up from their homes on Tuesday night. Meanwhile, the three-member probe committee, formed by the district administration on April 7, has sought seven more working days to complete its job as the three-day probe time frame expired yesterday.

# Dig finds new early

FROM PAGE 20  
The "remarkable discovery... will no doubt ignite plenty of scientific debate over the coming weeks, months and years", said Matthew Tocheri, associate professor of anthropology at Canada's Lakehead University, in a review commissioned by Nature. The researchers from France, the Philippines and Australia found the remains in the Callo Cave, where a bone dating back 67,000 years was discovered in 2007. It was not initially clear which type of early human that bone came from, but more recently the researchers discovered seven teeth and five different bones at the site, dating back between 50,000 and 67,000 years. With more evidence to examine, from at least three individuals, they were able to build the case that the remains came from a previously unknown type of human. "From the beginning, we realised the unusual characteristics of these fossils," Florent Tocheri, who co-led the study, told AFP at a press briefing. "We completed the comparisons and analyses, and it confirmed that this was

something special, unlike any previously described species of hominins in the homo genus," added Tocheri, a paleoanthropologist at France's Musee de l'Homme. In particular, the teeth they found had a surprising combination of elements from different early humans. "It's a mixture that we haven't seen in other species," said Tocheri. "And that was what told us, among other things, that this doesn't correspond to what we know today, so we have described a new species." But the discovery raises many questions, including how Homo luzonensis got to the island, which researchers say has always required "a substantial sea crossing" to reach from the mainland. Researchers are also as yet unsure which of the more ancient human precursors recorded in the fossil record in Africa Homo luzonensis may be descended from. For a long time, theories of evolution centred around the idea that an early species called Homo erectus began dispersing from Africa between 1.5 million to two million years ago.



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