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Wednesday NIGHTMARE

Buet students face torture, harassment by BCL men before every weekend

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Just before the start of their two-day weekend from Thursday, Buet students are supposed to get a breather from classes and exams on Wednesday evenings.

But when the evening comes, panic grips the residents of almost all the dormitories.

At any time, Chhatra League leaders can ask the students, especially those in the first and second years, to gather inside the Gono [common] Room, which is crammed by freshers. Sometimes, they are called to the rooftop of a hall.

There, the BCL leaders would harass and torture many general students in the name of ragging. The torture would intensify if anyone failed to attend any political programme.

Discussions on such incidents, which seemingly remained unheard of at one of the country's premier educational institutions, came to the fore after the murder of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of the university's electrical and electronic engineering department.

Abrar was beaten to death allegedly by some BCL leaders at the university's Sher-e-Bangla Hall sometime between 7:30pm Sunday and 2:30am Monday.

Angered, students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) demonstrated on the campus throughout yesterday to press for their eight-point demand. One of the demands was stopping physical and mental torture on common students at the halls.

Talking to at least 30 students of seven of the eight Buet dormitories, The Daily Star correspondents learnt about disturbing tales of harassment. None of the students agreed to be named fearing reprisal from BCL leaders.

"Stepping into the Gono Room, the first thing we must do is greet the Boro Bhaish [senior BCL leaders]. Later, they

Abrar



Members of Buet Teachers' Association and students bring out a procession on the campus, protesting the murder of Abrar Fahad. Bottom left, carrying an empty coffin, some Dhaka University students demonstrate near the Buet campus. Bottom right, a procession by DU students crosses a road in front of a dormitory of the university. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



OUTRAGE all around

3 more held; VC finally shows up, agrees to meet students' demands



MUNTAKIM SAAD and RAFIUL ISLAM

The gruesome murder of Buet student Abrar Fahad has touched off widespread outrage with students of different public universities taking to the streets demanding punishment to the killers.

Several hundred Buet students came out of dormitories and gathered in front of the university's central cafeteria around 10:00am yesterday, a public holiday, to press home their eight-point demand.

Their demands include capital punishment to the killers, expulsion of all the accused from the university, and a ban on organisation-based politics on the campus.

Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering department of Buet, was brutally beaten to death allegedly by some Chhatra League men at a university dormitory between 7:30pm Sunday and 2:30am Monday.

Yesterday, Buet students protested the "silence" of the vice chancellor and his administration over the Abrar murder.

VC Saiful Islam neither came to the campus nor gave any statement after the murder.

He finally showed up on the campus

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4 CAMPUS KILLINGS: LONG WAIT FOR JUSTICE



MOYEEN HOSSAIN RAJU (DU)
KILLED ON MARCH 13, 1992
Police yet to submit charge sheet



DIAZ IRFAN CHOWDHURY (CU)
KILLED ON NOVEMBER 20, 2016
Case under CID investigation



SABEQUN NAHAR SONY (BUET)
KILLED ON JUNE 8, 2002
HC awarded death penalty to 3 absentees in 2006



ZUBAIR AHMED (JU)
KILLED ON JANUARY 8, 2012
5 given death penalty, 2 got life term in 2018; all are fugitives



KILLINGS ON CAMPUSES

No punishment in most cases

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

Delays in investigations and no punishment of perpetrators of gruesome campus murders have fostered a culture of impunity at public universities.

Political analysts, and former and current student leaders say the link between mainstream political parties and student fronts is a key reason behind the lack of justice in such killings.

The Daily Star looked through newspaper reports and books on student movements and found that no one was brought to book for at least 151 killings that took place at universities since independence.

The floodgates to the murders opened in 1974 when DU saw its first student killing after Chhatra League men fired on and killed seven.

The incident may also have begun the present culture of impunity.

Four years after those killings, a court

sentenced Shafiqul Alam Proddhan, the then general secretary of BCL, and others to life-term imprisonment. But they all were set free during Ziaur Rahman's rule.

Since then no other perpetrators of campus killings has faced any punishment. The campus witnessed sensational killings including that of Chhatra Union leader Moyeen Hossain Raju in March 1992. He was shot while participating in an anti-terrorism procession on the day.

Raju's classmate Abdullah Mahmud Khan said that a case was filed in this regard but police never submitted a charge sheet.

Campus killings have come under the spotlight again after the murder of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering department at Buet, at the hands of BCL men.

Abrar's father Barkat Ullah filed a case accusing 19 including BCL leaders and police have so far arrested 10 BCL activists.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

He was loved by many

Abrar buried in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, from Kushtia

The small Roydanga Eidgah and the adjacent graveyard ground in Kushtia's Raidanga village could hardly hold the influx of people who turned up for the funeral of Abrar Fahad yesterday.

There were around 3,000 mourners of different ages. Most of them were shedding tears silently, talking in low voices and seen shaking their heads in disbelief, reflecting on how an innocent boy was brutally killed.

"How could this brutality take place with such a boy who never even talked loudly," said Habibul Hossain of Roydanga village.

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Abrar threatened over Facebook posts earlier

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

This was not the first time Abrar Fahad was called to room 2011 of Buet's Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

Earlier on October 3, the same group of people, led by Buet BCL General Secretary Mehedi Hasan Rasel, summoned Abrar, along with some six to seven other students of the hall, to the room over their Facebook posts, said two students who were there that night.

"They called us to the room and questioned us about some Facebook statuses we posted. At that time, they did not beat us up. They only warned us not to write such things on social media," one of the students said.

Rasel also threatened to evict them from the hall if they did not stop posting such things on Facebook, they alleged.

The students, however, did not want to name the other BCL leaders.

Talking to this correspondent, several residents of the hall alleged that ragging, evicting students over trivial issues and forcing freshers to join political programmes were not new.

Incidents of torturing students have been frequently occurring in the hall, they said.

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Hindus say goodbye to Durga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The five-day Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Bangalee Hindu community, ended yesterday with the immersion of idols of the Goddess Durga.

Durga Puja, also known as Sharadiya (autumnal), is the worship of Shakti (divine force) embodied in Goddess Durga. It symbolises the battle between good and evil where the dark forces eventually succumb to the divine forces.

Devotees bade a solemn farewell to their deity Durga and her children Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh through the immersion of the idols in water after inviting her to return to them next year.

According to Hindu mythology, the deity, along with her children, sets out for Kailash, her husband's abode, on Dashami.

Besides, the arrival and departure of Durga are considered very significant as her mode of transport

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Durga Puja ended yesterday with the immersion of idols of Hindu Goddess Durga. The photo was taken at Patenga sea beach in Chattogram city.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Samrat 'falls sick', taken to hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Jubo League Dhaka South president Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat, an alleged kingpin of illegal casino business in the city, was admitted to the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) yesterday as he "felt sick".

His condition is now stable and he is undergoing treatment at the coronary care unit, Prof Afzalur Rahman, director of NICVD, told a press briefing at the hospital.

A seven-member medical board, headed by the director, was formed for his treatment.

"The medical board sat in a meeting to discuss Samrat's health. The board also suggested carrying out some tests," said Prof Afzalur, adding that his primary test reports were fine.

The director, however, said Samrat would be under observation for 24 hours.

Samrat underwent a heart valve replacement surgery around 15 years ago, say NICVD doctors.

In the morning, the authorities of Keraniganj Central Jail took Samrat to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after he complained of chest pain. Later, he was moved to NICVD.

On Sunday, Rab arrested Samrat and his close aide Enamul Haque Arman, also expelled vice-president of Jubo League Dhaka South, in Cumilla.

A mobile court, led by Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam, sentenced Samrat to six months' imprisonment under the Wildlife Conservation Act after Rab recovered two kangaroo hides from his office in the capital's Kakrail.

Rab members also recovered an illegal 7.65mm pistol, five bullets, 1,160 yaba tablets, 19 bottles of foreign liquor and devices used for torturing people from there.

Samrat was sent to Keraniganj Central Jail on Sunday night.

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